

Surviving 9 to 5

A bad job can suck out your soul and cause you to lose the will to live. To some of us, it is so miserable that it consumes your whole life. But considering the current economy, it's never really an option to quit without having another job lined up. The key to surviving it is to have vision beyond the troubles of today. You don't need to fix ALL of the problems at work. All you need to do is cope long enough to find a new job.

Do you wake up every morning with that gnawing pit of dread in your stomach because you have to go to your workplace *again*? Are you burning through your vacation time on mental health days? Does your paycheck suck? Do you have a "challenging" boss?

If everybody loved their job, they probably wouldn't call it work. The lucky ones are those guys who have figured out how to get paid for doing what they love, while the rest of us simply get paid so we can afford to do what we love on the weekends. What if your job involves a soul-

sucking commute and also doesn't pay very well? Think about your co-workers -- do you like them? Have you formed friendships or close working relationships with any of them? Are you at least making valuable professional connections that you can call upon later in your career? Are you gaining skills or knowledge that you will carry forward with you to other, future jobs (hint: you definitely are)?

What if everything about your job makes you want to just stop showing up? I think, if you have a better attitude about your terrible job, you wouldn't have to be so miserable in it. We create our own realities.

Remind yourself that this WILL end
It's easy to think that things won't ever change. But that's just not true. The average worker no longer has just one change. With the increase in job opportunities the average number of careers a worker can expect to have in a lifetime is five -- and growing. Changing your job every few years has become common

practice, so you shouldn't think that a few years here and a few years there is a warning sign on your resume.

Make time for yourself

The truth is that this is good advice whether you hate your job or not. It's easy to get into the painful grind of sleeping, working and eating. Choose an activity that you enjoy (anything from going for a run to doing a little reading) and apply it your morning routine; that way you'll be getting up for the activity, rather than the job. If you put off doing things that you enjoy, you're bound to end up feeling bitter anyway.

Add something fun to the mix at work

Nobody works all of the time at work. Try and give yourself a little break from your workday. Check out your favorite sports teams on ESPN.com. Or, listen to music (if you can). Step out for lunch and use that time to decompress from the rigors of the office. Facebook a little but don't let it be seen. The trick is to

find something that you like and have fun with it for a few minutes during your day.

Leave work at work

If you spend eight hours a day at work, and eight hours sleeping, that leaves you eight hours all to yourself. When you let a crappy day at work take over your life, you're letting the company steal your time without paying you for it. Take your time during the day and focus on what you want. Release tension by playing sports. Go watch a movie, have a nice meal on a Tuesday night for no reason at all. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that you leave your work at work.

Do a better job

You may not be happy at work, but you don't have to waste your time. Since you're likely applying for other jobs anyway, you might as well do all you can to enhance your skills. Take advantage of training programs, if your company offers them. Doing a better job will also provide a sense of



satisfaction and you might start to enjoy what you do upon receiving approval. On the other hand, you'll get work done and make yourself more attractive to future employers at the same time.

Don't let your feelings jeopardize your job

On a note related to the previous tip, however awful things are, you don't want to ruin all of the hard work you've done. Even if you're eventually leaving your job, you don't want to leave it on bad terms, so make all the effort you can to keep from destroying relationships at your job. Also, don't slack off. How you perform at your current job can determine if you get your next one. Use that as motivation to keep your performance up. A positive attitude will go a long way in getting you out of a bad situation.

Make friends

If your problem at work is that it has become a grind, chances are that some of your coworkers probably feel the same way. Assuming that you actually like your coworkers, try having some fun with them. Make plans to go out together, have annual night outs or picnics. Find people to share lunch breaks with.



Rant to your heart's content

Just don't do it at the office. It used to be that the only people who heard us complain about work were our wives or girlfriends. However, this is the age of feminism, so she's probably working too. Your friends are out, they have their own problems, and you can't complain to your coworkers since they might be part of the problem. Try blogging. There are blogs about almost every aspect of life now and hating your job is more common than you realize. Plus, if there's one universal rule, it's that someone else always has it worse, so, the other guy's horror stories might put things into perspective.

