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Columnist

Professional Development

If work's a burden, try this

No matter how much you love your job – or your life – there are things you just don't want to do. You dread them and do them because you feel you have to.

My minister, Rev. Larry Snelson, recently said something that inspired me and helped me change my attitude toward my “have-to-dos.” I'd like to share what he said with you and see if it can inspire you, too.

He told a story about a man who was on the phone with his boss when his 4-year old son came up to him dressed in his soccer uniform, ready for Dad to take him to his first practice. The father had good eye contact with his son while listening to his boss, and eventually said, “I've got to go; I have to take my son to soccer practice.” The father noticed an almost imperceptible drop in his son's enthusiasm and could tell something upset him. When the father got off the phone, he told him, “Son, I said the wrong thing. I don't *have* to take you to soccer practice. I *get* to take you to soccer practice.”

What a difference a word makes. We sometimes don't realize the impact our words have on others. But how about the impact our words – and thoughts - have on ourselves?

Rev. Snelson suggested we stop saying, “I *have* to get up and go to work,” and start saying, “I *get* to get up and go to work.”

I decided to change my attitude about the things I don't like to do. I had created a set of forms to help myself keep up with all the things I do to run my coaching practice. They're labelled Marketing, Sales, Practice Management, Client Management, etc. I changed those forms so they now say “Marketing Get To-Dos,” “Sales Get To-Dos” (I admit that's a difficult one). It's amazing how much better I feel about doing those things I'd always dreaded.

When we do something because we feel we should or have to, we make the job harder. So I suggest you stop doing things just because you think you ought to, or because someone else thinks you should and start doing only the things you really want to do. If you tell yourself you get to do them, you may be surprised to learn eventually that you really do want to do them.

Maybe you don't like marketing, but you surely enjoy the results of successful marketing. Make the process as enjoyable as the desired outcome and you'll have a great day.

Which brings me to another idea I had after hearing Rev. Snelson's talk. I created a colorful document that I have hanging where I can see it every day. It says:

Today Is:
Marvelous Monday
Terrific Tuesday
Wonderful Wednesday
Thankful Thursday
Fabulous Friday
Super Saturday
Spiritual Sunday

It's amazing how just saying that to myself – and others – each day can lift my spirits and get me started off on the right foot. And not one person I've said that to has disagreed. It seems to make their day a little brighter, too.

So, here's your coaching assignment: Start saying, "I get to do..." and stop saying "I have to do..." The better your attitude toward responsibility, the better your life will become. And remember what a wise person once said, "You're not happy because you're well. You're well because you're happy."

If you have a story about how you've improved your attitude, I'd love to hear it. Send me an email and brighten my day!

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