



## How to love your Mondays

*Your guide to career success*

According to the 2018 Great Place to Work report, only 40% of us are happy at work. That means a massive 60% of us are unhappy. Is it possible to do work we love and get paid for it? Why do so many of us dislike our jobs, and what's the impact on our health and happiness? Society models a version of career success that revolves around status, titles and salary, not passion, purpose and happiness.

What would it be like to jump out of bed each Monday excited about the week ahead? To feel purpose and accomplishment at the end of each day and make a difference whilst paying the bills?

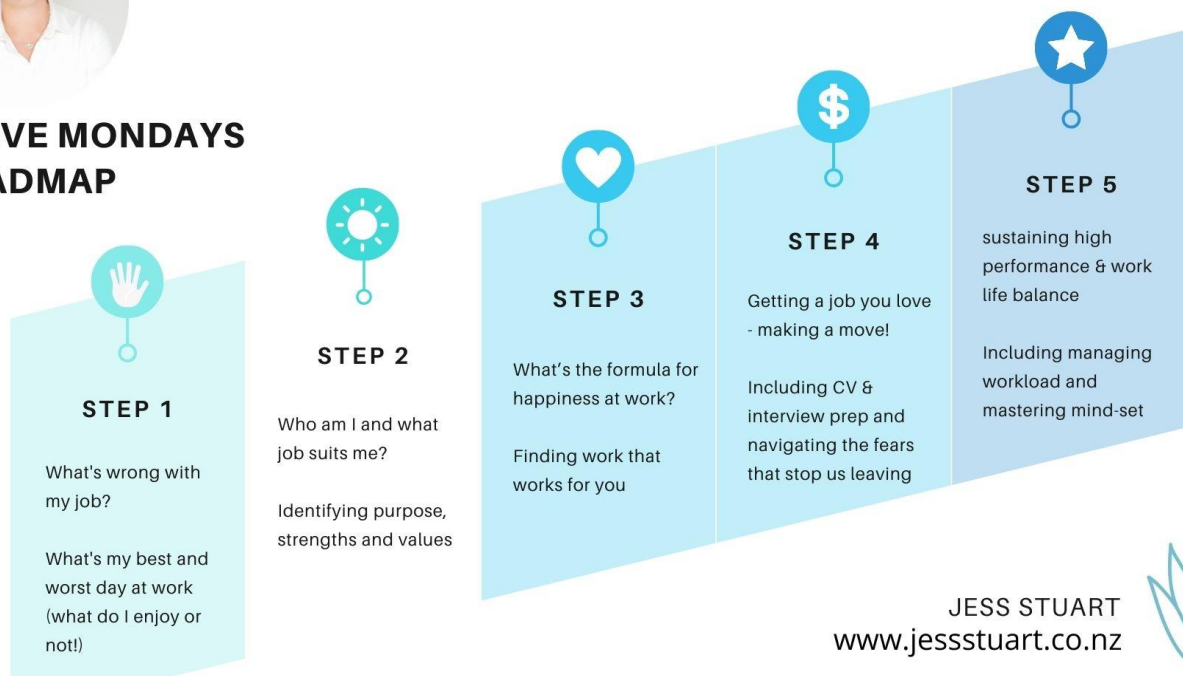
I believe we should all do work we love, because that's when we perform at our best and make more of an impact and let's face it, it's also where we spend so much of our time.

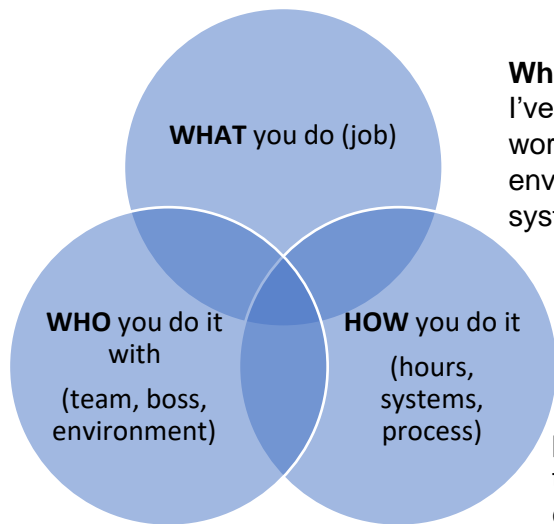
As I entered the workforce society modelled a version of career success that revolves around status, titles and salary not passion, purpose and happiness. I had to go on my own journey to discover this. Coincidentally this took me through a career in Human Resources where I learned a lot about business, recruitment and how people perform at work, including the reasons we stay or leave.