Don't forget to laugh and get others to join

Laughter really is the best medicine. Many scientists believe that humor can enhance your ability to cope with a number of situations by giving you perspective and helping you to see that the problem is manageable. Try and add humor to your daily whenever possible. Watch a sitcom over a drama or listen to a goofy morning radio show rather than the news. Go through 9gag posts and shuffle through tumblr. Keeping your sense of humor will allow you to be optimistic in the face of adversity, which will help you keep the ball rolling forward every day.



WORDS: INMA SUMAITA RAHMAN

Go crazy with efficiency

Six ways to get over all the things that slow you down at work

We're always complaining about how little time we get in the office, outside of the office. Time management seems to be a big problem. While managing our time during work and thinking about the social distances due to workload obstructs our productivity. We whine about all the interruptions and communication overload. Sometimes we even try to look for reading material to improve our time-management skills and productivity. It's ironic, I know. Well, get this. Most of your productivity drains because of your own doing. You give in to social media distraction because you crave a quick fix for attention. You waste ridiculous amounts of time doing things that don't really matter because you choose to do them, and you decide to do all these while you are working. What's the point of complaining about productive hours when you are wasting so much of it trying to distract yourself? You know what you need to do: Work. Of course there are other things like spending time with family and friends, going to places, keeping in touch with old friends. So do all that. Don't do all of it while working or, at least separate them so you're aware that you've chosen to waste your time. Here are some ideas to help you get started:

1. Social Network is the worst- Social media diminishes your efficiency more than you'd think it does. Do your tweeting, blogging, posting, status updating after work. Your facebook notifications can wait till you are done; your ultra-creative tweet can wait till evening. Don't mix social networking with your work life.

2. Avoid useless organizing- Some people give an awful lot of importance to organizing. There are all these different ways of organizing stuff such as your emails and files, right? Forget about it completely. Don't bother at all. Okay, maybe a little, but the absolute minimal amount. Get a gmail! You think you have the biggest email inbox ever and it bothers you? Big deal! There is always the search option. Finding something is just a click away.

3. Work in a deadline- One of my friends procrastinates whatever she needs to do till the time it is absolutely necessary. I bet that happens to most of us. This one time, I told her I needed something done within two hours and you know what? She finished it in two hours! It's called a deadline. Deadlines force discipline. That's why deadlines work. Use them.

4. Set Priorities- Prioritization can save you a lot of trouble and time. Whenever you have your boss getting on your nerves with a lot of work, try setting priorities. Learn to classify.



Make a priority list when there's tons of work on your table. You can always classify the work by making a list of urgent, important, and everything-else-that-can-be-taken-care-of-later. When the urgent work is done, you move to the important ones. By the time you finish the important work and you don't

always have time to do the rest. Give it a break.

5. Saying "no" is always an option- Some people find it difficult to say "no". It used to be one of my major problems with life. So, eventually I had to take care of much

unnecessary work on my part only because I was too polite to say the word. Eventually I learnt. Don't know what to say "no" to? If it's not a goal, a priority, say no. And never say "maybe". Maybe is for people who are confused. You don't want to give your boss or colleagues that impression.

6. Silence your devices- Try muting your computer, phone, even e-mail notifications when you're supposed to be working and getting things done. That way, you don't hear a distracting chime. If you really want to do it right, set aside a small chunk of time the same time every day to email. Also, never answer a call unless you're expecting it or have time for it, even if it's your boss. Being productive is your and only your responsibility. This boss of yours won't leave an opportunity to yell at you if the work is not done, even if he wasted a lot of your time with phone calls, unnecessary chat. Get your work done first.

Here's the thing. When you have to be dynamic and constructive, avoid distractions and later, you can do all of the other things. A diversion, indecision to decide what to do can actually do more damage to our creative self than we realize. You set the priorities. You make the choices. You have way more control than you realize.

WORDS: ASIF KAMAL
ILLUSTRATION: E R RONNY

WORDS TO BUILD BY

“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of other's opinions drown out your own inner voice. Most importantly, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.”

- Steve Jobs

CONNECT TO NEXT STEP

Tell us how you feel about our page. Feel free to e-mail us with your questions, comments, or suggestions. Join our facebook page to stay updated.

facebook.com/
thedailystar.nextstep
Email: nextstep@thedailystar.net

Download our PDF version from our website.