

BUILD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR JOB

OPEN YOUR MIND

One's mind, stretched by a new idea, never regains its original impressions.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

You can work through each exercise in this section all at one time, or you can spread it out over a whole week, doing a small amount at a time. We recommend you do these exercises right in this book. Alternatively, you can do the exercises in a "Love Your Current Job" journal and record your thoughts and your progress. Purchase your journal now to begin the process.

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Your job may be frustrating and stressful on a regular basis. You may think that the only solution is to change jobs; however, the only thing that may need to be changed is your relationship to your job. As your relationship to your job improves, so will your attitude. This is not about doing your job the same old way and just pretending everything is fine; it is about improving small details that will make a big difference in your relationship to your work. Build on what you do enjoy, eliminate what you do not and open your mind to the possibilities of loving your work.

Recognize when you have allowed your thought patterns to become stuck "in the box" and are looking at the situation with a limiting viewpoint. Don't restrict your possibilities, expand your field of vision and begin to plan for a future full of new possibilities. Change your perceptions and change common frustrations into satisfactions. Begin to look for ways to enjoy your work. Review your relationships with others and work to improve them. Take back the power and create your own change. Consider what your skills and abilities are and become clear on how you are utilizing these assets in your current work situation. If they aren't being utilized at your work, make changes so that the real you will become a part of your job. Don't waste your talents just because your environment hasn't become aware of them. Make your potential or current employer aware and

be proactive. Create a schedule to change your relationship to your job. Having concrete goals and action steps will move you along your path.

It's very easy in today's workplace to get into patterns of behavior. You complete the same tasks the same way, work with the same people and generally have a familiar routine. It is comforting and known. Step back and look at how you may be held back and restricted by this routine. Consider what artificial blinders you may have in place that limit your viewpoint and creativity. Expand your field of vision and see the possibilities in your future. Look at your job with the eyes of an outsider and consider how they would find positives in your current work. Remember it is possible to live a life without limits.

You may think that it's easier to leave your job and find a new one than to stay and make the changes necessary to love your current job. You've worked at this job and this workplace for many days and it's become familiar to you. You look at it with the same perspective everyday and see only the negative. It seems simpler to leave and find a new job than to stay, make the commitment, look long and hard at yourself and your actions and make the needed changes to create a better, stronger relationship with your job. You benefit most by this. You become more relaxed, more open to new ideas, more creative. You complete your work quicker and at a higher level of quality. You feel better about yourself and your abilities, your superiors notice your increased level of performance and reward you accordingly. You enjoy your work and perform better at it. Your overall quality of life improves.

<p>BRAINSTORM WAYS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS</p>
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Barriers are most often imaginary obstacles that seem very real at the moment. When trying to change your current work situation into work you dreamed of, these barriers seem very real and scary. We come up with practical, realistic reasons why something won't work. What you must realize is whenever you find yourself resisting anything during this process, make sure you realize it is fear talking in most cases. When you fully begin to understand why you are having difficulty moving forward with the process, you'll be able to see and understand the fear for what it is and be ready to move on with confidence.

List the top 5 barriers keeping you from loving your work and then brainstorm solutions. Don't judge yourself...just list ideas as they occur to you. You can return later to evaluate them.

What are my barriers?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can I overcome these barriers?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

LIST SKILLS AND ABILITIES YOU POSSESS AND HOW YOU CAN USE THEM AT YOUR JOB

To continue, look at how you view your abilities and skills at your job. Are they one of your barriers? It's easy to only look at what you can't do at your job and at areas in which your skills may be lacking. You often think about your failures and compare yourself unfavorably to others. Turn this around. Make a list of your skills and abilities. Be as general or specific as you'd like. Don't be humble - no one will see this list. Take credit for your accomplishments. Look at areas in which you have had success and extract what skills you used to achieve that success. Then determine how you can use these skills in your current job.

A **skill** is a strength of yours. It is something that you have interest in, develop over time and are good at. An **ability** is something that comes naturally to you. You are able to do something. A skill is something that you are good at, an ability is something that you can do.

