



A GUIDE TO MANAGING YOUR CAREER – EXPECTATIONS, PURPOSE, AND HAPPINESS



Part I. Career Expectations

Part I. Summary: This may seem like a basic exercise, but it is crucial to assess expectations you create for yourself and for your career. **Often, people cook up unreasonable career expectations, then they suffer the consequences of unrealistic demands.** Despite hours of work, superb productivity, or blood, sweat and tears, the employee may experience bouts of negative emotions. Everything from despondency and self-doubt to hopelessness or isolation.

Part I will help you gauge what "reasonable expectations" should look like.

A. At-Will Employment

Overview: According to indeed.com -

"At-will employment describes a working environment in which employers are free to terminate employees at any time, without cause, explanation or prior warning, provided it does not violate state and federal anti-discrimination laws. Similarly, employees can quit a job at any time without reason or notice."

All U. S. states practice a form of at will employment, with various exceptions for certain circumstances. Refer to Resources for additional information regarding federal and anti-discrimination laws.

What You Need to Know:

1. Employers have the right not only to terminate without cause or warning, but they can also, in general, change an employee's duties, salary, benefits, and PTO at-will.
2. As the employee, you are legally able to terminate employment with your employer at any time for any reason, without prior notice. While a minimum of a 2-week notification is the professional standard, it is not legally required (unless written in a contract).

Why This is Important: There is no such thing as job security (unless, perhaps, you are a supreme court justice or a tenured professor).

B. Contract Agreements

Overview: According to indeed.com -

"An employment agreement, or employment contract, is a contract between an employee and employer that includes the terms and conditions of employment. Employees and employers can negotiate the terms of the agreement prior to signing and hiring."

Contract Agreements often include items such as job title/duties, salary, benefits, probationary period, schedule, etc.

What You Need to Know:

1. In general, contract agreements serve as a legally binding transactional exchange between employer and employee.
2. The employer must legally fulfill their side of the contract agreement. *No more.*

Why This is Important: Employees should become familiar with their contract agreement. This will help you avoid creating unrealistic expectations of your employer, which include but are not limited to -

- happiness
- feeling valued/appreciated
- prestige
- increased self-confidence
- fulfillment

Your employer is not obligated to satisfy the example list above for you (unless written in the contract agreement).

C. Career Attachment

Overview: Career Attachment is the idea that employees are emotionally reliant on their job to feel good. For example, employees generally feel happy or elated after receiving the hard-earned promotion. On the flip side, employees can feel despair or massive discouragement when they do not receive that hard-earned promotion. Employees can become overly attached to everything from insignificant things (like parking spots) to life-altering items (like geographic location) and anything in between. The more you expect from your job/employer, the more dependent you become, the more attached you become.

What You Need to Know:

1. Reliance on your job (or job outcomes) sets you up for a disempowering career because you are forced to depend on outside factors for your emotional wellbeing.
2. Reliance on yourself (or self-worth) sets you up for an empowering career because your emotional state is always within your control.

Why This is Important: It is not your job's job to make you happy.

Part II. Career Purpose

Part II. Summary: In a world that emphasizes rewards, external accomplishments, and credentials, it can be easy to dismiss the purpose of a career. Your career is much more profound than external results such as money and prestige. Below are 3 pillars to help you generate purpose in your career, whether you're staying put or looking to move on. *These pillars are applicable whether you are happily employed, miserably employed, or not employed at all!*

D. Pillar 1 - Service

Overview: A service mindset is when employees seek opportunities to serve a greater cause outside of themselves. There are ample opportunities for employees to serve greater causes in the workplace. It could happen in the form of doing a great job for your boss. It might mean helping the company achieve business goals. Or, it could mean mentoring and teaching colleagues that are struggling. Application of a service attitude in the workplace builds internal resilience.

E. Pillar 2 - Development

Overview: Development is the idea of seeking any and all opportunities in the workplace to evolve yourself. This includes hard skills like knowledge, training, technical improvements, etc. It also includes the soft skills of self-confidence, worthiness, authenticity, etc. The workplace is just one platform in which people are consistently bombarded with self-development opportunities. Easier said than done! Application of a development attitude in the workplace builds internal stamina.

F. Pillar 3 - Legacy

Overview: The traditional form of legacy (i.e., your life accomplishments) is fine and dandy, but incomplete. What if you also left behind your emotional impact? In other words, legacy is also about leaving things, people, and places in a better state - setting them up for success!

At the end of your life, people may not always remember what you did, but they are likely to remember how you made them feel. Improve everything and everyone you come across. Application of a legacy attitude in the workplace builds personal character.

What You Need to Know:

1. People miss the profound reason for a career when they are too focused on external results (such as money or prestige).
2. By focusing on internal improvements via the 3 pillars as stated above, you create purpose and self-motivation - a much more meaningful and sustainable path!

