



MAKE YOUR TIME AT WORK COUNT

The song *Don't Blink* by Kenny Chesney expresses valuable wisdom:

*Don't blink
Just like that you're six years old and you take a nap and you
Wake up and you're twenty-five and your high school sweetheart becomes your wife
Don't blink
You just might miss your babies growing like mine did
Turning into moms and dads next thing you know your "better half"
Of fifty years is there in bed
And you're praying God takes you instead
Trust me friend a hundred years goes faster than you think
So don't blink*

But the song never mentions the third of our lives we spend at work. What does this kind of wisdom mean for our work lives? The answers are controversial.

An August 2018 *Business Insider* exposé found Americans spend on average 90,000 hours of their lives at work, yet nearly nine out of ten have “no passion for their jobs” and eight out of ten are “outright dissatisfied.” Jobs, the research shows, are contributing to insomnia and divorce. As students increasingly weigh the benefits of college, are we surprised they question incurring large debts to obtain “good” jobs they’ll hate anyway?

If work is a bane to the vast majority, the need for solutions is urgent.

One answer is to lower our expectations, eschew the idea of loving our jobs, and instead view our jobs as means to an end (paying the rent). However useful in the short term, the idea rings hollow as a solution to how we spend so much of our short lives.

Another solution is to reduce the hours worked. That idea has merit on many fronts: greater productivity, less stress, and better health, according to a review of research by Ohio University, which advocates a switch to a six-hour day. The solution is a partial one, providing more time for family and civic engagement, but doesn’t fundamentally address the way we spend our work hours.

It’s true that some companies and some work groups are cesspools of dishonesty and political infighting for status and money. Perhaps our purpose in these – and in places better than these – is to consider Viktor Frankl’s work and to find

meaning by thinking not first of ourselves but about others in the same boat.

At work, we have unique opportunities to not blink when it matters, to speak the truth and use our power to promote what is right. In 2014, I had the privilege of interviewing three inspirational and articulate McDonald’s workers whose leadership acumen was palpable and whose jobs took on new meaning when they were arrested in protests seeking to gain a living wage for all workers.

No matter our rank, we all have the potential in our work lives through our conscious vigilance to demonstrate courage, build character, and make work a better place. Don’t blink – or the opportunities for work meaning may escape you – and your chances will be over much faster than you think.

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