

# LifeMap<sup>SM</sup>



"LifeMap is a navigational tool to help you on your path towards personal and professional success. Our belief is that you can achieve a more rewarding career, a more productive organization and a more enjoyable and abundant life."

October 2010

## This Month's Message:

### Working for Happiness.

#### Paths Forward

- Need Career Coaching?
- Tired of boring meetings??

#### Resources

## Quick Links

[LifeMap Archive](#)

To subscribe a friend, colleague or family member to this free newsletter - email their address to [drpaul@drpaulpowers.com](mailto:drpaul@drpaulpowers.com) with the subject line "send LifeMap"

## Working for Happiness.

Since the dawn of time (or the dawn of the written word anyway) people have yearned for a deep sense of inner peace and satisfaction. In today's world we call it happiness. Most of us experience happiness in variably-sized doses that occur in between the predictable pitfalls of life such as a sick child, a flat tire or a bad day or week at work. Typically, good news or pleasant events give us a sense of happiness in proportion to their significance. That is: finding a bargain may feel good for the moment, a benign biopsy report will feel good for substantially longer. But the good feeling won't last forever because sooner or later the reality of day to day

life is certain to present you with your next parking ticket or root canal.

**Join our list**  
**Join our mailing list!**

For as long as I've been a psychologist (now 30 years) I have primarily consulted with people where they work. Sad to say, many workplaces are not wellsprings of sweetness, light, and joy. As the old saying goes, "That's why they call it work." But I have observed (and maybe even contributed a bit) to some work environments that provide more than monetary reward and in even some of the toughest workplaces I have found individuals who find satisfaction and enjoyment.

In the last few years there has been quite a bit of interesting, provocative and (predictably) optimistic research coming from the emerging field of positive psychology and a lot of it is about what makes us happy. I'm pleased to report that we're now seeing some validation of what I have long observed. But before sharing some paths to happiness at work let me add the caveat that they don't happen automatically and require the investment of energy from employee and employer alike.

### Paths Forward

• **Challenge Is Essential.** In a 1987 Conference Board survey 61% of Americans said they were content with work. When asked the same question last year only 45.3% said they were "satisfied" with their work . And this is in a recession where many feel lucky just to have a job. In its analysis the report said "Employees largely judge the overall quality of their jobs in terms of the degree to which they are challenged or stimulated". For employers this means crafting assignments wherein people can make and leave their mark. For employees this means -with or without supervisory support - you must find ways to make your job a reflection of your commitment to meaningful work and a job well done.

• **The Team Matters.** In the same study positive feelings about coworkers was the second most-liked aspect of their jobs. Folks who have been laid off frequently mention that one of the things they miss most about their former jobs is interaction with their colleagues. For employees this means seeking out like-minded individuals who really want to contribute and succeed. For employers it means creating opportunities for teamwork, collaboration and group learning. I have also found that it means be willing to make the hard decision to let go employees who cannot or will not pull their fair share. Employees know who the slackers are and retaining them (with no effort at coaching or remediation) engenders a sense of unfairness or favoritism.

• **The Self-Managed Employee.** This most recent recession has increased the demands made from above on most of the managers whom I advise. Unrelenting corporate expectations, more and more meetings and a quest for ever-better metrics leave even some of the most employee-focused managers with little time for those they manage. If this describes your boss then I suggest you do whatever you can to off-load any appropriate tasks from him / her. Realize

that it is up to you to increase your performance. Breaking out of your routine will provide you with challenge. Determine what most you enjoy doing and what makes you most productive and focus your energy there. Your evaluations, visibility and future opportunities will increase.

• **The Visible / Audible Employer.** Satisfied, motivated employees need to see and hear their leader. An organization's best employees are looking for creative ways to make meaningful contributions; it is the employer's job to say and show how. They do not perceive themselves as mere cogs in a machine and, thus, they want to know that what they do is important to the success of the enterprise. They do not see themselves as drones and thus, need to know where the organization is headed and how their effort is helping it get there. When employees feel engaged by the company's mission, when they are given meaningful work to do and are empowered to impact the business great things can happen.

• **The Happiness of Pursuit.** Researchers at Gothenburg University in Sweden studied data from hundreds of people about what makes them happy. One aspect of their findings was that work - hard work towards a goal- gives people true satisfaction and happiness. It appears that working *towards* a goal may have an even more powerful effect than *achieving* the goal itself. But the work cannot be mundane or boring. It must be challenging (there's that *challenge* thing again) and a good match for a person's skills and intelligence. (If this is not so then the work is demoralizing, demotivating and engenders feelings of dissatisfaction.) The implications are perfectly clear to see for employees and employers alike.

I've thrown out a lot of ideas in this edition of LifeMap. If you are a manager and would like to dig into more of the "how to's" I suggest [30 Reasons Employees Hate Their Managers: What Your People May Be Thinking and What You Can Do About It](#) (AMACOM) by Dr. Bruce Katcher. Don't let the provocative title put you off. It is well researched, taps into sub rosa organizational themes I've often encountered and has a strong focus on solutions.

**LifeMap** is about understanding that happiness - in our jobs and in our organizations - is with our grasp if we are willing to do the work to make it so.

#### • Need Career Coaching?

The best investment you can make is in your career, your future and yourself.

email [drpaul@drpaulpowers.com](mailto:drpaul@drpaulpowers.com)

#### • Tired of boring meetings??

Have Dr. Paul speak at your next off-site meeting or conference. Fast-moving, practical, motivating presentations from an acknowledged leader in the field of career and personal success.

<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/speakingschedule.html>

## Resources

- Are you or someone you know job hunting or thinking about it?

The best, concise, all-round job changing guide available. Revised Edition [Winning Job Interviews](#) by Dr. Paul Powers.

In this easy-to-follow, step-by-step book, Dr. Paul Powers demystifies job interviewing, explains why the process actually favors the job hunter, and shows how you can dramatically improve your interview skills. Packed with solid, practical information and laced with both humor and "kick in the pants" motivation, *Winning Job Interviews* is the book you wished you had before your last interview... and is mandatory preparation for your next one!

- Stalled at work? Still struggling to find your true vocation?

Or know someone who is? Order your copy of [Love Your Job!](#) *Loving the Job You Have, Finding A Job You Love* by Dr. Paul.

**<http://www.drpaulpowers.com/booksandarticles.html>**

---

Have an issue or question you'd like Dr. Paul to address in a future edition? Send an email to the email address list below.

If you found this issue of LifeMap of value please forward it to 3 people who you think will enjoy it or you may send us their email address a for a free subscription.

To ensure that LifeMap is delivered to your inbox, please add [drpaul@drpaulpowers.com](mailto:drpaul@drpaulpowers.com) to your address book or list of approved senders.

*(Our privacy policy: we do not share or sell email addresses or any info with any other parties. Ever.)*

**Sincerely,**

Dr. Paul

---

Email: [drpaul@drpaulpowers.com](mailto:drpaul@drpaulpowers.com)

Phone: 781-237-0550

Web: <http://www.drpaulpowers.com>

[Forward email](#)

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to [linda@powersdesign.net](mailto:linda@powersdesign.net) by [drpaul@drpaulpowers.com](mailto:drpaul@drpaulpowers.com).

[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by

