

# How to Avoid Workplace Doldrums—

## 3 Tips to Find Fulfillment & Purpose at Work

By Fatimah Gilliam, CEO, The Azara Group

Are you bored at work or disengaged? Do you feel like you are stuck in neutral? Does each day feel like Groundhog Day? Though tedious at times, your repetitive work routine may not be the root cause of your workplace boredom. The culprit could be purposelessness—not feeling connected to your work, your core values, and the people around you.

Having purpose is what motivates us, gives us energy, and sparks positive feelings of excitement that encourage us to contribute and show up each day.

Thousands of years ago, Aristotle championed the importance and virtues of being happy, thoughtful, and purposeful. Now science proves the value in finding meaning in what we do. There is a link between professional contentment and having purpose. Studies show that having a sense of purpose is more important for job satisfaction than having a high-quality manager. It is also important for your health—purpose can also lower your risk of death by 15%.

To help you raise your happiness quotient and infuse more enjoyment into your daily grind, here are three tips to finding purpose in your career.

### 1. Know How You Fit Into the Big Picture

When you understand how your individual contribution fits into the work your colleagues or division are doing, you can start to see the big picture—how your work is critical to larger goals and objectives. While you might be crunching numbers for a report or fine tuning a presentation for your boss, those numbers or that presentation might be critical in landing a new client or getting your team a bigger budget.

To find purpose, you can even link your work to the broader role your company plays in getting goods and services to consumers. If your company makes shoes and your job is to work on the marketing campaign for a new product launch, shift your mindset. Your part is not just to think about how to connect with customers so they buy those shoes. Instead, consider your function in completing various marketing tasks as serving a greater good. You are personally helping release products that keep people from being barefoot, assisting everyday people in wearing something that makes them feel good about themselves, and launching a fashionable product that gives others confidence when they walk down the street.

When you are feeling dragged down by the monotony of a specific task, remind yourself why you are accomplishing that task. Remember how your work relates to something beyond the immediacy of your To Do List. This will increase your sense of purpose and how you value your contribution.

### 2. Be Clear About Your Core Values

To have a sense of direction about where you are headed and what that means to you, you need to understand the synergies between what you believe in and your career and employer. After taking an assessment of what really matters and your core beliefs, explore how your work supports your core values.

If you search far and wide and cannot find a link between what you believe in and your work, or what your employer does is in direct conflict with fundamental beliefs, then you may need to reassess whether you are working for the right company. You will struggle in finding purpose in what you do if your daily work violates your core principles and beliefs.

### 3. Go Beyond Yourself — Find Ways to Help Others

When we are helpful, generous, and give to others, it makes us happier. If you start realizing that part of your job is to make life easier for those around you—your boss, colleagues, or clients—you will start finding more purpose in what you do. It is easy to get bogged down in daily struggles. Thinking extensively about yourself and everyday challenges can be deflating. Once you look beyond yourself to find ways to be helpful and add value, your job satisfaction could rise.

You do not always need to search for large ways to help or think of grand gestures. You can be useful even in small ways. Finding fulfillment in lightening someone else's load in small ways can help you find purpose each day. If a colleague needs assistance with a discreet 15-minute task, carve out the time to support them. If someone wants your quick input or wants you to proofread a document, then help them. Volunteer without being prompted or asked. A few minutes here and there will make you feel good about your work.



#### Final Thoughts

No matter how much joy or purpose we find at work, it is natural to experience workplace happiness in waves. We cannot be excited every moment of the day. Some days we may dread going to work even when we truly love our jobs. There is an ebb and a flow to work and life.

The trick is to find and constantly seek purpose in what we do. By remaining on a continual quest to find more meaning in our careers enables us to feel more connected to

our colleagues. The daily hustle and bustle feels less like a weighty grind when we allow finding purpose to guide us in attaining satisfaction in our work. The end result is we will be happier, and move a little closer to what Aristotle believed—that happiness is the ultimate purpose of human existence.

#### Fatimah Gilliam, Esq. & The Azara Group

Fatimah Gilliam, Esq. is the Founder and CEO of The Azara Group. She started her career on Wall Street as a corporate attorney, worked for Citigroup and the United Nations, and is a successful entrepreneur. She is an expert negotiator and career strategist, and is a graduate of Harvard University, Columbia Law School, and Wellesley College.

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