

1. Flourishing in love and work*

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INTRODUCTION

Sigmund Freud believed that two areas contributed to individual happiness and fulfilment – love and work, *‘lieben und arbeiten’*. But Freud did not think that work was satisfying to most people; most worked out of necessity. We have broadened ‘love’ to include family, relationships with others, and extra-work activities. We have also broadened ‘work’ to include careers and lifelong contribution, to better reflect present day realities. In addition, more women and men today are raising the issue of ‘happiness’. Thus, a central question becomes, how can they flourish in their lives, work and careers (Keyes and Haidt, 2003; Sheldon, 2004)?

Why is flourishing in life, work and careers important? Let us first consider levels of flourishing in life and work. Keyes (2002) examined a mental health continuum, with languishing and flourishing in life at each end, in a sample of 3032 US adults. The findings indicated that 17 percent of respondents were flourishing, 57 percent were moderately mentally healthy, 12 percent were languishing, and 14 percent met criteria for depression. Flourishing individuals, not surprisingly, scored higher on psychosocial functioning; flourishing was associated with the presence of mental health while languishing was associated with the absence of mental health.

Ryff and Keyes (1995) developed a theoretical model of psychological wellbeing with six dimensions:

- autonomy – self-determining and independent;
- environmental mastery – competence in mastering one’s environment;
- personal growth – seeing oneself as growing and expanding;
- positive relations with others – having warm, trusting and satisfying relations;
- purpose in life – having goals in life and a sense of direction;
- self-acceptance – positive attitudes toward oneself and one’s past life.

Scores on these scales, in a nationally representative sample of over 1100 US adults, were significantly associated with indicators of life satisfaction, depression, happiness, and positive and negative affect.

Harter et al. (2003), using extensive survey data collected in organizations by the Gallup organization, examined the association of wellbeing and flourishing indicators in the workplace (e.g., levels of work engagement) and business outcomes (e.g., financial performance). Using meta-analyses, they showed that positive workplace perceptions and feelings were associated with higher levels of customer and client loyalty, higher profitability, greater productivity, and lower rates of turnover. Thus, the presence of positive emotional states and feelings, and positive views about the workplace and one's relationship to it, increase quality of life, employee job performance, and organizational success.

Interest in flourishing in life, work and careers is consistent with the growing body of research in positive organizational scholarship (Seligman, 2002; Cameron et al., 2003). Most of the earlier research focused on 'problems' in the workplace such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, turnover, conflict, burnout, and barriers to performance. Positive organizational scholarship focuses on passion, engagement, virtues, wellbeing, proactive behaviour and outstanding performance. Keyes and Haidt (2003, p. 4) define flourishing as 'a state of positive mental health, a state in which the individual functions well psychologically and socially', a positive and broad state of human functioning. Spreitzer and Porath (2013) define thriving or flourishing in the workplace as the experience of vitality and learning. They identify autonomy, competence, and belongingness, all components of self-determination, as contributing to higher levels of thriving at work, thriving reflected in vitality and learning, both contributing to performance, productivity and health.

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FLOURISHING – A RESEARCH MODEL AND SOME EVIDENCE

Spreitzer et al. (2005) presented a model of thriving at work embedded in the organization. They define thriving at work 'as the psychological state in which individuals experience both a sense of vitality and a sense of learning at work' (p. 538). Thriving is socially embedded since vitality and learning are based in social systems. Thriving is important as it enhances both individual development and health. Their model includes five panels of variables: organizational features and resources

obtained while working leads to agentic behaviour, resulting in thriving at work, which embraces development and health. Workplace antecedents of agentic behaviours include organizational features such as discretion in decision-making, widespread information sharing, and a climate of trust and respect. Resources are produced while engaging in work and include knowledge, positive meaning, positive affect and relational resources. These workplace antecedents increase individual agentic behaviours such as exploration, helping others, and focusing on the work tasks.

