

Is your job building or killing your self-esteem?



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By SCOTT BELLOWS

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Researchers and executives obsess over how to create the most conducive job atmosphere to maximise productivity, performance, and profits.

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Business Talk week after week in the Business Daily highlights cutting-edge research and practices in order to create world-leading workplaces. Usually managers fail to utilise powerful scientific data to lead their employees properly.

However, sometimes no matter how much supervisors try to enhance their offices with the best techniques, a few employees inevitably fall through the cracks.

A firm could improve workers' task identity, task significance, and enlarge their jobs or hasten staff cohesiveness, autonomy, and trust. But how could some staffers still fall through the cracks?

Sometimes moderating variables push against work efforts that fall outside the control of even the best executives.

Many influences may moderate the effects of managerial techniques on employee outcomes. Political uncertainty, for example, may worry workers and diminish their productivity and bosses often can only partially mitigate the effects.

Often though, moderating factors come from within employees themselves. Researchers find two powerful moderating forces in an employee's self-esteem as well as his or her personal life satisfaction.

Self-esteem means how someone views their worth. Humans use subjective qualitative assessments about themselves that generally reflect their own attitudes.

Writer Michael Formica looks at the two extremes, those who hold little self-regard can become depressed and fall short of their life potential, while on the flip side those with too much self-love can irritate others with their inflated sense of entitlement and inability to learn from their own mistakes and shortcomings that therefore also makes them fall short of their full potential.

Many modern life practices may help or hinder self-esteem. Interestingly, researcher Ray Williams highlights how heavy Facebook usage lowers someone's self-esteem and Mark White investigates how men with successful girlfriends might feel lower self-esteem.

Turn the situation around and realise sometimes your job aids or tears down your self-esteem. Perhaps you grew up in a family of medical doctors who always insisted that you also become a medical doctor as an adult.

But, instead, you chose to study accounting and became a Certified Public Accountant(CPA).

Inasmuch, no matter how much you achieve as a certified public accountant, you still hold an ingrained feeling of failure because you continue to disappoint your family with their expectations about your career. Maybe you even feel embarrassed to tell other people about your accounting profession.

In such situations and many like it, you might want to put in the significant time and effort to switch both your job as well as your career.

But you may require herculean efforts even to just change jobs within the same sector, since your boss, company, or tasks cause you to hold lower perceptions about your self-esteem.



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The Enron accounting scandal back in 2001 caused many auditors from Enron's auditing firm Arthur Andersen to feel embarrassed about working for the organisation. Inasmuch, researchers Jon Pierce, Donald Gardner, Larry Cummings and Randall Dunham introduced the concept of organisation-based self-esteem.

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So gauge your organisation-based self-esteem by asking yourself the following six statements that represent your opinions about your work and yourself in each category.

Take each declaration and judge it in your mind on the following 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 point scale whereby each number represents your following opinion of your workplace as: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Somewhat Disagree (3), Neither Agree or Disagree (4), Somewhat Agree (5), Agree (6), Strongly Agree (7).

I feel a sense of personal satisfaction when I do my job well. My opinion of myself goes down when I do this job badly. I take pride in doing my job as well as I can. I feel unhappy when my work is not up to my usual standard.

I like to look back on the day's work with a sense of a job well done. I try to think of ways of doing my job effectively.

Now add up the numbers for each of your above answers.

Take your total and divide it by six (6) to give you your average response. If you scored a five or higher, then you enjoy a strong organisation-based self-esteem and your current job may enrich your positive self-perception.

If your average result fell between a three and five, start scrutinising the source of your personal self-worth and to what extent your present job builds or diminishes your attitudes about yourself.

If you gloomily rated your organisation-based self-esteem on average as below three, then you should instigate an immediate search for a new job for the sake of your self-worth and immediately embark on soul searching for other causes of your state of mind.

Do not underestimate the importance of self-esteem. Researchers Donald Gardner and Jon Pierce discovered that organisation-based self-esteem proves as a stronger predictor of performance and employee satisfaction than even self-efficacy.

Find a job that makes you feel good about yourself. You should be proud to go into work every day with your head held high. Do not hesitate to search out and form the best version of yourself that you can build.

The *Business Daily* next Thursday continues assessing more variables in the Business Talk mini-series on discerning whether to quit your job with a focus on life satisfaction.

Share your own job quitting or staying stories with other readers through #KenyaTurnover on Twitter. Scott may be reached on scott@ScottProfessor.com or follow on Twitter: @ScottProfessor.