

Get lost: Working passion into your workday

Written by Julie Desmond
Thursday, 14 April 2011 13:03



You know the look: Einsteinlike hair, wild eyes that light up like Zelda. Passion. You know the feeling: a deep and irrational drive to participate or perform for the sake of participating or performing. No carrot, no reward; just doing it because it feels to your core like the absolute right thing to spend time on.

Many people trudge through every workday, just getting by until they can get out and do something that matters personally, something interesting. Getting paid is a good reason to work, I get that. But what if it didn't suck? What if you could incorporate some of that passion into your business-as-usual?

If you were hired, and especially if you have been in your role for a while, there must be something at work that you are good at. Often, we breeze through the parts of work that come easily, and then let ourselves be dragged through the muddy world of things we've put off. I say We because we all do it, to some extent. If it's difficult or challenging, it is called work. And yet, what is challenging to others might be exactly the part of your day that was pleasant or exciting or really satisfying. Look for more of what comes naturally.

Managers, look for ways to build on the strengths and interests of each team member. Rather than creating improvement plans that demand someone contort their skills and interests to fit a prescribed mold (aka job description), take a broad view of your team. Can the workload be re-orged to capitalize on individual strengths?

Teni is amazing with spreadsheets. People come from all corners of the company to get tweaks from an Excel Expert. Some requests are challenging, but with a strong knowledge base and an interest in building on what she already knows, Teni has the confidence to welcome new assignments. She has a passion for this stuff, and everyone wins because of it.

No one can avoid drudgery entirely (it's good to suffer a little). But if you ever look up from your work and wonder where the time went, then you've found your passion. Get to work looking for more of whatever it was you were doing when you completely forgot it was work.

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