Porath et al. (2012) developed a measure of thriving at work and examined its association with important outcomes (e.g., burnout, health, job performance) and antecedents (e.g., changes in one's work and family context) in three studies involving five different samples. Two components of thriving (learning and vitality) were assessed by scales with high reliabilities, and both showed construct validity. Thus, thriving was positively related to general health, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment, and negatively related to burnout.

Lyubomirsky et al. (2005), using a meta-analysis of 293 samples involving 275 000 individuals, showed that happy individuals generally indicated more favourable job and work outcomes than did their less happy counterparts (more positive performance ratings from supervisors, higher job performance and productivity, less burnout, and lower levels of counter-productive job behaviours).

DEVELOPING ONE'S REFLECTED BEST SELF-PORTRAIT

These models and accumulating research findings have led to efforts to apply them in increasing levels of individual flourishing. One such example is the Reflected Best Self-portrait (RBS) exercise. Individuals create their Reflected Best Self-portrait, which represents who they are at their best, based on their social experiences (Roberts et al., 2005). One's RBS is based on the perceptions of how others see them. An RBS is one's view on the qualities and characteristics that one exhibits when at his or her best; RBSs build on one's strengths. Individuals can learn how to enter their best state. One's RBS can enhance one's performance by identifying new possibilities and supporting proactivity; an RBS highlights the self that an individual could or would like to become. Thus, RBSs set out processes for individual growth, leading to greater capability and potentiality in the workplace and in life more generally.

THE FLOURISHING-RICH GET EVEN RICHER

Research evidence has accumulated over the past decade showing that positive emotions in the workplace (e.g., joy, optimism, gratitude) foster spirals of increasingly strong positive emotions and individual functioning. Fredrickson (2003) developed her 'broaden-and-build' theory, the effect of positive emotions in increasing the scope of individual thinking and action, which, over time increases individual and social resources, and functioning. In addition, the positive emotions of one person can spread throughout a work team or family. Positive emotions increase individual wellbeing, speed up recovery from cardiovascular problems, and result in improved decision-making.

RESILIENCE

Resilience refers to both an individual difference trait and a set of assets or protective factors and processes that lead to positive outcomes. Resilient individuals possess quality resources (e.g., human, personal, emotional) so they can develop competence and experiences that lead to further success, self-efficacy and self-development. Positive emotions, and the experience of creating these, serve as an important source of individual resilience (Sutcliffe and Vogus, 2003).

INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL DISCONTENT

The challenges facing organizations to be successful have increased over the past two decades as business has become more global (O'Toole and Lawler, 2006; Lawler and O'Toole, 2008; Joel, 2013). Organizations must deal with heightened international competition, the introduction of new technology, increased speed of response, increasing complexity, a continuing need to be cost conscious on the one hand yet more innovative on the other, meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse workforce, and the fallout of the 2008–09 financial disaster and the continuing worldwide recession that followed (Katzenbach and Kahn, 2011). In order to remain successful, organizations need to make their employees their competitive advantage (Pfeffer, 1998; Lawler, 2008).

Organizations have to address these, and other challenges, by engaging the 'hearts and minds' of all their employees (Katzenbach, 2000). This seems to be increasingly difficult for a large number of organizations.

More employees report higher levels of job insecurity (Antoniou and Cooper, 2013), and are experiencing pressure to work longer and harder (Burke and Cooper, 2008). Yet a recent Gallup survey showed that only 30 percent of respondents were engaged in their jobs. In addition, levels of employee stress and corresponding increases in burnout, distress and ill health have risen (Cooper et al., 2009).