Why This is Important: Career purpose is about owning the personal journey (all the ups and downs) towards personal improvement and evolvment, which is a *constant* work in progress.

Part III. Career Happiness

Part III. Summary: As mentioned in Section I - it is not your job's job to make you happy. Why not? Because a career, which is external to you, features many items you do not control: salary, raises, bonuses, benefits, promotions, titles, colleagues, customers, bosses, acquisitions, layoffs, mergers, etc. Since a career is external and you do not control such features, it is futile to depend on this external entity for your happiness. A much more logical choice (that requires fierce personal growth) is to depend on yourself for happiness. If you haven't already discovered, jobs are very good at letting us down!

G. Detaching

Overview: As noted in Section C, over-attachment to your job is not the formula for a successful career (not without burnout, anyway!). It is very possible for employees to become unattached to job outcomes while maintaining stellar performance and a successful career. Yes, that is correct! It is possible for you to become a happy and thriving employee who can create an amazing career, regardless of job outcomes. External job outcomes include things such as unfairness, politics, duties and responsibilities, drama, promotions, etc.

What You Need to Know:

1. Reducing career attachment increases happiness level – i.e., minimize reliance on job outcomes.
2. The path to detaching from outcomes includes improving the ability to fulfill your own emotional needs.

Why This is Important: The more you rely on your internal self to fulfill emotional gaps, the less dependent you become on externals... paving the way for autonomy.

H. Autonomy

Overview: Autonomous employees know how to say NO. They state their opinions confidently without fear of retribution. They show up authentically without justifying or apologizing for who they are. They execute work boundaries without fear. Being autonomous means your employer needs you more than you need them... because you're so confident in who you are and what you have to offer that you can walk anytime. Autonomous employees do not burn out, overextend their energies, or consistently sacrifice family time in the name of work.

What You Need to Know:

1. Increasing your autonomy will help increase your happiness level.
2. The highly confident person who fiercely believes in their own self-worth is the one who becomes autonomous.

Why This is Important: Money and accolades can take you so far. But happiness comes from the autonomous feeling of belonging anywhere and everywhere you may land.

I. Self-Worth

Overview: Self-worth isn't about knowing all the answers or solving all the problems. It isn't about pleasing others or sacrificing yourself for the greater good. It's not about being right or wrong, good or bad. Self-worth is a mindset: the conviction that you are capable and worthy. That you are willing to learn, fail, and succeed while owning the bad with the good.

Self-worth is knowing in your gut that you are enough regardless of others' opinions, regardless of outcomes, regardless of circumstances. It is the willingness to embrace any emotion without wavering in who you are. Self-worth is the result of the most important relationship you will ever know: the relationship you create with yourself.

What You Need to Know:

1. Career autonomy is achieved through the process of elevating your self-worth.
2. Self-worth is the result of the quality of the relationship you have with YOU.

Why This is Important: The relationship you create internally with yourself is reflected to you via the external world (such as your job). Therefore, if you do the hard work to create a happy relationship with yourself first, you get to take that happiness with you wherever you go. *"You don't see the world as it is, you see the world as you are."*

Conclusion

It is not your job's job to make you happy, satisfied or fulfilled. It is, however, your job's job to offer challenges and obstacles in the name of self-improvement, self-growth, and self-discovery. Defeating roadblocks and rising above helps you unravel newfound capabilities from within.

Then, you have the privilege to apply your newfound gifts for the betterment of the world... so you can get out there, defeat more challenges, and repeat the process all over again!

Final Comments

While this guide offers concepts and career perspectives to create wellbeing (certainly not all-inclusive), the intricacies of *how* to go about applying these concepts are too complex for a written guide. However, now that you have this guide contemplate, you might be wondering, ***"Where do I go from here?"***

I invite you to submit questions should you need clarification on anything stated above. Or, if you'd like to share your own challenges and access my brain, I'm all for it! Just let me know and we'll make it happen!

Contact Me, I'd love to hear from you: gina@deliberatedoing.com

Additional Resources

Websites:

indeed.com/hire

nlrb.gov, eeoc.gov

indeed.com/career-advice

Videos:

[What Employees Need to Know About Employment](#) by Gina Covarrubias

[Are You Too Attached to Your Career?](#) by Gina Covarrubias

[Career Purpose: When Work Isn't Working for You](#) by Gina Covarrubias

[Learn How to Reprogram Your Mind](#) by Dr. Joe Dispenza

[Know Your Worth and Where You Belong](#) by Brene Brown

[Stop Chasing Happiness](#) by Dr. Robert Puff

Articles:

[How to be Free from Attachment](#) by Gina Covarrubias

[How Can I Care Less About Work?](#) by Gina Covarrubias

[The Goal is Not the Point](#) by James Clear

[Feeling unfulfilled or stuck at work? Three ways to help you get unstuck](#) by Dorie Clark

[Be Happy at Work Posts](#) by Cy Wakeman