



APPOINTMENTS

MAKING OPPORTUNITIES KNOCK ON YOUR DOOR

Personal development: Why work?

How many people do you know who are happy with their jobs? Perhaps you are one who is working just to survive and make ends meet, deriving little satisfaction from your employment. Those who find fulfillment, joy and contentment in their work do exist, but they are not the majority. One thing is sure: to be fulfilling and ultimately satisfying, work needs a long-range goal and an overall opportunity for personal development.

The many books, articles and reports that address the state of various national workforces testify to the fact that something is fundamentally wrong with the modern approach to working life. Note this comment from an anonymous essay on the Internet: "Work" as we know it tends to make us unhappy because we do so much of it, because it is so repetitive, because we don't get to choose what we do, and because what we are doing is often not in the best interest of our fellow human beings." Many of us could echo that observation.

Of course, a number of factors contribute to the sense of well-being we can draw from our employment. Similarly there are specific causes for the dissatisfaction that workers experience. Identifying them may

provide some helpful insight.

HARD QUESTIONS

Do we have the courage to ask ourselves whether it's possible that people weren't intended to live and work as we do today? Of course, there are implications behind such a bold question; namely, that we did not evolve from a primeval life form but were created by a divine Being. Could it be possible that work has become such a burden today because we are not "working" in the way the One who created us intended?

Let's take a moment to put aside any preconceived notions we might have and explore this line of thinking to see whether there is a relationship between the purpose of human existence and where we are today in terms of work. The Bible simply says that man was created in the image and likeness of God. Religion and the Bible describes the human form but also addresses the purpose of life. In the first chapters of the Bible God reveals Himself not as a singular entity but in a family relationship—Elohim in Hebrew. In the first chapter of John's Gospel we learn that Jesus Christ was known as "the Word" before He came in human form. As the Word He was with God

and He was God. So, long before the earth and human life existed, there were two Beings who have always existed. Humankind was created to have a physical relationship with God that would develop into an eternal, spiritual family relationship—to become "sons of God," as the New Testament expresses it. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19). Whereas animals were made after their own kind, man was made after the God kind, a unique creation with a unique purpose. Having created the physical human form complete with a con-



scious mind, God gave humans stewardship over the earth. The Garden of Eden was a perfect environment and provided the training ground for what man was to do as the human population increased and more of the earth's surface was inhabited. Adam and his descendants were given dominion over the various animal life forms. Regarding the environment, he was told to "tend and keep it," or nurture and preserve it.

Humankind was set to work, living as a physical entity. But unlike animals, during their lifetime humans were to take on the mind and character of the One who had created them, to develop in His likeness. To facilitate this development of character, God gave humans work to do and guidelines for how that work was to be performed.

Unfortunately the story we see in the first few chapters of Genesis is that almost from the very beginning people refused to work in compliance with the way of life God set before them, choosing instead to "do their own thing." Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden and allowed to decide for themselves the way of life they wanted to live. Mankind had refused the fruit of the tree of life, which would have provid-

ed a continuing close relationship with the Creator and the environment He had created.

The original concept of work was bound up in a family-oriented relationship with the environment such that we could realistically refer to it as a way of life. God intended work to be part of our way of life. Our efforts were to be directly tied to the support and development of His family through stewardship of land and animals. In modern parlance we would say we are to take ownership, or responsibility for the environment in which we live and for the positive development of home and family. This supplies purpose to human efforts and results in a great sense of fulfillment.

Ownership is a vital key to worker satisfaction. In the context of our personal labour, it means we will be doing things that we feel are productive and useful. This can be accomplished to some degree even in today's urban environment. Obvious examples are starting our own business or working in a small partnership where the various tasks undertaken lead to the construction of the whole. If we look at the Garden of Eden model, the key to worker satisfaction would be ownership of land.

Not just a suburban lot, but land enough to require the effort of all family members in providing for the family unit. In the original model there was no urbanization or specialization as we know it today.