Here are some issues and challenges facing today's working men and women – signs that many employees and families are not flourishing:

- Working men are reporting as much work–family conflict as women, women typically reporting more in the past.
- More women are now in the workforce, more dual-earner and dual-career couples are in the workforce, and more women – estimated at 40 percent – are the primary breadwinners in their families. However, a higher percentage of men than women lost jobs during the recent economic recession.
- Levels of job stress, work overload, burnout, and dissatisfaction have increased in various occupations and professions over the past two decades (Pfeffer, 2010).
- Some workplace cultures increase levels of employee dissatisfaction and distress (Padilla et al., 2007; Burke, 2013a).
- More women are obtaining the necessary education and work experience to qualify for career advancement (Davidson and Burke, 2011) but don't know whether to 'lean in' as Sandberg (2013) suggests or 'lean back', given women's responsibilities for both work and home and family functioning.
- Women and men holding senior management positions work very long hours, often more than 70 hours per week. And most would like to work fewer hours while still achieving career success. How can they achieve one without detrimentally affecting the other? Schulte (2014) writes that working parents in a two-parent family today are working a combined 28 days more every year – a full month extra than they did in the 1960s.
- More women and men find themselves in the 'sandwich generation' with responsibilities for their children as well as their elderly parents. This will increase as the population ages, and more young adults pursue further education while still at home (Neal and Hammer, 2007).
- Levels of greed and materialism continue to increase though the association of money and happiness is weak. The media offer daily examples of individuals found guilty of fraud, bribery, theft and corruption. Issues of character have been raised as one

source of these behaviours and actions (Wang and Murnighan, 2011; Burke, 2013b). Yet materialism has not increased levels of individual wellbeing. Something seems to be missing in people's lives (Kasser, 2002; Diener and Seligman, 2004). Kasser (2002) reported that placing a high importance on money and financial goals compared to other life goals was negatively related to psychological health.

- Examples of transgressions by executives are being reported every day ranging from inappropriate sexual behaviour and relationships, alcoholism, bribery and fraud (Slayton, 2007; Kets de Vries, 2009; Burke, 2013c). Individual and organizational reputations have been damaged, resulting, in some cases, in both individual and organizational 'deaths' (e.g., Enron, Arthur Andersen) (Burke, 2011).
- There has been an increase in unhealthy lifestyles among both men and women (obesity, alcohol consumption, sleep deprivation). Unhealthy people are tired, dissatisfied, work more slowly, make more errors, and have more accidents. Healthy people work harder, are more satisfied with their jobs and work environments, are more productive, and more likely to help others (Loehr and Schwartz, 2003; Seldman and Seldman, 2008).

Let us now examine some of these areas of concern in greater depth.

DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING CHARACTER

Examples of character failings such as theft, fraud, bribery, and corruption appear daily in the media (see Burke, 2013c). Crossan et al. (2013) focus on character as a key to improving leadership in organizations, reducing human frailties and transgressions, and enhancing individual satisfaction in life, work and careers. Character, to them, includes traits (e.g., open-mindedness, extraversion), values (e.g., courage, accountability), and virtues (e.g., loyalty, humility). They propose 11 dimensions to character, offering both definitions and examples of each. These dimensions are: integrity, temperance, justice, accountability, courage, transcendence, drive, collaboration, humanity, humility and candour. Character has several elements, specifically aspects of personality that can be inherited and other elements that are developed in early childhood family experiences, in educational settings and in both work and extra-work life experiences. Character can be developed in and by organizations (Kilburg, 2012).

Crossan et al. (2013) stress the development of leadership character in business education and offer suggestions of how this can be carried out and achieved. They show how the use of case studies, role play, mentoring, self-assessment, and self-reflection activities can play a part.

THE IMPORTANCE OF POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Several researchers have highlighted the key role of positive emotions in emotional and physical wellbeing (Argyle, 1997; Fredrickson, 1998; Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Cameron et al., 2003) leading to the emphasis on positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship. This emphasis on positive outcomes such as wellness, flourishing and thriving added to the previous research on work stress, negative events and experiences and negative outcomes (dissatisfaction, burnout, and turnover). Positive emotions lead to a broadening of an individual's thinking and actions whereas negative emotions lead to a narrowing of these. Positive events and positive emotions build resources. Uchino (2006) reviews evidence that positive emotions influence physiological responses such as lowering blood pressure. This evidence led to the identification of intervention techniques designed to increase levels of positive emotions. These include the use of meditation (Fredrickson et al., 2008), and focusing on positive events in one's life and work (Seligman et al., 2006), termed 'savouring' by Bryant and Veroff (2007), focusing on things one is grateful for (Emmons and McCullough, 2003) and on helping others (Steger et al., 2008). Positive emotions not only increase positive outcomes they also decrease negative outcomes.

