

The careerist: 'Recognise what work provides and the needs it meets'

By Rhymer Rigby

Published: December 12 2010 17:02 | Last updated: December 12 2010 17:02

Managers are encouraged to keep staff engaged. But how do they stay engaged themselves? And can you turn round a job that has become boring to you?

Is my glass half full? "If you're happy, you're automatically engaged, so start by thinking about what makes you happy in what you do," says Jessica Pryce-Jones, chief executive of [iOpener](#), a workplace happiness consultancy.

Octavius Black, founder of Mind Gym, a performance consultancy, says part of the challenge in staying enthused is that work is where few people expect to find happiness: "However, studies show that many people are likelier to find happiness at work than not. You need to recognise what work provides and the needs it meets – it offers friendships, conversation and challenges."

How do I boost my sense of engagement? An awareness of being part of something big is helpful, says Ms Pryce-Jones. But she adds: "A lot of what motivates you on a day-to-day basis is actually quite small." Look for meaning in what you do: "It affects everyone from CEOs to janitors. You need to think about how you make a difference – who benefits from what you do."

Mr Black says long-term personal objectives help: "Set yourself challenging goals. Just doing this may force you to reshape your role."

Is there anything I can do outside my current role? Charles Woodruffe, managing director of business psychologists Human Assets says: "First ask [yourself] if you can expand your role or add to your professional development. Or you could look for engagement elsewhere in the company. Many organisations take social responsibility very seriously."

Ms Pryce-Jones says improving engagement could even come from activities outside of the workplace that feed back into your job: "If you look at the volunteers who work on Linux, they put in enormous amounts of unpaid work and are very engaged in what they're doing."

Are there simple ways to jog myself out of a rut? "Do something, no matter how small," says Ms Pryce-Jones. "One of the most important things for mental and physical well-being is a perception of control. It could be as simple as talking to someone you've never talked to before. You can also work on your confidence – as confidence is the precursor to action."

Talk things over with others, says Mr Woodruffe, but: "If you're in a group that's stuck in a rut don't join in with the grumbling groupthink."

Should I cut my losses? "You need to ask if you can reframe your work as interesting and stimulating," says Mr Black. "Are there obstacles you can remove? Work out what it is you dislike and if you can, change it. If you can't, there's no point and you need to move on."

Or, as Mr Woodruffe puts it: "Don't try to put a sticking plaster on a serious disease."

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2010.

See article at: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d2e9be3e-04b5-11e0-a99c-00144feabdc0.html#ixzz185AavcQN>