



Book 101 Ways to Have a Great Day at Work

Stephanie Goddard Davidson
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Recommendation

When a book has a smiley-face on the cover, you pretty much know what to expect. And you won't be disappointed with this one; it's upbeat all the way. This optimistic book would make a great little gift (even for yourself). Stephanie Goddard Davidson brings her considerable expertise to this simple little book of 101 tips (one per page) for improving your productivity. Here's how to minimize stress and become happier at work. The suggestions range from one-sentence instructions to a couple of paragraphs each, and are valid, practical and often thought-provoking. *BooksInShort* recommends it to anyone with a job and a susceptibility to being cheered up - it just might get you through a bad day.

Take-Aways

- You can make more days great days.
- You can renew your sense of purpose.
- You can prevent and cope with stress.
- You can make effective changes in your job, or change to another job.
- Do what you can instead of focusing on things you cannot control.
- These 101 techniques can improve your productivity, outlook and well being
- Find inspiration wherever you can, especially in other people.
- Plan your life based on important relationships, instead of schedules and deadlines.
- Breathing is an effective stress reducer.
- Learn something new every day.

Summary

Introduction

If you're having another bad day at work, remember that you have more control and power over your day than you might realize. You can make more days great days, have a renewed sense of purpose in your job, make a positive impact and prevent or cope with stress. These 101 tips have been used successfully by employees at all kinds of workplaces. Here's a sample:

Take Stock, Listen and Breathe

Think back to when you first began your job. Try to recall the elements of your position that excited you then. List ten reasons why you still like your job. Look at the list from time to time. Make another list of the five things you would like to see happen this year. These don't have to be just about work. You can include your personal goals, too. Look back on this list once a month to check your progress.

“Try planning today by the relationships that are most important to you, instead of by schedules or deadlines.”

Nobody likes every aspect of his or her job, but nobody hates everything about it, either (if you do, it's certainly time to go job-hunting), and this little trick can help you get through the tasks you'd rather not deal with. Do the things you most dislike first. Get them out of the way. Then, do what you like. It will feel like a reward.

“You really only need five outfits. No one notices or cares how many outfits you own, just as long as you don't wear the same thing twice in a week.”

Figure out one thing you can do to maximize your salary this year. Do one thing every day that you believe is healthy for you. This isn't silly. It will make you aware of the many healthy things you can be doing for yourself.

Plan your day based on the relationships that are most important to you instead of your schedule or deadlines. Become a more effective listener by making a conscious effort to listen more than you talk. Both of these will improve your professional and personal relationships.

“Character is the root; personality the flower. Your external 'beauty' is only as strong as the roots no one can see.”

Take a deep breath - it's an effective stress reducer. Clear your mind and remember to learn something new each day, no matter how big or how small. You can learn something from every person you come in contact with each day. And while you're focused on people, look at a relationship you have at work that's strained or not satisfying. Try to "mend fences."

Let It Go

Do what you can instead of focusing on things you can't control. If you're angry with someone let it all out in a letter to him or her, and then destroy the letter. Share your knowledge with someone who can benefit from it. Treat yourself to something every day, and try to stay positive. Look at problems and figure out how to be part of the solution.

“People don't give feedback to be mean or judgmental. If they don't care, they'd just let you fail.”

A change of scenery can help you focus, clear your mind and reduce stress. Go to a different floor, a different bathroom or some part of the workplace you rarely see. Concentrate on one thing at a time instead of multi-tasking. See if that makes you more productive and less stressed. The next time someone does something nice for you, tell that person's boss. You'll feel good, the boss will feel good and the "good-deed doer" will be appreciated. Don't wear anything that makes you feel like you don't look your best. Your work and your mood are greatly affected by your self image.

The Best Prize

Find inspiration wherever you can. Perhaps a quote that you can put on your desk or a role model whom you can read about. Take time to relax. Being a workaholic isn't the answer.

“If you are already on a solid financial path, or if you are known to be a little too frugal, now figure out one way you can also reward yourself financially each pay day. A special dinner, a massage, a new plant. Just make sure the money is

spent on you.”

Pay attention to your voice - do you speak too quietly or too loudly? Give some thought to how you communicate. What motivates you and the people who work with you? Find out, don't guess. If you're facing a problem, figure out what it really is. You can't solve a problem until it's been completely defined.

“Turn your attention today to the things you can control and do something about them.”

Communicate in person by walking around the workplace. Then take time to sit and think. You can't be effective if you're never still. Remember that thoughts are power.

Give a gift or award to someone you haven't had time for due to your workload. When someone comes to you with a problem, empower the person to come up with a solution. Don't solve the problem or you'll end up being the only person responsible for the outcome.

“Don't assume you know what motivates others or that they know what motivates you.”

