

## Session M106 – Recognizing Career Contentment

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**CAREER CONTENTMENT**

*All we do is all about you.*

**Session Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand the new concept of career contentment
2. Distinguish career contentment from traditional job satisfaction
3. Inventory your readiness for career contentment



**Introduction:**

Most people don't use the word *contentment* when discussing their jobs or careers. However, finding contentment at work is not only possible, but available to anyone willing to adopt the right mindset. This session will demonstrate how the term "job satisfaction" and the programs and policies that traditionally support the term contribute little to the ultimate happiness, satisfaction, or contentment of employees. The speaker asserts that the most contented employees have found a way to balance the passion for the work they do with the competing and often destructive forces of poor managers, inadequate pay, less-than-ideal office environments, and other employer-controlled conditions that undermine what most of us call job satisfaction. Contentment on the job must be self-generated from within. Anyone waiting for their employer to provide the conditions--a new boss, more money, a corner office--that will make them more satisfied will have a long wait. The speaker will demonstrate how to assist your employees to redefine and then redirect their careers toward a more fulfilling and contented state.

**The Case for Career Contentment:**

Every employer offers job satisfaction, but due to years of cost-cutting, layoffs, and uncertain job markets, employees are swayed less today by job satisfactions that are here today, but could be gone tomorrow. Industrial psychologists and human performance technologists have long suspected that traditional job satisfaction has lost its motivational effect. The more employees are given, the more they expect—and yet they still complain and come and go regardless of efforts to keep them satisfied. HR leaders and CEOs are asking: "If employees can't be satisfied, how do we attract, motivate, and retain them?"

The answer, discussed during this session, is a surprising source of employee resilience, motivation, and effectiveness that was overlooked and is relevant to everyone who works. Careers are guided and sustained by an employee's sense of *career contentment*, and job satisfaction plays only a minor role in their decisions. It's good to have, but not at the expense of wasting their time and talents in the wrong jobs or careers.

Career contentment explains why employees won't accept just any job, no matter how satisfying; why they may be content to stay in a job despite dissatisfying conditions, or why they may leave a job despite the best efforts by employers to keep them satisfied and engaged. They're on a mission and job satisfaction is secondary to the contentment they derive from work that fulfills their calling and is meaningful to their purposes.

The idea that contentment trumps job satisfaction may be a surprising revelation for some. That's because the business world has forever equated job satisfaction with success and fulfillment, and we think contentment means "settling for less." But things are not always as they seem.

There never was nor will there ever be, a consistently perfect or completely satisfying job, career, or employer. Even if there was, it's human nature to eventually want more or something new and different, making it impossible for employers to satisfy all employees all the time. Employees are never completely satisfied.

During the last three decades, Human Resources has observed how every generation entering the workforce has complained about the same dissatisfactions as the generation before them: Long hours, shrinking pay and benefits, lack of recognition and poor supervision — and this is despite the ongoing efforts by employers to improve job satisfaction. And although employees are never completely satisfied, this has never prevented them from having enjoyable careers, thanks to their contentment.

**Despite dissatisfying job conditions, an employee can be content to stay in their job if they reason the conditions are worth enduring in order to fulfill their calling and evolving purposes.**

Dr. Chris Peterson, co-founder of the new positive psychology and board member to the Gallup Organization's Positive Psychology Institute, put it this way: *"Due to a lazy misuse of terms, we overlooked how career contentment trumps job satisfaction in importance to a person's career."* And Dr. Richard G. Petty, a noted MD and International specialist in psychiatry and human potential says, *"Career contentment is a key aspect of our work lives that slipped under the radar and should birth a revolution in the workplace."*

#### **Job Satisfaction vs. Career Contentment:**

To understand why contentment is so important, it helps to know how it differs from satisfaction. Dictionaries imply these words mean the same thing, but if this were true, how is it possible we can be content even if not entirely happy or satisfied, and why don't we associate satisfaction with "settling for less?" Resolving this matter requires an understanding of the etymology or root origins of these words which reveal each fulfills a different purpose. This is what we overlooked.

