



Joy in the Workplace: Creating Zones of Inspiration, Trusting Relationships, and Profitable Work Environments

You may have picked up this book feeling intrigued or even irritated about a title like *Joy in the Workplace*, and who can blame you for feeling cynical about such an unlikely combination of words? But I'm going to ask you to suspend disbelief because I have seen joy in the workplace and know it exists and that it's practical, achievable, and highly profitable. All over the world, businesses, schools, and other organizations are tuning in to joy, using it to reduce staff turnover and to increase productivity, customer satisfaction, and profits.

I have always been fascinated with human behavior, and for the last twenty-five years my research has been about the potential of human performance in the workplace. As an Organizational Behavior Specialist, I have consulted and worked for corporations where dysfunctional communication and conflict cause low morale, lousy productivity, and negative adversarial relationships (nice words for "I hate my job"). The heart of the problem is frequently defensive fear stemming from a bad habit of treating others with disrespect. I coach senior executives and business teams on how to let go of fear, and how to communicate in more constructive ways. As communication and collaboration improves and fear subsides, employee relationships become more Synergistic, strengthening every facet of the business. It's as if . . . there's magic in the air.

People are motivated to excellence by a sense of belonging, personal recognition, money, meaningful work, personal growth, and achievement. For people to be motivated by desire –which is the key to extraordinary performance – they need a fear-free environment that delivers more than just a paycheck. The motivation and excitement to perform at an exceptional level comes directly from the joy experienced through intra- and interpersonal connections (Synergistic relationships). Synergistic workplaces foster a sense of emotional security, creativity, and synchronicity. People want to have fun and feel fulfilled while creating something greater than themselves, and Synergistic leaders can achieve outrageous goals by harnessing and directing the

human desire to engage cooperatively in compelling, satisfying work. Wise business strategists have always understood the competitive advantage of a happy workplace.

One of the greatest sources of power in a business is the committed hearts and minds of the people – the unified creativity and energy of people who are excited about their work. Harnessing that commitment builds unshakable, unstoppable zones of inspiration and secure, highly profitable work environments.

In this book, I've tried to include a good mix of inspirational examples and step-by-step directions for creating joy in the workplace. Like most changes, achieving joy through Synergy means giving up old ideas, unhealthy ways, and opening up and trying some new techniques and strategies that may frighten you. In this book, you will learn about managers and employees who have gained greater personal and customer satisfaction and discovered how much fun it can be to get up and go to work everyday. If you're not enjoying work as you should; if you'd like to feel energized rather than drained; if, instead of getting stuck in the mire of distrust and competitiveness, you'd like to feel comfortable with and "affectionate" toward your colleagues, this book was written with you in mind.

How would you like to experience Joy in your workplace?

We have worked with hundreds of enterprises such as yours in helping them grow their sales through a newly unified, joyous workforce.

We would love to gift this entire book to you during our first face-to-face meeting. To schedule an appointment with us, please contact us at:

maryna@synergyteampower.com

Learning from the Masters

I've had the honor of learning many of the practical aspects of my profession from truly great masters of business. I've been given the trust and respect to implement my Synergistic solutions to many of the toughest age-old motivational problems.

Once commitment and enthusiasm for Synergy are seen in the actions and activities of the CEO and senior executive team, a trusting environment takes hold and extraordinary achievements are possible.

People love to support an organization that exudes enthusiasm and creativity. It's fun and it's joyful. Sadly, these types of organizations are in the minority. On many occasions, I have been invited to visit companies where, on an individual work level, there is an emptiness, a lack of spiritual psychological and emotional satisfaction, stemming from hostile environments and long, demanding hours. Many of these organizations have more internal competition between senior executives, managers,

and fellow workers than with market competitors – and the problem is increasing exponentially.

You are probably saying: “Well, business is a serious activity. It’s all about paychecks, profits, and show-me-the-money-shareholders.” I want to draw a clear distinction here. It is more about how you believe business should be conducted. If you are of the old school, you believe in hierarchy. I have found that hierarchy is a distancing philosophy that operates under an uneducated misconception that fear, intrigue, and manipulation result in success. What I learned from the masters was that successful business leadership is all about sharing information, relationship-building, and trust.

If you like people, you won’t have a problem with the idea of creating joy in the workplace and building relationship bridges. If you don’t like people, or you’re afraid of them, you’re not going to like this very much.

For years I have known that great business masters and leaders were not the hyped-up image that the media portrays. My experience has shown that the brash, swash-buckling, all- about-me big personalities would fail time after time. Often in the past, I would cogitate over making such a personal judgement in a variable professional situation . . . and then . . . I received an advance copy of Jim Collins’ *Good to Great* book – now a bestseller – and as I read his description on Level 5 leaders, my personal judgement was suddenly validated by empirical research. What a great day that was!

