

Love It, Don't Leave It

How to Get the Job You Want Without Leaving the Job You Have

Training and Development, 2004, by Sharon Jordan-Evans and Beverly Kaye
From their book **Love It, Don't Leave It: 26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work**

Workplace satisfaction is a two-way street that demands:

1. Effort from your manager and the leaders of your organization.
2. Initiative and effort from you.

Ultimately you choose your career, your boss, your team, and your organization. You decide your length of stay and determine the quality of your work. If you accept that responsibility and its challenges, you will get more of what you want from your work and your workplace.

How many of these statements apply to you:

1. I have evaluated carefully and listed in detail what I like and dislike about my job and workplace.
2. I have looked at performance reviews and identified steps I could take to improve.
3. I have talked with a colleague or peer about work and what I want from it.
4. I have clearly evaluated my role in a workplace dilemma or dissatisfaction.
5. I have explored and listed all options for improving my workplace satisfaction.
6. I have identified what is possible to change and what isn't, given my company's culture, leadership, or rules.
7. I have taken a risk by talking to people who might be able to help me or by trying something new.

If you haven't taken any of those steps, what is stopping you? It is so easy to blame. For many people, excuses and finger-pointing are a knee-jerk reaction. However, blaming seldom gets us what we want and need. It is up to each person to get his/her dream job. Start by asking for what you want.

Many people don't ask for a variety of reasons:

- Some expect their bosses to read their minds.
- Some settle for less and bring half their hearts (or brains) to work.
- Others decide it is easier to leave than to ask.

To hold an honest, courageous conversation with your boss, a colleague, or a senior leader to ask for what you really want:

1. Get crystal clear about what you want by interviewing yourself.

- What about my job makes me jump out of bed in the morning?
- What makes me hit the snooze button?
- If I were to win the lottery and resign, what would I miss most?
- What would be the one change in my current role that would make me want to stay for a long time?
- If I had a magic wand, what would be the one thing I would change about my department or team?
- If I had to go back to a position in my past and stay for an extended time, which one would it be and why?

2. Consider who, when, and how you will ask.

- Who can deliver what you want?
- How and when will you approach those people?
- Will you request the conversation over e-mail, voice mail, or face-to-face?
- Will you meet with them early in the morning or over lunch?
- Will you meet with them on Monday or later in the week?

When you open the conversation:

- Get to the point quickly.
- Thank the person for his/her time and say that you have a request.
- Lay it out and be specific: What do you need? Advice? Feedback? A new challenge?

3. Identify the barriers, and then bulldoze them.

Some of the most common barriers are:

- **Fear.**
Face your fear, plan your approach, and go for it.
- **Your boss, or other decision makers, mindsets, constraints, or concerns.**
Anticipate the problems and potential obstacles to your request. Seek solutions that work for you, managers or executives, and the team.
- **Lack of what's in it for them.**
Before you contact the request-granter, ask yourself: What's in it for this person to grant my request? How will this person benefit? Is my request easy or difficult to grant?

When the Answer Is No

In spite of careful planning and strategic thinking, you will no doubt encounter a no from time to time.

Listen to the reasons, and then try one of these alternatives:

1. Ask again in a different way or at a different time.
2. Ask how you can help make it work-brainstorm possibilities.
3. Ask someone else who might be able to help with your request.
4. Ask what is possible if not this.
5. Ask when this might be possible if not now.
6. Ask what you can do to improve the way you are asking.

What about you? Are you, like many of your colleagues, operating in overdrive, doing so much and running so fast that you are not thinking about requirements for your own satisfaction?

Think about what you want and need. Plan for how you will ask for it. Then do it.