

What's your happy? Explore...

July 2016 Newsletter



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Getting help

Confidential support, information and resource referrals are available for a variety of concerns — both work and personal. Call for assistance for you, your household members or your adult children under age 26, whether they live at home or not. Call or visit us online today!

Explore and reach for your potential

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Do you feel like you're living up to your potential? Are you enjoying all the success you think you can achieve? Or...

- **Do you feel trapped?** Are you stuck in old routines that are no longer working for you? Do you think "I can't", "I shouldn't" or "I'm not good enough"? These negative self-messages can wreck your confidence and keep you from moving ahead.
- **Are you holding on to security?** Many of us settle for situations that feel safe – even if they don't make us happy. It can be scary trying new things. Even so, we need to take reasonable risks to test our limits and expand our possibilities.
- **Do you need to be more resilient?** People who reach their potential don't often get there easily or by accident. It's usually the result of the "try, try again" attitude. If you give up easily when faced with setbacks, building resilience can help you refine your approach and keep trying.

If you have a sense you could do, achieve and enjoy more — it may be time to explore your potential.

What are your untapped talents and dreams?

Potential is about your capabilities and desires. You can have unused or under-used abilities in many areas including:

- Hobbies and sports
- Jobs and relationships
- Growth and self-satisfaction

Living up to your potential doesn't mean becoming a superhero or superstar. It means becoming a super-you.

How can you discover your potential?

Only you can unlock your potential. Need some help identifying your inner strengths and interests? Try this quiz for clues¹:

1. Growing up, what did you love to do?

2. What makes you come alive?
3. Who do you most like being with?
4. What do you secretly dream about doing in your life?
5. What would you love to do all day if you didn't have to earn a paycheck doing it?
6. When was the last time you jumped up out of bed excited to tackle something? What was it?
7. How do you think you could make the world better?

What to do next

Did these questions spark some ideas? Did they remind you of interests you've pushed aside or put on hold? If so, here are some tips on what to do next:

- Try some new activities that really interest or excite you
- Spend more time or reconnect with someone you like to be with
- Join groups – like hiking, biking or reading – that focus on activities you enjoy
- Find a mentor to guide and support you
- Write about your wishes, ideas and experiences in a journal or diary
- Get counseling to delve further into your interests or explore what might be holding you back from pursuing your potential
- Read about potential: You can find books in the library, bookstore or online under "self-discovery" and similar topics

Remember, you're one-of-a-kind. Add more enjoyment to your life by learning about your unique potential and pursuing what makes you happiest.

¹www.manifestyourpotential.com

Creating your ideal work life balance

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We've all heard how important it is to achieve worklife balance. But what does that actually mean?

For starters, it suggests there is such a thing as a perfect balance between your work life and personal life. Also, it implies you should be able to find the precise balance if you try hard enough.

But let's be real: The idea of balance is different for everyone. What feels like too much work and too little play for one person may be fine for someone else. In addition, balance — like life itself — is dynamic. Needs and demands are always changing.

Go for what works for you

It may be better to set your goal as whatever works for you right now. And realize it may change later.

In other words, how much work and how much personal time do you need to feel happy and accomplish what you want? Here are some tips that may help you find an answer:

- **Make a formula.** Work and personal life rarely occupy exact 50-50 time slots. So start by trying to think of time allotments you need for work/home/family/personal life. Remember: The objective is to feel satisfied and less stressed while still meeting your goals.

- Have a definition of success. How will you know when you've achieved your ideal worklife balance? What will your life feel like when you "get there?" It may help to look back over each day. Write down achievements that made the day satisfying and obstacles that made it stressful. It's easier to work on any goal when you define it.
- **Keep a sense of control.** Feeling out of control is a basic reason for unhappiness. If you're working too much, is it in your control to figure out ways to delegate more of your work? Would it help if you could change your hours? Can you speak to your manager about the issue? Can you think of other positive actions you can take?
- **Enlist friends and family members.** Let those close to you know you're trying to create more balance. Get their feedback and help as you try to achieve your goals.

Keep these tips in mind as you work toward satisfaction. It can be a challenge to juggle the demands of work and life, but with effort, support and a positive attitude, you can do it!

Weighing your options

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Decisions, decisions. We make them all the time. And we have so much to choose from these days. Consider these numbers¹:

- Many supermarkets display over 85 brands of crackers, 285 types of cookies, 120 pasta sauces and 165 juice drinks
- Today's tech stores may offer 42 different computers, 110 TVs, 45 car stereos and 50 DVD players

And those are just shopping choices!

Every day we also decide what to wear, what to eat, what bills to pay, how to solve simple problems and more. Plus we face bigger decisions like what school or college to attend, how to budget and save, where to live, whether to have children and so forth.

What's your go-to decision-making style?

When it comes to making choices, most of us fall into certain patterns. There are "satisficers" and "maximizers."² Which most closely describes you?

- Satisficers make the best possible choice quickly.² The goal for satisficers is to make decisions and find solutions that are adequate, not perfect. They talk to people and do research. Once they find a solution that meets their standards, they choose it.

So, let's say they're shopping for a smartphone. They go shopping and find one they like at the right price so they buy it. This task is now complete for the satisficer.

- Maximizers check out all options before they choose one.² Maximizers want to find not just a good solution, but the best solution. They may keep researching long after finding an answer that's acceptable.

When phone shopping, for example, they may try many models to decide which is the very best. Afterward, they might even have "buyer's remorse" for not picking a different one.

Which style makes people happier?

Experts say satisficers are often happier because they don't overthink everything. They don't obsess or look back on their decisions with regret.²

Maximizers may achieve great results. But their process can add lots of stress to their lives.²

What's your style?

Few of us are purely satisficers or maximizers. You're likely to be a mixture of both. And it's possible to alter your style if you wish.

Say you lean toward being a maximizer and it causes you worry and anxiety. You can start making more efficient choices by asking yourself questions like:

- How important will this decision seem 10 minutes from now? 10 days from now? 10 years from now?
- If I make a good — but not perfect — choice, what's the worst possible outcome?

Or perhaps you're a satisficer who feels you sometimes settle too easily? Consider whether certain choices deserve more research and spend a little more time when you think it's worth it.

Explore your decision-making style. See if it might be worth making some tweaks to improve your outcomes, your stress level or both!

¹www.swarthmore.edu

²www.wsj.com

e-Thoughts — *My father, the explorer*

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Our e-Thoughts feature provides close-up views on topics and areas of interest from everyday life.

My father was an explorer though he didn't set sail or even drive out of state all that often. His "day job" as a dentist was not that exciting at all.

But his "dad job" was different. He was a real learner and a great teacher to me and my brother. He never stopped being curious. And he passed his love of discovery to us.

If we were out for a walk, he would help us turn over a big rock to see what was under it. He would slow down so we could follow a line of ants marching along. He would lift me on his shoulders to see a bird's nest in a tree.

It was the era of encyclopedias and we had not one, but two sets. We were forever looking things up with him by our side. (The internet was decades in the future.)

His love of learning led to fun, too. Life, according to my father, should be an adventure. It was always exciting to look at life with him and through his eyes.

So now I'm an explorer and I encourage you to be one, too. Instead of wondering "why," find out. Look it up. Google it. Turn over rocks until you find answers. Stray off the path a bit to see where the ants are going. Take your time and discover life's special treasures.

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