

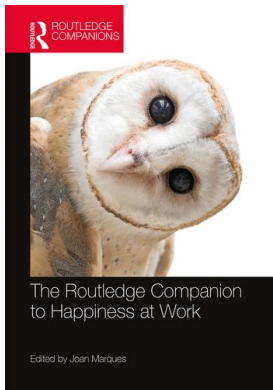
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## The Routledge Companion to Happiness at Work

Joan Marques

### Soulful Work for Happy Employees

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Debra J. Dean

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# 11

## SOULFUL WORK FOR HAPPY EMPLOYEES

*Debra J. Dean*

### Introduction

While being happy at work is important to the employee, many business owners or leaders of organizations need to see a connection between happy employees and the return on their investment. In other words, is it worth the time, money, and energy to create a culture where employees will be happy? To measure this return on investment, many desired workplace outcomes are used, such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. After all, many business leaders understand those phrases and the direct connection they have to the bottom line.

### Happiness at Work

When talking about happiness at work, folks tend to camp in one of two fields. In one camp, they toss their hands up and make a disgusted face mumbling something to the tune of “people go to work to get a paycheck”, or ask the question “how does happiness at work impact the bottom line?” In the other camp, supporters of happiness at work rally together to prove the concept is beneficial to the bottom line of the company and promote community events to try and advocate for their cause.

According to Fisher (2010, p. 384), a “comprehensive measure of individual-level happiness might include work engagement, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment”. She explains that although happiness has not been a term researched extensively in academia, many other constructs have been studied that seem to overlap the paradigm of happiness, the most common being job satisfaction. Fisher describes three practical ways to view happiness related constructs in the workplace. They include transient level, person level, and unit level. At the transient level, an employee may momentarily experience “positive mood, experience of flow, and discrete emotions such as joy, pleasure, happiness, and contentment” (p. 386). Happiness at work on the personal level occurs between individuals and “include[s] dispositional affectivity, job satisfaction, affective commitment, and typical mood at work” (p. 386). Happiness at work at the unit level involves teams, work units, and entire organizations. Basically, the unit level of happiness measures the same personal level construct, just at a group level. This is most often viewed in awards, such as Forbes’ “The Happiest Companies to Work For” list, or the CNBC list of “the top 25 companies to work for if you want to be happier”.

The assumption is that if a person works for a particular company, they will be happy. However, the realist usually responds with something like, “being happy depends on how the person feels on

the inside—it’s a personal decision” or something like that. And it is seen with all sorts of circumstances, for example, let’s use Dick and Jane. Dick works for one of the companies on the list above. He expects to be happy because the company is a “happy” place to be. But Dick is miserable and hates his job. Dick has a history of moving from place to place and changing friends frequently because they just do not make him happy. On the other hand, Jane does not work for one of the top 25 happiest companies, and she is going through her fair share of trials and tribulations. In the life of our hypothetical employee, Jane, she had a car accident about one year ago. It prompted the doctors to run some tests. She found out she has cancer. Now, she is dealing with divorce and bankruptcy to pay her medical bills. But Jill is happy. Her mindset gives her a clear understanding that life could be worse and that she has been blessed. Although her situation is dreadful, her mood is joyful, and her typical disposition is happy. These examples are provided to demonstrate how happiness is truly at a personal level, although it may be measured at a unit level to determine if members of the group are overall happy, satisfied, content, engaged, and committed.

### **Nourish the Soul at Work**

The concept of nourishing the soul at work is found in workplace spirituality. The origin of workplace spirituality is possibly a 1953 Fortune magazine article titled *Businessmen on their Knees*. In that article, Norton-Taylor (1953) examined several reputable organizations and found that leaders had invited God into the boardroom and as a result, their workplace was much better. At the time, Norton-Taylor called it a movement and questioned if businessmen were “promoting religion as a useful tool and God as a good partner to have in the firm?” Or if businessmen were “putting their religion to daily ‘practical’ uses” and “experiencing a spiritual awakening that is indeed genuine?” Other than this one magazine article, the 20th century literature is fairly void of God in Business, Faith at Work, Workplace Spirituality, and the other common phrases that are used in the 21st century.

