

Dread being back at work? 4 tips to reviving the joy in your job

 By [Anja van Beek](#)

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You used to like going to work (or, in the hybrid world, doing the work) and being inspired to solve problems. You used to thrive on that kind of drive. But now, even after a December break, you're finding it difficult to get excited about the new year with a newfound focus.



Image source: Andrea Flacquadio from [Pexels](#)

You probably thought "I just need a break..." towards the end of last year, but now that you're back at work, you might find yourself scrolling through social media, TikTok, or Pinterest, counting down the minutes until you can close your laptop.

You could also be secretly scrolling through job portals in the hopes to search for inspiration for the rut you find yourself in.

However, it isn't as cut and dry as you might hope, especially given the current economic scenario, where you should "simply be thankful to have a job". And to top it off, the expectation to be 'innovative' adds another layer to this complex situation.

According to [PwC's Workforce Hopes and Fears survey](#), which involved more than 52,000 workers across 44 countries, say that nearly one in every five employees worldwide say they are likely to switch jobs in the next 12 months, indicating that the so-called "great resignation" is not going away.



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Enough has been written about how, especially in a nation with such a high unemployment rate, the grass isn't necessarily

greener on the other side and that you should instead water the garden you have now.

Here are some suggestions to revitalise your current career while you still have the chance to find inspiration and a fresh joy for what you do.

1. What sparks joy in your role?

You can significantly improve your performance by finding significance and meaning in your work. Purposefulness is the crucial trait to developing your own agility.

You'll be able to better understand how to leverage your innate talents and interests to help and support the larger team when you concentrate on them. This will immediately affect how you feel like you're contributing meaningfully, which directly affects how you feel like you belong.

As professionals, we are tempted to "fix" something, meaning we focus on our weaknesses, instead of building our innate strengths. To discover your innate strengths, make a list of activities that you do during a normal week.

Record which activities make you excited, the ones where you are lost in time. Things that you do effortlessly should be an indication of your natural strengths.

Share your talents and strengths with the world now that you have discovered them. Think about how you can help others. Sometimes all it takes to ignite that spark is a change of scenery. Another possibility is that you get more energised when you assist others. Assisting a distinct cross-functional team with a major project, for instance.

This might also enhance your reputation as a trustworthy and valuable resource and inspire some fresh enthusiasm for your problem-solving skills.

2. What does your career mosaic look like?

Career planning traditionally done is no longer effective. A career mosaic is a notion that agile HR teaches. As a result, jobs are much more flexible, with an emphasis on personal growth and adding value to both the organisation and the individual.

Instead of waiting for a manager or an HR programme, you should take charge of your own development. You should initiate conversations about your future and be honest about your goals.





3. Get a mentor (or two)

A lot of us can attest to the value of having a mentor. The opportunity to discuss your ideas with an expert and gain insight from their experiences in life and work is priceless. There is a lot of value in using the lessons shared to influence your career choices through gaining insight and appreciation.

What I have learned from my mentor are the benefits of building a network and how to embrace the currency of generosity. This simply means being open to sharing knowledge and being helpful without expecting in return.

I had more than one mentor... one with a specific HR, functional perspective and another from a broader business strategy and personal perspective. My HR mentor has guided me on how to handle sensitive matters; some tricky industrial relationship issues and how to handle them with a human-centric approach, not only a tick-box exercise where you let someone go.

4. The power of self-leadership

How are you channelling your energy? What perspective do you take on the world? Daily practice of intentionally choosing how you see the world will influence your thinking, feelings, and actions. This is crucial if you wish to re-energise your career.

Our brains are like Velcro – noticing (and sometimes, obsessing) about the negative first. Be intentional about finding the benefit in your role and the value and impact you are making for the clients and team members.

Another step in self-leadership is to assess whether you are biased. A bias is merely an automatic response we utilise to navigate the world in order to respond fast and without thinking.

What mental shortcuts do you use that influence how you see your current role and may need to be adjusted?

For example, if you are in a brainstorming session and you tend to favour or detest a recommendation from one of the team members, ask yourself: "If this suggestion was offered by someone else, would I also like or dislike the concept as much as I do?"

In closing

When revitalising your position and profession, consider the role of self-care. Consider whether you have sufficient habits in place to be resilient and perform at a high level. Self-care is essential, and strong evidence supports the advantages of nourishing your soul through journaling, silencing the mind, and mindfulness.

Think about your level of commitment. Perhaps 3 x 5 minutes of mindful breathing, perhaps a morning routine which includes some exercise. Decide what works for you. Devote time to developing regular rhythms and habits that will help you. These rhythms and routines can help you cope better with the problems you face in your job, and as a result, you will find joy in your professional journey.

ABOUT ANJA VAN BEEK

Anja van Beek is an independent leadership consultant, talent strategist and coach.

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