

How to Love Your Job

Even if You Don't



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Take This Job and...

So, you hate your job and you are looking for strategies to survive. Or maybe, you don't really *hate* your job; it's just that you frequently find your mind wandering at times—like every minute of the day. Maybe you are at your wits' end. How will you get through another week without losing your mind?

Hey, don't feel bad, most people are in the same boat; studies show that very few people just *love* their jobs. So what do you do now; are you stuck being bored and unhappy at work every day for the rest of your life? It's possible, but all is not lost. Let's discuss a few strategies for successfully living through the employment blues.

Not all of these strategies will work for you. Every job is different and every employee has different reasons for not getting the most out of their job. Face it, some jobs really are awful, and some employers really are as grasping, selfish, and slack-witted as those bosses in the Sunday funny papers. So make sure that you try the methods that you feel most comfortable with, and remember that a convenience clerk might have a few

options that a police officer might not. In other words, your mileage may vary.



Assess This Mess

First things first, you've got to figure out why you are struggling to get through the day. Take some time; sit down and figure out the negatives of your job. Write them down; sleep on it. Then write down a few more, and maybe delete one or two. Just get a clear picture in your mind of exactly what you need to fix.

Now, rank your list-- the most irritating facets of your job on top. We'll need a good list because unless you are planning on hitting the Lotto tonight and retiring, we are going to try to attack the most hated parts of your list first. We'll get to the minor parts of your list, like the awful parking situation around your job, the annoying empty coffee pots and the lunch-thief later.

Look at your list. Is it reasonable? If your principle beef is that you are a waitress and the boss won't let you have green hair and a nose ring, well... I'm not sure there's going to be a solution for you until you change jobs or hit that Lotto that we were discussing. There are a few areas that you simply cannot change—and areas that your employer has complete control over. These are things you'll have to learn to live with—or leave your job.

So, your list is sensible? Good, now we'll take a crack at it! We can't read your list from here, so we'll divide the general areas of complaint into several sections. If your number one item is lower down on our list, don't worry about it, just skim down.



Money, Money, Money

Many people hate their jobs because they feel like they work hard all day and never really get anywhere. By the time they pay for the necessities of life, their wallets and purses contain only dust, cobwebs, and the occasional moth. Is this you? If so, there are two main strategies to dealing with your problem, one is motivational, and one strategic. Truth be told, you probably should work on both of them.

We'll talk about strategy first. Are you really doing everything you can to maximize the amount of money that you make? Are you getting more training and or education? Have you spoken with the boss about a raise, or about what it takes to be considered for a promotion to the next level? Is there a next level at all?

So many people never actually get up the gumption to sit down and speak with their employer. Do it, and do it without delay! If you get nowhere with your employer, at least it will show you what you're up against. Maybe your employer has no idea that you'd like to move up the ladder, many employees are quite content with their present situation, you know. The only way he or she is going to consider you is if you speak up. Your boss, much like your spouse, is not a mind reader.

Let's talk about motivation for a moment. Do you have a husband or a wife? Children that like to eat? Does your unfulfilling job provide health insurance or perks like free travel? Sure the nuts and bolts of your job might be boring, but rather than focus on that, think about what that job provides for you. So many folks focus on what they don't have, rather than what they do. Does your boring job provide the money for a basically happy life? If so, you might give that some thought instead of dwelling on the negative.



Boooooring!

You've been at work for ten minutes now, and already your eyes are rolling back in your head. Your job doesn't challenge you to think, and sometimes you think that a trained monkey could do your job just as well. Sound familiar? Many people are bored out of their minds while they are at work.

The truth of the matter is that most jobs are exactly like this. Repetitious tasks must be done, and chances are good that whoever designed your job

created it in a way that insured that the employee would never have to think for himself. So many employers seem to be risk-adverse, and these are the guys who design a job that can't be easily screwed up. Boring is always high on their agenda.

So how does one live through this? The answer is simpler than you'd think-games. We know of one waitress who can tell you exactly how many plates she has delivered in the past three years. We spoke to a bank teller who knew what her record for most clients served in a day (and week) were. There are policemen who keep track of their tickets, and bakers who count their cookies.

Take a lesson from your childhood. Remember when you were a youngster and you had to make your way through your daily chores? You made a game out of it didn't you? While you might not have managed to get someone else to do your job for you, Tom Sawyer probably had nothing on your ability to make a game out of drudgery. So why did you stop? If your job is mind-numbingly boring, make a game out of it! Chances are good that those around you will wonder why you're suddenly smiling all the time and you appear to be having fun.

Keep'em guessing



Jeez she sure is rude!

Evil coworkers are everywhere, and we're not talking just rude and disinterested either. There are many employees out there who are positively *evil*!

You know the type. They hate their job even more than you do. Heck, they seem to hate their life, the world, and everyone in it. The fact that you continue breathe seems to annoy them somehow, and they refuse to be cheered up in any tangible way. You are forced to spend a considerable amount of time in close proximity with this person. You even have to interact with them. So what now?

