

How Can You Sustain Success?

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Last week's article offered some thoughts for achieving short-term success. But how do some people stay energized, consistently contributing their talents over long periods?

Marcus Buckingham is the author of The One Thing You Need to Know about Great Managing, Great Leading, and Sustained Individual Success. In the book, Buckingham defines sustained success as "making the greatest possible impact over the greatest period of time."

Let's start with having great impact in a single day. Think about your best day at work in the past three months? Why did you love that day? Can you repeat it? Use this article to figure out how!

Too few people love what they do every day. Marcus Buckingham's research indicates that fewer than two out of ten people are employed in a position where their work continuously inspires them. Isn't that sad? Would you like to become one of those twenty-percenters?

How can you do what you love to do every day, so that you can have the greatest possible impact over the greatest period of time?

Here's Buckingham's answer: "Discover what you don't like doing, and stop doing it."

Is that it? Surely there's more than that! What about hard work and ongoing education? What about continuous improvement? What about shoring up your weaknesses?

Those factors will certainly contribute to your short-term success. But time is the limited resource that long-term successful people protect more than any other. The two out of ten people who do what they love to do every day are very discriminating about how they use their time, cutting out all activities they don't enjoy!

How can you do that? Doesn't everyone have aspects of their work they don't enjoy? By far, the majority do. Buckingham's research says that 8 out of 10 of us deal with activities that don't inspire. So, are you ready to decide that you don't want to remain a part of this strong majority?

What can you do if you are bored, frustrated, unfulfilled, or drained by your work? First, generate an "inventory" of your daily activities. Separate what you do into those actions that energize you and those that cause you to complain to your closest friends. Knowing these, you now have options!

Start by tweaking your role. Perhaps it is possible to increase the percentage of your day that you spend on the aspects of your work that you love.

It's likely that the portions of your work that you love utilize one of your strengths—which makes you stronger. If you can't increase the amount of time that you spend in those activities, at least focus more of your mental energy on those responsibilities. Imagine ways that you could perform those activities even better—and when you actually do, someone will notice!

Another possibility is to align yourself with an ally or partner of some sort. For every aspect of your job you hate, someone in this world loves doing that work. You could generate a powerful win/win solution for both of you.

If these options don't work, you may consider changing your role. Start looking for opportunities that will utilize more of your innate talents. If it can be with your current employer, great! If not, well....

Cutting out the aspects of your life that you don't enjoy CAN BE done! If you want more specific options than the general guidelines here, call for a free exploratory conversation.

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