In 1999, Mitroff & Denton conducted the first qualitative research project on the concept we now call workplace spirituality. Their efforts distilled the word “interconnectedness” as a single word that describes spirituality (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 83). It could be a connection to God, a higher power, nature, or anything bigger than one’s self. Mitroff & Denton defined spirituality as “the basic feeling of being connected with one’s complete self, others, and the entire universe” (p. 83). The academic pioneers explained that “people are hungry for ways in which to practice spirituality in the workplace without offending their coworkers or causing acrimony”, and they believe strongly that “unless organizations learn how to harness the ‘whole person’ and the immense spiritual energy that is at the core of everyone, they will not be able to produce world-class products and service” (p. 84). Additional research by the scholars led to the finding that “recognition of an inner life that nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work that takes place in the context of community” (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000, p. 139). Since their first study, researchers around the globe have joined in the effort to understand more about the impact of spiritual workplaces on people, planet, and profit.

Around the same time as Mitroff & Denton’s revolutionary exploration, the well-known research giant The Gallup Organization reflected on decades of data to try and distill what the world’s greatest managers did differently. They concluded, based on research with over 80,000 managers over 25 years, that pay and benefits are “like tickets to the ballpark – they can get you into the game, but they can’t help you win” (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999, p. 29). Their book, while not definitively pointing to workplace spirituality, describes twelve similar concepts. Specifically, Buckingham & Coffman list the following twelve items on their measuring stick (p. 37), several of which are similar to spiritual leadership concepts of altruistic love, faith/hope, vision (Fry, Vitucci, & Cedillo, 2005) and inner life, meaningful work, and sense of community (Ashmos & Duchon,

Table 11.1 Items on the Buckingham &amp; Coffman (1999) Measuring Stick

Know what is expected of me	Supervisor/someone at work cares	Mission/purpose of company
Materials and equipment	Encourages development	Co-workers committed to quality
Do what I do best every day	Progress in last six months	Best friend
Recognition last seven days	My opinion counts	Opportunity to learn and grow

2000). Additionally, the Dennis & Bocarnea (2005) Servant Leadership Assessment Index concepts of agapao love, altruism, empowerment, humility, serving, trust, and vision are similar to Buckingham & Coffman's list above.

In 2001, the cover of Fortune magazine promoted a follow-up article titled *God in Business*. Gunther (2001) cited the previous 1953 article and explained that "bringing spirituality into the workplace ... is breaching the last taboo in corporate America". David Miller, author of *God at Work*, was quoted in Gunther's article as saying that "God is found in earth and rocks and buildings and institutions, and yes, in the business world". With all of this talk about God in business, some practitioners and scholars alike embarked on a journey to determine if there was a difference between religion and spirituality. Giacalone, Jurkiewicz, & Fry (2005) address the matter of religion and spirituality by stating that "spirituality is necessary for religion, but religion is not necessary for spirituality" (p. 5).

As with any new discovery, it takes a while to fully understand the phenomenon and define the parameters. In this effort, Giacalone and Jurkiewicz defined workplace spirituality as "A framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of organizational transcendence through the work process, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy" (2010). Although an agreed-upon definition is not yet set in stone, the focus on spirituality in business is becoming "today's greatest megatrend" (Aburdene, 2005) and "the need for organizational leaders to devote attention to spiritual values has likely never been greater" (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003).

Fry (2003) argues that spiritual leadership is inclusive of other major leadership theories, but incorporates calling and membership as two key follower needs for spiritual survival. The theorist states that "leaders must get in touch with their core values and communicate them to followers through vision and personal actions to create a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership" (Fry, 2003, p. 693).

For many workers, work has taken an ever more prominent and time-consuming place in their lives. As a result, workers need for connectedness, meaning, purpose, altruism, virtue, nurturance, and hope in one's work and at one's workplace likely is also at an all-time high.

(Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz, 2008, p. 465)

In 2008, research by Rego & Pina e Cunha defined workplace spirituality as "the recognition that employees have an inner life which nourishes and is nourished by meaningful work taking place in the context of community" (p. 55). Additional research found that:

[P]eople work with not only their hands but also [P] their hearts (spirit). It is when people work with their hearts or spirit that they find meaning and purpose, a kind of fulfillment that means the workplace can be a place where people can express their whole or entire selves and be fulfilled.

(Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009)

The concept of building a workplace that provides a sense of community is possibly derived from spending more time at work and less time with family and neighbors. “As the two-decade trend to spend more time at work increases, we actively seek opportunities for meaning, purpose, and a sense of connection and belonging from our work” (Fry & Nisiewicz, 2013). In response to the shift where one spends more of their time at work, organizations need a business model that enriches the lives of its employees, customers, suppliers, and the community while still maintaining adequate levels of financial performance (Fry and Nisiewicz, 2013).

Employees are “no longer content to park their souls at the door, people sought to bring their whole selves – body, mind, heart, and soul – to work” (Benefiel, Fry, & Geigle, 2014, p. 177). Garcia-Zamor (2003) wrote that “There is a spiritual awakening in the American workplace” (p. 355). He explained that in the 1990s there were “more than 300 titles on workplace spirituality” that flooded bookstores (p. 355). In 2019, Amazon showed more than 500 books with “workplace spirituality” in the title and a Google search found about 17,600,000 results. There are probably more books, however, titles and content are also using phrases such as Faith at Work, God in Business, Spirit at Work, and Spirituality in the Workplace.

### **The First Research Project**

A beautiful process of academic research is the joint effort to fill a gap in research and then expand the field through empirical literature. This process is sweetly displayed as Mitroff & Denton performed the first qualitative study and other scholars (this is not an exhaustive list) such as Ashmos, Benefiel, Cedillo, Duchon, Fry, Geigle, Giacalone, Jurkiewicz, Miller, Nisiewicz, and Vitucci have extended the research over the past 20 years. For the purpose of this book chapter, the focus will be on three studies performed by Dean (2016, 2017, 2019).

### **Employee Engagement**

Employee engagement is one of the buzz phrases used in corporate America. From a practical viewpoint, the thought is that if employees are engaged they will be happier, more enthusiastic, and will produce better products and services. The introduction of employee engagement started with qualitative work on personal engagement and personal disengagement (Kahn, 1990).

The employee engagement concept is a personal decision and organizations cannot force an employee to be engaged (Vosloban, 2013). Although an agreed-upon definition has not been provided in the existing literature, Vosloban believes that three basic concepts belong to employee engagement. The first concept is emotional. The emotional aspect of employee engagement may also tie back to the spiritual aspect of workplace spirituality (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2010). The second concept is behavioral, and the third concept is cognitive engagement. Vosloban also wrote that the same factors which engage an employee can also disengage an employee. Factors such as environmental and personal aspects of emotions, family, and personality all have the potential to positively or negatively impact employee engagement.

Employee engagement is an emerging concept that can aid an organization with absenteeism, attrition, business productivity, customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, individual performance, profitability, and resilience (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014). Since 1990, employee engagement has received much attention. Bhuvanaiah & Raya provide an extensive list of definitions from empirical research. Since Kahn was the first to coin the phrase, it makes sense to start with his definition of employee engagement as “the harnessing of organization members selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances” (1990).

The list of employee engagement definitions compiled by Bhuvanaiah & Raya (2014) also includes words or phrases such as someone who is absorbed in their work, adaptive, aware of business

context, committed, dedicated, empowered, energized, and engaged, as well as phrases such as employees that are enthused for work, experiencing belief in what they do, experiencing collaboration, experiencing meaningful connections, and experiencing positive emotions.