“We were surprised, shocked really, to discover the type of leadership required for turning a good company into a great one. Compared to high-profile leaders with big personalities who make headlines and become celebrities, the good-to-great leaders seem to have come from Mars. Self-effacing, quiet, reserved, even shy – these leaders are a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. They are more like Lincoln and Socrates than Patton or Caesar.” (Jim Collins, *Good to Great*, 2001)

In all the successful companies I have worked with, leadership is encouraged at all levels of the organization, and empowerment is seen as a strategic advantage. A workplace leader is a committed, motivated individual who contributes energy, creativity, skills, and knowledge toward a common goal. This means that selecting the right people becomes a strategic key to success. By selecting the right people, you reduce conflict, motivational issues, and the need for hierarchical management. When individuals are empowered, self-directed, and motivated, rules and regulations are less important.

Why I Wrote This Book

When people ask me what this book is about, I try to answer in the clearest way possible: This book is about attraction and love; it helps people fall in love with their lives by helping them find joy in the workplace. To many people, it is difficult to reconcile

the fact that a person may be a successful business consultant, a romantic, and perhaps even a philosopher. If my listener seems interested enough, then my fullest answer is that this book contains what I believe are the essential concepts for radically changing the world of work and the world of business by changing the way we relate to each other in the workplace. At an individual level, it's about expressing your passion for a particular way of working and finding the right place to do it and the right people with whom to do it. At a leadership level, it's about freeing people to be more creative and, consequently, more productive. At an ethical level, it's about doing things right.

The people who read this book may do so for any number of reasons, although the main reason I would expect is because they want to improve their work lives and are hoping for answers to the troubles that plague them at work. It doesn't really matter who you are – this book should prove useful to you. You can apply many of these suggestions to your entire life.

The World of Work is Changing

This book will be published at the same time of my PBS special of the same name. It is exciting to think that I'll be reaching an even wider audience; that a teenager working in a fast food outlet can be exposed to the possibility of creating joy in the workplace. I like the idea that grandfathers, small business owners, and college students will find more purpose and meaning in their daily activities. The workplace is changing once again, but this time we are reacting in a deeper, more spiritual way. The new millennium brings with it a deep dissatisfaction and a yearning for collaboration and connection. We are reaching beyond the idea of materialism and connecting with what we know really works. We are all looking for meaning and joy in our lives. And we are looking for it in the workplace.

I remember the old benevolent dictators of the past who took care of their employees, providing them with outstanding working conditions, nurses on staff to take care of that common cold, and nurseries for the children of mothers working on the production line. Yes, they were dictators but they were also warm, generous, and caring individuals who had built their businesses based on the American dream. In small towns all over the United States, you would find these great business leaders whose style of leadership was relative to the times. While this earlier society was more conformist and hierarchal, I can't help but think that if those leaders were running businesses today, they would have adjusted their style to be more Synergistic, while not losing their humanity and understanding that a business is only as good as the people in it. Then along came the corporate raiders during the '80s with their "greed is good" mantra – buying up the wonderful family businesses, breaking them down, selling them off, making oodles and oodles of money, and ultimately destroying a concept that took many decades to build.

So, the question now becomes how do we create joy? Not just for a moment of fleeting happiness or for a day of pleasure, but in our families, our sporting activities and

hobbies, and in the context of this book, the workplace. It is tough, because a lot of people have given their loyalty to a company and after many years of dedicated service, they've been told that their services are no longer required. Nice words for: You're fired! How does an individual who embraces ethical values believe it is possible to create joy in the workplace? One answer to that question is that, often in life, tragedy, pain, and suffering serve as wake-up calls, awakening the spirit of reconciliation within our true, authentic selves. We cry out for connection with our deeper selves and ask, "Who am I? "What do I stand for?" "What is life about?"

Catastrophe or a loss of a job may at first appear to be a crisis, but ultimately it will equal gain because we learn to make prudent, wise choices. If we choose to journey within, then the pursuit of happiness and joy becomes attainable. As Socrates said: "The unexamined life is not worth living."

The first thing we need to examine is what our perception of life is all about. Understanding how we perceive things will assist us in directing our lives toward joy.

Chapter One: The Joy Solution

*"My best advise? Fall in love with what you do for a living."
- George Burns*

When people start wanting to come to work, start enjoying the people they work with and the place where they spend most of their waking hours, the organization changes as an organism, growing richer and stronger with the strength of its people. It becomes a world without fear – a world of play and creativity, growing and developing, positive and oozing with every increasing potential.

