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## WORKING WELL NEWSLETTER

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**July, 2006**

Welcome to the first issue of the WORKING WELL newsletter—an online wake-up call about paying attention to what really matters in your working life and how to achieve the things that mean the most to you. In each issue we'll feature a "test yourself" quiz, related articles, as well as print and online resources to help with managing your work life. We hope you'll feel free to share this with friends, family members and colleagues, and to send suggestions and questions our way at any time ([breinhold@charter.net](mailto:breinhold@charter.net)). Thanks, and welcome aboard!

Barbara Reinhold

**This month's assessment tool:**

### **HOW FREE TO SUCCEED ARE YOU?**

The following twenty questions, borrowed from Barbara Reinhold's Work Satisfaction Audit, (available in its entire 100-question format on the landing page of Reinhold's site), will give you a quick hit of just how well your current work situation fits with your desires for your life. On a scale of 1-4 (1= not much, 4= very good fit), circle the number which best describes the degree to which this statement matches how you feel about your work.

1 2 3 4 I wake up most mornings eager to get to work.

1 2 3 4 Things are run the way I like them to be at work.

1 2 3 4 I believe I'm good at what I do.

1 2 3 4 The structure and pace of my work day fit my own natural rhythms.

1 2 3 4 My organization "walks the talk" about the things I believe in.

1 2 3 4 I can get flexibility and special accommodations when I need them.

1 2 3 4 This job helps me to develop and sustain my self-confidence.

1 2 3 4 My boss has a realistic picture of my talents and abilities.

1 2 3 4 The pace of learning and risk-taking in my work now is right for me.

1 2 3 4 I'm able to be successful and still have enough time for relaxation and relationships.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total score

If you scored less than 25 to 30 on this mini-quiz, you're not being choosy enough about how and where you do your work. Or perhaps you're just not asking for enough. To get a more complete picture of the Ten Work Satisfiers and why they're critical to your productivity, your satisfaction and even to your health,

[www.barbara-reinhold.com/work\\_satisfaction\\_audit.html](http://www.barbara-reinhold.com/work_satisfaction_audit.html)

#### **WHY DOES CAREER FREEDOM MATTER ANYWAY?**

The How Free Are You to Succeed? quiz is based on research from the fields of organizational effectiveness, Psychoneuroimmunology, neuroscience and psychology, proving that *how you feel about your work situation* is perhaps the primary determiner of two important things:

- How well you do the job you're in

- The quality of your mental and physical health "Career freedom," then, is the ability to be yourself at work—to be authentic, who you really are—and to feel appreciated, rewarded fairly, encouraged to learn and take risks, and allowed to integrate the demands of work and personal life.

Life in many organizations today seems to be on a collision course with all we know about staying healthy and productive. Despite research by Boston psychologist Rosalind Barnett showing that our resilience in the face of work stressors is tremendously enhanced by keeping our non-work relationships strong, nonetheless the hours, pace and demands of work for many of us make that nearly impossible. The majority of us live our lives feeling like Lucy and Ethel in the chocolate factory, stuffing those chocolates coming off the production line anyplace we can—most often in our mouths, of course. And paying the price in terms of exhaustion, grumpiness, compromised immune system protection, increased aches and pains and greatly decreased inability to think clearly and perform at our best. Thus, employers are shooting not only us but also themselves in the foot by requiring us to choose between working and really living.

**We have two choices here:**

1. to hope that people leading our organizations stop to read the abundant research exhorting them to change the cultures they've created (not likely, because they are also often running on empty) OR
2. to use the more finely-grained Work Satisfaction Audit yourself to pinpoint exactly where the mismatches are occurring for you, in order that you can pinpoint what's missing and set some goals for making changes and/or minimizing the discomfort.

The second approach is obviously much more likely to result in progress any time soon. And the toughest parts of this second option are *having the courage to expect that our work fit us and then doing the honest introspection to see how we ourselves have probably been complicit in allowing these vexations to continue*. In many years of coaching and counseling people about their careers, I've never seen a give-away situation that was entirely the fault of the organization. For instance, do any of these vignettes seem familiar?