There are various levels of employee engagement, according to the Blessing White Organization (Bhuvanaiah & Raya, 2014). The engaged are highly productive followers; the almost engaged are followers that are reasonably productive and content with their job. The honeymooners and hamsters are highly satisfied with their job title and their employer; however, they have low contribution levels. The crash-burners are followers that are highly productive and contribute the maximum level; however, they are not happy with their success. The disengaged are discontent followers with a negative outlook for the organization. Gallup (2013) also identified various levels of engagement to simply include (a) engaged, (b) not engaged, and (c) disengaged.

Wiley (2013) wrote those common components of employee engagement include a willingness to exert discretionary effort, commitment, employee alignment with organizational goals, enthusiasm for work, and organizational pride. To measure employee engagement, Wiley examined the following four elements: advocacy, commitment, pride, and satisfaction. He explained that the reason to examine these four elements of employee engagement is simple. A follower with high levels of employee engagement is proud and satisfied with their firm as an employer. The engaged follower advocates for their firm, is content with their workplace, and intends to remain employed by the organization. Wiley noted that the top ways to improve employee engagement are displaying confidence in the firm's future, displaying organizational support for work/life balance, ensuring leadership communicates a motivating vision, ensuring that safety is a priority, having a promising future for self, having excitement about one's work, having opportunity for growth and development, making quality and improvement top priorities, and prioritizing organizational corporate responsibility efforts to increase overall satisfaction. Wiley wrote that the list of ways to improve employee engagement can be reduced to four pillars. The first pillar, according to Wiley, is that leaders inspire confidence in the future. The second pillar is that managers recognize employees and emphasize quality and improvement as top priorities. The third pillar is that work is exciting and there are opportunities to grow and develop. The fourth pillar for employee engagement is that firms demonstrate a sincere responsibility to their employees and the communities where they operate.

### **Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership is a phrase coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in his 1970 *Servant as Leader* essay. Greenleaf described a servant leader as one that serves first and explained that a leader that leads first is vastly different from a leader that serves first. As a servant leader, one will prioritize the needs of others with expectations of seeing the growth and well-being of their followers. In other words, a leader that serves their people would expect the health, knowledge, and independence of their followers to improve as a result of their leader-follower relationship. Such a leader will share power and will help others develop and maximize their performance potential. A servant leader is focused on the person first instead of the task.

Servant leadership has much support from names such as John Wooden, Ken Blanchard, and Stephen Covey. Wooden is considered one of the world's greatest servant leaders. His core being was a selfless leader. In return, he received love, loyalty, and respect from his followers while he led them and, most impressively, decades after their official leader-follower relationship ended. Blanchard believes that servant leadership is the foundation for effective leadership and that it is more applicable than ever in our world today. Covey emphasized empowerment of employees as a key attribute resulting from servant leadership. Covey exclaimed that servant leadership is a process that turns leaders into coaches which results in motivating, inspiring, and uplifting others in a way that has not been done before.

## **Research Findings**

In 2016, Dean conducted quantitative research to examine the impact of servant leadership on employee engagement. The instruments used for this research are shown in Table 11.2. Dean thought that if she could distill down how to predict engaged employees, she could teach and coach to increase happiness at work. Using the Employee Engagement Index (Wiley, 2013) and the Servant Leadership Assessment Index (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005), she found that all aspects of employee engagement are related to or correlated to servant leadership's ten characteristics as defined by Patterson (2003). Specifically, agapao love, altruism, empowerment, humility, serving, trust, and vision all related to employee engagement. Based on this information, Dean coached a team for over a year and found that her methods worked, resulting in some of the highest levels of engagement in the international organization.

## **The Second Research Project**

A second research project examined job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Again, the idea was that if an employee is satisfied at work then they are happy and will produce more effort. And, if the employee is satisfied, they will be more committed to the organization, thus having less turnover or absenteeism. This project used spiritual leadership as the predictor variable.

## **Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction was chosen as one of two dependent variables as it is considered as “the most important and frequently studied attitude” (Akehurst, Comeche, & Galindo, 2009, p. 280). The definition of job satisfaction generally encompasses an attitude a person has towards their job (Locke, 1969; Price, 2002), or a perspective of how well one's work environment meets their expectation (Spector, 1997). The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) evaluates the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of the work environment. According to Lester & Bishop (2000), the MSQ is “one of the most frequently used instruments to measure job satisfaction” (p. 154). The instrument used for this research measured ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social status, social service, supervision (human resources and technical), variety, and working conditions (Weiss et al., 1967).

