BLOGS

How to Bring the Joy Back to Your Job
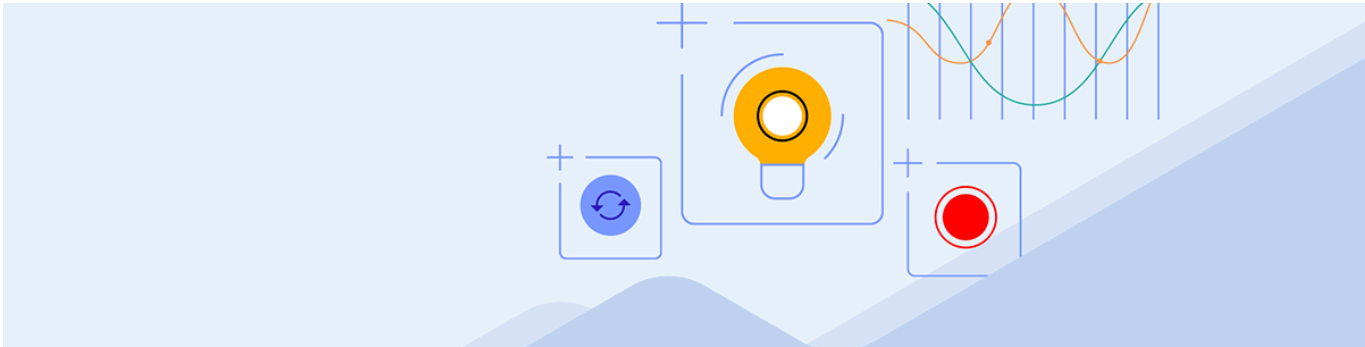
by Suzanne Scacca | ⬜ November 22, 2024 | People | 0 Comments

If your job brings you little joy, you can do something about it, and that doesn't have to mean quitting. See four strategies to shake things up and rediscover the joy you once felt for your work.

Do you dread getting out of bed to start your workday? Or find yourself getting frustrated with minor inconveniences? Perhaps you feel bored and unmotivated to work, causing you to fall behind which makes things worse?

It's OK to fall out of love with a job you were once so passionate about. It could be due to extreme burnout, outgrowing the gig or something else altogether.

To rediscover your joy, you need to get at the root of the issue. In this post, we'll look at various challenges that may be sapping all the joy from your work and some tips for dealing with them.

4 Strategies to Reignite Your Passion for Working

For some of you, the end goal in this process will be to reignite your passion for your work. For others, it will be discovering a new path completely.

Here are some ways to find out what you need:

1. Focus on Yourself and What You Can Control

Whether you work for an employer or a bunch of clients, you might feel like the actions or choices of others are affecting your work and how much you enjoy it. They very well could be. From coworkers

ignoring guidelines on a regular basis to critical decision-makers going MIA, there are many ways in which others can make your workday more difficult and not as enjoyable.

That said, there isn't always a lot you can do when it comes to others' behaviors. You can send terse emails and have meetings to discuss issues, but that won't force anyone to change. They need to take accountability for themselves.

So what you need to do instead is focus on what is within your control to make things better at work.

For instance, let's say you're an app developer. You consistently receive everything you need to complete a project too late. And because you're usually given a tight timeframe with no wiggle room, you're left with two choices:

1. Work nights and weekends to get the job done by the deadline.
2. Work during your usual work hours, deliver late and get chewed out by management.

So, what can you do?

The first thing is to evaluate how these outcomes are impacting how you feel about your job. Then determine a better path forward by answering:

> What do I need?

The solution might be to ask for longer or more flexible delivery dates. After all, if milestones aren't being met earlier in the project, you shouldn't be forced to make up for the lost time by rushing through the work or completing it after hours.

Another solution could be to propose a more effective onboarding process if clients are the ones holding things up. Or to revamp the design-development handoff process if you're not getting what you need to get the job done or the design team is creating unnecessary work for you.

Granted, this may require a discussion with your team lead or project manager to see about revising these processes. And while that decision is ultimately out of your control, you can present it as a system-wide problem that's affecting everyone, not you. If it doesn't

get fixed, you (the collective team "you") will keep failing to meet deadlines. Worse, profit margins will shrink as the team follows the most inefficient path forward.

If you can't see a way of getting your needs met, then it may be time to look for a job where they will be.

2. Set Some Challenges for Yourself

Do you feel bored with your job? If so, what is it about the work that bores you that didn't before?

The longer you spend doing the same job day in and day out, the more it can come to feel like a tedious routine or chore. It also starts to feel second nature, to the point where it no longer excites or challenges you.

You could switch employers, but you'll likely run into the same sort of ambivalence once you settle into a routine there.

Instead, try to see if you can bring a spark back to your work by setting some new goals and challenging yourself.

Ask yourself:

> What was it about product design or development that drew you to the job in the first place? And is there a way to make that a reality again?

For example, let's say you've been a website designer for small businesses in your area for 10 years. You love empowering local entrepreneurs to conduct business online. However, the recession has severely cut into business owners' profit margins. So they're now seeking cheaper alternatives, like AI website builders. What clients you do get have high expectations while being super stingy, and it's stressing you out.

Again, you can't change the external forces at work. However, you can adjust your approach to make it work better for you.

You could start by targeting a different niche. Ideally, it would be one that's more recession-proof, like medicine or fintech. Designing digital products for a new type of business could be both interesting and a challenge (in a good way). Plus, you won't have to deal with clients as much that want to undercut your rates or find shortcuts to doing what you're best at.

Something else you could do is add new skills to your repertoire. There are loads of online courses and certificate programs that would enable you to move into related but more advanced roles, like interaction design, UX research or team leadership.

