

# Happiness at Work

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Is work getting you down? Maybe every day is feeling like a Monday for you. There is value in working towards happiness at work. It is tied to better health, creativity, less turn over, and much more!

The last few years have highlighted the connection between work and a person's well-being, though research had already been happening on this subject.



In their work, the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkley defines happiness at work as feeling an overall sense of enjoyment at work; being able to gracefully handle setbacks; connecting amicably with colleagues, coworkers, clients, and customers; and knowing that your work matters to yourself, your organization, and beyond. Let's dig in a little to how we get there!

## Purpose

We have a sense of purpose when we make valuable contributions to others (individuals and organizations) that we find personally meaningful. Our purpose is a reflection of our core values, and we feel more purposeful at work when our everyday behaviors and decisions align with them. Want to nurture purpose? Link your day-to-day tasks to something broader—to your values or making lives better.

## Flex Your Social Muscles

Dr. Robert Waldinger of Harvard directs one of the longest-running studies on what makes people thrive. He shares that the people who had the warmest connections with other people weren't just happier, they stayed healthier longer and lived longer.

There's a catch, like exercise, you need to make a habit of it for the benefits. But, it can be small and not time intensive. Just reaching out to a colleague just to say 'Hi' or check in personally will bring happiness to both! Lean into your curiosity about your co-workers to create a social bond.

Practicing empathy also helps us understand each other and can lead to effective teamwork.

## Engagement

Do you enjoy your work most of the time? Do you often get so deeply involved with your work you lose track of time? If your answer is 'no', there is room for increased engagement for you! This can be done with ownership of schedules and tasks and shifting from hectic, multi-tasking methods to allow for a deeper work flow. In one study, the most important predictor of a good work day was making progress. Even "small wins" can make us feel good and inspire us to get more done. Focus on and celebrate the progress you have made! Finally, if you want to learn more, look up 'job crafting'. It is a proactive approach to reshaping your work life with a sense of ownership and self-motivation, which makes you more engaged at work.

It's not just up to employees. Happiness at work, like happiness in life, is a basic human need and in turn, is a big perk a workplace can offer. Research shows that happiness at work is essential to organizational success and is worth the effort to create it. For more information, contact Tara Solomon-Smith, [tsolomon@ksu.edu](mailto:tsolomon@ksu.edu), or by calling 620-244-3826.