

How Happy Are YOU At Work?

By Michael Spremulli

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77% of Americans enjoy the time they spend away from their jobs more than the hours they spend working, according to a recent Gallup study. Do you experience any of these conflicts while at work?

While working on a task do you feel mentally "pulled" in opposite directions?
For example, part of you says "hurry up -- get it done", while another part says "slow down, this has to be done accurately".

Is your way of doing things different from someone else's way of doing things?
You may feel comfortable planning as you go, without writing things down, while a co-worker prefers to create detailed, written action plans and to-do lists.

Are you are asked to complete tasks you do not enjoy because they do not come naturally to you?
You may find it easy to work on projects that have a lot of interaction with people, but not compiling the statistics for the quarterly report.

All three of these conflicts are related to a person's behavioral design. Simply put, your behavioral design describes how you prefer to naturally behave. Everyone has a combination of the following four styles. However, one style is usually more prominent.

*Some people focus on the bottom-line, are very results-oriented and prefer to work at a rapid pace.

*Others enjoy interacting with people and being in the spotlight. They like a high degree of people contact.

*Some individuals prefer to work "behind the scenes" and enjoy the planning process while working in a slow, deliberate manner.

*Others are attracted to detailed work such as data analysis and copy-editing.

When you can do what comes naturally to you and interact with people who behave in a similar way as you do, all is well. You feel happy, energized and rewarded. However, when conflict develops, whatever its form, you become miserable. As misery increases, so does stress, tardiness, absenteeism, errors, physical complaints, and turnover.

One of the main reasons so many people are unhappy at work is because they are experiencing one or more of the three types of conflict mentioned above.

Here are some suggestions to help you resolve these behavioral conflicts.

When you find yourself being mentally "pulled", ask yourself this: "How do I need to behave in order for the project that I am CURRENTLY working on to be successful?" Do you need to "have it done yesterday" or is precision and attention to detail more important? Whichever is more important, let yourself be "pulled" in that direction. Acknowledging this internal dialogue and making a conscious decision how to behave will help reduce the conflict.

When interacting with someone who does things differently than you, first realize that this person probably does not intend to give you a hard time. Their behaviors stem from their preferred behavioral style. Just as you have your way of doing things, so do they. The goal is for both of you to discuss how you each prefer to approach your work and reach some type of compromise.

When projects are assigned to you that do not match your behavioral design, you have several options. You can enlist the help of people whose natural behavior matches the demands of the project. You can also speak with your manager/supervisor about the type of tasks that energize you and request that in the future, those tasks be assigned to you. The most drastic measure (and sometimes the most appropriate) is to remove yourself from the environment -- yes, quit! If you are a person who does not like the spotlight and prefers to work behind the scenes and your position constantly requires you to make presentations and public appearances, you will continuously be unhappy. The single most important factor related to job satisfaction is having a job that closely matches your behavioral design.

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