


CAREERS

REGISTER · SEARCH · LEARN | TorontoSun.com/Careers

To advertise call 416-947-3588 or 1-800-268-4309

SPRING INTO WORK WELL-BEING

JOANNE RICHARD

Improve your well-being at work and you'll improve your quality of life overall.

Well-being is linked with all kinds of positive outcomes — from a fulfilling personal life to success in your career, says sociologist and workplace expert Tracy Brower.

Spring is a perfect time for fresh starts, positive mindsets and growing your overall health — cognitive, emotional and physical — to grow your work joy. Work really matters: Its importance has actually grown by 9 per cent in the past year, rising to third place behind family and health and ahead of money, friends, hobbies and community, according to data from Gallup.

“Work gets a bad rap in the popular press as a negative experience and something to avoid but, in reality, work is critical to our sense of joy and community,” says Brower, author of *The Secrets to Happiness at Work*.

No work is idyllic, and it always comes with ups and downs, but “overall work provides an opportunity to get off the couch, show up and make an effort that matters to co-workers. These are all positive for our well-being.”

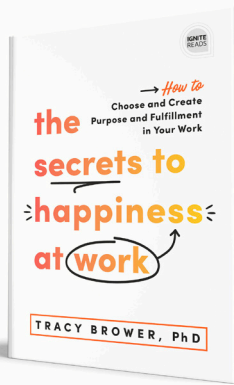
Spring forward with the time change and bring work to life: “When we feel better, we can bring more of ourselves to our work. And it operates in the opposite way as well — career success contributes to well-being,” says Brower, of tracy-brower.com. “Greater levels of purpose, connection and learning are all correlated with well-being and we can realize many of these through our work — contributing to something that’s important, building relationships and facing new challenges that help us grow.”

Take Brower’s steps to create the conditions for all kinds of work well-being in the new season:

■ Remind yourself of how others are counting on you and the ways your work matters to your customers and colleagues. “This small action will help you consider your significance to others and the work and nurture a sense of meaning and purpose, which are highly correlated with well-being.”



Tracy Brower



■ Build relationships with your co-workers: Get to know them and be intentional about investing time to connect with colleagues — 31 per cent of workers plan to get more social, according to Workhuman

data. “Ask questions, listen, be present and appreciate all that they bring. When you’re connected with others, you’re significantly more likely to have a sense of well-being, translating into greater physical, cognitive and emotional health.”

■ Seek opportunities to learn and grow in your job, or for your next job. “Raise your hand for the new project, take initiative to learn a new system, recommend solutions to problems or ask for developmental feedback from a coach or mentor.” Data from Workhuman, an employee recognition program that does its own research, shows that 43 per cent of workers are aiming to learn a new skill at work. When you’re stretching and challenging yourself, you tend to feel a greater

Stop chasing happiness

“One of the problems with the press on happiness is that it tends to put us in a judgmental frame of mind,” says work expert and author Tracy Brower. “We assess our happiness, worry about our happiness and then worry about our worry. But it’s important to know that happiness will always ebb and flow.”

We will all have situations where we’re struggling and situations where we’re celebrating, says Brower. “And ironically, when you chase happiness for its own sake, you’ll actually be less likely to achieve it.”

It’s better to focus on creating the conditions for happiness, says Brower. Whether you’re an introvert or an extrovert, you need at least a few connections. Foster belonging. Be intentional in investing in others. Seek growth, learning and challenge, finding ways to take initiative, learn and stretch.

sense of well-being because these tend to expand your capabilities and confidence. Soon you’ll be inquiring about a promotion or raise.

■ Be intentionally grateful, even for small things. “When you’re grateful, you remember all that’s going well, and you remove yourself from the cycle of always wanting more, which is linked with greater levels of depression, anxiety and unhappiness.” When you wake up or when you go to sleep, take time to think of a couple things you’re grateful for. In the midst of stress, take a few minutes to take a deep breath and consider something you can appreciate. These will contribute to your well-being in big ways.

■ No matter what you’re doing, do the best you can. Performance is correlated with happiness and well-being. And for top performance, be sure to take time away to recharge and rest. Travel is great for fueling creativity and productivity.

AI and work-life balance

LINDA WHITE

Seventy-seven per cent of Canadian knowledge workers admit they don’t have a healthy relationship with work, but 54 per cent believe artificial intelligence (AI) will improve it.

HP’s Work Relationship Index also found 70 per cent of information technology decision makers and 72 per cent of business leaders agree AI can play a role in improving the relationship with work and their work-life balance.

Business leaders are more likely to see AI’s benefits than knowledge workers, with 75 per cent saying AI will make their jobs easier compared to 58 per cent of knowledge workers. Fifty-five per cent of knowledge workers believe AI will open new opportunities for them to enjoy work and make their job more interesting.

Meanwhile, 45 per cent of Gen Z knowledge workers are concerned about their jobs being replaced by AI, while 42 per cent of knowledge workers feel unsure of when to use AI in the workplace and 41 per cent feel unequipped to harness its full potential in their role.

Carbon tax rebates

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) is calling on the federal government to immediately disperse carbon tax (fuel charge) rebates to small- and medium-sized businesses.

Doing so would result in one-time rebates between \$2,600 and nearly \$7,000 in Ontario. “That’s a big chunk of money that small business owners could really use right now,” says CFIB president Dan Kelly. “It’s deeply unfair that five years into the program, Ottawa is still sitting on over \$2.5 billion it owes to small firms.”