

# DO YOU DRAG YOURSELF TO WORK EVERY MORNING?

FIND MEANING IN WHAT YOU DO. HERE'S HOW!



By JEAN SELVAM

jean.selvam@leaderonomics.com

**D**OES this sound familiar to you? "I hate my job! I am dragging my feet to work every morning and I don't really care about anybody at work!"

This expression or ones similar to this is often preceded by feelings of dissatisfaction, frustration, boredom, and many other negative emotions.

I have often heard this expression among friends especially when they hear about my excitement regarding my job and how I find meaning in what I do.

They regard my situation as "lucky" because I enjoy work. However, instead of "being lucky", I was determined and patient to find work in a field that I could be passionate about.

It is often difficult to find meaning in what you do for a living. Many factors contribute to this difficulty such as financial concerns, poor workplace location, demanding management, personal burn-out and many other stresses.

During a time when the economy is not doing well, one might feel the need to accept any offer that "puts food on the table".

So why is it important to find meaning in what you do and how can you achieve that? This could potentially be a long process, mainly because finding a meaningful job could be a "waiting game".

At the same time, I think that there are many ways to find meaning at your workplace even if it does not fit your job description exactly.

## NURTURING THE JOY OF BEING AT WORK

But why is it important to find meaning in what you do? I believe that finding meaning means figuring out your passions, your interests and something that stirs up excitement in your everyday life.

What better place is there to exercise these interests than at work where we

typically spend eight hours in a day. This does not include travel time!

Imagine spending 1½ hours in traffic only to arrive at a location that makes you feel depressed and demotivated, and having to do that five days a week. To me, that is a miserable idea.

I believe that when you are passionate about your job and excited by it, many other positive things will follow.

You would start to think of creative ways to not only do your job, but to also make the working environment a fun and comfortable "second home".

One person's joy and positivity could be contagious! Your co-workers could become close friends or even be considered family.

By having this bond with the people you work with, there would be a lot more understanding and cooperation in the working environment, which would eventually create a meaningful workplace.

It sounds so blissful, doesn't it? But, getting to a position where one can find meaning in doing what he or she does at the workplace is a journey.

Personally, I think it helps when the person already knows what he or she enjoys or is passionate about.

It could be anything from working with a specific population or community of people, working with animals, working in a Fortune 500 company or even working in the civil service.

If we can identify our passions and interests early on in our careers, it would be able to guide us in our choices or even motivate us to work towards having the "job of our dreams".

## IMBUING YOUR PASSION INTO WORK

However, if you are already in the workforce, you can still take time to reflect on your interests and passions.

Find out where your talents lie and check to see if your abilities can be used in your job. Once you have uncovered these, you can try to align your work with your passion and make a difference in

your working life.

For example, if you find that your passion is in giving back to the community, you could find out if your company does any community work and contribute in that department.

However, if your interests or passions are not available in your company and if looking for a different job is not an option, volunteering is always a possibility.

There is a huge number of non-profit organisations that would value your contributions. In this way you could still feel a sense of fulfillment by doing something that is meaningful to you.

## PERSEVERANCE HAS ITS REWARD

Earlier in the article I mentioned that I was considered "lucky" for finding a meaningful job that goes hand-in-hand with my passion. In reality, it was a long pro-

cess, which included months of frustration and exasperation.

I knew my passion was working with children and youth, and my interest was in the field of counselling.

But, I was still lost in job-hunting and was pressured to find a steady job in order to live a comfortable lifestyle. Many people thought I was being picky but I knew that I needed to work in an environment that would be meaningful to me.

So instead of waiting around for the "perfect job" to come, I began working in jobs that were closely related to my passion.

I started off by teaching young children, moved on to a centre providing therapy for adults and finally ended up in a job that allowed me to work with children and youths as well as provide therapy on a part-time basis.

At this point, I would consider this as my "perfect" job because it encompasses my passion and interest.

It was not an easy journey but I have found meaning in what I do and that creates an excitement within me.

So don't be afraid to take time to reflect on the things that would help you jumpstart your day. There is always a way to find value in what you do, although it may not always be an easy path to take.

There may be moments of wanting to give up and feeling demotivated, but the joy and peace that you will achieve in doing what you do is truly worth the hardship. So instead of saying "I hate my job," won't it feel nice to say "I'm working for my passion"?



■ Jean has a background in marriage and family therapy and has worked with a variety of people. She has a special passion for working with children and teens because she finds joy in being able to connect with them and seeing the world through their eyes. She believes that everyone has strengths and can be empowered to lead a life filled with positivity and true happiness. To connect with Jean, email her at editor@leaderonomics.com