

Do You Need to Get Out?

Wwondering if you think you need to leave? These surveys will show you where you are in your work life and where you would like to go. These four sections are included here.

1. Your contribution to your restlessness at work.
2. Do you really need to leave your job?
3. Are you ready for a get-away?
4. Are you ready to make a shift?

1. Your contribution to your restlessness at work.

Many Telecommunicators are restless about their work, unhappy, I see it in every seminar I teach. I often get notes from workers who are furious, dejected, feeling hopeless, or ready to quit. After talking for awhile it sounds like employees are unknowingly COLLUDING with their impossible bosses to make their work lives a wreck.

On the two lists below, check Y or N for each of 10 items-- then let's see who's contributing more to *your* miseries:

YOUR EMPLOYER'S CONTRIBUTIONS:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Y | N | Excessive demands/ too much work/too many trainees |
| Y | N | Too little appreciation expressed for work well done |
| Y | N | Inappropriate delegation of tasks |
| Y | N | Unrealistic expectations from them |
| Y | N | Inconsistency in rules, requirements, instructions |
| Y | N | Lack of communication |
| Y | N | No support for trainers having balanced lives |
| Y | N | Lack of participatory management |
| Y | N | Lack of good coaching |
| Y | N | Ineffective or inadequate training of Trainers |

Your employer's score = _____

AND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MESS YOU'RE IN?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| Y | N | Negative thinking -- giving up, blaming others |
| Y | N | Unhealthy behaviors, nutrition, no exercise, spending, smoking |

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| Y | N | Shut-down feelings |
| Y | N | Neglected relationships, avoiding others |
| Y | N | Boredom -- not seeking out ways to be intellectually challenged |
| Y | N | Making too little time for play, relaxation, rejuvenation |
| Y | N | No introspection -- asking what you could be doing differently? |
| Y | N | Resistance to changes in how training is being done |
| Y | N | Abdication of responsibility - no clear career development plan |

Your score = -----

SO WHO GOT MORE NEGATIVE POINTS ----- YOU OR YOUR EMPLOYER?

2. Do You Really NEED To Leave Your Job?

Fewer than 10% of people in all professions are really satisfied with their work these days. What's more, 20 million of them are staying in jobs they hate just to keep their health insurance--when job dissatisfaction is the thing most likely to make them need to use it. Go figure, eh? Workplace stress is the # 1 health problem for working adults. To find out whether your job is likely to put you out of commission, try this quiz about five causes and symptoms of "toxic work."

ANSWER YES OR NO TO EACH OF THE ITEMS BELOW.

1. What have you been feeling about you work? Do these seem familiar to you?

- I'm worried about keeping my job or finding another one if I lose it.
- I just don't feel competent enough.
- I find myself getting irritable or angry a lot.
- Work makes me feel sad and bored-- just not interested in it anymore.
- I just don't feel anything much of the time.

If you have two or more YES answers for this question, you're a ready candidate for physical or emotional illness. Ongoing anxiety (questions a and b), anger (c) and depression (d) are major causes of heart attacks and diminished protection from your immune system. Shut-down feelings (e) put you equally at risk.

2. How are you treated at work? How many are true for you? Yes or No

- I've been passed over for assignment, promotion or recognition
- I don't really feel like I belong doing this anymore
- Nobody seems to want to work or collaborate with me.
- Nobody pays much attention to how I do my job.

Again, two or more YES responses signal an at-risk situation. When you're feeling "out of the loop" (a and b), ignored (c), alienated (d) or under-valued (e), your body definitely reacts. Your immune system produces fewer infection-fighting cells and your endocrine system

sends out stress hormones which undercut your stamina and resistance. Unless you find a way to reconnect positively with your work, you're asking for trouble.

3. How is your health? Over the past six months, how many of the following symptoms have you experienced? Yes if you have..

- a. Recurrent colds, flu's or infections.
- b. Back or muscle pains.
- c. Headaches or digestive problems.
- d. A worsening of a chronic health problem.
- e. Fatigue or sleeplessness.

Again, two or more YES responses signal that something about your work isn't right for you. It's time to talk to your aching body parts and ask them what you really need at work.

4. How much say do you have in how you work gets done?

- a. Administration insists that everything gets done their way.
- b. There's no flexibility for me in how I do training.
- c. The people in charge at work don't manage in changing environment.
- d. There's so much to do it's impossible to get it all done and do a good job.
- e. I'm ready for more responsibility, but I just can't seem to get it.

Again two strikes and you're out. Research shows that clearly one of the best ways to make people sick is to give them more work and no control over how to do it -- and yet managers do it all the time.

If you work for a dictator (a), a rigid clock watcher (b), or a dinosaur (c), you're in trouble, and your body knows it. Similarly, if you're in a situation where you're overwhelmed (d) or dead-ended (e), the chances of staying healthy and productive at work are slim.

5. How well does your job fit with the rest of your life?

- a. People at home are upset with me for working shift work (overtime).
- b. I try to make time for friends, but somehow it often doesn't work.
- c. I have a hard time getting close to people and expressing my feelings.
- d. I'm really pretty serious most of the time.