Bono et al. (2012), in a three-week longitudinal study involving 61 women working in nine outpatient family practice clinics from two health care organizations, found that both naturally occurring positive work events as well as a positive reflection intervention, were associated with lessened stress levels and improved wellbeing. Stress levels and physical complaints dropped by 15 percent after employees were asked to spend ten minutes writing about three things that had gone well each day. Employees logged on to a website where they were asked to identify three things that went particularly well that day and why they went well. Events could be either work or non-work related and large or small. They then wrote their thoughts on why this happened. This brief end-of-workday positive reflection intervention not only decreased stress but increased wellbeing in the evenings after work. They suggest that not only should organizations decrease negative events but also increase positive events along with end-of-day positive reflections.

Happiness

Let us now consider happiness. Lyubomirsky (2007) defines what happiness is and isn't, offers a diagnostic tool to identify one's level of happiness, and describes initiatives to increase one's level of happiness. She writes that 50 percent of happiness is genetically determined, 10 percent is a function of one's situation and circumstances, and 40 percent is within an individual's ability to control and change. Based on the critical concept of 'intentional activities', she offers a dozen happiness-increasing strategies. They include exercises to increase and practice optimism, how to enjoy one's pleasures in the moment, why staying active increases happiness, and the importance of investing in relationships. Ferguson and Sheldon (2013) in two experimental studies found that an explicit attempt to be happier increased the actual experience of happiness – trying to be happier can really work.

The happy-productive worker hypothesis

The happy-productive worker hypothesis has been with us for almost 50 years, suggesting that happy workers are more productive than unhappy workers (Wright and Cropanzano, 2007). Taris and Schreurs (2009) noted that this relationship has generally been supported at the individual level with, however, less support for the hypothesis that happy organizations are more productive organizations.

Cultures of Companionate Love

Barsade and O'Neill (in press), in two studies carried out in very different industries (non-profit long-term health care, and in several industries such as financial services and real estate), found that employees performed at higher levels in cultures of 'companionate love'. In these cultures, employees expressed caring and affection for co-workers, and showed tenderness and compassion when there were difficulties. Employees feeling free to these emotions were more job satisfied, more committed to their organizations, and higher performing.

SUSTAINING ONE'S ENERGY AT WORK

One aspect of human sustainability at work (Pfeffer, 2010) is energy. Energy can run down at the end of the work day. Fritz et al. (2012) consider strategies that individuals use at work to manage and sustain their energy. They report, based on a sample of 204 women and men at different

organizational levels and functions, that learning something new, focusing on what gives one joy at work, setting new goals, doing something that makes a colleague happy, showing gratitude to a colleague at work, seeking feedback, reflecting on how one has made a difference at work, and reflecting on the meaning of one's work, were related to feelings of vitality. Positive work relationships were energizing, as were learning and finding meaning in one's work.

Fatigue increased taking opportunities to have a snack, go to the bathroom, drink a caffeinated beverage, talk about common interests with a colleague (e.g., sports), listen to music, surf the Internet, and send and receive personal emails.

The Fit Executive

Challenges in today's business environment require leaders to be mentally and physically fit (Blanchard and Kearin, 2014). Managers and executives need to stay focused on and energized about what they are doing. Neck and Cooper (2000) make the case that people who are physically fit are more productive. Fit individuals display better mental performance as well. They support this claim by citing studies showing that fitness does promote job performance in a range of occupations. Physically fit women and men have more energy, feel better, are less likely to be obese or become obese, have fewer health problems, and live longer. Being physically fit is associated with physiological benefits such as improved cardiovascular functioning and strength, less body fat and lower weight. Diet and exercise was found to also be associated with lower rates of cancer and actual improvements in heart disease and blocked arteries (Kromhout et al., 2012).

