

“The Mentor” Digest 2

First published in Professional Fundraising magazine

January – March 2007

January 2007.

Q: I'm not really enjoying my job at the moment. I feel under too much pressure and I've lost my motivation but I don't want to leave as the money's good. What can I do to boost myself?

A: You probably can't change the volume of work you have, but you can change your response to it. The secret is to regain as much control as possible. Start by getting very clear about what you want to be different. Think about your hours, how you want to feel, and what you want to be doing, both at work and away from it.

If you think you could be better organised (be honest!), try Mark Forster's book, "Do it Tomorrow". It really will help. Make sure that as much as possible of your work time is spent doing what you do best. If you are struggling with tasks others could do better, delegate them if you can. Ask for any training you need to top up your key skills.

Take good care of yourself. Neglecting your personal needs will compromise your health and wellbeing. Make sure you plan in space and time for you. Use that time to do something you love, that will make you feel great.

Finally, if your job calls more on your weaknesses than on your strengths, it's time to think about finding something that does use your talent to the full. It will be more rewarding and might even pay better.

February 2007.

Q: I have been in my job for three months. I'm enjoying the work, which is challenging, with scope for promotion. I get on well with my colleagues, and my boss is pleased with my progress. However, before I joined, I applied for the job of my dreams, which was more senior. I came second at interview, and was really disappointed. Then their first choice left after a week, and now they've offered me the post. I feel really torn. Should I accept, or stay put?

A: Leaving now is a risk for you, and disappointing for your employer, who has spent time, money and effort achieving a good match for your role. So you need to be clear about what the dream job might offer you which your current one can't, and what you bring to each.

Be objective, then. Score each role on how well it matches your strengths, aligns with your values, and offers you the right challenges, rewards and development opportunities. Then compare what you can offer each organisation in terms of skills, experience and commitment, and how they align with what you want to achieve in the world. If possible, talk it through with someone neutral.

Now ask yourself, is your dream job still pulling as hard? If you resign, how will you feel? What about being second best? Talk again to the other employer with your insights in mind. It's your choice, so be clear in your mind, and choose with your heart.

March 2007.

Q: I've recently started in my first management job. I've discovered that two of my new team had a big argument some months ago, and haven't spoken since. They send each-other emails across a small room, and the job gets done, but the atmosphere is awful. How can I get them to work together?

A: You're quite right to want to solve this, for the sake of morale and productivity. Start by talking with them, together and in private. Let them know that you would like to help them to resolve the situation, and offer them support. Then talk to each of them separately to get their individual view of the problem. Depending on the nature of the issues, your options range from coaching through team development to formal mediation.

If it's a matter of perspective, then try working separately with each individual, to see whether they can find different ways of thinking about the situation. A change of viewpoint can make a real difference. Take a coaching approach, encouraging each individual to think for themselves.

Sometimes conflict between people can be a matter of personal style, and a good personality profiling tool can help people understand and appreciate differences and find ways to work with them. Many coaches offer this option.

If the issues are really intractable, then I suggest encouraging them to use formal mediation. The ACAS website, <http://www.acas.org.uk/>, has some useful guidance.

<http://www.professionalfundraising.co.uk/>



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