The word, *satisfy* originates from the French and Latin words *sad* and *factitious*. It's sad, because in order for you to be satisfied, someone has to do something to fulfill your expectations first. You can't simply choose to be satisfied, and because you lack control over your employer, job, boss, pay, benefits, and other things that make you satisfied, you may never be completely satisfied. It's factitious or artificial because satisfaction doesn't originate from within but is dependent and conditional on factors outside of you.

Job satisfaction is a condition created artificially by employers to attract, motivate and retain employees. This condition is beyond an employee's ability to control except by bargaining, complaining, or changing jobs. This explains why, despite efforts by employers to make employees satisfied, they're never completely satisfied.

The exercise on the following page helps you understand your lack of control over traditional job satisfaction. Under each column, check yes or no for each item: Can you control or significantly influence each item?

	Important To You?		Control or Influence?	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Challenging Tasks / Responsibilities				
Reliable employer (lay-offs don't occur or they are minimal)				
Advancement Opportunities				
Equal Opportunity				
Higher Pay				
Bonuses				
Outstanding Employee Benefits				
Safe Working Conditions				
Training and Development Opportunities				
Budget and Resources				
Nice Boss / Fair Boss				
Nice Co-workers				
Like to Travel				
Family Atmosphere				
Great Location				
Stable Work Environment (Low Turnover)				
Flexible Work Schedule				

As much as you would like to control these items, they are controlled (outside-in) by employers and used to attract, motivate and retain employees, and to influence their career decisions without taking into full consideration their deepest purposes for working. These items remain with the job while an employee's sense of contentment (inside-out) is a genuine feeling or state of mind that remains with them as they change jobs, careers and employers.

The word, *content* originates from the French and Latin words *contain* and *enclosed*, meaning *from within* and suggests that when their desires are limited by what they already have, or when satisfaction isn't possible, the contented person endures with a calmness protected by their own self-sufficiency. Rather than complain about what they don't have, the contented employee reasons to persist and endure with what they do have until they can turn their situation around.

Contentment is not a condition dependent on artificial things you don't have or people you can't control. It's a state of mind which means it's dependent only on how you think, and by reasoning alone you can choose to be content with or without job satisfaction. An employee's sense of contentment with work enables their resilience to persist and endure so they can fulfill their purposes despite the inevitable job dissatisfactions.

Whether job satisfaction is intrinsic or extrinsic makes no difference. Employees can't have either without the job which is controlled by employers. However, with or without a job or job satisfaction, employees still have a career or choice of work and control of their state of mind and contentment. Stated more succinctly, employers control jobs and the means to satisfy while employees control their state of mind and contentment, which they rely on to manage their careers with or without job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is great if you can get it, and so is engagement with your work but only if you want it, and playing to your strengths is important, but neither of these things is possible or makes any difference unless you are content in your job in the first place. Career contentment trumps job satisfaction.

**Positive feelings of accomplishment and flow that you typically associate with job satisfaction are actually experienced from the inside-out as contentment. These feelings are genuine and can't be artificially created by employers, and through reasoning you can experience these same positive feelings despite dissatisfying job conditions. You can be content with work even if dissatisfied with conditions.**

Career contentment is a powerful concept affecting resilience and retention but requires shifting an employee's focus away from expecting employers to make them satisfied and learning how to reason and recognize their own contentment. More than doing what they love, this involves employees finding ways to love what they do without complaining for the privilege of fulfilling their calling and evolving purposes.

By focusing on job satisfaction rather than encouraging and helping employees to recognize their career contentment, you could say employers have spent billions trying to improve the wrong thing. However, employers can't offer career contentment. It's a state of mind. But what employers can do is demonstrate their contentment worthiness.

