

Tips for Improving Your Current Job

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Are you unhappy in your job and know that you need a change, but can't just quit today (or even tomorrow)? Most of us do not have the luxury of leaving our current job without having another job waiting in the wings, so it makes sense to change what we can in your current job to make it easier to bear while you work towards being able to leave it. The following exercise will help you identify steps you can take to make a shift in the areas that are causing you the most grief in your current job situation.



Steps for Improving The Job You Hate

1. Make a list of the top 5 things that bug you about your current situation. These can be big-ticket items like your boss yells at you daily, or something that may seem more insignificant but over time builds up to more than an annoyance, such as something like there is no lunchroom and you must eat at your desk (where you also get interrupted).

Some common issues may include: doing tasks that are boring, your daily commute, work hours that don't fit with your family needs, working in a physical environment that is uncomfortable, too much work and not enough time, or conflicts with co-workers.

2. For each thing on the list come up with at least one thing that you can do to change the situation. It's important to focus on what you have control over, as you cannot force others to change. It's also important to realize that you may not be able to completely fix the situation to your satisfaction. What we're after is incremental change that will allow you to tolerate your situation with reduced stress.

Some ways you can take action include changing your perspective: choose not to focus on things that annoy you or choose not to take conflict personally. You can deal with feeling overworked or overwhelmed by setting and holding firm boundaries for your time: don't work through your lunch hour, stay late, or do work at home. See how creative you can be in finding ways to even subtly shift your top five issues.

3. Set dates for when you will implement your action steps. By consciously setting a date that you will begin each action, you will be more likely to actually try it. Also set a time period for when you will evaluate how your interventions are working for you, and make adjustments if needed. It's a good idea to write these due dates on a calendar.

4. Find ways to keep your actions steps in your awareness on a daily basis. One of the most difficult things about changing a habit (and the way we work and the ways we interact with others at work are habits), is remembering to do it differently. Find ways to remind yourself of the changes you are making on a daily basis. This may be a sticky note on your desk or a task in your daily calendar. Find what works for you to keep you aware.

5. Evaluate the effectiveness and adjust if necessary. Back in Step 3 you identified a date when you would look at how your action step is working for you. For different types of actions you may have different lengths of time that you will try them out. Take a look and see if things have improved in the targeted problem area, even slightly.

If things are now acceptable to you, congratulations! Keep doing what you've been doing. If things have improved, but not enough, or haven't improved at all, implement one of the other ideas you came up with to address this problem.

If you consistently apply the action steps you've identified, your top 5 problems should get better. Now that you're no longer completely stressed about your current job, you will have the energy you need to figure out what's next for you and begin pursuing your dreams.

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Laura Allan is a psychotherapist and career coach. After making a mid-life career change, she is happily living her ideal career. Laura is passionate about helping clients use their own experiences and inner wisdom to evolve into the best version of themselves, leading to a happier and more fulfilling life. You can contact Laura at 206-999-1192, or by email at Laura@LauraAllanCounseling.com