Schwartz and McCarthy (2007) target four areas of energy in their work with organizations: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. They offer the following suggestions on increasing levels of each:

- Physical – enhance sleep by setting an earlier bedtime and reducing alcohol use; get exercise at least three times a week, eat small meals and snacks, and take regular breaks from your work.
- Emotional – express positive emotions regularly, defuse negative emotions early using deep breathing, and reframe upsetting situations.
- Mental – reduce work interruptions, respond to emails and voice mails only at predetermined times during the day, and identify your most important challenge at the start of the day.
- Spiritual – spend time on things you enjoy doing and do well, and live by your core values.

They describe a long-term project with Wachovia Bank in which adoption of their energy program resulted in increased individual and organizational performance. At a more general level, organizations can boost energy by creating rooms where individuals can go to relax and unwind, subsidizing memberships in fitness facilities, encouraging managers to involve staff in midday workouts and walks, and suggesting, and modeling, the checking of emails and voice mails at regular daily times only, never during meetings.

WORK AND FAMILY ENRICHMENT

The work–family challenges facing professionals and managers are daunting. Groysberg and Abrahams (2014) collected questionnaire data from almost 4000 executives over a five-year period as well as interviewed 82 executives from various countries. One of their conclusions was that their sample believed that work–family balance was not possible for those interested in career advancement.

Camgoz (2014), building on positive psychology research, examined the role of ‘savouring’ in work–family conflict (WFC) using a sample of 354 employed women and men in dual-career couples with at least one child at home. Respondents scoring higher on ‘savouring the moment’ reported less WFC. Savouring is defined as ‘processes through which people actively derive pleasure and fulfilment in relation to positive experiences’ (Bryant and Veroff, 2007, p. 2). Savouring is the ability of women and men to focus on, appreciate and enjoy, and increase opportunities for positive experiences in their lives. Savouring is an active process of enjoyment. Savouring has been shown to have positive relationships with optimism, self-esteem, happiness, and life satisfaction (Bryant, 2003).

Organizations also have a significant role to play in spite of their limited success to date. It may mean that organizational leaders need to recommit to supporting their employees in achieving work–family enrichment. Supervisor support and organizational support have been found to be useful (Kossek et al., 1999). Formal programs such as on-site childcare, flexible work schedules/flexitime, a compressed work week, telecommuting, job sharing, part-time work, leaves of absence and sabbaticals, are a few examples of what organizations can offer their employees. These initiatives have been shown to have value in enriching the work–family relationship and reducing work–family conflict (Baltes et al., 1999).

STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES

As a beginning professor I thought that working long hours would contribute to career advancement and objective career success. A chance discussion with Jim Gillies, my Dean when I was a tenured associate professor, confused me. I walked from my office on the sixth floor to the elevator after one of my evening classes and met Jim in the elevator, his office being on the seventh floor. It was in March with summer and no teaching on my horizon. Jim said that he could never accomplish in 12 months what he could accomplish in 11. This perplexed me since I felt I needed 13 months instead of 12! Jim and Betsy, and their four children, took every August off and went to a cottage, during which time he did no (or little) work. As time passed I realized that Jim was on to something.

Pat McNamara (2014), CEO of a Toronto public relations firm, takes one to two months a year away from her firm – a total disconnect (no work contact of any kind) for a mental cleanse. Too many managers are mentally and physically tired. This disconnect allows individuals to ‘clean out the cobwebs’, identify possible successors back home, provide time for strategic thinking, stops bad habits (constantly checking one’s emails), provides time for rest and recuperation, and time for friends and family. She offers some guidelines before embarking on one’s sabbatical (e.g., let key customers, clients and staff know what you are doing and why, let key people know when they might contact you, cleanse your mind of work-related issues).