The idea of career contentment and its worthiness was inspired by employee reactions to the tragedy of September 11. Following this event, employees began to question why they were working so hard when at any time they could go to work and lose their lives to another tragedy. They said, "Job satisfaction is offered everywhere, but not guaranteed or worth dying for." They asked, "What is so important that would enable my contentment to stay in a job despite risks and dissatisfying conditions?" While employers were offering job satisfaction (which employees can't control), employees were looking instead for contentment (which they do control).

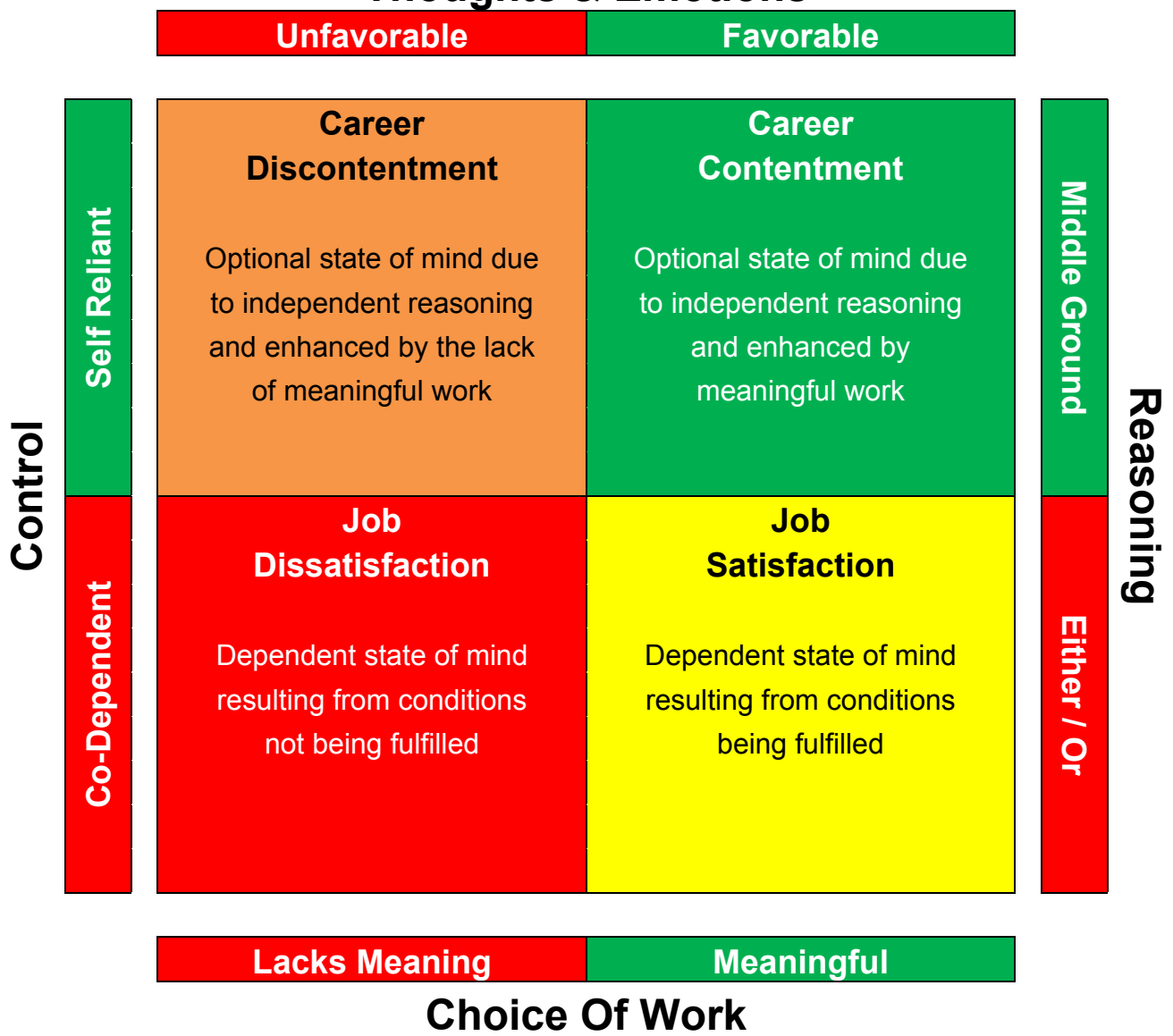
The model on the following page helps to explain what employees are actually controlling in order to have and enjoy the career they desire despite instances of job stress and dissatisfaction.

