



5 WAYS TO FIND MEANING AT WORK

Discovering what's important



BY DR. MARIA CHURCH

Sometimes work seems like, well, work. It's not the fun, fulfilling or rewarding kind of work that we look forward to tackling but the life-sucking, drudgery kind of work. What to do when work drains the soul and seems like a waste of a life? Find the meaning in the work you do and you will find meaningful work.



Finding meaning is like building a bridge from one shore to another. It is a connection of two places — where you currently are and where you want to be. You're spanning a river of various challenges that can impede your efforts. The following five steps will help you build the bridge to find meaning at work:

1. Find Your “Why”

Everyone has a “why” they work and it just gets buried in the day-to-day grind. Remember when you applied for the position in the first place? The excitement and anticipation you had filling out the application and sending it off with your resume? Remember the endless waiting for the invitation to interview and the nervousness you felt when you interviewed? Why were you so excited, anxious and nervous? Why did you want that job? What was it about that organization or position that excited you so? This was your why! Connecting with your why may be as simple as answering these questions and feeling your response.

Your why might be the prestige of the position, or the challenge of the projects. Your why might be because it is a great company with a mission or vision of which you wanted to be a part. Or, your why could be the salary and benefits the position provided you. Your why could have been to take care of your family or travel more. Whatever that is, reconnect with it. If your why has changed, then build the bridge to your new why.

2. Help Someone

If you want to find meaning, try helping someone else. Humans are helpers — it is in the DNA. Winston Churchill said, “We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.” Helping others takes the focus off yourself and puts it onto another.

Not only will it help you focus on someone and something else than hating your job, it will also feel darn good while you are at it. Perhaps you could mentor someone, or give a tour to a new employee. You could volunteer for a committee and meet some new people in the organization at the same time.

3. Leverage Your Skills

When you leverage your skills with what you enjoy doing, you are bridge-building a task with meaning. For instance, you may enjoy photography, but that may not be required for your job. Chances are that someone in the organization may need some photographs taken for

a project they are working on, employee badges, annual report or many other possibilities. Let key contacts within the organization know that you have this skill and would love to help out.

You will not only get to do something you love at work, but you get the added bonus of helping as well — a win-win!

4. Take a Break

Sometimes you just need to walk away for a little while. After all, “absence makes the heart grow fonder.” Vacations are designed to give a break, refresh the mind and replenish the soul. Take your vacations! If you need to take a day to do a mini-vacation to refresh and rejuvenate, then do so. While you are at it, take your lunch break too and a mid-morning or mid-afternoon break to walk around outside and take in some fresh air.

Burnout happens when we don't take those mini-breaks and longer respites from work. Oftentimes when you just keep plugging away at work, you could lose concentration and focus. This practice is extremely unproductive in the long run. You are not the Energizer Bunny! Feed your soul with a break from work.

5. Be Authentic

It is exhausting trying to be someone else — the person your boss thinks you should be, the team member your colleagues think you ought to be or the super-worker you think you should be. Be YOU. When you live and work in a place of authenticity, you tap into your own creativity, joy, and meaning.

Remember that meaningful work is just a bridge away. You can reconnect anytime you stop, pause, and remember what brought you here in the first place. 🌟



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