



How you, too, can have a love affair with your work

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Find your why: Look for a deeper meaning beyond the day to day mundane or the hardship you are facing. This might be something as profound as how you are saving the planet or as ordinary as how you are able to pay your bills or put your child through college. Anything is possible. There are people who love cleaning houses because they are helping their customers have better, more productive lives and people who love cleaning houses because they are providing a better life for their children. Your why has to make the work meaningful to you, not necessarily anyone else.

Focus on the positive: This is much more than having a Pollyanna attitude or looking for the silver lining. This is a sense of gratitude for not only the personal benefits of the work but also for the ways that it stretches you and calls you to be a better person. Once you can truly be grateful for difficulties, then you are in a better frame of mind to resolve problems.

Have a job that is mind numbing and repetitious? Ask yourself: How can I make it more interesting? Are there ways to make it more creative? Could it be a stepping stone to something else? Can I transform the job so that it is more challenging, not just for me but for others as well?

Having difficulty with a boss? Can you learn new communication skills, develop a better understanding of their personality and how to approach them or even follow the procedure to hold them accountable? Do you need to be a whistleblower? Can you recognize your personal strengths and ability to overcome hardship? Do you need to step into a leadership role yourself?

Accept that love requires both hardship and joy: Love affairs aren't always a bed of roses whether with our beloved or with our work. On the other hand, love affairs that weather storms are much more solid and resilient. Learn to be grateful for the difficulty so that you can also enjoy the pleasure.

Doubtbusters

Focus on action, not feelings--Many times our feelings trick us into believing things that just aren't true. Just because we feel nervous about trying something challenging, it is not a sign that we should avoid it. In fact many times feeling nervous is a good thing because it is an indication that we are stepping outside our comfort zone. Give yourself permission to take action, *imperfect* action, regardless of your emotions.

Focus on positive self-talk, not negative self-talk-- Our brains are like Velcro for negativity and Teflon for the positive so it is important that we learn ways to take charge of our thinking. One way to do this is to pay attention to the messages that we are telling ourselves, evaluate those messages and change them to more realistic and positive ones.

Focus on measuring personal progress, not comparison to others--The comparison trap will lead to doubt and criticism every time. We can always find someone who is better than we are. By the same token we can always find someone who is weaker as well. Neither is beneficial for shoring up our self-confidence. Instead, learn to measure progress based on your goals and personal accomplishments. Pay attention to where you started and how far you have come.