

C1 Advanced / Listening

- Part 2 -

Script



Interviewer: My guest today is Diana McLeod, careers advisor at the University of Blackstable. She'll be talking to us about how our work can make us happy. Thank you for joining us, Diana. Isn't the key to happiness in the workplace keeping ourselves interested in what we do?

Diana: You would think so but it's actually quite hard to say whether it leads to happiness or not. A few months ago I saw some results of a survey in which graduates were asked to rate different careers in terms of how interesting they were. I was amazed to see that teaching was rated as the least boring. It came in way ahead of careers in the media or in advertising. Teachers say their work is challenging, that no two days are the same, that they get lots of opportunities to interact with other people and that there's some scope for using their creative skills – all things that keep them engaged. But whether they were happy or not is another question.

Interviewer: So perhaps we should be asking, 'What is it that makes us unhappy at work?'

Diana: Yes, indeed. Common complaints are long hours, a long commute, unrealistic deadlines and job insecurity. You just can't feel happy if you know they're going to fire you any minute. That is definitely top of my list and it's on the increase. After that I'd put having to move away from your friends and family to take a job and contact with other people at work that is unsatisfactory in some way.

Interviewer: Are these poor relationships at work prevalent in smaller companies, too?

Diana: Well, bullying, for example, happens in all sorts of organisations but it's true that the bigger the company or institution is, the more likely it is to occur. Small businesses do have a much lower incidence, which is one reason for the high levels of job satisfaction that their employees experience. In a small company, everyone is treated as if they count. There may be fewer opportunities for training and development than in the big corporations but there's more chance of your skills being appreciated. This is also because you've got fewer people above you telling you what to do. No one likes that.

Interviewer: Becoming self-employed would solve the problem, of course.



Diana: That's true but people need to bear in mind that the boundaries between work and leisure will begin to blur. As likely as not, you'll end up with your nose to the grindstone at all hours of the day, though you'll probably mind that a lot less than if someone else had coerced you into working on a long weekend. You're in control of your own destiny and that tends to make us happier.

Interviewer: I suppose money is a great source of satisfaction, though.

Diana: In fact, it doesn't make much difference once you have enough to meet all your basic needs. A bonus or pay rise might lift your spirits but not for long, especially if you suspect you didn't deserve it. In fact, if you don't see them as being related to the quality of your work or the intensity of your efforts, they'll ultimately reduce your motivation. The carrot and stick approach won't always motivate us or keep us happy.

Interviewer: But one key to happiness must surely be success.

Diana: Happy people often are successful at work but they were probably happy in the first place and that affected their behaviour in such a way that their employers noticed them and promoted them. So how do we get happy? By feeling that we matter and that our work is making a positive difference to others. There's a saying that you do a job for the money, a career for the status but a vocation because you care. So if you would do what you do even without being paid for it, then it's pretty much guaranteed to make you happy.

Interviewer: Well, I must say that's very encouraging and very good advice, especially at a time when many people find themselves starting their working lives as volunteers. We're opening the lines to callers now, so if you would like to talk to Diana about your career plans, the number to dial is ... [fade]