## **Organizational Commitment**

In addition to job satisfaction, organizational commitment is a popular research topic. Fares & Noordin (2016) explained that “organizational commitment is one of the most widely examined variables in the literature” (p. 30). Mowday (1998) reflected on his 25 years researching organizational commitment and stated that employees believe “commitment to work and an organization represented a positive relationship that could potentially add meaning to life”, and organizations

*Table 11.2* Instruments Used

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Type of Scale</i>	<i>Source</i>
Employee Engagement	4	6-point Likert	Wiley (2013)
Servant Leadership Assessment Index	42	6-point Likert	Dennis & Bocarnea (2005)

believe “that having committed employees would be beneficial due to the potential for increased performance and reduced turnover and absenteeism” (p. 388).

### Spiritual Leadership

Fry (2003) defines spiritual leadership as “comprising the values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary to intrinsically motivate one’s self and others so that they have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership” (p. 694–695). Fry (2003) introduced the causal theory of spiritual leadership to include intrinsic motivation of altruistic love, hope/faith, and vision as a holistic leadership theory to address the four areas that define the essence of human existence, which include the body, mind, heart, and spirit.

### Research Findings

Dean (2017) conducted a quantitative evaluation of job satisfaction and organizational commitment along with spiritual leadership. The instruments used for this study are found in Table 11.3. Altruistic love was a main predictor for both job satisfaction and organizational commitment. According to this research, when employees have altruistic love, sense of community, and meaningful work they may have more job satisfaction, and altruistic love may predict more organizational commitment. According to Fry (2003), the spiritual leadership characteristic of altruistic love includes courage, empathy/compassion, forgiveness, honesty, humility, integrity, kindness, patience, and trust/loyalty. And, Fry defined altruistic love as a “sense of wholeness, harmony, and well-being produced through care, concern, and appreciation for self and others” (p. 712). Ashmos & Duchon (2000) described sense of community as the act of “living in connection with other human beings” and noted that the workplace is its own kind of community (p. 136). Interconnection among workers is an important part of the workplace; Ashmos and Duchon also wrote that “feeling part of a community is an essential element of spiritual development” (p. 137). Meaningful work, according to Ashmos and Duchon, is the act of being involved in work that gives meaning to life.

### The Third Research Project

#### *Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction, & Organizational Commitment*

The final research project included in this chapter combined all three desired workplace outcomes of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. This time, the predictor

Table 11.3 Instruments Used

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Type of Scale</i>	<i>Source</i>
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	20	5-point Likert	Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967)
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	15	7-point Likert	Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979)
Religious Commitment Index (RCI-10)	10	5-point Likert	Worthington, et al. (2003)
Spiritual Leadership Scale	41	5-point Likert	Fry, Vitucci, and Cedillo (2005)
Spirituality at Work Scale	21	7-point Likert	Ashmos & Duchon (2000)



Table 11.4 Instruments Used

<i>Instrument</i>	<i>Number of Items</i>	<i>Type of Scale</i>	<i>Source</i>
Fruit of the Spirit Scale	45	7-point Likert	Bocarnea, Henson, Huizing, Mahan, and Winston (2018)
Organizational Spirituality Values	20	5-point Likert	Kolodinsky, Giacalone, and Jurkiewicz (2008)
Employee Engagement	4	6-point Likert	Wiley (2013)
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	20	5-point Likert	Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (1967)
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	15	7-point Likert	Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979)

variables were the Fruit of the Spirit as defined in Galatians 5:22. The fruits are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The origin of this project began when a new instrument was created by Bocarnea, Henson, Huizing, Mahan, & Winston (2018).

### ***Fruit of the Spirit***

Dean (2019) wanted to use the new Fruit of the Spirit instrument along with previously used instruments for employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to see if the fruits were related to the desired work outcomes and, if they were, to also see if any of the fruits could predict the desirable work outcomes. The instruments used for this study are shown in Table 11.4.

Dean (2019) found that all of the fruits were related to, and many predicted, employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational spirituality. The strongest relationships for employee engagement were love, kindness, and self-control. The strongest relationships for job satisfaction were joy and gentleness. The strongest relationship for organizational commitment was love. And, the strongest relationship for organizational spirituality was love and peace. A quick view of each predictive variable is shown in Table 11.5.

### **Practically Develop a Culture of Soulful Work**

Based on the research conducted by Dean (2016, 2017, 2019) practical recommendations to develop a culture of soulful work for happy employees will be discussed in this section. To start, the variables for each project are listed in Table 11.6. For each study, the one variable that stands out is love. It is also stated in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that the “greatest of these is love”, and that is probably not a coincidence.

Table 11.5 Fruit of the Spirit Predictive Variables

<i>Desired Work Outcome</i>	<i>Fruit</i>
Employee Engagement	Love, kindness, and self-control
Job Satisfaction	Joy and gentleness
Organizational Commitment	Love
Organizational Spirituality	Love and peace

Table 11.6 Research Project Variables

<i>Research Project 1</i>	<i>Research Project 2</i>	<i>Research Project 3</i>
Agapao Love	Altruistic Love	Love
Altruism	Faith/Hope	Joy
Empowerment	Inner Life	Peace
Humility	Meaningful Work	Patience
Serving	Sense of Community	Kindness
Trust	Vision	Goodness
Vision		Faithfulness
		Gentleness
		Self-Control

### Love Your People

When working with people in business, it is sometimes challenging to show enough proof that loving their people will produce the results they want as an organization. However, the proof is in the research. Time and time again, empirical research shows that love is related to and can predict desirable work outcomes, as is the case in the research performed by Dean (2016, 2017, 2019). It was a number one predictor of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. If there is only one item taken from this chapter, please let it be to love your people.

Once an organization is ready to believe in love, the next challenge is to coach the leaders to love their people. This is not as hard as it may seem. Dean recommends weekly coaching sessions to discuss how to practically and properly love their staff that week. Ideas include walking around and talking with team members, knowing the name of each employee, inquiring about their family and hobbies, and bringing in snacks, or allowing the employees to have extra time to handle personal affairs that may be stressing them out. Once an employee knows that you genuinely care about them, they feel loved. Another idea to show someone you care is to find out what their favorite things are and use those throughout the year as a token of appreciation. An easy way to do this is to ask everyone at the same time with a worksheet. A sample is provided in Figure 11.1. This worksheet can be completed and saved for future reference. In the past, Dean and her colleagues have used this to add a little special touch to awards and recognition throughout the year. The worksheet is shared with all employees in the department so they can also provide special treats for their co-workers as a thank you or pick-me-up.

An example of loving your people may include providing a baby shower when an employee is expecting a child. Recently, this topic arose on social media as a leader asked what to do with her male employee that was expecting his tenth child. Several people said that nothing should be done and listed various excuses for not exerting any effort. The one idea that seemed to have more favor was to pass around a card for everyone on the team to sign and provide an envelope for anyone that wanted to donate money. The result is a card with well-wishes for the family from everyone and a little extra financial help for the new addition. Even if the amount was only \$25, it would surely be put to good use.

### Build a Sense of Community

Building a sense of community and love go hand-in-hand. As leaders talk with their teams and invite them to monthly or quarterly events, such as a picnic in a park or lunch at a restaurant, the community will start to develop. Dean recommends routine intentionality by building a sense of community. Practically, a few ideas may include bringing the team together for a non-work related

<b>Favorite Things Worksheet</b>	
Name:	
Birthday:	
Work Anniversary:	
Please list your favorite item(s) for each category below:	
<b>Category</b>	<b>My Favorite Thing(s)</b>
Animal	
Book	
Breakfast food	
Dinner food	
Hobby	
Inside activity	
Lunch food	
Alcoholic drink	
Outside activity	
Restaurant	

Figure 11.1 Favorite Things Worksheet.

event such as bowling, sponsoring a family at Christmas, or volunteering in the community. Additional ideas include celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and other life events. Additionally, consider celebrating success at work such as completing small and large projects. Dean warns that celebration on a day other than the actual birthday or anniversary may not have the same impact as celebrating on the correct day. Also, celebrating at the leader’s favorite restaurant may not have the same impact as celebrating at the favorite location of the person with the birthday or anniversary.

As an example of a celebration gone wrong, picture an employee that has worked for an organization for 40 years. Before her special day, her human resources representative stops her in the hall to inquire about her anniversary and mentions that her boss has something special for her. When the special day arrives, nothing happens. The human resources representative later asks her if her boss gave her the special gift and the employee said no. Apparently, he did not have time that day to stop by her desk. When he does finally stop by her desk, more than a week later, he provides her with a card and \$100 cash. Due to the lack of attention on her special day, the gift had a negative effect on the employee as she felt like she was not loved and that the 40 years of her life was a waste. Additionally, a lost opportunity with this milestone anniversary was a community-building event. It would have been easy to celebrate with cake and an open house so that all of her colleagues could wish her well and thank her for her service.

### **Provide Meaningful Work**

The harder variable to work with, in Dean’s experience, has been providing meaningful work. To start, one will need to reach out to leadership to see if they can articulate why the work is meaningful. This needs to be broken down into the day-to-day work that each employee performs, not an overall mission or vision statement printed in the handbook. It is important that each employee understands how their day-to-day work relates to the larger purpose of the organization. It is best if the leader of the team will take charge of this mission in defining meaningful work for their staff. If the leader is not able to do this or not willing to do it, then it is possible for an employee at any level to do it, but it will be challenging; worthwhile, but challenging.

One way to start this process is to begin with the end in mind. Print out the corporate mission and vision statements, and then back into the finite work that is being done. This will require conversations with various people in the organization at various levels. Those conversations will likely be interesting and rewarding in and of themselves. Throughout this process, the methodology of lean six-sigma or operational excellence may arise. It would be surprising if they did not surface. The reason for this is because many people do work that does not need to be done any longer. Perhaps the work is irrelevant and no longer needs to be performed. Perhaps the work is not being looked at by other people and can be eliminated all together. Or, perhaps the work can be improved with process efficiency methods. An easy way to start is to simply ask why. Invite others into your day-to-day tasks and ask why the work is important and how it relates to the overall mission of the organization. Also, ask why the work is done the way it is being done. If someone says “well it was always done that way”, then question if there is a better way to do it. Look for options to automate the work with macros or artificial intelligence. If work can be done better, that will free up an opportunity for employees to do real work that is meaningful instead of mundane tasks.

An example of this involved an examination of a large department with more than 300 highly skilled employees. Their work was tracked using lean methodology practices and conversations were had. It was discovered that these highly paid individuals were spending more than 75% of their time copy/pasting into spreadsheets. It was revealed that much of their time was being wasted on any given day. This was not good for the company, nor the morale of the employees. These highly skilled employees wanted to do meaningful work. In the end, a project was initiated to improve the computer systems so that all of the employees could do more meaningful work.

### Conclusive Note

The main takeaway from this chapter is to foster a culture of happiness at work through loving others. This aligns with Matthew 22: 36–40 (NIV) where Jesus said the greatest commandment is to:

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, happiness at work is a personal decision that can be measured at a unit level. The main ideas found through this research include loving others, building a sense of community, and having meaningful work. Those three items can include many of the other variables that were also found to be related to and/or predictive of employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Variables such as agapao and altruistic love, empowerment, faith/hope, faithfulness, gentleness, goodness, humility, inner life, joy, kindness, meaningful work, patience, peace, self-control, sense of community, serving, trust, and vision have all proven through empirical research to have a relationship to happiness at work. An easy way to implement such a culture is to start with love.

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