

Be Responsible for Creating Your Own Happiness

By John McFerran | Saturday, June 27th, 2009

What's the biggest difference between dreading the coming work week and anticipating the possibilities it may bring? Your happiness.

In her new book, *Thank God It's Monday*, author Roxanne Emmerich explains that we each have the power to change our own attitudes and the culture of our workplace. She says that the best part is that making positive, measurable change that really matters can begin in a single day.

In other words, you are responsible for creating your own happiness.

Make the decision and take action to maintaining a positive attitude and creating a pleasant workplace. When you wake up, smile and tell yourself it's going to be a great and productive day, and chances are, you'll go out there and make it one. You may be surprised at how contagious your happiness can be.

And who knows? By starting with these 10 steps, you may find yourself looking forward to Mondays from now on.

1. Be present. Usually, when we're at work, we think about home. When we're home, we think about work. Emmerich says that pattern only leads to resenting where you are. Instead, step up and make a commitment to being in the moment and focusing on what needs to be accomplished.
2. Do something you love every day. You may not like every aspect of your job, but there is likely at least one thing you enjoy doing every day. Think about your interests, abilities and strengths and identify tasks that you really like. Doing something you love on a regular basis will make your work more meaningful.
3. Take the reins of your own career. As the person who stands to gain the most from your personal and professional development, take charge of your own career. Instead of sitting back and waiting for your career to unfold, jump in! Develop your own goals, show interest in the company's future, contribute ideas, take part in projects and volunteer for training opportunities.
4. Seek the information you need. People grow frustrated when they do not receive enough information about what is happening in their organization or are left out of the communication loop. If this is your situation, be upfront about asking for the information you need to do your work, to stay in touch with the expectations of your boss and the needs of the company.
5. Form friendships with your co-workers. When you like the people you work with, you're more likely to look forward to work every day. Get to know your co-workers. Building a personal support network of people you can share with and care about will enhance your work experience.

6. Avoid others' negativity. It may be nearly impossible to avoid people who gossip, complain or display venomous attitudes, but you can choose to tune out and walk away from their negativity before it starts to take root and cling to your mindset.
7. Let go of things beyond your control. There are things that happen -- from late deliveries to budget cutbacks -- which we simply cannot control. When these things get in the way of your goal, take a deep breath and let it go. The faster you're able to sidestep the obstacle and come up with an alternative plan, the better off you'll be.
8. Ask for feedback. You may think you're doing OK, but getting feedback from your manager or a customer reinforces good performance and fortifies areas needing improvement. Don't be shy about asking for a quick assessment to affirm that you're on the right path. It will help you feel good about the kind of positive contribution you make.
9. Celebrate the little victories. Keep your eyes and ears open for the little "wins" that pop up when working on projects or evaluating processes. Give a co-worker a pat on the back for good work and point out your department's achievements at the next meeting with the boss. Even a little recognition goes a long way to creating a feel-good and unified team environment.
10. Have fun. If you can't remember the last time you had a good laugh, felt relaxed or savoured some quality "me" time, it's long overdue. Schedule it in if you have to. If you regularly reward yourself with some self-defined fun away from work, you're less likely to be swamped by stress.

-- With reporting by Barbara Chabai

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