

How we can all be happier at work! 4 things you can start doing today!

As a career & executive coach for nearly two decades, it saddens me to read the statistics about how unhappy Australians are at work. Over the past five years, the figure has always sat around the 50% mark. See article [‘less than half of Aussies are happy with their job’](#) Huffington Post.



It seems a sad reflection on our working culture, that the level of overall job satisfaction by employees in Australia is so low given we are ‘the lucky country’. Yet little seems to change, even with all the wonderful newly designed workspaces, employment laws to protect employees’ rights, health & wellbeing initiatives, the push to invest in culture etc. However half of us are still not happy in our work. This is not good for anyone – employees, employers and the country’s economy.

So how can we as individual employees put a smile back on our dials at work? How can we harness the enthusiasm and joy we once experienced when we were doing a job that gave us a sense of satisfaction? Or maybe you’re yet to experience this feeling in your career – that wonderful feeling of a good day’s work and belonging and being a part of something worthwhile.

There are many things you can do today that will help you increase your work happiness and it does not require as much effort as you may think. It is about giving yourself permission to take the time to reflect on who you are, your wellbeing needs and what is important to you on the career front. It does require some guts to reflect on what has been and to dedicate time to planning what you want the future to look like. It can be confronting— however, one thing I can guarantee is you will be better off for doing it.

While it is easier to say what we don't like when it comes to work, for most people it is harder to say what they do like and what they truly want to be doing.

Below are 4 areas you can work on today to help you gain more happiness from your work. It only requires you to take the time to invest in yourself and go through the questions and additional activities if you feel inclined.



1) Conduct a Job Audit – My Gifts V's This Job

While this may sound a little odd, as we tend to think we know our strengths inside out. For many of us, we list off the skills we are currently and regularly using, forgetting that a career of 5 -10 years+ we are starting to develop a pretty good transferable skill set. We may have forgotten the skills we once used, or even neglected or to give thought to the 'soft' skills we have.

Ask yourself:

- Do I know what my core skills/strengths are? List them.
- If I don't know and cannot articulate them, is it time to do an audit of my core skills/gifts and those I want to be using more of?

- How much am I using my gifts? For example; if you're a big picture visionary type are you utilising this in your day job? Or if your strength is around helping others and being a great listener and providing wonderful personal support, are you leveraging this gift?
- Do I feel like I am being challenged & am I seeking out challenges and opportunities to develop these skills?

By celebrating your skills and gifts you will increase your confidence and your happiness with who you are and what you are or could be offering.

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ

2) Self-Awareness – Who am I and when am I at my best?

While it may sound a little odd, how well do you know yourself? Are you busy doing and not taking much time to reflect on who you truly are and what would make you happy? Or do you do this fleetingly and then tell yourself to stop being silly and come back to reality – work is hard and is not to be enjoyed?

This is where [MBTI / Type](#) can come in to help us increase our level of self-awareness of our own type and of the other types – 16 in total. An awareness of our own type and those we interact with provides us with many different lenses to improve our relationships. Type awareness can be helpful in highlighting your gifts and what you need to be fulfilling these gifts and operating at your best.

Understanding our preferences around the 4 dichotomies:

- Where we get our energy from – Extrovert or Introvert
- How we take in information – Sensing or Intuition
- How we make decisions – Thinking or Feeling
- How we prefer to order our world – Judging or Perceiving

When these preferences are combined to form a four-letter Type, for example, ISTJ (16 in total) it becomes clearer as to why others behave as they do and or frequent misinterpretation of others behaviours both at work and home. By improving our level of self-awareness it enhances our relationship with ourselves and provides us with greater insight and empathy towards the relationships we have with others. It can lead to far more rewarding and positive relationships in the workplace and contribute to our overall happiness.

[The MBTI can be done with an accredited coach or psychologist.](#)

You can also look at free online assessments, however, be aware many of these are not particularly accurate.



