

## Positively Productive: Staying Positive and Motivated at Work

In today's competitive world, it can be very challenging to find the positive in work challenges. You may be asked to do more or different work with less help, and do it faster and better than before. The stress of this kind of environment can often have a negative result and can gradually impact the happy, optimistic attitude you once had about your work.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Though there are certain aspects of your job you can't control, you still have the power to shape your own responses, outlook and performance.

### Focus on the Positive

A big change at work—like a new initiative or an updated computer system—can make it difficult to stay positive. Take a step back, breathe deeply and remind yourself of the things you enjoy about your job and don't be afraid to treat yourself.

**Look for the good.** Many people find it hard to stay positive when they're living through the pain of everyday challenges. If things at work aren't looking great, always remember that the challenge will pass and if it doesn't you will adapt. Appreciate the things about your job you like—whether it's a supportive boss, the variety of tasks you get to do or the great pay you receive. Honor the small things that make your day a little bit better. These could include: being close to your gym, easy access to public transit or a comfortable lunchroom. Noticing and pointing out the good doesn't just help you stay more positive but can also influence your co-workers' attitude too.

*By finding new ways to handle challenges you can learn to stay positive during difficult times so you can continue to enjoy your work, do a better job and get the most out of life.*

## Escape Negativity

Talk around the workplace can take your attention away from your daily tasks and affect the quality of your work. A negative outlook is like a virus that can spread around a workplace from co-worker to co-worker. Complaining, without taking any action to fix the problem will never solve anything and can make others feel unhappy too. To avoid negative energy:

**Stop gossip.** Although it's important to share information with your colleagues, gossip is never helpful. Refuse to join in. If someone asks you whether you know a co-worker—and they're clearly about to complain—turn the conversation around and share a story of their great work on a project. Joining in on office gossip makes you look unprofessional, hurts others and affects team spirit.

**Avoid "poisonous" people.** Every workplace has a few specific people who seem to enjoy negative energy. They think that everything is a conspiracy, always complain and are quick to criticize other ideas. Be aware of these people and try to avoid them because their pessimistic outlook will start to impact your own.

*Making your own professional development a priority is integral to staying motivated and positive at work.*

**Reward yourself.** If you've just finished a hard project or you're feeling really exhausted, consider taking a vacation day if you can. A long weekend can improve your productivity and leave you feeling refreshed and motivated to return to work. If a day off isn't possible, try to take a smaller break like a nice lunch out or a meal with your colleagues after work once a workplace goal is reached. "Mini rewards" acknowledge your hard work and can help you stay motivated when work gets tough.

### Come Together

Developing relationships with your co-workers is one of the most effective ways to improve your attitude and output at work. Feeling supported will help you have fun, reduce tension and respond to pressure. Although it does take effort, you already share one important thing in common—you work at the same place.

Reach out and realize the value of work relationships. If you begin to feel negative, look to upbeat co-workers to put things back into perspective. Organize mid-week social events to give everyone something to look forward to, or start an office sports team. This will not only get you up and moving but can also be a very valuable team-building exercise. Take the time to celebrate birthdays and other important milestones. You will start to notice a change in how you work with others, how people treat you and your own feelings about your job.

Give thanks when someone makes an extra effort to help you. Or if you're impressed with the quality of a colleague's work, tell him or her. Praise doesn't always have to come from a team leader and when you encourage an environment of appreciation, you will also start to get positive reinforcement back. This can reduce unconstructive competition between teams or co-workers and can ease workplace tension.

Having a good outlook in life is not usually something you're born with. It takes a lot of hard work and persistence and the regular highs and lows of life are always testing you. But, **you** shape your perspective and are ultimately responsible for your own success. By avoiding negativity, focusing on the positive and offering and asking for help when needed, you'll feel better prepared for when work and life challenges come your way.

### Aim Higher

Instead of getting bogged down with the challenges of today, place your focus on the future.

You will find more enjoyment in your work if you're always aiming to do better. Acknowledge what you can't change and work on the things you have control over. Ask yourself what your ultimate goals are. Where you see yourself in two, five, ten years? Then ask yourself what you need to do to get there.

It's a great exercise to look forward and decide where you would like to be, but you need to make sure that you reach your goals. Look into taking courses, gain extra certifications and read books on your profession. While on the job, volunteer to lead projects, learn things that aren't necessarily a part of your job description and organize task forces or committees. These efforts will help you become better at your role, make your job more rewarding, bring you closer to your goals and maybe even take you on a new and exciting career path.

If you have any questions about this topic, or if you wish to discuss a personal situation you may be experiencing, we invite you to contact your EAP.

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