Researchers who have worked with concepts like joy and happiness have found that people who are happy are healthier, recover quicker from illness or injury, work more productively, are more creative, and have greater self-esteem and emotional balance. People who are happy at work don't need to take "mental health" days from their sick leave. They don't sabotage equipment or shirk their duties, and they never shoot one another. *Joy in the Workplace* helps organizations change by helping people change, which translates into employee satisfaction resulting in billions of dollars gained. The question is, when it comes to your organization, are they billions gained or billions lost?

How do we bring joy into the workplace? The answer is in a single word with an expanded meaning . . . Synergy. Synergy is any process by which the total of something (say, efficiency) is greater than the sum of its parts. A physical example of Synergy is bread. You take yeast, flour, and water, none of which can be eaten alone, and you combine them with heat, ending up with a loaf of bread. More simply put, the

chemistry that turns four basically inedible ingredients into the staff of life is a perfect example of Synergy!

Synergy at work is what happens when people join together to accomplish a goal. Sometimes the spontaneity that sets the condition for Synergy comes about because the situation is unique, such as when there is a disaster and everyone pitches in without question to clean up and bring about normality. Synergy may also occur when things get hectic and people have the chance to do work they don't usually get to do.

I have a colleague who once worked for the sales department of the Vermont Teddy Bear Company in Shelburne, Vermont. At Christmastime, this company really shifts into high gear and people rotate positions as necessary. One day, word came up from the factory floor that there was a great need to get the teddy bears ready for shipping. Several people went down to the factory where they brushed and dressed and boxed teddy bears for several hours, working as a team, helping each other get each bear presentable and ready to ship. They played music and lugged heavy boxes from one part of the floor to another. They had a ball! Years later, my colleague still talks about her time at Vermont as one of her most enjoyable work experiences. The fun of doing something new as a team made work fun, and having fun made the work more easily achievable: They caught up in no time.

Synergy is more than a physical interaction between components: It is a highly effective way of getting people to work together. Aside from increasing work efficiency, Synergy feels good: people *want* to work together. Companies that focus on Synergy succeed financially and interpersonally, with low turnover and little absenteeism. Synergy will increase employee and I customer satisfaction. It will significantly decrease absenteeism and attrition as it decreases lessmeasurable problems like individual stress, bullying, scapegoating, and blaming. Synergy will let you keep your best employees longer, maximizing your training dollars. Synergy is not only an interesting scientific phenomenon: It could be the best business tool you will ever use.

Recently, the International Labor Organization found that Americans are working harder and longer than anyone in the industrialized world. Japan used to out-work us, but we surged ahead over the last decade, working on average 137 hours (3.5 weeks) more per year than workers in Japan. We work about 6.5 weeks more than the British and approximately 12.5 weeks a year more than German workers. While governments such as France and Canada recognize a work week consisting of 35 hours, the U.S. has been laying people off while piling overtime hours on remaining workers. Whereas people in European countries typically have vacations of four to six weeks, Americans are lucky to get two.

The interesting thing is that, with all that extra work, we don't hear anything about Americans being happier and more fulfilled at work. It seems we are working extremely hard for no particular reason except for the fact that people tend to feel guilty if they are not producing at an above-average level.

“Success is being truly happy at what you do.”
- Tommy Lasorda

I enjoy my work because it's fun, and I derive a great sense of purpose from seeing companies grow while their employees become more trusting, satisfied, and joyful in their daily responsibilities. One of the most important aspects of making work more joyful is understanding the concept of directing and conserving energy. It's all about working smart rather than working harder. I don't have anything against hard work, but if it doesn't pay off in satisfaction, it leads to increased stress, domestic and child abuse, alcoholism, drug addiction, and violence. Bullying is becoming a well-known workplace problem as people with fragile egos, insecurity issues, and too much power take out their frustrations on those who work for them. People who are being bullied suffer like victims of other types of abuse – with decreased immune response, increased illness, and even chronic disease. We don't hear much about bullying (like other forms of abuse, it tends to be kept secret), but you will see more and more discussion about it on the Internet and in employment reform because it can lead to the kinds of violence that make the news.

Like murder, for example. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1999 there were over 23,000 reported acts of non-fatal workplace violence in this country. In the year 2000, workplace violence (including assaults and suicides) accounted for 16% of fatalities in the workplace. Violence is always in the top three causes of workplace fatalities. I guess you could say work doesn't kill people, but that *people* kill people.

Between cutbacks, layoffs, and downsizing, the resulting increased workload on remaining workers, and the stress of wondering if you'll have a job at all next month, employees are suffering under increasing stress and a growing anger about the way the world of work is being run. Add that to recent economic conditions, and you have a powder keg in the making. Even if employees aren't actually murdering each other, character assassination and general mistrust between co-workers and labor and management are constants in many organizations. Widespread misery accounts for a well-known condition where the most likely time for a person to suffer a heart attack is on Monday morning – the start of the new workweek.