It turns out there's often an intrinsic motivation at play that can be far more important (and rewarding) than the extrinsic salary and status we've given prevalence to. Whilst most of us go to work to earn money, there's more to it than that when we talk job satisfaction. It could be the reason so many of us are unhappy at work and don't feel like a 'dream job' really exists. It's why I wrote [I Love Mondays](#) to help you uncover this secret and support your own career journey, including case studies from over 20 others who've done the same across different industries and roles.



### I LOVE MONDAYS ROADMAP





**What makes us love our job or not?**

I've boiled this down to three main categories. Our enjoyment at work is made up of what we do, who we do it with and the environment that surrounds us (how we do it), including the systems, process, hours etc.

The job itself might be the problem: it doesn't align to our skills, we've outgrown it and we're bored, or it's too hard and we're stressed. Then again, it might not be. It could be the toxic

people or terrible work culture. Even a good job is a struggle at the wrong company – are the people or the values of the company out of kilter with your own? Maybe your boss is a bully, or you're an introvert working in a team of extroverts.

It could also be the conditions we have to work in or the hours we work. Is it the complicated commute to get to the office that's the problem? How many of us loved our jobs more during Covid-19 lockdown, when we could do them from home in our PJs, without the daily commute, fluorescent lights and broken air conditioning? There's more to it than simply the work we're employed to do.

Let me ask you about your best day at work – ever. In any job, at any time in your career. What was it? What were you doing that day and with whom? Why was it so good? What skills were you using? Was it a challenge? What was the outcome or goal of what you were doing? How much fun was it? Why?

Go ahead and do this exercise now. Brainstorm anything that comes to mind when you think about your best day at work and write it down.

Similarly, your worst day can be just as telling as an exercise. The kind of people we don't want to work with or a lack of vision/values that align with our own. A job that's so boring the day felt like weeks. Being undermined, micromanaged, not feeling safe. These experiences will tell us about what we need to avoid and also what's important to ensure we do enjoy our next job.

**Consider these questions to help you align to work you love:**

- How do you want to be remembered?
- What are you doing when you're in flow or that makes your heart sing?
- Who do you admire and why?
- Identify your purpose by asking yourself the following questions:
  - What's really important to you?
  - What do you daydream about?
  - When are you having the most fun, what are you doing, who are you with?
  - What are your most memorable times/fondest memories?
  - How would you live differently if your days were numbered?
  - What does your perfect day look like?
  - Imagine you'd won the lotto. What would your typical day look like six months later?

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### My top five strengths are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### My top five values are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

### Finding purpose to make a difference

Philosopher and civil rights leader Howard Thurman said, “Don’t ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, because the world needs more people who have come alive.”

*Employment Today* magazine quoted a Gallup survey finding a staggering 62% of employees have no passion for their work. What does having passion for your work mean? It’s a combination of your values and strengths along with a sense of purpose in what you do. It’s being able to make an impact and knowing what you do makes a difference.

It’s a fundamental part of enjoying what we do – to find purpose in it, to connect to something bigger than ourselves and to see how our efforts are making a difference. This can be in the values of the organisation, helping those we work with or a bigger factor that connects into our reason for being alive. Either way, it gives us a reason to get out of bed in the morning and a feeling of productivity when we know what we’re doing makes a difference.

Finding purpose in our work doesn’t have to mean working for Amnesty International, saving people from death row, nor does it mean quitting our jobs and starting a yoga blog from Bali.

The concept of ikigai roughly translates to ‘reason for being’. It’s a balance of our spiritual and practical needs being met. This balance is found at the intersection where our passions and talents converge with the things the world needs. It is, simply put, our reason for getting out of bed every morning. It is often portioned into these intersecting categories:

- What you love (your passion)
- What the world needs (your mission)
- What you are good at (your vocation)
- What you can get paid for (your profession)



### Making a move

By now you’ll start to have some idea of what makes you happy at work and where you might need to change. That might mean a complete career change, just a role change or some minor tweaks to what you’re already doing or perhaps the same thing but in another organisation better aligned to your values?

Either way it can be a daunting place to be, especially if it makes us unhappy.