Notice the four rectangular boxes surrounding the four inner squares. They represent the control employees exercise over their career by use of their thoughts and emotions, reasoning and career choices to fulfill their calling and purpose. As you review this model, answer the following questions pertaining to your current or last position. As you do, physically point to your answer on the model.

- Are your **thoughts and emotions** favorable to support the fulfillment of your intentions to have and enjoy the career you desire, or are they unfavorable causing you grief?
- Is your **reasoning** to recognize the agreeable middle ground in any situation or are you expecting to be made satisfied and either you have job satisfaction or you don't?
- Is your **choice of work** meaningful to the use of your talents and the fulfillment of your calling and evolving purposes, or does your work lack meaning and purpose?
- As it pertains to your self-reliance and **control** of your career, are you co-dependent on your employer to make you satisfied or are you self-reliant to pursue your own career contentment?

## Career Contentment Model

### Thoughts & Emotions



**Revelations:**

- Notice that career contentment is feasible with or without job satisfaction based on favorable emotions, middle ground reasoning, career self-reliance and work that is meaningful to your talents and purposes for working.
- Note also that job satisfaction is always based on either/or reasoning (either you have it or don't) and codependent on your hard work in exchange for the satisfactions offered by employers.
- Career discontentment results from the lack of meaningful work but also from the lack of favorable thoughts and emotional control. Fortunately for you, you have the option at anytime to change both your thoughts and choice of work to achieve career contentment.

The optimum situation is to have both job satisfaction and career contentment, but employees lack control over employers, jobs and the satisfactions they offer or may choose to take away. But they do control their thoughts and emotions, reasoning and career choices in order to recognize their career contentment, and they leverage it to have and enjoy the career they desire. This requires a shift in paradigms.

**From Job Satisfaction to Career Contentment - A New Paradigm:**

The career paradigm we grew up with and is still being taught today says: *Do what you love and work real hard and your employer will help to make you satisfied.*

At first glance this seems reasonable, but today it evokes comments like, "Yeah, right!" and, "Whatever!" This paradigm contributes to the very problems employers are trying to prevent. If we know employees are never completely satisfied, why do employers insist on attracting, motivating and retaining them with job satisfaction? Employers are giving employees a reason to complain and training them to be dependent rather than self-sufficient. And although employees are expected to be content and not complain, they were never trained how to be content without complaining.

It's like text messaging while crossing the street. The human mind is most effective when focusing on one thing at a time. By focusing employees on wanting to be made satisfied, we've taken their eyes off the more important aspect of doing the work they love. They're preoccupied with wanting to be made satisfied and complaining about not having it rather than exercising control of their thoughts, emotions, reasoning and self reliance to focus on meaningful work and fulfilling their highest purposes. It's no wonder employees are intent on complaining even though employers are intent on offering new and improved job satisfactions.

A new paradigm focusing employees on their career contentment says: *Take the responsibility for doing what you love but also look for ways to love what you do without complaining, and let employers worry about keeping you satisfied.*

**Readiness:**

The contentment model indicates four specific areas where employees can begin to exercise greater control over their state of mind and career to achieve contentment. Use

the inventory on the following pages to help focus discussion and pinpoint areas where you (or your employees) may need assistance getting started.

