

How to Be Happy at Work!

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we spend about 2,000 hours per year at work. This being the case, wouldn't it be great if we could not only rely on our work as a source of income but also as a source of genuine happiness? Sound improbable? Well actually, it's an achievable goal and many are attaining it. Here are some suggestions:

Change your thinking. As human beings, we very quickly become sensitized to things that annoy and bother us. Thus, we tend to go through life focusing on the negatives. This is certainly easy to do in the workplace where we are subjected to all sorts of people with different habits, outlooks and lifestyles. But *Inc. Magazine* contributor Geoffrey James suggests in the 1/30/12 issue that we ask ourselves two critical questions about our work: 1) What has to happen for me to be happy? and 2) What has to happen for me to be unhappy? If your responses to the second question outnumber your responses to the first question, you've created a system in your head that guarantees unhappiness. Isn't it far better to simply accept that there are going to be stressors and frustrations at work but that you are going to focus on the things at work from which you derive genuine pleasure? For example, genuine friendships and a sense of accomplishment. James recounts, "I once worked with a guy who was always angry at the people he worked with. The moment anything didn't go the way he thought it should go, he'd be screaming in somebody's face. He was making everyone around him miserable – but just as importantly, he was making himself miserable because just about *anything* set him off."

Change your vocabulary: In the 2/13/12 issue of *Inc. Magazine*, James suggests that the words we use actually shape our perceptions:

1. **Stop using negative phrases** such as "I can't," "It's impossible," or "This won't work." Such statements program your mind to look for negative results.
2. **When asked "How are you?"** respond with "Terrific!" rather than a depressing "OK" or "Getting by."
3. **Stop complaining** about things over which you have no control. This only serves to depress you and those around you.



4. **Stop griping** about your personal problems and illnesses. What good does it do, other than further depress you and everyone else?
5. **Substitute neutral words** for emotionally loaded ones. Rather than saying, "I'm enraged!" say "I've got a real challenge!"
6. **Expunge profanity and obscenity** from your vocabulary. Such words incite and spread negative emotions.

Since nearly 30% of our lives are spent at work, why not make the workplace a *happy place*?