

Change...

Your Job or Your Attitude?

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The other day, someone asked me a question that brought a smile to my face: "How do you manage to appear so happy all the time?" I had to confess that there was a time, several years ago, when this was not the case. During that time, some may have even described me as withdrawn and angry.

In all honesty, I felt trapped in my job. I complained about everything work related. I was resentful for not getting the salary that I felt I deserved and that my colleagues were working less hours while I was asked to take on more responsibilities. I was frustrated by the unrealistic expectations of customers and irritated by my coworkers. As a result of these feelings, I dreaded going to work. It took every ounce of energy just to get myself to the office, and the days seemed to drag on and on. This left me feeling totally exhausted.

Maybe it was job burnout. Maybe I was going through a midlife crisis. Whatever it was, it was affecting me deeply. This poisonous attitude started to affect my personal life. I lost my passion for life. I knew I had to do something. I had to make some kind of change. However, instead of changing jobs, I decided to change me. I chose to work with a professional life coach and underwent a process that took several years. But I can honestly say that I am a totally different person today because of that one simple thing – a change in my own attitude.

In these trying economic times, you may find yourself feeling burned out or trapped in your job. However, it's not impossible to transform the way you feel about your job. It just takes time and the willingness to change. Think back to when you first started. Do you remember the excitement you felt after that phone call or interview when you were offered your position? Try to rekindle that feeling. Start now.

Here are a few simple techniques that helped me transform my attitude:

Dress the part. What do you wear when you need to make a good first impression? I dug into the back of my closet and pulled out those "interview" clothes and power suits.

Arrive Early. Spend some quiet time settling in before everyone else arrives. Surprisingly, this gave me a calmness that I was able to carry throughout the entire day.

List Three Things. Most of us pride ourselves on multi-tasking. However, this can actually make you feel less productive. To avoid the stress that comes when you just can't seem to finish a project, try making a list of three priorities for the day. Once those are done, create a new list. You'll be amazed at the sense of achievement that comes with crossing things off your list!



Give positive feedback. Most of us hear more of what we are doing wrong rather than what we do right. So when someone does something that helps you, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, communicate your appreciation. Be specific and take the time to write a note or send a card. You will be surprised at the impact this will have for such little effort. Expressing your appreciation of others actually enhances how you feel about them. This, in itself, is a great reward.

Make a grateful list. Create a list of all the things you like about your job. Then read the list to yourself out loud. See if you can add one more item to your list every day. When I first made my list, I struggled to find those things that I liked. I started with the basics: the paycheck, the good medical insurance plan and paid vacations. Each day, I was able to add at least one thing to my list, until I found my list too long to read. A reminder of the simple fact that I really did love my job!

The desired result is that by changing your attitude, you may find that your environment will change as well. As Gandi said, "...be the change you wish to see in the world."