Ownership of land creates a bonding by virtue of economic interest. It also ensures direct benefit for any work invested, as well as the emotional reward of seeing results for personal effort. It helps build loyalty as the effort of each member of the family contributes to the greater whole rather than merely to self-fulfillment.

PURPOSE-DRIVEN WORK
For physical and mental endeavors to be meaningful and rewarding, they must have purpose. A goal beyond sustaining physical life can inspire and motivate to great accomplishments. But when the horizon becomes blurred and the peaks of success appear an impossible dream, there is no reason to strive to do better. We become bogged down in mediocrity and too easily satisfied. Temporary pleasures seem to be all that is left within reach, so we busy ourselves with comforts and enjoying life and leave altruistic pursuits to others.



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ADVISOR - MEDICAL MARKETING

We are now on the look out for an exceptionally talented and quick witted individual, ideally a Medical Doctor, who could operate effectively at the intersection of Medicine, Commercialism and Social Responsibility. In as much as the previous incumbent was a Medical Doctor (who after a 07 year stint opted for a professional career in politics and may even end up as a Health Policy Legislator!) we would also welcome individuals with a thorough scientific background with specificity towards Biology and Chemistry.

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Motivation and solving office conflicts

THE CONSCIENTIOUS and well-meaning owner of a small business cannot seem to get his work force motivated, despite a good benefits package and pleasant working environment. "I am coming to the conclusion that it doesn't pay to be nice to people," he says. "Maybe if I fired a few of them I'd get better results."

The supervisor of a 100-employee division of a large company says his employees are demoralized; he wants to know ways to increase their motivation.

An office manager is stunned to find out that two of her best employees told another supervisor she did not like them. "They are both top performers, and I can never remember being dissatisfied with them in any way," she says. "What's happening?"

These managers are discovering that managing means managing people. In the course of consulting and column writing I have found the two major problem areas for managers, are how to motivate and how to reduce conflict.

Take the owner who is contemplating firing some of his employees. It is not that he is doing something wrong by giving them a handsome benefits package and good working conditions. He is just not doing enough. If you are in his situation you should ask yourself questions: Do your employees participate in decision making? Do they have promotion opportunities? Do they think you have made promises you have not fulfilled? Do you reward them for initiative and superior performance?

People will work for money, but except in extreme circumstances, they resist working for money alone. They also want recognition, security and opportunity. There is, accordingly, a simple solution for the supervisor of those 100 demoralized employees: Tell them "thank you."

It is human nature to like praise and to be motivated to work for it. I often tell my clients, "Do you want to make \$1,000 in five minutes? Go and give an employee a word of praise. His work rate will increase, his motivational level will rise, and he will pass along his good mood to others."

And you must be aware that all the good work and good feeling you build up can be destroyed in ways you little expect. Take the supervisor who was amazed to find out that her two best employees thought she disliked them.

It can happen like this: The



manager is worried about a procurement problem. Frank, the employee, passes the manager in the corridor and greets her with a smile. The manager, engrossed in her problem, looks up briefly and mumbles a reply. Frank's mood drops. He wonders why she is angry with him, what he did, whether he is doing a good job.

The next day, the procurement problem takes a turn for the worse. Frank tries again. This time the manager does not even respond. Frank's worst fears are confirmed. And the manager does not even realize it.

Why does this happen? Employees are constantly gauging their job security and their employer's satisfaction with their performance by the expression they see on the manager's face.

OFFICE CONFLICT at its worst is caused by a deliberate troublemaker. Here is a typical case:

"I work with a manager who constantly criticizes me and the other managers. He likes to show my boss how knowledgeable he is and how he is the only guy who can get anything done around here." The boss laps it up, and the two of them have lengthy conferences discussing all the employees. This guy is bent on climbing to the top over our bodies. What should we do?"

These professional conflict makers create moral problems, credibility problems and eventual productivity problems. They can be cunning and vicious, but they flourish only where the boss is a willing participant.

Professional conflict makers devote so much of their energies to criticizing others' performances that their own tasks are neglected. You can find subtle ways of pointing that out to their superiors.