PROTEAN CAREERS ARE FLOWERING

Definitions of what a career is are also changing (Hall, and Associates, 1996; Hall and Mirvis, 1996). Historically, a career was defined by upward mobility and advancement in a steeply graded hierarchy, achieving greater responsibility and influence, with the vast majority of employees remaining with their organizations for life. Career success was measured by objective criteria such as pay, perks, status and power. Today a career is more likely to be defined as a lifelong series of work experiences, with job movements being upward, lateral and in some cases downward – termed protean careers (Baruch, 2000; Hall et al., 2013). Career success is increasingly measured by intrinsic criteria such as satisfaction, engagement, meaning, learning and growth rather than external criteria such as income and organizational level. More people today want to trade money for meaning. Sandberg (2013) views careers today more like ‘jungle gyms’, structures allowing movement from one rung to another rather than as a ladder.

Individuals having a protean career orientation (PCO) are self-directed and self-managed, driven by their own values in how they view their careers, and find ways to create and maintain meaning in their work and throughout their careers (Hall et al., 2013). Individuals having a high PCO are more likely to make choices that lead to meaningful work; they do this by changing jobs, occupations and organizations. Over the life span, individuals high and low on PCO are likely to achieve the same levels of objective success over time but individuals higher on PCO will achieve higher levels of meaningfulness over their life span.

JOB CRAFTING

Organizations have traditionally designed jobs. A job design includes the tasks and relationships undertaken by an individual. Job design has several effects on individuals such as influencing levels of job satisfaction and performance. And organizations have been encouraged to design jobs to make them more satisfying, developmental, and a better fit to individuals (Hackman and Oldham, 1980; Bakker et al., 2013).

Job crafting (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001) involves changes that employees make to their tasks and relationships, which enhances the meaning and significance of their work. Job crafting lets employees design and make changes to their jobs to create more meaningfulness. Job crafting involves changes in tasks, relationships and individual's views of their tasks and relationships. Employees change their jobs instead of changes being made by their manager or their organization. Job crafting has been shown to increase job satisfaction, motivation, and purpose, usually positive outcomes, with an occasional negative outcome as well, such as overwork and fatigue.

Given changes in the nature of jobs and in the knowledge economy, the notion of fixed job designs no longer makes sense. Instead employees are encouraged and empowered to change their jobs to deliver better results to employers, along with more satisfaction and engagement of employees. Berg et al. (2013) review several efforts using job crafting in diverse organizational settings, including providing a Job Crafting Exercise, a tool that helps employees identify applications of job crafting to their jobs to better fit their needs, skills and preferences.

RECOVERY

Individuals need to recover from work since they must expend effort and energy while at work. Individuals working longer and harder need

more time to recover. Recovery processes are the opposite of and reverse the stress-strain process, akin to recharging one's batteries. Recovery is important for maintaining one's health. Studies have shown that incomplete recovery increased the risk of cardiovascular disease (Kivimaki et al., 2006), lowered levels of work engagement (Sonnentag, 2003), and lowered task performance (Binnewies and Sonnentag, 2008).

Individuals can prevent or reverse the negative consequences of work stress by recovering in their leisure hours. There are at least two ways to recuperate. One involves taking vacations. Vacations have been found to have positive effects on individual wellbeing (Westman and Etzion, 2001), but the beneficial effects of vacations quickly fade when individuals return to work (Westman and Eden, 1997; Fritz and Sonnentag, 2006). In addition, individuals sometimes do not use all their vacation time, and an increasing number of individuals now choose to stay connected to their workplaces when on vacation.

A second way is to engage in recovery activities at the end of each day and on weekends. Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) examined the effects of individual recovery activities and individual wellbeing and performance. They considered four recovery activities or experiences:

- psychological detachment from work during off-work time;
- relaxation – of the mind and body;
- mastery – from engaging in after-work activities and experiences that offer challenge, learning opportunities, and the development of new skills;
- control – discretion in terms of what activities are undertaken off the job and when.

