



Seek First to Manage Yourself

By Chanon Collins

Take a moment to reminisce about your first day of work for your current job. Did you take an extra bit of time in the morning attending to your clothing and appearance? Were you feeling excited, nervous, and challenged? This was probably a strong, positive memory for you, much the memory of your first day of school or the first day of vacation – you were truly excited about your adventure in the beginning, but as the day wore on, your main focus became getting back home. Is this image a bit familiar?

Unfortunately, many people in the workplace are stuck in the phase of “getting back home.” Managers in every industry are struggling with motivating their team members to improve performance and create peace of mind. Some of their efforts are rewarded, but most only offer short-term appeasement. It is time that people look to a different source for enrichment – they must look inside themselves.

Each individual must become his or her own source of motivation and happiness. This is not to say that all cases of an uncomfortable or unpleasant workplace are the results of unhappy employees, but little efforts by many people hold great promise for improvements. Patricia Fripp, author of **Get What You Want!**, suggests that people need to draw on past memories to create a positive future.

Fripp creates an analogy between falling in love and functioning in the workplace. The comparison might seem extreme, yet the emotions stemming from each are similar. Fripp suggests that boredom and frustration in the workplace can be squelched by regaining the exhilaration of the first day on the job. People can rejuvenate themselves and their environment by implementing small changes in their daily lives. Arriving a bit early to work allows you to settle in peacefully and arrange your activities. People who rush in late for work rarely experience the serenity of planning out their daily activities.

Fripp recommends doing the “icky” things first. All jobs have mundane tasks that must be performed. Doing these things first allows you to look forward to the more enjoyable things – much like a child who chokes down brussels sprouts in order to savor his chocolate cake.

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Your appearance played a large role in making a strong first impression on your first day of work. Recapture this experience by dressing with care and attention to detail. The compliments you receive on your attire will only add to the enrichment of your day. You will probably find that your newly found exhilaration will spread rapidly – happiness is infectious.

The need for rejuvenating the workplace is not a contemporary development. Benjamin Franklin’s third rule of management is to “seek first to manage yourself.” This is sound advice in any industry, in any time period. A line from John Gardner’s **Grendel** speaks volumes on this subject – “Tedium is the worst pain.” Don’t let boredom rule your environment. Fall in love with your job all over again...

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