

ABC's of Loving Your Job by John C. Maxwell

People who want to retire so they can sit under a coconut tree watching the grass grow baffle me. We were created for meaningful work, and one of life's greatest pleasures is the satisfaction of a job well done.

And yet, there are millions of people who don't like their job. There are over 600,000 ways to make a living in this country, yet job satisfaction surveys tell us that more than 50 percent of the working population claim to dislike their job. Something's wrong with this picture!

I've discovered that loving the job you have, or finding a job you can love, is dependent on three things. I call these the "ABC's of Loving Your Job."

Associates—Work with people you enjoy.

For years, my INJOY friends have heard me brag on people like Dan Reiland, Tim Elmore and Dick Peterson. It has been my privilege to work alongside these men, and many other wonderful people, for years. For me, going to work is like going to a party—all my best friends will be there! I realize that not everyone is surrounded with my kind of staff. The good news is you can develop one. When I talk to leaders about hiring people, I advise them to hire first for affinity, second for character, third for specific skills. If you bring on someone you like whom you can trust, you can teach him or her whatever skills they need for the job. Regarding your existing staff, don't forget that people skills can be learned as well. If you are willing to make the investment, you can cultivate the right kind of people skills in them, helping them become the kind of people that everyone wants to be around.

Belief—Trust that your work is worthwhile and making a vital difference.

Legendary Indy 500 racecar driver Andy Granatelli said once, "When you are making a success of something, it's not work. It's a way of life. You enjoy yourself because you are making your contribution to the world." Bob Buford has written that many people spend the first half of their career pursuing success. When success alone is found to be lacking, they give the second half to the pursuit of significance, which is far more satisfying. If your job is not making a difference in this world, by all means, get out there and find something else. But in many situations, you'll find a sense of making a difference through your work if you simply look for it.

Challenge—Find a job big enough to keep you growing for the rest of your life.

Like too-small shoes pinch the feet, too small of a job pinches a leader's spirit. Cole Porter used to sing, "I want to ride to the ridge where the West commences. I can't look at hobbles and I can't stand fences. Don't fence me in." If the job you have now offers no opportunity to grow, decide to grow anyway. Invest in your own personal development, sharpening leadership skills, interpersonal skills, and technical skills. What you'll discover is that your organization will find a place for a person who has made a priority out of growth. And if they don't, the competition will! And keep this in mind when you consider your top performers: Are you providing room for your top performers to grow? If you don't, someone else will.

Finding joy in your work, or evaluating a lack of joy, can be found by considering associates, beliefs, and challenges.