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## **Works for Me!**

A recent poll found that 58% of us are not happy at work. That number is astounding when you realize how many hours of each day working Americans spend doing something they do not like. The question is, are they unhappy and what can they do to change it?

It is no secret that we live in a workaholic, high-demand, high-performance world where the early bird gets the worm and the night owl gets the promotion. Americans work an average of 47 hours a week, 50 weeks a year. The results of this pace is evident everywhere. Stress, divorce, absenteeism and worker dissatisfaction are at an all time high.

In my practice, clients often complain that they do not have enough time for family, friends, or hobbies. Work consumes them, stealing their energy and leaving them without the proper balance between work and the rest of their life. I address their issue by first asking the question, “Why do you work?” Their immediate response is usually, “Because I have to”. Reasoning that life is too short to endure daily dissatisfaction for a reason so vague, I have them dig deeper, take their time, think about it and write a list of all the reasons they work. They usually surprise themselves with the answers. Sure, they are generating income to satisfy basic needs but the list goes on. Work gives them a sense of accomplishment, satisfies a need to be productive, introduces them to new people and ideas, and gives them an opportunity to mentor others. For some, work is about “giving back” or making the world a better place to live. For others, it is a field of competition, one where they win after a childhood of athletic disappointments. For all of them, it is more than they thought it was.

It’s a great time to work in America. Employees have more sway over how, when and where they are working. If you are one of that 58% percent that is ‘unhappy at work’, first ask yourself why you work and then examine your options for improving satisfaction. Here are a few questions to get you started:

**Are you working for the right company?** Companies have a culture all their own. Have you chosen one that shares your values?

**Do you have work location options?** The number of workers telecommuting is on the rise and more acceptable than ever in corporate circles. Cutting commute time can make a big difference in recapturing leisure time. If you are self-motivated and have room to dedicate work space, this just might be for you. If you cannot work remotely, is there another location that might suit you better, another city, office location or department?

**Have you made connections?** In a recent survey, having a friend at work is one of the top reasons for employee satisfaction. Reach out and get to know your peers.

**Are you managing your time?** No matter how much you accomplish, there is always more to be done. Between the phone ringing, e-mail dinging, and constant flow of new project requests, you never get to the end of the work pile. Knowing that, why do we think staying at work longer than is expected will get us ahead? Time management is the key. Identify your top priorities, cut back on the unnecessary tasks such as replying to every e-mail and set a time to leave your desk.

**Are you managing your expectations?** No matter if it is a job, a relationship, or a new toy, the excitement wears off over time. If you are expecting your work to provide you with endless satisfaction, you may be expecting too much.

**Are you in the right job?** Some positions have an 'expiration date'. It could mean you are now overqualified through development and experience or that you have not kept up with changes. It can also mean that you need a new challenge or less responsibility. Whatever the reason, if you are no longer a match for the role you play, a new position could be the answer. Explore your options inside your current employer first.

**Are you fully developed for the role you are in?** Do you know your shortcomings and how they might impact your effectiveness in your job role? If you do not, it could be time to order an assessment from your business coach. The right assessment can help you not only identify your strengths and shortcomings, but also help recommend ways for you to use your motives, interests and preferences to improve your job satisfaction and productivity.

**How is your attitude?** Has it occurred to you that you always have control over your attitude? Sometime, that is all we control, but do not discount the power of keeping your complaints down and your mood upbeat. Focus on the reasons you work and remember you have a choice in how you approach the job to be done.

**What kind of space have you created?** No matter where you work, you can always have some freedom to create your own space. Let it reflect your personality. After all, you may spend more time here than at home.

**How are things at home?** Sometimes we transfer our unhappiness at home to our work lives. Does your family support your work choices? If not, you may need to address those to find happiness at work.

Your business coach can help you to identify these and other roadblocks to your job satisfaction. Discuss your concerns and ask for help. If you are in a job transition now, make the search for your next job, think through your “possibilities” and vow to make this the new job one that suits you better than the one you left behind. Understand your motivation to work and your choices and you may just find yourself thinking TGIM [Thank God it’s Monday]!

**Sherry B. Jordan, MA.** a Management Coach and Senior Consultant with Coaching.ppr can assist you in identifying your career or business goals and set strategies to meet them. For more information, visit [www.coachingppr.com](http://www.coachingppr.com) or call at 904-616-9237.