

# ● Ask America's Ultimate Experts

## Q "Help! I hate my job!"

The thought of going to work getting you down? You're not alone: A recent survey found that 55% of Americans aren't happy with their jobs. Yet you *can* start loving work more today—without looking for a new job!—thanks to these proven satisfaction-boosting strategies!

### 1 Connect with your workmates!

Career experts Myra S. White, Ph.D., J.D., Christine Durst and Ann Mehl reveal how to build a better rapport:

#### Bond with your boss by smiling!

Smiling, greeting everyone by name and limiting complaints sends morale soaring—and helps the boss see you as someone who solves problems. As a result, she's more likely to ask

your opinion about office issues, making you feel more valuable and boosting your job satisfaction!

#### Earn respect with small gestures!

A study found that folks who do the most work are the *least* liked by their colleagues! Why? Such behavior puts more pressure on everyone to perform. Instead, focus your help on the individual. For instance, if you see someone is swamped, saying something like: "I'm running out for lunch. Can I get you a sandwich?" will earn you their respect and gratitude!

#### Win over co-workers with cookies!

Bake up a batch of cookies or muffins, and bring them to work about once a month. Research proves that the scent of homemade goodies triggers fond childhood memories for most folks, boosting their levels of the feel-good hormones serotonin and dopamine. And they're sure to connect those good feelings with you!



### 2 Make your workday easier!

Our experts advise zeroing in on the positives and learning to breeze through the negatives:

#### Picture this every a.m.!

Visualize the most enjoyable part of your day, says Mehl, whether it's your chat with co-workers in the break room or your lunch plans with friends! Concentrating on the bright spots of your day will overshadow any dark spots, leaving you in a better mood!

#### Focus on your value!

No matter your job title, you're important to the success of your company, say our experts. Do you boost sales? Deliver customer service? Pinpoint why you're valuable, then repeat that reason to yourself for a minute every day. Saying an inspirational mantra daily increases mood-boosting alpha brain waves, putting you in a more positive frame of mind!

#### Get through tedious tasks faster!

Have a responsibility you'd rather skip? You can get it done in half the time, promises White. The secret: Avoid multitasking. Studies show trying to do more than one thing at a time actually distracts our brains. The result? We work less efficiently than if we focus on just one task!

### 3 Fill your space with mood boosters!

Our experts suggest sprucing up your work space with proven bad-mood busters:

#### Turn on an ionic air purifier!

Simply being near a computer can send your mood plummeting! They emit positive ions, which trigger changes in your body that lead to stress and anxiety. The fix? An air purifier that emits negative ions! Try: Ionicpro Mini Ionic Air Purifier, \$24.99 at BedBathAndBeyond.com.



**The happiest jobs in the U.S.?**  
Clergy top the list of the most satisfied workers, according to a recent study. They're followed by firefighters, travel agents and mechanics!

#### Display vacation photos!

Just be sure to place them where you can frequently glance at them, suggests White. The constant reminder of a time when you were relaxed and stress-free can help you return to that same state of mind! The proof: Studies show that positive memories lower your blood pressure, stimulate the brain's pleasure center and decrease stress hormones!

#### Add a fleece throw!

Textile researchers have found that holding certain types of cloth can change your mood! What's more, when female volunteers in a British study held 10 different fabrics, fleece significantly boosted feelings of contentment. So put a fuzzy throw over the back of your chair and touch it whenever you're feeling pressure overload!



—Jennifer Leonard

## Our expert panel



Harvard University professor and inspirational speaker **Myra S. White, Ph.D., J.D.**, teaches people how to succeed in the workplace. She's the author of *Follow the Yellow Brick Road*.



**Christine Durst** is the co-founder of RatRaceRebellion.com, a site featuring home-based and virtual jobs. She designs career development programs for the Department of State and the U.S. Armed Forces, and appears regularly on CNN.



**Ann Mehl** is a certified career coach. A former executive recruiter, she assists people in jumpstarting their careers. She's also been a featured expert as part of Martha Stewart's Whole Living program.