Have you thought about talking to them? To try to have that conversation with them about how you do not enjoy how they are treating you. Give them a chance to change. You don't have to be confrontational, at least, not at first. Focus on one particular thing that the coworker says or does, and try to convince them to change it—get them to throw trash in their own can, or refrain from calling you "dearie". Sometimes, a minor change works wonders.

If you are rebuffed, or worse yet, insulted; it may be time to have the conversation with your employer about the way you are being treated. Remain calm, don't yell or make unwarranted accusations. Politely ask for help, and remember that your employer is probably not looking forward to this conversation, or the one he or she is going to have to have with the other employee either. Be patient; give the situation time to improve.

Prepare yourself for the probability that this annoying person may not change and may in fact continue to bother you. Unless it's a sexual harassment situation or some other behavior or work issue that your employer has specific rules about, you may simply be forced to continue working with the person.

You could kill them with kindness, ignore them or learn to handle the situation as best you can. Find a way to live and work with this situation. You can do it.



The Boss Really is an Idiot

This one is probably the single toughest one to overcome. If your boss is a bad one, things probably will not improve. Unfortunately, someone has got to be in charge in any organization, and when your boss is incompetent or just unreasonable or biased, you are going to be in for a long, tough slog each day.

If you boss is merely incompetent, the best thing you can do is to provide as much help to him as you can. Not only will you make yourself invaluable to him, you will also gradually learn his job—thus positioning yourself to move up in this, or a different organization. The greater your skill set, the greater your flexibility when it comes to finding a more challenging and fulfilling employment opportunity!

If, on the other hand, your boss is unreasonable and/or biased, you have several strategies available—none of them good ones. You can buckle down and take the abuse; do the job as best you can and hope that he notices your value; you can start looking for another job; you can go over his head and hope that his boss might help; or you can seek legal action.

Keep in mind that your boss's boss may well not care if he is abusive towards you. The higher ups in a company tend to be bottom line oriented, and if your boss's numbers are good, your unhappiness may just be the price of doing business to them. If you are going to fight, keep in mind that there is a very good chance that you are going to lose. Understand the risks before you make the attempt! Have you reached a point where keeping your sanity mandates that you take the risk?

Your mantra (if you choose to fight) is DOCUMENT DOCUMENT DOCUMENT. Write everything down. Keep a journal of what's going on, every time you have contact with your boss, note it. Keeping a record will also enable you to cover your backside if things do get out of hand. Protect yourself.



Busy Bee

You are buried in work; you have more on your plate than you can possibly handle. There are new tasks coming in before you've finished the old ones. You are stressed out, physically drained and there is no relief in sight. Now what?

First things first, are there others in your organization doing the exact same job? If so, and they are managing the same amount of work without stressing out, the problem may be that you are in the wrong job. But if you are the only one doing this job, or alternately, if everyone doing this job is having the same problems, you have several strategies available.

Do NOT allow yourself to be abused. Take your lunch, take your breaks, and indeed take all of them! A stressed out employee does a poor job, so working through your personal time is a recipe for poor performance and things will get even worse from here.

Ask for help! Let your supervisor know that you are over-burdened and getting further behind. Show your boss what you are doing with your time and if you can prove that you are working hard and still falling farther and farther behind, it will then become her responsibility to find a solution. So many people are fearful of asking for help, fearful that their boss will believe that they are lazy or incompetent. But if you are going quietly insane trying

to do the unreasonable, it's much better for everyone in the organization to be honest about your situation. Most employers will appreciate the honesty.

If possible, have a solution in mind. Are there tasks that you should not be doing? Are you behind because you've been forced to cover for someone else? Be ready to make suggestions. They may not be accepted, but it certainly won't hurt to try. Your supervisor will appreciate the fact that you've taken the time to fully explore the situation and your options to fix it.



Conclusion

There are many reasons that you might hate your job, but no matter what they are, you're not the first person to have gone through this. You're not alone. Keep an open mind about possible solutions for your problem. Think it through, communicate with your co-workers and employer, and be ready to change your attitude. You've probably heard it said before, but it's true.

No one can make you feel inadequate without your permission

This is true for a lot of things—no one can make you feel unhappy without your permission, no one can make you feel angry without your permission, and so on. Your attitude may very well be the ONLY thing you CAN change about your job and that's really ok. It's up to you as to how you react to things. Learn to look for the positive in each situation in instead of the negative. You'll find that it truly will make a big difference.

And if all else fails, is your present job really worth the loss of your sanity and your health? Stress is probably the leading preventable cause of poor health in the world today. If you've tried everything to improve your job,

and nothing has helped, do NOT be afraid to seek out a new position elsewhere. Remember, a job is merely a means to pay for your life. Your life is not something that you should be giving to your job!

So until (and if) you make that big change, do your best to adjust your attitude. You might even discover that your job isn't as bad as you once thought.

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