If you have to give constructive criticism, keep it focused on work - don't make it personal. Remember that you are responsible for where you are in your job and your career. You have choices, including the one about staying or leaving. Don't take a job or stay at a job simply for the money or the title. Remember what Theodore Roosevelt said, "Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

“Are you making career decisions based on money? Or title? Money and title don't get you very far when you are miserable eight hours a day.”

Stay informed! Read industry or professional publications, give and receive feedback, give positive reinforcement. Trust yourself to make decisions. If a decision proves to be wrong, you will learn from it. You can't change others, only yourself, so don't try to fix everybody.

The Bosses Shoes

If you can't stand working on a particular project and have difficulty motivating yourself to even begin today, tell yourself you'll only work on it for ten minutes. Once you've started, you'll probably work on it longer. If not, at least you got ten minutes of it done today.

“Pay attention to your thoughts today. They create your life.”

List everything that's bothering you. Decide which things you can do something about. Let the rest of them go. Put yourself in your boss's shoes. You will probably feel relieved that you are you. When faced with a dilemma, focus on finding a win-win situation. Share your success strategies with others.

“Take small steps, but start making it happen today.”

Reorganize, pay attention to your surroundings, and throw out all that clutter!

Notice what you react to and how you react. Try a new reaction. Don't try so hard - sometimes you have to just let things flow. Don't worry so much. Decide what you can do about the situation and then do it. You are in charge of shaping your future. It won't happen all at once, though, and every little step gets you closer to where you want to go. Write a mission statement for yourself and take risks! Visualize your plan with your goal in mind.

The Quality of Character

Go all out and make that extra effort today. Be of service to others. Helping others can make you feel better, too. Focus on what people say instead of half-listening to them while you figure out what you're going to reply. Get to know others at your office. Think of a colleague who is not like you, and then list his or her five most positive traits. Value your opposite. Don't gossip. Find things

worth liking about the boss.

“Each of us has elements of every personality type; we just rely on one style predominately. Break out of your usual way and develop the rest of you.”

Make sure you have enough peaceful downtime. Create balance in your life. Change your style. If you're a take-charge person, sit back and observe today. See what it feels like to be completely different. Character is your most important quality. Try to build your character every day.

If money or education were no object, what would you be doing right now? If it's not what you're doing, start planning. Can you create parts of your ideal career in your current situation? Can you do volunteer work in that area? Focus on working toward that new career.

Cut the Complaining

Network! Join a professional group. Be a mentor. Share information; teach someone something they want to learn. Reach out to people and don't worry about being rejected.

“Life is short. Don't wait until later.”

Find the time to reflect. Think about where you were five years ago. Does that make you feel better or worse about where you are now? Pay attention to what you do, say, and think. Keep excellence in mind and make everything the best it can be now.

Is there anything you've been putting off? Do it today. Look at the big picture. See through the eyes of the company or organization you work for in order to understand their practices and policies.

“Slow down today and choose excellence.”

When someone complains, turn the conversation around to something positive. You'll both feel better. Try to find something good, even in the worst situations - you may even stumble on a solution.

Don't forget to take good care of yourself. Exercise, take in some fresh air, eat right, drink plenty of water, rest, have fun, go to bed early.

Count Your 10 Blessings

Say thanks to the boss. You'll be pleasantly surprised by the reaction. Use the Golden Rule when dealing with co-workers. What is the one thing a co-worker could do to make things better with you? Do that very thing yourself. Admit your mistakes. It's the best way to gain your co-workers' respect.

Count your blessings. Make a list of at least 10 of them. Are you feeling overwhelmed and unable to say "no" when you really want to say "no"? Think of someone who said "no" to you recently. That person knows how to set limits and you respect that. Set your own limits, but express them kindly and clearly.

If your workload is too much, ask your boss for advice on managing the extra work or reprioritizing it. The boss will either give you some good ideas regarding your request or will lighten your load because he'll have a full understanding of your workload's limitations.

Relinquish the need to be right all of the time. Open up to other people's ways of seeing things. You don't have to agree, just consider the other side. You might learn something new. After all, Albert Einstein defined insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results." If you're not getting the results you want, try a different way.

Making the Day Great

Don't ignore your own strengths and expertise. List areas in this job where you excel. Is it a particular skill? Is it a gift for

communicating or handling difficult people? Maybe it's meeting deadlines or accuracy. This isn't luck, it's ability.

Read a good book. That's one of the best escapes from your day-to-day world. Reading is taking a mental vacation. Think you don't have time? Read during lunch, while standing in line, or before bed. Don't limit your reading to work-related matter - that's not a mental vacation. Read something that has nothing to do with your job or career.

Finally, list all of your accomplishments. Focus on the past year. Find at least seven achievements. Reflect on how productive you've been and how you've had more great days than you might have realized. Make today another one of those great days.

About the Author

Stephanie Goddard Davidson, CEO of Workforce Management Solutions, is a specialist in human resources, training and development.