Obviously, heart attacks, physical and verbal assaults, and even petty disagreements that double the length of weekly meetings, cost companies money. Rapid turnover, absenteeism, and poor morale are the personnel equivalents of an ever-fueled fire, consuming profits while burning out people, too.

The opposite side of the coin is that it is possible to re-create the workplace, under a model that stresses humanity even as it builds profits. Even for those working in giant, multinational corporations, the insights in this book can be used to transform your work section or your department. When the impact of these dynamic changes is felt, it tends to widen throughout the organization as others start to ask, “Why is that department doing so well? How can we improve ourselves?”

Improvement in any organization comes from the concept of teamwork. With a confident and happy workforce, and a leadership that recognizes, applauds and rewards talents and a hard work ethic, great things can happen!
To schedule an appointment with us to see how we can help your organization grow, please contact maryna@synergyteampower.com

Laying a Foundation for Synergy

*“If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail.”
- Unknown*

In the same way that you would lay a foundation to construct a building, laying a foundation for Synergy in your organization prepares you for success. Joy comes about when you have created the correct environment for Synergy to build and grow. Creating the environment entails cleaning up the organizational climate.

Challenging Personal Fear

Psychological fear has all the same feelings, symptoms, manifestations, and reactions as the fear one feels when threatened physically. The good news is that psychological fear can be set free, reestablishing the courage to be objective. Changing our outlook about fear will help us gain the strength to challenge the fear existing within us, which gets easier with each attempt.

Psychological fear is a coward and a bully. Like all cowards and bullies, once we take a stand and have the confidence to deal with fear, it leaves us. You will be amazed at how quickly your mind and body will respond. Struggling with or denying fear is the food it needs to exist.

I once heard a great Swami say, “Invite your fear to tea to discuss what it needs and satisfy it by giving it the attention it is demanding from you. Then invite it to leave.”

*“You have nothing to fear but fear itself.”
- Franklin Roosevelt*

If we don't recognize the fear, it can cause us to behave in ways that we do not understand. For example, if we have a fear of not being accepted or loved enough or we are afraid of success, we might choose to use all kinds of excuses and come up with many justifications for not continuing with an opportunity or relationship.

Choosing to become more aware of the fear we feel will consciously lead us to set fear free. We do this by challenging the fear and doing the very thing of which we are afraid.

If you are a shy person who is embarrassed to conduct business presentations, challenge yourself by joining Toastmasters International, or offer to be the emcee at your next business conference. If you have a fear of spreadsheets, computer software applications, or you are intimidated by a bully in the workplace, you can overcome all of these fears by preparing for each situation or experience. It's not about winning the war – it's about winning one battle at a time. You can and you will be able to change whatever you want by having the courage to make prudent choices.

Challenging Workplace Fear

The fear of being fired or demoted or the fear of being attacked personally or humiliated is a very real possibility in today's workplace. In many organizations, the fear of failing and the "blame game" are very prevalent. When a manager's behavior toward an individual becomes personally abusive and aggressive in an attempt to get the employee to conform to company policies or procedures, exactly the opposite happens. The employee, motivated by fear, will carry out the task but, internally, will experience resistance, resentment, and perhaps even thoughts of revenge. We need to recognize that fear decreases productivity, compromise, flexibility, and interpersonal communication effectiveness and can create emotional and mental illness.

The financial cost can be devastating and can normally be tracked back to poor management skills and personal insecurity.

The Causes of Fear in the Workplace – A Leadership Perspective

To eliminate fear in the workplace, you need to promote the growth and development of your people. Letting go and allowing people to make mistakes will build confidence and higher performance. Recognize that everyone fails from time to time: the leader as well as those following the leader's vision.

Be tolerant by defining and expecting a learning curve. Expect humanness. Be trusting of those who have earned it, be honest and direct with those who have not, but not brutally so. The idea is to create zones of inspiration through education and personal growth.

"A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done."

- Dwight D. Eisenhower

Building small, high-performance teams for maximum effectiveness and motivation will allow your people to feel a sense of belonging. Naturally, there are employees lazy and clever enough who attempt to get away with minimal efforts. It is this type of employee that will test your leadership ability. Human relations, vital as they are to employee motivation, must always be accompanied by a firm insistence on good attitudes and

good work. The old joke that “firing will continue until motivation improves” is just that, a joke. Good leaders will turn conflict into Synergy.

We hope you enjoyed this excerpt of our *Joy in the Workplace* book, we would love to provide you with a complimentary copy at our first meeting. Please schedule an appointment with us at maryna@synergyteampower.com

