



how to feel better about the time you spend earning a living. Here's the catch, though: If you set happiness as your primary goal, you can end up feeling the opposite. This is because happiness (like all emotions) is a fleeting state, not a permanent one. An alternative solution is to make meaning your vocational goal.

As author Emily Esfahani Smith has outlined, people who focus on meaning in their personal and professional lives are more likely to feel an enduring sense of well-being. Research shows that making work more meaningful is one of the most powerful and underutilized ways to increase productivity, engagement, and performance. In one survey of 12,000 employees, 50% said they didn't get a feeling of meaning and significance from their work, but those who did reported 1.7 times greater job satisfaction, were 1.4 times more engaged, and were more than three times as likely to remain with their current employer.

As a coach to executives considering their next career move, I often hear clients express their desire to find greater meaning at work. Take Jon (not his real name), for example. He started a biotech company, which he successfully grew to over \$2 billion in revenue. Investors were champing at the bit for him to take the helm of another organization as CEO. However, when presented with these outwardly impressive opportunities, Jon confessed that he wanted to solve what felt to him like hence the 2017 including long

what are we really searching for when we say we want more “meaning,” and how does it differ from happiness?

An important source of meaning is actions or activities that “express the self.” But they are “mostly irrelevant” where happiness is concerned. Jon’s pull toward a different type of job was an expression of what had beâs

Living with meaning and purpose may not make you happy — at least in the short term. It requires self-reflection, effort, and wrestling with issues that initially can be frustrating. But when you approach work situations mindfully, with an eye toward contributing to others while honoring your personal identity, you'll find opportunities to practice the skills that help you find the intrinsic value in your work.

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