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How to Be Happy at Work: A Practical Guide to Career Satisfaction

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Lay-offs. Impossible bosses. Benefit reductions. Long commutes. These are a few of the conditions found in today's workplace environment. For those who encounter these and other problems, there is this author-a career counselor, psychotherapist, and corporate outplacement consultant. This second edition of her book provides exposition, analysis, and an array of possible positive outcomes to difficulties experienced by twenty-first-century workers.

Hirsh notes that there is no single formula for workplace happiness, but identifies many of the common elements that large groups of employees share. For example, thousands of people entering the work force today are children of "baby boomers"-those born between 1946 and 1964 who tend to hold common ideals and values forged in the prosperity of post-World War II society. Another group of workers, somewhat older, shares attitudes imposed by parents who lived through the economic depression of the 1930s. Many of those parents believed that a secure job was of paramount importance, and they downplayed workplace quality issues.

To analyze workplace happiness, one really begins with oneself. Hirsch recognizes this principle as seminal, and discusses it in the initial chapters. She emphasizes that each individual brings different circumstances and goals to his or her employment situation. Issue identification, case studies, and discussion assist the reader in developing a range of solutions to challenging employment situations.

The book moves from career choices, to career security, to midlife-career transitions, to career happiness. Each chapter concludes with highly useful worksheets, so that the reader can relate personal experiences and choices to the topic covered, using questions like this one, from the chapter called "Quitting Your Job": "If you'd never leave a job without having another one lined up, how do you plan to carve out enough free time to look for a new job?" The worksheets are clear, logically organized, and can be of invaluable assistance to the reader who wishes to explore his or her attitudes toward work and working, and apply the answers to bettering their

situation.

Hirsch deals with almost all possible workplace conundrums, from ethics to quits. Many readers will discover that they are ripe for a career change, or for a major transition in their present employment status. Some of the case studies have a “from pizza delivery person to pizza king” spin to them. However, few pizza kings elect to go back to being delivery persons, and most career-shift veterans have happy stories to tell their peers.

It does help to be educated and self-motivated when beginning this process, but anyone seeking to improve a work situation would do well to read this insightful and carefully wrought book.

Leonard F. Charla