Another option would be to stay with your small business niche, but offer other solutions. Like creating courses that teach owners how to build their own website. Or making and selling pre-built templates they can use in the website builder of their choice.

This way, you could still do the creative work you love. You just wouldn't have the stresses that come from dealing with clients and their own challenges they're trying to navigate.

3. Start a Side Hustle

Falling out of love with a job or career is tough. There are ways to try to salvage that old spark. But just as some relationships fizzle out over time, so too can our relationship with our work.

Now, if you've been doing design or development for some time, it can be challenging to make the leap into another field. It can be risky, too.

While you might be eager to rid yourself of a job that brings you no joy, you may want to stick with it for the time being for financial purposes and/or stability. That doesn't mean you can't start working to build something new for yourself on the side.

Side hustles are a great way to make extra income for sure. In fact, almost 40% of adults in the U.S. currently have a side hustle. They're also a good way to try out other jobs and to experience what it's like in completely different industries.

If you have some extra time, start experimenting with side hustles. For instance, you might do odd jobs like logo design or video editing. You could also start an online business, working as a coach or mentor for other designers, for example.

Whatever you do, find activities and gigs that catch your interest and give them a try. Even if they're not a great fit, they'll shake up the monotony of life for just a little bit while allowing you to make money until you figure out what you really want to do.

And who knows? Maybe that's all you need from a side hustle. It might remind you of why you started working as a web designer or developer in the first place and make you appreciate what you already have.

Then again, you might find a side hustle that you feel more passionate about than anything else you've ever done. In that case, it's a good idea to come up with a transition plan. Essentially, how will you slowly but surely increase activity in your side hustle so you can make enough money to phase out your main gig?

It could take months or even years to do this. But creating a plan will make the process much more tolerable and enjoyable along the way.

4. Prioritize Your Life

Do you find yourself feeling resentful of your job, wishing you had more time to spend on everything else? It might not be the work itself you no longer enjoy, but how you're splitting your time between it and your personal life. If you can shift things around with your work schedule and find a better balance, it may help with the feelings of discontent you're experiencing.

Burnout may be to blame, too. If work has been especially hard, stressful and time-consuming as of late, that can wreak all sorts of havoc on your mental state.

There are a few ways to tackle this one.

To start, take a look at the way your workday is structured. Are you working during your most productive hours? If not, that suboptimal schedule could be causing you to slow down, requiring you to work longer than is necessary.

A schedule built for efficiency will enable you to get done with your work much earlier each day.

Another thing you can do is create an energy-boosting, health-focused routine for yourself outside of work. Even if you can't cut your work hours by much, these practices will give you more feel-good vibes outside of work as opposed to being too drained to do anything when you're done.

Some ways to accomplish this are:

• Waking up and avoiding blue light for at least an hour
• Watching the sunrise
• Getting a workout in
• Spending time outdoors
• Avoiding food and drinks high in sugar
• Drinking plenty of water
• Taking a 30-minute nap

• Avoiding blue light before bed so you sleep more soundly

These activities will allow you to preserve and build up extra energy for all those things that bring you joy outside of work.

Something else you should do is evaluate how much you actually need to work. For instance, let's say you're employed by an agency and you're working 60 to 80 hours a week. Why? Are other designers, developers and team members doing the same?

When people are consistently overworking, something is wrong. Either there aren't enough people to share the load or the organization's processes need major improvement. Either way, your employer should be actively trying to remedy the situation. Otherwise, it's a recipe for burnout and high employee turnover.

If you're a freelancer, the same question applies if you're working more than 40 hours a week (or whatever you consider to be a reasonable number):

Why?

If you feel like you don't have enough time to spend with friends and loved ones or you have no energy or interest in doing anything, something has upset the balance in your life. It could be that you have too many projects. It might also be that you're charging too little for all the work you do, which forces you to work too much.

Cutting back your hours while simultaneously maximizing your output and earnings should give you the energy and motivation to enjoy your life. Restoring this balance should reduce those feelings of resentment or unhappiness you feel towards your job.

Wrapping Up

It's exciting when we find a job we're passionate about. We get up in the morning, excited about the work and creative possibilities that lay ahead. Which is why it can feel so terrible when you lose that passion and excitement for it.

Rather than make a rash decision and quit your job for one that will likely cause you the same grief over time, take some time to ponder what's really going on. Once you figure out why you don't enjoy the work you do, start working to fix it. While there's not much you can do about cranky coworkers, troublesome clients or disorganized companies, there's a lot you can do to improve your own situation and mindset when it comes to work.

Invest in Your Health to Boost Your Productivity

There's a close correlation between health and productivity. <u>In this post, we'll look at what research says</u> about the impact that mental, physical, job and tech health have on productivity and what you can do to improve all of it.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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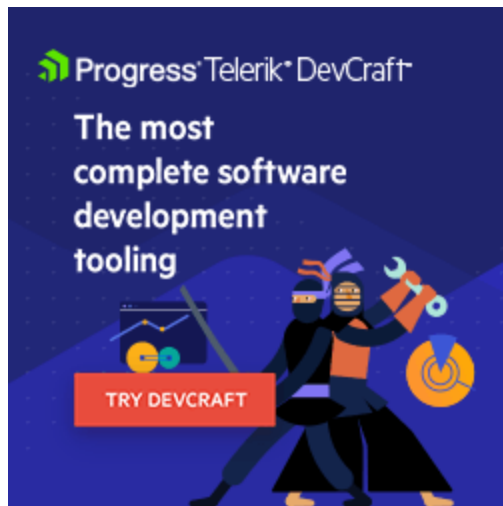
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