- The perfectionist who feels put down and depressed because she hears constructive criticism as an attack on her whole self, and thus feels very under-appreciated and tense at work.
- The dad who won't take the vacation time he needs to recharge his battery because he's such a micro-manager, and thus adds to his exhaustion the problem of perpetually-disappointed family members.
- The team leader who doesn't speak up with alternative options when deadlines handed down from on high are impossible to meet, because she believes no one is listening anyway—just as no one did when she was a kid.
- The gifted engineer-writer who dreams about the materials he could create for his company to bridge the gap between tech products and potential new customers, but whose self-doubt keeps him from letting anybody know about either his ideas or his skills.
- The well-loved supervisor who is seen as way too emotionally involved with her team and unable to give them bad news, which in turn keeps them from sharpening their performance. So her team thinks she's great and her superiors roll their eyes about her productivity metrics. She, meanwhile, is convinced that the solution to every business problem is to keep the family harmonious, just as she did again and again as the oldest child in a highly dysfunctional family.

Situations like these, of course, are where a good coach or counselor can be helpful in ferreting out what changes you want to make, helping you see how you might be sabotaging yourself, and guiding you through the process of setting and achieving whatever “prison-break goals” you decide you need to make.

Some organizations have OD, HR or EAP experts on hand to help in sorting out problems, while others leave you to take care of yourself (or not!) on your own. If this e-mail was forwarded to you by a coach, that person might be a good place to turn. You can also check out career and life coaching resources online. Or just click [www.barbara-reinhold.com](http://www.barbara-reinhold.com) to see if any of the resources there work for you.

The only thing not to do is nothing. The price for being an ostrich about your career and physical health is very high.

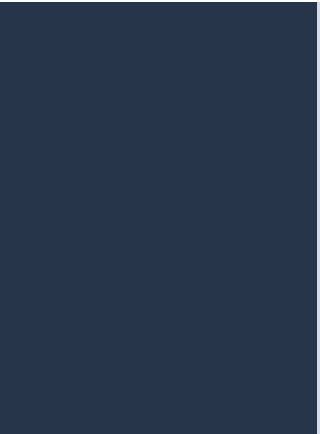
#### **CAREER QUICK TIP FOR THIS MONTH:**

Are your 2006 vacation plans made yet? If not, your boss may be coming around to ask you about it. According to the new True Careers Survey, 80% of employers are now encouraging their workers to use all their vacation time (as opposed to less than half in 2004). The word seems to be out that crispy-fried employees do not add much to teams charged with being maximally high performing. 574 million U.S. vacation days will go unused in 2006: both you and your employer need for yours not to be among them.

#### **SUGGESTED RESOURCES**

- Laura Nash and Howard Stevenson, *Just Enough: Tools for Creating Success in Your Work and Life*. Harvard Business School faculty members Nash and Stevenson lay out the four pillars of success—happiness, achievement, significance and legacy—along with relevant research, assessment tools, excellent case materials and practical strategies for combating what they call the destructive “culture of maximization” and maintaining a fulfilling, livable life on the road to success. It would be a terrific book to read and then discuss with colleagues at work or friends at home.

- Whether you’re a business leader or an employee trying to position yourself for what might be coming next on this roller coaster ride known as the global economy, you should be on the distribution list for the trends and forecasts provided by the Herman group. ([www.hermangroup.com](http://www.hermangroup.com)) Roger Herman, his wife Joyce Goia and their team of forecasters and management consultants offer ongoing commentary and access to research on the trends working people should know about. Their most recent articles have been about employee retention, offering concepts and statistics to help managers keep



their best people—and to help employers negotiate for what they want more effectively.

Thanks for reading—and be sure to recommend this newsletter to anyone you think might benefit from it, or to send us the e-mail address of anyone you'd like to be reading it in the future.