

Survival MODE

IF YOUR JOB SATISFACTION IS AT A LOW, IT CAN EASILY SEEM LIKE THE WORKING WEEK IS AN EXERCISE IN SURVIVAL. SOMETHING OF A GURU ON POSITIVITY IN THE WORKPLACE, **JANICE HADDON** TELLS US HOW WE CAN THRIVE, NOT JUST SURVIVE, AT WORK.

We spend such a huge amount of time in work, how we feel about it can make or break us. Our stress levels are up so much that stress is one of the biggest causes for sickness absence and our mental wellbeing is now at the peak of concern. So how do we strike the balance and get it right?

We can only be truly happy in work if the culture that we find ourselves in fits with our personal values. If we have a value of respect, for example, and end up working in an organisation where rudeness and bullying are accepted, we are not going to be happy. Even if that rudeness and bullying isn't directed at us, it will not be an environment in which we flourish. Working in an environment that goes against our personal values will cause internal conflict and, ultimately, stress.

So how do you know if the culture fits with your values? First you need to start with understanding what your values are. Make a list of your top six and prioritise

them. It's not something that we think about often, but it is worth taking the time.

Personal values are the standards that we set ourselves and provide the basis of our responses and behaviours. They are the keys to our interactions on a daily basis. A match with an organisation's culture and values is the key for your happiness in the environment you are in. A match and you have the potential to flourish – a mismatch and you have the potential to spiral downwards.

CHANGE

Change impacts us all in many different ways and in all areas of our lives. We all go through a cycle of emotions when change hits us – the speed, timing and how we deal with it varies from person to person.

If the changes fit with how we view ourselves and how we want life to be, then we are more likely to be positive about it. If we haven't chosen the change and it is something that doesn't match what we thought our future



REMEMBER, IT IS NOT WHAT HAPPENS TO US,
BUT HOW WE DEAL WITH THINGS AND HOW
WE RESPOND, THAT DEFINES US.

- Break bigger tasks down into manageable chunks
- Set yourself time scales for achieving things
- Be realistic – climbing Mount Everest when you don't have the right shoes just won't lead to success. But it is important to stretch yourself
- Keep the vision of what you want in clear focus
- Tell someone! When other people know about it, it can spur you on and add to your motivation

As well as having clarity on your goals, being successful in the workplace requires a great attitude and positive self-esteem. Ask yourself the following questions – if you get a negative answer to any of them then set yourself some goals and make some changes that you are in control of. Be honest with yourself about your work attitude. Are you helpful and willing to take things on, or are you more the kind of person who can't be seen for dust if there's work to be done? Think also about your own levels of positivity. No one likes to be around people all day if they behave like the clouds have just fallen in.

TAKING CONTROL

There are various other ways you can control your satisfaction. How do you dress? Are you smart and well-groomed? Scruffy people don't inspire confidence and, whether we like it or not, most people still judge a book by its cover. When you are at work, you are representing your company's brand and if you are striving for success, you need to look the part.

Next, think about your communication. Practise being clear and articulate. If you mumble, it's difficult to connect with people and you will soon be isolated. Put the utmost of energy into this and into as much of what you do as is possible. A spring in the step alone can make you exude confidence and capability and confidence to ask the right questions. Remaining calm in a crisis will also benefit your work capabilities while earmarking you as someone reliable who can think clearly and resolve difficulties.

One of the most important things to remember when you want to thrive, not just survive, is to work hard, over-deliver and, if you don't know something – ask! That is how we learn and grow.

And lastly, smile! It is impossible to feel miserable if you have a smile on your face.

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would be, we are more likely to resist it.

This type of situation can generate feelings of anxiety or fear which in turn can trigger the “fight or flight” response – where emotions are raised in a strong enough way to get us up to “fight” for what we want or to “flee” to a place of safety. There is also a third response where we “freeze” and are completely unable to do anything; decision-making goes out of the window.

So, with all change, it is important to get clarity. To help you get clarity, it is important to write down and understand:

- what is happening
- what the circumstances are
- what the impact is on you
- what options you have

Weigh up your options – look at the pros and cons of each one and decide the best course of action to take. Then set yourself some goals.

We alone are in control of how we deal with things – take responsibility for yourself and look after your health in terms of physical, nutritional and positive mind.

Remember, it is not what happens to us, but how we deal with things and how we respond, that defines us.

GOALS

Successful people have goals! Here is the most effective way of ensuring you achieve yours:

- Write them down – be specific