Sonnentag and her colleagues (e.g., Sonnentag, 2001, 2003; Fritz and Sonnentag, 2005, 2006; Binnewies and Sonnentag, 2008) have found that individuals making greater use of these recovery activities report generally more favourable outcomes.

Hahn et al. (2011) carried out a quasi-experimental study evaluating the effects of a recovery training program, recovery-related self-efficacy, and a range of wellbeing outcomes. The training involved two sessions conducted one week apart. Four recovery experiences (see above), recovery-related self-efficacy, and wellbeing measures were collected before the training, and one week and three weeks following training. Forty-eight individuals were trained, with 47 waiting for the next training opportunity. Results showed an increased use of recovery experiences at one and three weeks, increased recovery-related self-efficacy at one week, and lower levels of perceived stress and negative affect at three weeks,

with no change in levels of emotional exhaustion at either follow-up assessment.

THE PARADOX OF SUCCESS

Are you living your eulogy or your résumé? (Ariana Huffington, 2013)

Beginning with the premise that we live in a materialistic society, O'Neill (2004) examines the 'paradox of success', the dark side of success, and the arrogance that often accompanies success. Society holds out a vision of 'mythic success' that includes wealth, power, status and prestige. He proposes a new mythology of success predicated in the belief that one can't have it all – a satisfying personal life and a satisfying demanding working life. By accepting this premise, one is more likely to view success in terms of a balanced life. But most views of success have not yet emphasized this shift in definition and values. Change begins by introspection. And introspection and potential change usually emerge from pain (feeling overwhelmed, disillusioned, failed marriages, workplace failures). He cautions that one's greatest strength in leading to success can become one's greatest weakness.

O'Neill maintains that a rebalancing of one's life is possible. It starts with self-reflection. He offers, as an example, the following question to begin: 'Why hasn't my success brought me a deeper satisfaction, a fuller life?' (O'Neill, 2004, p. 9). Taking stock increases the likelihood of important understandings emerging as well as commitments for a more satisfying life.

There are work–life choices and trade-offs that individuals make and end up living with the consequences. Heath and Heath (2013) believe that individuals make flawed decisions about investments in their life and work and the benefits that will follow. They identify four decision-making characteristics that lead to less than optimal outcomes. First, individuals narrow the choices they are considering, missing out on other options. Second, individuals search for information that supports their choice(s). Third, individuals focus too much on immediate and short-term emotional responses to their choices. Fourth, individuals choose to stay with their choices rather than identify other new options. Many of these characteristics make the individual overconfident that the choice they made will result in the future in life and work they envisioned.

HOW WILL YOU MEASURE YOUR LIFE?

Christensen et al. (2012) have this heading as the title of their book. They write that high achievers function in ways that can often lead to unhappiness. Christensen describes his experience with attending five-year reunions of his Harvard Business School class. At the first five-year point, attendance was very high and everyone seemed satisfied and prosperous. At the second five-year reunion point (now ten years following graduation), attendance was lower. Many were now more financially secure and career successful in their business life, but more were clearly unhappy (in unhappy marriages, less joy in what they were doing at work). For many, career prospects flourished while family and personal relationships had deteriorated. But these observations did not apply to all of his classmates; many of them had very satisfying personal lives as well. It is likely that even fewer attended the next five-year reunion, with more having even greater careers success as well as more bad marriages, more divorces, and more questioning the value of what they were doing.

They pose the following central questions, which they address in their work:

- How do I measure my life?
- How can I be sure that I will find satisfaction in my career?
- How can I be sure that my personal relationships become enduring sources of happiness?
- How can I avoid compromising my integrity – and stay out of jail?

How can one find happiness in one's career? They argue that it begins with identifying one's priorities. What is most important to you in your career? One needs to develop a plan according to this priority, but being open to balancing the plan with emerging opportunities. Finally, they conclude with the execution of this plan and the allocation of resources to key priorities. The goal for individuals is to find happiness in one's career, in one's relationships, while behaving ethically. They believe, however, that relationships with family and close friends will be the most important source of happiness in one's life. They write that individuals need to develop a sense of purpose to increase their chances of having a satisfying life. They suggest that a meaningful sense of purpose has three components:

- Who is the person you want to become? This requires introspection. What makes you tick? What motivates you?

