

What the Happiest People Do at Work

(abbreviated article; for full article see link below)

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They're Always In Countdown Time

The best part about vacation may be...the anticipation. Research finds that the weeks leading up to a break yield even more bliss than the afterglow of one. This may explain why your happiest colleagues plan miniholidays every three to four months (instead of, say, one long vacation in August) giving themselves more escapes to look forward to throughout the year.

They're remembering a famous ad campaign.

There are multiple realities—and happy people choose the most helpful and positive one. When Shawn Achor and his colleagues trained workers to think of their stress response (pounding heart, shaky hands, etc.) as "helpful" (it increases clarity and mental toughness) instead of "harmful," they performed better at work, reported fewer psychological problems and had closer-to-optimal levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

They're giving their cubicle a makeover.

They roll out bamboo mats...grow wisteria...and hang princess wallpaper with (removable) starch paste. Office workers were not only more upbeat and motivated when they decorated their own workspaces, but 32 percent more productive than in the usual grayish setting.

They're exercising their "smiling" face.

Smiley people are sometimes faking it, but after an hour of beaming broadly you will genuinely feel happier. Achor writes that a powerful way to ensure that you come across as positive is to take a close look at the person talking with you, because we mirror one another unconsciously. Is her expression anxious? Disengaged? Tired? If so, he suggests that you change your own face "and see if the other person follows the new script."

They're always giving a minute—or 10—away.

They have 230 emails, 23 voicemails and 13 items on their priority to-do list. So when the junior associate asks for help with her report, what do they say? "Sure." Because—conscious of it or not—offering to lend a hand to others at work actually makes us happier. When people helped others for just 10 to 30 minutes a day, they actually felt less time-constrained—it's part of the afterglow of feeling more capable, confident and useful.

They're doing the one thing that's almost as good as not working.

Socializing with colleagues is the only thing proven to make us almost as happy as we are when we're not at work. Those with a best friend at work are 47 percent more likely to have received praise or recognition within the past week.

They're not doing "salary math."

When people break down their earnings by the hour, they derive less happiness from pleasurable experiences.

They never think about their Wheaties.

To preserve stamina, judgment, emotional self-control—and, by extension, happiness—reduce the number of choices you need to make every day, because even little ones sap your strength.



"I completed my report on how to waste less paper and electricity in the office. I sent it to you telepathically."

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