Important Tips for Finding Happiness at Work

Luther "Trey" Denton

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Writing about happiness might seem a stretch for a professor of marketing, but I have been leading an honors section of Georgia Southern’s freshmen orientation class titled “Finding Happiness in Today’s Consumer-Oriented Society.” Marketers share some blame for the overt materialism that undermines much happiness in our lives today, and I will try to rectify some of this bad karma by offering these lessons in happiness from our class readings and discussions.

1. Find your noble purpose at work and make sure it’s linked to helping others. Each day, do your best to help others, to alleviate suffering and to make the world a better place. Of course they meant a long, long time ago — in a galaxy far, far away — but we are in a restaurant and there is a waitress managing the system.

2. Look for good in others just as you look for the meaning and purpose in your work. If you look for good, you will find it. If you look for bad, you will find that, too. One outlook will more likely lead to happiness. The other will lead to your personal unhappiness. Make a point to express gratitude when you find others doing good things.

3. Don’t expect your boss to be any more perfect than any other human being. Shunryo Suzuki is credited with saying, “Each of us is perfect. Each of us could do with a little improvement.” Every human being has strengths and weaknesses, and frequently they are tied to one another.

4. No whining. This is one of the most difficult of lessons because complaining is so tempting. Snarky, petty, defean and witty sarcasm get easy laughs, but they erode happiness at work for yourself and others.

Before complaining, ask yourself what you can do to offer a solution. Work helpfully to fix problems or keep quiet. Finding new employment is definitely an honorable course of action when efforts fail to correct persistent intolerable problems, but this is a drastic course of action.

Finding genuine humor in the multitude of minor irritations that are part of the normal workplace is helpful and healthy. You can tell the difference between an undermining comment and genuine humor by the impact on organizational culture. The former depresses spirits, and the latter raises them.

5. Make a contribution to an organization’s happiness climate. If you are bringing the happiness of an organization down, evaluate yourself honestly and consider what changes you can make in your actions and/or outlook.

There are many bad bosses and unhealthy work environments out there, but if your past is strewn with persistent unhappiness that spans people, bosses and organizations, do “not double down” this time with a strategy that has already failed you. Try something new.

Frequently, people unhappy at work decide to invest less in their organization. This most often results in a decline in happiness, job satisfaction and work performance.

To be happier, invest more. Also evaluate those you consider your colleagues — and if they consistently make you feel worse about where you work, you may need to choose a different group. Happiness and unhappiness are both contagious.

6. Widen your zone of happiness. Allow yourself to be happy under a wider range of circumstances. Do not intentionally narrow your happiness zone with a list of personal demands. Being picky and hard to please does not boost happiness.

7. Realize that happiness is not a destination. If you find yourself thinking, “I would be happy if...” or “I’ll be happy when...” or “If I owned a...,” then I would be happy,” you are setting yourself up for sustained unhappiness while you await some future perfect satisfaction.

Look for the relative happiness available to you right now, even as you delight in your prospects of even more happiness down the road.

8. Instead of mine recently told my class “no one deserves to be happy.” Embrace that mantra and then take responsibility for creating your own happiness at work.

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**Important tips for finding happiness at work**

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2. **The self tipper:** While you are in a tire store, the employee at the end of the shift would then credit back either the majority of the money or all of it to the accompany’s card.
3. **Charge-back Charlie:** This is one of the worst of the worst. This is the guy who buys stuff on his card all the time and then basically refuses to pay for it.
4. **The back draft:** So now we are in a tire store. The store is losing money and has no idea how. It is so bad that a manager comes up front and watches every sale that’s made. No cash register can be opened without a manager’s key, and yet all product is accounted for as either in stock or has a sales receipt listed as being sold. Where is the money going?

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