

Increasing Your Happiness

Create a To-Do List for the Day

Once you've checked for action items, take a few minutes to make a to-do list for the day. This gives you a picture of how your time will be used, what resources you will need, and any other people you may need to involve. How you set up your to-do list is up to you – whether it's by most pressing items first, "low hanging fruit" (easily completed items) first, or some other system. What's important is that you create a list so that you have a plan for the day. While your plan may have to change to accommodate emerging needs or unexpected events, having a plan means you can get back on track when the immediate crisis has passed. Keep your list manageable, and limit it to just what you will work on today – that way the list doesn't become overwhelming and discouraging.

Practice Professional Courage

One of the greatest things you can do for your own professional development and workplace happiness is practice professional courage. Professional courage involves directly and productively addressing conflicts, advocating for yourself and others on your team, and otherwise dealing directly and proactively with potential problems. It can be difficult to practice professional courage, as it involves taking risks – it can seem easier to let a conflict go unaddressed or to accept the status quo. However, allowing conflict to be unresolved or your needs to go unmet can breed resentment and undermine productivity and happiness. Professional courage helps to promote open communication in the workplace. It also assures that resentments and grudges do not fester. Learning to practice professional courage is a leadership skill which can help prepare you for, and make you a candidate for, more responsibility or promotions. But even if it does not lead to job advancement, practicing professional courage marks you out as a leader and someone who wants to promote the healthiest workplace.

Take Time to Socialize

It may sound like exactly the opposite of what you should be doing at work, but take the time to socialize with others during your day. Take a few minutes to chat with a colleague when you refill your coffee cup. Ask a coworker how her day is going. You want to keep these interactions relatively brief so that you are still accomplishing work, but also long enough to make a meaningful connection. Many people also find they are happier at work if they take the time to socialize with coworkers outside of work hours, whether by meeting for dinner regularly or otherwise sharing non-work time together. Whether you choose to limit your socialization to work hours, or you choose to spend time with coworkers away from the workplace, it is key to have interactions that aren't wholly centered on work. Getting to know your colleagues as people, and letting them get to know you as a person, helps you feel connected. This can make you a much happier person at work!