3) Clarity of our Values & How we live them

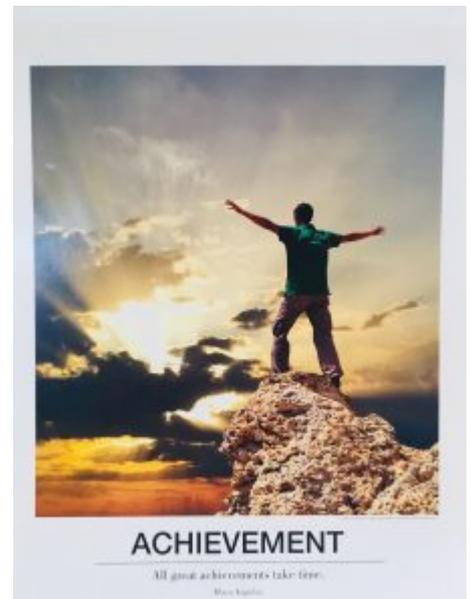
It is not unusual for our values to play a greater role in our work and home lives as we get older. As a coach, I have found after our twenties our values feature more strongly in our decision making. While we were once prepared to overlook things we did not agree with, we may find ourselves confronting the boss for his unacceptable behaviours or becoming increasingly annoyed by our employer's lack of commitment to areas they have publicly declared a commitment to. Lack of opportunities to engage in further training and

development, lack of respect for all staff, rules apply to some and not to others etc all feature in how we live our values. As such values of integrity, fairness, progression, development and so on are constantly not lived out in our work life more many take its toll – resulting in people leaving or simply going to work and going through the motions.

Being clear about our core work values and having a plan for what to do when these are compromised is empowering. It provides us with our own set of standards in writing and can enable us to make an informed decision about if to stay or go if our values are constantly being compromised.

- If you have not documented your values lately or ever now is the right time to start.
- If no, take some time to document your core values up to 8 is a good number and flesh out what these values look like and how they are lived?
- Do an audit of how many of your core values are reflected in your current career and organisation? If it's less than half it may be time to look at alternatives.

Having reviewed your core values you may find you are not living some as you would like at work or more are being met than you had initially thought they just need some shaping. For further support see the [free career resources](#).



4) Success – what does success look like to you?

So many of us paint a picture of what success looks like from our parents, our culture, and what society deems as a successful person. Largely someone with a terrific sounding job title, a fancy car, and a nice home – very much [status symbols](#). This is certainly one definition of success, yet it is only one – there are millions of other definitions, those that we chose to define for ourselves.

The important thing to remember is you have to define and write down and live what your definition of success looks and feels like – forget all the others. Success maybe around self-employment, a job that offers you flexibility for your hobbies or family, working with creative types, being outdoors, working on challenging problems, doing the impossible, helping others, feeling great about yourself, minimal stress etc. Success will never be attained if the goals were not truly yours – if you did not want them, you just thought you had to as was what was expected.

- Spend some time thinking about your own definition of what success looks like?
- How will you know when you're successful?
- What would it look and feel like?

- Is it the end goal or is it something you experience over the course of the journey, or perhaps it is both?

If you have not created your definition of success, being truly honest with yourself, and then documented it, then it's likely you're simply working to someone else's definition of success. Or you may discover you're already living a successful work life, you just had not taken the time to take stock.

It is important to remember most of us have a lot more choices than we think when it comes to our work and finding jobs and environments where we can thrive and be happy. We can get caught in a rut and struggle to see how much we must offer and all those wonderful job opportunities are around us.

As with so many important and rewarding life experiences, it requires some hard work to get to be who you are and to be doing work you find rewarding and that brings you happiness.

Take the time to go through the key questions from this article if you're not feeling happy at work. Further free careers resources can be accessed from my site. <http://kellymagowan.com/career-strategy-services-for-executives-professionals/career-resources/>

Remember to give yourself permission to be in a job/career and environment where you can be the best version of you.

Author

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