## Control of Your Self Reliance

### Resolve your most important intentions.

	No	Need	Rank
	Problem	Help	Ordered
You are certain regarding your career goals and aspirations.			
You know the type of work which is most meaningful to you.			
There are no conflicts between your life and career priorities.			
You have no doubts about having and enjoying the career you desire.			

### Do what it takes to fulfill your intentions.

You feel ready and self-empowered to pursue what you desire.			
There is nothing holding you back or blocking your path.			
You understand your limitations and how to extend them.			
You know how to make things happen and get things done.			

### Look for ways to love what you do.

You can find joy in what you choose to do.			
You know what "flow" and being in the "zone" feel like when working.			
You can always find ways to "self-motivate."			
You would rather be doing the work you've chosen versus anything else.			

### Eliminate complaining.

You have nothing to complain about.			
You understand complaining accomplishes nothing.			
You can honestly and intentionally find the good in whatever happens.			
You avoid complainers and situations that expose you to complainers.			

**Considering the items you've rank ordered, summarize in your own words how you can improve the control you exercise over your self-reliance.**

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## Control of Your Favorable Thoughts & Emotions

### Evaluate and modify faulty beliefs.

	No	Need	Rank
	Problem	Help	Ordered
You believe you are capable of having the career you desire.			
You believe you are worthy of the contentment and success you seek.			
You believe others are ready, willing and able to assist you.			
You believe things will work out just as they always do.			

### Strive for a non-negative disposition.

You can be optimistic despite any unfortunate circumstances.			
You don't fool yourself into believing things are better than they are.			
You are okay with the fact not everything always goes your way.			
You have a "sunny" disposition even when bad things happen.			

### Keep thoughts in alignment with your best intentions.

You keep your thoughts focused on your intentions and off the obstacles.			
You can explain why thoughts are more powerful than circumstances.			
You understand what "non-negative" thinking means.			
You can accomplish anything you set your mind to.			

### Keep emotions favorable to inspire your best actions.

You know how to make yourself feel good at will.			
You understand the relationship between bad thoughts and bad feelings.			
You make excellent use of your imagination to feel inspired.			
You consider yourself a positive thinker and believer.			

**Considering the items you've rank ordered, summarize in your own words how you can improve the control you exercise over your thoughts and emotions.**

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## Control of Your Middle Ground Reasoning

	No	Need	Rank
	Problem	Help	Ordered
You think things through before reacting or taking action.			
You know why it's foolish to expect complete satisfaction.			
You are not easily irritated, and give people the benefit of doubt.			
You know why satisfaction is a condition meaning "sad" and "artificial."			

### Seek the agreeable middle ground not satisfaction.

You have a strong tendency to look for the good in people and things.			
You know that nothing and no one is absolutely perfect or satisfying.			
You know how to easily process disappointments.			
You are comfortable with "the agreeable middle ground."			

### Recognize the priority value of fulfilling your intentions.

You're able to flex and compromise to get what you desire.			
You can deal with the dissatisfactions, as long as you can fulfill your purpose.			
You're not easily distracted by frustrations or setbacks.			
You believe sacrifices are worth making if it benefits your purposes.			

### Inspire and leverage your resilience.

You bounce back easily from adversities, and roll with the punches.			
You know how to "recharge" your batteries when you need to.			
You know when to get away or take a break.			
You have close relationships with other who can help you.			

**Considering the items you've rank ordered, summarize in your own words how you can improve the control you exercise over your middle ground reasoning.**

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## Control of Your Choices For Meaningful Work

### Connect with your calling and deep interests.

	No	Need	Rank
	Problem	Help	Ordered
You know when you're getting a career calling or not.			
You're able to gather wisdom from within when making decisions.			
You choose opportunities you believe are worth fighting for.			
You make career choices without doubting you've done the right thing.			

### Be attentive to your evolving purposes for working

You feel a deep sense of purpose related to what you do.			
Your purpose is so strong it's able to see you through dissatisfactions.			
You recognize when a purpose has lost it's meaning to you.			
You understand how your purpose is a source of strength and determination.			

