

The ABCs of Work: Joy

Law Department Management

Career Development



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Is there a formula for success at work? Are there simple rules that you can follow to increase your chances of getting what you want? Career Path columnist James Bellerjeau thinks the answer is yes. In this series of articles, *The ABCs of Work*, he shares the formula with you.

Greetings readers and congratulations! Simply by virtue of being here you are already on the path to increasing your odds of success. While luck plays a gigantic role in life, that does not mean you are helpless to control your fate. If you want to think of it this way, the tips we'll explore are ways to increase your odds that luck will find you.

Today's topic is all about finding **Joy** in your work.

Last time we talked about the importance of Integrity, which is vital to having a sustainable career.

Today we explore the benefits of finding joy in a sometimes joyless work landscape.

Know the difference between joy and enjoyment

You might be wondering, “what is the difference between happiness and joy?” Just a short while ago (The ABCs of Work: Be Happy) I urged you to learn how to be happy at work. Isn’t finding joy in your work the same thing?

It is similar, to be sure. Here’s why they are not the same thing. When you are happy you have a positive outlook on life. You see the silver lining in every situation. As a result, people like to be with you.



Joy is lasting and comes from within. Artwork by Paul_Feoktistov / *Shutterstock.com*

Joy, in this instance, means you find meaning in what you are doing. You see the value behind your work. If other people like to be with happy people, a joyful person likes to be with themselves.

Joy here means deep fulfilment. Joy is lasting and comes from within. Contrast this with enjoyment, which comes from external things and is typically fleeting. I discuss this in one of the Moral Letters for Modern Times, On Joy and Enjoyment:

> When you are free from doubt, worry, jealousy; when your course is the same whether you are pushing into the headwind or blown along by a tailwind; when you delight in stillness as much as you do in motion; when you do not rely on external things, joy is your reward.

Here are some ways you can find joy at work:

- **Seeing how our actions add value**. We all want our work to mean something. The best way

to achieve this is to ensure we are working towards a greater goal. Helping our companies execute their strategies is a good place to start.

- **Making a real contribution**. We're often able to choose our own priorities. How joyful it is when we pick topics that bring meaning to others and make their lives better. Whether leading a diversity initiative or helping your company on its sustainability journey, opportunities abound.
- **Helping others**. We think we'll be happiest when we help ourselves. It turns out that we are most moved by helping others. Can you propel a team member along in their career? Help unstick a colleague who can't progress at the moment? These are the things that you (and they) will remember. And they bring joy.
- **Staying true to your principles**. Last time we talked about integrity. When you are put under pressure and maintain committed to your principles and values, you rightly feel joy.

What's wrong with enjoyment?

Nothing, as such. But beware mere thrill-seeking. Because enjoyment comes from external things, some people become addicted to seeking it out. At best, everything goes well, and the person easily finds satisfaction. More often, a thrill-seeker needs greater thrills to attain the same heights of enjoyment. Eventually, the risk-reward calculus becomes unbalanced. Disappointment and unhappiness await. Joy is less flashy than enjoyment but more durable once found.

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Although you focus on finding joy, you can and should take pleasure in enjoyment. Mark your victories where you will and celebrate your wins. You will have many fun times with your team. Savor them. Fun times are necessary to get you through dark times when stress is your constant companion.

Honorable mentions

Leveraging a single tip to drive work success is a heavy lift, even a tip as important as joy. Our formula will necessarily be incomplete. But the formula has impact, and all the more so because we've kept things simple. Here, to finish, are some honorable mentions to serve as food for thought:

Judgment — For years, this was my go-to answer to the question of what key attribute I look for in in-house counsel. The best lawyers know when they can answer a question directly, when they need to do more work, and when they need help. When deciding amidst uncertainty, they make the correct call most frequently. While judgement can be coached, the best teacher seems to be experience.

Justice — It helps to take a step back and keep perspective. Businesses are competitive and like to win. Lawyers are competitive and like to win. Winning should never be our sole guiding principle, however. Our aim should be to do what's right, not what's expedient.

Be well.

Question, comment? Contact Career Path columnist James Bellerjeau.

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Bellerjeau served for two decades as group general counsel for Mettler-Toledo International Inc., an S&P 500 company with its worldwide headquarters in Greifensee, Switzerland. He then led Mettler-Toledo's global Sustainability program for several years through June 2021.

Bellerjeau shares thoughts on how to live a good life at Klugne. You can also follow him on LinkedIn.