

Heard curious facts
about the amount of
time



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Most of us have often heard curious facts about the amount of time we devote to certain activities. For example, one can be amazed by the realization that we spend more than one third of our life in sleep. But not less importantly, when speaking about our conscious part of life we have to admit that more than a half of it is occupied by work. And while the state of sleep is usually pleasant for us, if one dislikes his or her job it is a great problem, as spending half of our life for an unpleasant activity looks like a very pessimistic perspective.

Moreover, some researchers even suggest that it is the very nature of human beings that makes us dislike work as such, and that we carry our professional and personal chores only out of the bare necessity to survive rather than because we enjoy it. However, I believe that this view is somewhat simplistic, and that it is possible for a person to really enjoy his or her job, and with the help of the personal association with what one is doing to turn the necessary work into a perfectly meaningful activity. Let me try to define what I mean by this, and how I define the notion of meaningful work.

First of all, it seems safe to suppose that without the internal motivation based on our system of psychological rewards human beings in any time during the history would hardly commence any kind of activity that would lead beyond the satisfaction of the most basic needs, such as the need for food and shelter that even animals can fully satisfy with their level of intelligence.

Thus, there is something in the human psychology that seems to drive us to the achievement of something excessive in relation to the minimal possible goal. In the context of our discussion, this psychological factor means that

there is something in the process of work of almost any kind that can incite the person carrying it to strive for its completion for the sake of the completion. And on my personal example I can testify that the visible end result of the work can trigger mechanisms of psychological reward, which for some people, including me, can in the future serve as powerful additional motivators (Bryner 2007).

On ground of this, as one of the definitions of meaningful work may serve the establishment of the link between a person`s understanding that work can actually offer psychological rewards that are safe in contrast to those offered for instance by alcohol or drug abuse, and the chosen strategy of behaviour in which that person aims to include work in her or his life as a necessary and worthwhile activity that satisfies something more than the mere need for money.

That the above mentioned approach to the definition of meaningful work is indeed a possible life strategy is testified by the example of what is known as workaholism, a psychological dependency on one`s professional activity as on the only or the most significant source of self-satisfaction. This phenomenon demonstrates that the psychological rewards produced by work can be so strong that they may essentially overtake a person with the force similar to a drug seeking behavior (Killinger 2004, pp. 3-17).

While this may be quite problematic for an individual, it can help us strengthen our definition of meaningful work in such a way as to in addition to the already mentioned understanding of psychological rewards associated with work to include in it the clause that meaningful work is also characterized by person`s ability to imagine life without it and still retain the

sense of one`s being. In this light, a truly meaningful work may be defined as an inherently voluntary activity based on the assumption that one`s occupation is neither based on the unavoidable compulsion, nor is the only meaning of life, but rather represents the possibility for a harmonious personal development and offers benefits for one`s emotional and even spiritual life.

With all this said, I think we can conclude that the idea that the human unwillingness to work is our inherent quality is true only in a limited context, while from the general point of view work we are involved in influences almost every aspect of our life, and therefore is an integral part of our being.

Sources

Bryner, Jeanna. " Subliminal Rewards Trigger Harder Work, Research Shows".

LiveScience. com, 2007. Visited April 16, 2007 at

Killinger, Barbara. Workaholics: the Respectable Addicts. Key Porter Books Ltd, 2004.