### Seek to enhance the meaningfulness of what you do

"Blue Mondays" and "Clock Watching" are things you don't think about.			
You don't allow mundane tasks to affect your state of mind.			
You are able to speak proudly about your choice of work.			
You initiate suggestions to make your work more engaging.			

### Commit to changes which enable your career contentment

You know instinctively when it's time to leave a job, and when to stay.			
When it's time to go, you go with confidence, ease, and no regrets.			
You have the courage to follow your heart.			
You prefer to avoid future regrets by taking complete charge of your career.			

**Considering the items you've rank ordered, summarize in your own words how you can improve the control you exercise over your choices for meaningful work.**

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### **From The Employee Point of View:**

An employee's sense of career contentment originates from within and functions like an internal "homing device." By relying on their inner sense of contentment, it feels to employees like the job finds them, and without actually experiencing what it's like to work someplace, they know instinctively which employer is best for them, how long to stay, and when they're being called elsewhere. This feeling of being called to vocation happens without regard to job satisfaction because it's linked more with the fulfillment of an employee's sense of contentment associated with purpose, not what employers offer.

Career minded employees oriented to achieving career contentment realize employers are not in business to satisfy them or to manage their career. They understand having the career they desire is their responsibility, just as employers are responsible for managing the business without regard to their career.

### **If You Say...**

**"I have job satisfaction."** It means your employer has fulfilled your expectations, but this doesn't guarantee you are content to stay there or that you're on track to fulfill your calling and purpose. You might leave even if satisfied.

**"I lack job satisfaction."** It means your employer hasn't fulfilled your expectations, but this doesn't mean you're discontent with your job or that you're planning to leave. You might stay even if not entirely satisfied.

**"I have career contentment,"** It means your job situation is conducive to fulfilling your calling and purposes, but this doesn't guarantee you're satisfied with your current job conditions. But if committed to your purpose, it's possible you can overcome the dissatisfactions by reasoning to leverage your contentment or resilience to endure. You believe your job is worth fighting for.

**"I lack career contentment,"** It means you're in the wrong job. You'll probably leave unless you're given work you believe is meaningful or conducive to your purposes. Unfortunately, not all employers can accommodate a change you want to make to your job, particularly if you feel called or inspired to change careers. If the employer can't, you must ask yourself, "Can I find reason on or off the job to be content with a dissatisfying job?" If you can, do so without risking your job, state of mind or health by complaining. If you can't, move on rather than waste your time complaining and your talents in the wrong job or career. If you can't move immediately, find a good reason to endure without complaining until you can. You may find your contented state of mind is enough to help turn your situation around.

### **From The Employer Point of View:**

Career contentment is not a program employers have to decide whether to accept or implement. It already exists in the minds of employees and it's a matter of employer's catching up with them, and job satisfaction is rarely enough to overcome an employee's desire for contentment linked with fulfillment of their evolving purposes.

Contentment worthy employers seek the right employees who are contented to be in the right jobs and utilizing their talents to make valued contributions without complaining. They help orient employees to make informed career choices, and insure they're trained, resourced, recognized, and rewarded. They don't expect career minded, purpose driven and self-sufficient employees to forfeit their purposes because they're being paid to fulfill the employer's purposes. It's a matter of establishing a mutual benefit and purpose.

The challenge to employers is twofold and requires employee coaching and training to reorient employee reasoning and to develop their self-sufficiency and resilience:

- How to switch on an employee's "homing device" and to insure employees take responsibility to identify their calling and manage their career to fulfill their evolving purposes.
- How to shift an employee's focus away from expecting employers to make them satisfied and insure they understand how to purposefully utilize their contentment to avoid complaining and suffering the costly effects of job stress and dissatisfaction.