Find out more about my [coaching programmes](#) to help you prepare for your next career move or maybe a complete career change.

As you make you plan to move forward here are some top tips to help if you're unhappy at work:

- Talk to your current company – your boss or HR – about the way you feel, what alternatives there might be or what tweaks can be made: other work, transfers, secondments, working patterns or issues with people that need to be resolved.
- Upskill – take some courses (there are many online), do some voluntary work, join groups and professional associations. Seek out more responsibility in your current job or get involved in other projects. Mix with different teams and gain a new perspective.
- Don't hang out with toxic co-workers or get embroiled in office gossip – it'll only make you more unhappy, and it does nothing for your brand either.
- Build your network – in person and online (especially Linked In). Talk to other people about your plans, learn from the experience of others, listen to suggestions and get the word out you're considering a change or a move.
- Spend some time doing some self-reflection. The exercises here will help. It's critical you know yourself so you can make decisions aligned to who you are and what you want. If we don't know what we're looking for and what suits us, how do we know how to find it? Self-awareness is key in this space and will help align you with a career you love.
- Talk about how you feel and get help and support – from friends and family or, if it's appropriate, helpful colleagues. Get a coach or mentor; they can be useful not just in terms of bouncing ideas around but in helping you figure out a plan that gets you clarity and helps you bring this to life and make it happen.
- Start looking. This can be daunting but is also fun. Treat it as experimental research; it's just looking and assessing your options. Update your CV, search the jobs boards and talk to recruitment agents. This is a research phase, so you can do all of this and still stay where you are. You're not committing to making a move just by looking. But you might find the next move is ready and waiting for you.
- Develop other sources of income to give yourself more choices and flexibility. Consider the gig economy or some kind of side hustle based on your passions.

### **What stops us leaving – facing our fears**

Regardless of the reason we're unhappy at work, shouldn't we just quit? Why don't we leave? Most of us in the developed world are not forced to be there. We have a choice and can leave at any moment, so why don't we?

It's not that easy. So many factors play into this big decision. The most obvious being money. I need this money to survive, especially if I've got responsibilities, bills, rent, kids. I can't not have an income. I've got debts to pay. What if I don't get another job? There are not enough jobs in the market to risk it right now. These are some of the common reasons we stay put.

They'll also be lots of other factors that stop us. Our own fear of the unknown, not being confident we can make the change. Not wanting to lose what we've got and the security of the familiar. The career we've put so much effort into already. What will other people think? I like my colleagues and I'd feel bad for leaving them in this mess.

This can be especially true if it's a career change – I don't want to have to start at the bottom again. This is all I know and what I'm qualified for. It's familiar, but also wouldn't it be a waste of a decade if I now decided to do something different and start again?

There's also a sense of pressure we can often feel that stops us. This can come from inside ourselves or externally, from friends, family, colleagues or society. I've put too much into this

career to give up now, what will people think, everyone else is doing it, my parents are proud, my friends think I'm successful, I earn good money, my colleagues respect me, who am I if I'm not my job title?

How do we know now is the right time to take that leap? Often fear keeps us waiting, but there's also an element of procrastination here too – the feeling of not quite being ready yet. I'll just wait until I've got a bit more money, until I've got another qualification, until I've lost 5kg, until after my holiday. There's always a reason to put it off. Often we're waiting for conditions to be perfect before we begin.

If we wait until we're ready or for perfect conditions, we might wait forever. In our minds we're never ready, even when we're beyond ready. This is particularly true when we think about taking a risk, getting outside our comfort zone – we'll never be ready to face the fear because we're waiting for the fear to dissipate, and of course it doesn't until we give it a try.

Often we think we need a bit more experience or an additional qualification to be truly ready. The irony is if there wasn't a stretch or challenge in the role and we could do it from day one, we'd be incredibly bored.

We also like to have certainty, and this can be what we're waiting for. We might want it all mapped out and to see all the possibilities and know this is the right path before we set off. If we know exactly where this is heading and where we'll end up, maybe then we're ready to take the leap. But the saying is true: you don't always need to see the whole staircase to take the first step.

I had no idea what my new career would be when I left the corporate world and went down many paths, trying new things and that got me to where I am now. Sometimes the path only emerges as we travel along it.

### **Where can I find out more?**

If you're ready to find out more and put these tips into practice, navigate your fears and find work you love get your copy of the book [I Love Mondays](#) or contact me for one to one [coaching](#).