Example: writing, oral communication, organizing events, research, project management, problem solving, idea generation and training others.

What skills and abilities do I possess?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can I put each one to use in my job?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

BUILD YOUR WORK AROUND WHAT GETS YOU EXCITED

Make a list of things in your work that make you feel good and excite you. For example, do you enjoy: brainstorming ideas, giving presentations, training others and solving problems? How can you work more of those things into your job? Can you volunteer on a project or talk to your superior and ask to be given more of the work you enjoy? Be creative and expansive in your thinking. Come up with 3-5 ways you can use each enjoyable activity/skill in your work now.

What gets me excited about my job?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

How can I do more exciting activities or skills in my job?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

FOCUS ON WHAT IS GOING WELL

It's easy to focus on things that are going wrong when you don't enjoy your job. If you take some time and review each aspect of your job, you'll be likely to find quite a few areas that you enjoy and that are going well. Change your focus to these areas and on increasing them and watch your attitude and relationship to your work move in a positive direction.

What areas are going well for me?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How can I better focus on these areas and add more of them to my work?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

ACTION ITEMS:

- [] Review the material in this section. Focus on your answers.
- [] Select one barrier that you face in your job and take one concrete step towards overcoming it this week.
- [] Select one skill or ability that you possess and begin to use that in your job this week.
- [] Identify one thing that really excites you about your work and incorporate more of that activity into your work this week.
- [] Identify one area of your work that is really going well for you and spend some extra time expanding on that in your work this week.

NOTES:

IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH COWORKERS

Find a job you like and you add five days to every week.

H. JACKSON BROWN

Enrich the quality of your life on the job by cultivating friendships or deeper relationships with your coworkers. If you don't think that you could do this, choose one person to start with. Go to lunch with him (or her) and gradually get to know him better and spend time making the relationship more meaningful. Another benefit is that you will develop a network for support and encouragement.

Below are 5 ways you can relate better to your coworkers. Feel free to write your thoughts and ideas on the lines below each section as you read each recommendation.

1. ACCEPT AND SEE THEM FOR WHO THEY ARE

Think of a coworker who challenges you. Look for the positive instead of the negative in him (or her). Step back and detach from your agenda and viewpoint and look at him with new eyes. How will you accept his imperfections and shortcomings as well as his strengths and talents?

2. BE FULLY PRESENT FOR THEM; LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGING

Think of your last interaction with a coworker. Did you give him (or her) 100% of your attention? Don't try to have conversations while working or speaking on the phone to someone else. Clear all distractions and focus on that one person. Listen to his point of view and his opinions. Don't immediately jump in with a judgment or solution. How can you be a better listener and encourage others express themselves?

3. TREAT YOUR COWORKERS AS EQUALS

Again, think of a recent interaction with a coworker. Did you think of yourself as superior to him (or her)? Put aside preconceived notions. Your coworkers have thoughts, feelings, wants and needs just as you do. Treat them with respect and put yourself on equal footing. How could your last interaction (and your next) be improved?

4. UNDERSTAND WHO THEY ARE, WHAT THEY THINK & FEEL, AND WHY THEY BEHAVE THE WAY THEY DO

Think of one specific coworker while you consider the following: Take the time and effort to 'step into his (or her) moccasins' and view things from his perspective instead of yours. Remember a time in your life when you experienced similar events/feelings. How can this help you to understand them better?

5. REMEMBER A PERSON WHO REACHED OUT TO YOU

Think back to a time in your life when a coworker reached out to you and took the time to get to know you better. Remember who that person was and how good it made you feel that they took the time to reach out to you. How can you do the same now to someone else?

ACTION ITEMS:

- Review the material in this section. Focus on your answers.
- Try each one of the recommended five ways to improve your relationship with your coworkers.
- Schedule the activities you found most effective to be on-going in your calendar.
- Integrate at least three of the ways to improve your relationship with your coworkers into your work today and each day this week.

NOTES:
