

q wellbeing: with YU DAN SHI

Four surprising working habits that derail our performance and happiness

When you feel miserable and stuck at work, it's easy to imagine everything will be OK with a new job, a different career path or quitting altogether. You may have already experienced several career changes, only to feel unhappy time and time again. When we are in pain, we look for the fastest way to take our pain away. If the job is too painful, we assume another job is the solution. It seems completely logical. Get rid of the source of our unhappiness, then we will be happy, right?

The problem with this approach is it largely focuses on external factors. Getting away from toxic environments does give you space to think. Taking time out to rest and regroup is necessary for our wellbeing; however, unless we also take the time to reflect and learn, it's likely we will find ourselves in similar stressful situations again and again. Our current situation is the result of our long-term behaviour and habits. Through years of research and working with professionals and executives, I have discovered that a lot of our unhappiness is the result of our long-term behaviours and habits. These habits often give us the successes early on, but later derail our performance and happiness.



These detrimental habits include:

- 1. You care too much.** Responsible people are often great leaders at home and in the workplace. Being responsible and considerate of others can bring us early successes. However, pleasing everybody ends up pleasing nobody. As we become overwhelmed by our responsibilities and the perfect image we believe we need to keep up with, our performance drops and our stress level increases.
- 2. Don't understand your strengths.** Many intelligent people can learn things with ease. This ability enables them to climb the career ladder as corporations expect their workforce to be good at many things. However, if we strive to be good at everything without developing a deep understanding of what our real strengths are, we risk under-utilising their capabilities. Our performance starts to decline as we see more of our weaknesses, which impacts our confidence.
- 3. You do too much.** Workaholicism is another habit that stops working in our favour. Working exceptionally hard often rewards us with success early in our career, but eventually wreaks havoc mentally and physically. We feel overwhelmed and exhausted by the demands and complexity of our work and life. Stress and unhealthy habits eventually impact our health and wellbeing.
- 4. Undervalue the importance of passion.** Many people achieve success early on because they can stay focused on their goals. However, they can be too single minded and often put their creative pursuits or passion projects on hold, concerned they might distract them from their steady path. Without tapping into their passions, life feels dull. This will eventually make them feel resentful towards their daily work and life.

We quickly discover these behaviours get us ahead in our careers, so we keep doing them, even when they don't make us happy. When these behaviours become a daily habit, they inevitably wear us down, no matter how successful we are. What underpins this pattern is the fact we don't know how to achieve success in a healthy and optimal way, ways that get the best out of us. Most of us have only been taught how to work harder and longer to achieve success, not how to work better. In other words, many of us are high achievers but not necessarily high performers.

When we learn to achieve in an optimal way, we sustain our success for longer, and we become much happier. With the right tools and techniques, people learn how to motivate themselves naturally without shouting "come on, you can do it". They understand how to perform at their peak and restore their energy daily. And they learn how to re-design their work and daily agenda to get the best out of themselves. By refining their working habits, people see tremendous results within a short period of time. They take back control, feel energised and driven. They not only start to perform better at work, but they also feel much happier overall. Their relationships with their families improve as their psychological wellbeing recovers. For many, they also finally have the time to re-connect with their passion projects, bringing joy back into their lives. Work has two parts: what the job entails and how you manage it. As the complexity of our workplace increases, how you work plays an increasingly important role.

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