

HAPPY WORK

The average full-time worker spends 42 hours a week in work, and if you take into consideration we're awake for just 112 hours a week, that's a big chunk of time spent with our nose to the grindstone.

"Work can be an overwhelmingly important part of our lives," says Personal & Business Coach Louise Nevin, (www.louisenevin.com). "And the satisfaction we get from our career can be a major factor in how happy we are in our lives. It could be time for you to ask yourself if what you're doing now is life-affirming or life-numbing? If it's less the former, and more the latter, then are there ways you can change this? Happiness in work can be achieved by changing your habits and routines. Observe yourself in the workplace and ask yourself, 'Where do I face most difficulties? With work colleagues? Management? When I'm asked to do certain tasks? Think about things you could improve on that will break negative habits and increase your happiness in the workplace.'"

PLAN: "Get into the routine of planning your daily, weekly and monthly activities. Each evening

prepare a list of all the things you 'Have to do' and you 'Want to do' for the next day so a worry becomes a reminder. Start your day an extra 10 to 15 minutes early and write down the top three important things you must do that day. This keeps you focussed on setting and reaching your short-term and long-term goals."






KEEP POSITIVE: "Happiness comes not only from achieving career and life goals, but from becoming a better individual. Try to avoid negative gossip. When you do encounter a negative person, you have the choice to either be affected by their negativity or choose to be a positive influence on them."

BE CREATIVE: "Dissatisfied with your career? Then take responsibility for changing it. What makes you unique, and how can you utilise your talents to achieve your desired career? What could you improve on to save time and money? Creativity fuels your motivation to achieve your ultimate career and life goals."

61% of people say that respect is the key to happiness in the workplace.

HAPPY HELPERS

Here is your challenge if you choose to accept it (you better). Perform five random acts of kindness in one week. Why? Research has shown it can increase your happiness for up to three months! Our favourites are:

-  Remember your friends who never get out anymore? Offer to babysit so they can catch a movie or show together.
-  Let someone skip the queue, especially if they look like they're in a rush.
-  Pay the toll for the car behind you. Imagine their surprise when they get to the booth.
-  Cut your neighbour's grass. Go on, you've got the lawn mower out anyway and that's half the battle.
-  Write a compliment on a post-it and stick it to your colleague's monitor (keep it clean people).

HAPPY FACE

Unhappy because you don't look like Gisele Bündchen? You're not alone sister. Research shows only one in 30,000 women will be born with a model's body, which is why Alice D Domar, PhD, author of *Be Happy Without Being Perfect* encourages us to celebrate our beauty, not our flaws.

"If all you can see when you look in the mirror is flaws, practising active gratitude can help," says Alice. "When you look at yourself, try to focus on what's good. Search for what's strong, beautiful, healthy or unique. If you have trouble finding anything, then you've got to change the way you look at yourself. Pretend you're viewing someone else's reflection – your best friend, your sister, or someone else you love – and apply the standards that you use for your loved ones' bodies to your own.

Now choose at least five things about the image that are positive, and tell your image what you see, addressing her as a second person. "Your eyes are a beautiful green," or "You have great legs." Speak to the reflection with the same love and compassion that you'd use when addressing a beloved friend or relative."



HAPPY READS

1. *Happy for No Reason* by Marci Shimoff, €17.15;
2. *The Courage to be Happy* by Colm O'Connor, €14.99;
3. *Authentic Happiness*, by Martin E.P. Seligman, €19.80;
4. *21 Days to a New You* by Dr Celia d'Felice, €10.55;
5. *The Happiness Equation* by Nick Powdthavee, €11.85;
6. *The Emotional Toolkit* by Dr Darlene Mininni, €12.99;
7. *The How of Happiness* by Sonja Lyubomirsky, €13.20;
8. *101 Morale Boosters* by Gael Lindenfield, €11.70. All books are available from Eason (www.eason.ie).