If two or more of these items are true for you, your life is really out of balance! You are robbing yourself of the things you need to stay healthy and resilient -- supportive relationships (a and b), emotional expressiveness (c), leisure (d), playfulness (e), when your employer forces you to squeeze the joy, love and relaxation out of your life (and you choose to allow that to happen), you actually undercut not only your health and vitality, but the quality of your work performance as well.

THE BIG PICTURE: So What's You're Over-all Score?

More than 10 YES responses over all? If so, it's time to start thinking and talking to other folks who know you well about whether it's "safe" to stay where you are. Your obviously need to change something -- either the ways you're doing your job or the job itself.

3. Are you ready for a Getaway?

Fantasize about taking a temporary break from your workaday world? But are you ready to take the step? Take this quiz to find out:

1. You hear about a talented co-worker who's quit his job to travel with his wife and three small children throughout England & Scotland. Your reaction:
 - a. How can he leave us in the lurch like that, doesn't he care. Does he have a brain tumor? Or I'll bet he was going to get fired anyway. Yeah, that must be it.
 - b. Man, that's cool. How did he work up the courage to take the step? His kids are going to love him like crazy for this. I wonder if he'd adopt me.
2. Your mom sends you a big box of dusty documents of yours from her attic. There, you discover a old journal you kept up in 8th grade. It's filled with dreams of being an astronaut or rafting up the Amazon or writing novels in Portugal. Sigh and then:
 - a. Put it away next to your perfect old report card. After all, you're a working person now - no time for this stuff.
 - b. Bring the journal downstairs, take out a big notepad, and start writing down some of you adventurous ideas again. After all, if not now, when?
3. You have a hobby that you absolutely adore. Whether its bike-riding or mountain climbing or restoring old homes or sailing around the coast, you dream of the weekend (or your much anticipated 10 or 12 days off a year) to indulge it a bit more. As for taking it a step further, your reaction is:
 - a. Hey, I'm lucky to get Saturdays & Sundays off.
 - b. This hobby is as least as compelling as my job. Maybe it should take precedence for a while.
4. You have the opportunity to be the relief rower on the America's Cup yacht next year (okay, so we're fantasizing here). To train fully, though, you're going to have to temporarily quit work for seven months or so. What do you imagine will be the reaction of your family, friends, and co-workers?
 - a. Are you crazy? Don't you have a family to support? Don't you know that if you step off the fast track, it's the slow track from now on for you buddy?
 - b. Wow, what an opportunity! You're going, right? Hey, don't forget us worker drones. Send us postcards. Man, what a guy. I'd like to be in his shoes someday.

5. You're on your deathbed. Your last feeble thoughts are flitting through your rapidly declining brain. They are:
 - a. Boy, I wish I had done something more to enhance my career!
 - b. Jeez, almost dead. Why didn't I always order the extra fudge on the side?
 - c. And why didn't I try out some of those plans & adventures I always dreamed of?

4. Are you ready to make a shift?

Fantasizing about going back to school and leaving your job? Check your readiness.

1. How important is your career?

- My work is important but not my sole reason for being
- My job is a means to a home, college for my kids, benefits and a yearly vacation
- I couldn't go to work every day unless I believed in what I was doing

2. How do you feel about your current job?

- I no longer believe in what I'm doing I'm just stuck in a love hate thing.
- I am sick of the people and politics in my workplace
- My job still feels fresh and interesting

3. How do you feel about chaos and change?

- In the face of chaos I shut down
- I like everything settled, I don't like to rock the boat
- It sounds corny but when life gives me lemons, I make lemonade

4. How adventurous would you say you are?

- Damn the torpedoes and full speed ahead
- I like the Japanese saying "the nail that sticks out gets hammered."
- A bird in the hand is my motto in my life

5. How aware are you of new opportunities and trends?

- I live for new projects
- I sometimes have ideas but I never have the time to do anything about them
- I am always on the lookout for a better opportunity

6. How closely does your personality match your career?

- I'm pretty easygoing and adaptable to most environments
- When I leave work I don't think about work until the next day

7. Is your work your life mission?

- I'm not flying high on the career swing, but hey, it's living?
- My agency isn't so bad but at least it's not as bad as XYZ Com Center
- I have to love what I do to care about it

8. Do you want to.....

- Stay where you are
- Advance at your agency
- Find a new agency
- Advance at a new agency
- Get into a related field in public safety
- Get out of public safety
- Go to school full time.

Our Wish For You

Introspection is a very good thing. We hope that you were able to take a look at your feelings during this exercise. Now, we want you to talk to someone about it, share. Whatever feelings this brought up, do a journaling exercise. We hope you found out you really do love your job and that you really don't want to get out. We don't want you to! We appreciate what you are giving, know that although many people do not express their appreciation for trainers, that without the teachers in the world no one would have the courage to pursue their dreams or overcome their challenges. Being a teacher is an honor, deserving of much respect.

It is vital you take care of your own needs in 4 realms - physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally. Maya Angelou said "Work is something made greater by ourselves and in turn that makes us greater." Take a moment for yourself each day and do something nice for yourself in all these realms so that you can continue to do good work so that great things are accomplished that - without your efforts - would have never happened.