



Increasing Happiness at Work

Despite our circumstances, happiness is an emotion we can cultivate with practice and intention. There are many challenges associated with our jobs that can make us feel dissatisfied at work. Sometimes a job change is necessary; other times, a mindset shift can do wonders. How can you increase one or more of the following happiness triggers?

1. Connect to Your Values and Purpose

What brings your life meaning? What motivates you? It's important to identify and honor what is central to designing a life well-lived. Brené Brown has created a “Living Into Our Values” exercise that you might find helpful: www.brenebrown.com/resources/living-into-our-values

2. Utilize Your Strengths

Strengths vary from person to person – it's key to recognize your unique personal and professional strengths. A strengths-based approach allows you to meet yourself where you are right now and assess: what are you doing well and what can you build on?

3. Build Social Connections

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed how we interact with our co-workers, ranging from being physically isolated in work-from-home arrangements to communicating in person while wearing masks and standing six feet apart. We are hardwired for social connection – it is critical not only to building positive emotions, but for survival.

A few simple solutions might include: invite someone to grab coffee; call instead of text; make eye contact; schedule an informational interview with someone doing interesting work and ask them for their story and advice; and, go for a walk with a friend or co-worker to catch up.

4. Create Anticipation

Do you have items on your calendar that you look forward to? If you don't, try something new. Novelty boosts happiness by keeping your life from becoming dull. You might try setting a new, meaningful goal and imagine what it will feel like to reach that goal. Take time to celebrate!

5. Relax and Take Breaks

Studies show that we're productive in chunks of time (typically 90-minute blocks) and need breaks to recharge. Even a 5-minute break can be enough down time to refocus on the task at hand. Consider going for a walk, chatting with a co-worker, grabbing a snack, or letting your mind wander. Resist the urge to scroll social media though – our brains continue working and don't recognize that activity as leisure time.