- How do you stay committed to these aspirations? One must also be open to opportunities that arise en route.
- What metrics will you use to measure your life?

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The following conclusions seem warranted regarding individual flourishing in life, work, and careers. First, there is increasing evidence that though standards of living have risen for some, individuals are becoming increasingly concerned about their family, work and careers in terms of satisfaction and wellbeing. Here is a summary of some signs and symptoms, indications that individuals are not flourishing in these central life roles, found in recent Gallup surveys:

- low levels of work engagement;
- working long hours, not taking allocated vacations, working on vacations;
- increased levels of stress and strain;
- human frailties – sexual harassment, affairs, alcoholism, greed and materialism, fraud, theft, corruption, bribery, leading to negative consequences such as jail, bad reputations, bad corporate reputation, and family breakdown;
- work–family conflict, feelings of career success and personal failure;
- frustration of women and minorities – barriers to advancement, bias, discrimination, stereotypes, not using all their talents;
- poor physical health, poor lifestyle choices, obesity, sleep deprivation.

Second, more women, men and families are calling for a more satisfying and meaningful life, work and careers. Attention needs to be paid to the question of what individuals can do to be more satisfied, effective and successful in their various life roles, work and family being central, with the support of their employing organizations.

Third, individuals, families and organizations are responsible for, and can increase, the opportunities to change this reality and increase flourishing in life, work and careers. And individuals, families and organizations will benefit – a win-win situation all round.

Fourth, running through many of the suggestions to enhance flourishing is the notion of balance. We see the importance of balance in terms of using one's strengths, investing in work and family, aggressiveness versus timidity, and 'how much is enough?'

Fifth, individuals and families need to take greater responsibility for

their experiences and circumstances. This requires individuals and families to become more aware of their strains, satisfactions, experiences and options, and then establish priorities and goals consistent with their aspirations and act accordingly. Specific examples would include:

- defining what success in life, work and careers means for themselves and their families;
- investing in family and relationships, enriching family relationships and experiences;
- becoming more physically, emotionally and spiritually fit;
- maintaining one's character and integrity;
- reducing levels of work investment, reducing levels of work and Internet addiction and perfectionism, utilizing time management skills;
- engaging in recovery activities at and after work (relaxation, vacations, work breaks, weekend breaks, lunch breaks), and engaging in active and proactive constructive coping responses.

The good life is a process, a state of being. The good life is a direction not a destination. Pleasures lead to short-term happiness; meaning leads to long-term happiness. What is success, professional success, where do you want to invest: work, family, leisure, voluntary organizations? Have meaningful goals but enjoy the day-to-day process of achieving these goals? It is important to work on being happier, not the end state of happiness. Enough –what is enough? Constant striving leads to perpetual stress and dissatisfactions, but you are still not fulfilled. How will you measure your life?

Finally, here are some initiatives that organizations can undertake:

- efforts to build and reinforce character, the development of servant leaders;
- executive coaching and counselling, employee assistance programs;
- work flexibility – teleworking, helping with travel stress;
- increasing levels of flow and work engagement, the development of career development programs;
- conducting stress audits and stress interventions;
- advancing qualified women and minorities;
- supporting an ageing workforce, supporting 'sandwich generation' employees;
- creating a workplace culture that support health such as corporate wellness programs;
- creating a culture that values and supports flourishing.

These initiatives are challenging, and require that organizations incorporate employee flourishing as part of the business plan, making the business case for employee wellbeing, executive leadership commitment, the allocation of financial and time resources, and the monitoring of their efforts, with no guarantee of success.

The remainder of this collection examines these conclusions with examples of ways individuals, families and organizations can play their parts in increasing levels of flourishing in life, work and careers.

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