



## [DR. SHIRLEY'S CAREER CORNER]

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# Stimulate your job satisfaction

How's your level of job satisfaction? Is it positive or negative? Are you in a funk? Do you find yourself humming the Rolling Stones' famous refrain, "I can't get no satisfaction"?

In the 2006 General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, 47 percent of those surveyed across all occupations said they were satisfied with their jobs. The survey was based on interviews with randomly selected people who collectively represent a cross section of Americans. Interviewers asked more than 27,000 people questions about job satisfaction and general happiness.

Tom Smith, director of the General Social Survey, states in a published report on the study, "Work occupies a large part of each worker's day, is one's main source of social standing, helps to define who a person is and affects one's health both physically and mentally." Smith goes on to say that "because of work's central role in many people's lives, satisfaction with one's job is an important component in overall well-being."

The survey points out that the top 10 most satisfying jobs are mostly professions involving caring for, teaching and protecting others, and creative pursuits. The least satisfying jobs are mostly low-skill, manual and service occupations, especially involving customer service and food/beverage preparation and serving.

So, where do you stand? Are you in the 47 percent of workers who

are experiencing job satisfaction, or are you in the 53 percent who are dissatisfied? Whatever your position, here are three considerations to help stimulate your level of job satisfaction. I highly recommend that you get a pad and pencil and take notes.

1. Determine what you like about your job. First of all, job satisfaction describes how content you are with your job. What establishes satisfaction on the job for you? Is it the job itself? The people with whom you work? The opportunity to utilize the skills you enjoy most in performing tasks? Your manager's leadership style? The company's organization culture? The level of contribution or sense of accomplishment you are experiencing? Or, perhaps, it's the money and benefits? I encourage you to think long and hard. This exercise can be an "eye-opener."

2. Determine what you don't like about your job. Of course, it's easy to simply reverse some of the factors previously stated. However, there are other considerations. Are you in a rut? Is your job no longer challenging? Perhaps, because of the time you spend on the job, you are in the throes of a work-life imbalance. Once again, carefully think about the specifics that cause you angst on your job.

3. Evaluate your current job potential. Are there opportunities for advancement, a lateral transfer or job enhancement? A question you need to ask yourself at this stage is, "Can I love the job I'm with, or do

I need to move on?" Keep in mind, though, that the grass is not always greener on the other side. Can you get what you need elsewhere? With the state of the economy, what is the job market in your geographic locale for your area of expertise? I certainly suggest that you do your research well before you decide to take the leap.

With all things considered, maybe you should just develop a positive outlook on things. Gener-

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ally, you can change your current circumstances by changing your attitude about them. Developing an optimistic point of view and changing negative self-talk patterns can be helpful, reduce stress and add to your overall productivity.

In addition to determining what you like about your job and what you dislike, assess your current state of mind. You may need to make some changes in yourself to see things in a more positive light. Whatever your needs, going through this thought-provoking process can certainly help you to make a more informed decision.

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