More than offering the basic job satisfactions, contentment worthy employers make it possible for employees to do what they love doing most and to experience as often as possible that "end of the day" feeling of self-respect and genuine contentment that comes from a job well done and appreciated.

#### **Benefits of Career Contentment to Employers:**

- **Reduced complaints and associated costs.** According to the American Institute of Stress, US employers are spending over \$300 billion annually to address the same complaints heard every year about the same dissatisfactions: Long hours, shrinking pay and benefits, lack of recognition and poor supervision. These complaints persist despite ongoing efforts by employers to prevent them, partly because every generation entering the workforce is oriented to expect satisfaction, and to complain or quit if they don't get it. Employees have not yet been oriented to leverage their contentment and fulfill their purposes without complaining.
- **Performance improvement.** Career contentment draws from positive psychology, which teaches that people don't live in response to their conditions but in response to their emotions caused by what they think. Conditions encountered in life and on the job are subject to employee thoughts about them, and by improving how employees reason to deal with their conditions, it's possible to improve how they feel and the effectiveness of what they do. Employees preoccupied with needing, wanting and complaining about lacking job satisfaction act or perform in response to emotions of fear, worry, envy, doubt, and anger. However, employees predisposed to reason and leverage their contentment to endure act or perform in response to emotions of enthusiasm, excitement, optimism, and gratitude despite their conditions, which enables their resilience and greater performance potential.
- **Recruitment and retention effectiveness.** Employers who rely primarily on job satisfaction to attract, motivate and retain employees not only invite employee

complaints and dissatisfaction in the future, they waste valuable resources attempting to satisfy employees who prefer contentment derived from meaningful work, even if not entirely satisfied. Seasoned employees realize job satisfaction is fleeting while Generation X and the Millennials have made it clear they're not eager to kill themselves working for the same job satisfactions they didn't see their parents receive. Employers demonstrating their contentment worthiness in addition to offering traditional job satisfaction will have a distinct advantage over employers who don't. By connecting with and inspiring employees on a level meaningful to their career contentment, savvy employers will activate employee "homing devices."

**Speaker:**

Jeff Garton is a certified professional career coach, popular radio host, speaker, and author of the new book, ***Career Contentment: Don't Settle for Anything Less*** (ASTD Press, 2008). He is founder of Career Contentment Inc., an international career-coaching firm based near Chicago, IL. The firm produces how-to guidebooks and audios on the new topic of career contentment for individuals, employers, trainers, and career coaches.

Before founding his firm in 2000, Garton spent 23 years in human resources where he worked with the Philip Morris Companies, leading the global staffing functions for Kraft Foods and the Miller Brewing Company. He holds an MA in organizational communication and Public Personnel Administration from the University of New Mexico, and earned his ICF coaching certification through the Career Coach Institute. He is a member of ASTD and the recipient of two SHRM/EMA awards for best in class recruitment branding and marketing.

Jeff is host of "***Career Contentment Radio***," a nationally syndicated talk radio program heard worldwide on VoiceAmerica.com Business Radio Network. Executives and renowned experts in career, coaching, medicine, psychiatry and psychology are interviewed on this program to share their opinions on the emerging topic of career contentment. Garton also speaks to professional audiences and industry groups internationally on the topic of career contentment, finding meaningful work, and attracting job opportunities in difficult job markets.

Job aids are provided on the following pages.

# “I Get It”

## Career Contentment Trumps Job Satisfaction

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### **Get this - career contentment is a state of mind:**

- The positive feelings of accomplishment and flow you thought were job satisfaction are really contentment, and are possible even if your job conditions are dissatisfying.
- Contentment stays with you when you change jobs, careers or employers while the job satisfactions stay behind with the employer.
- Contentment is a major source of personal empowerment, resilience and success that was previously overlooked due to our love affair with job satisfaction.
- Only if you are content with your job in the first place can employers hope to make you satisfied, engaged, or make use of your strengths.
- Contentment doesn't mean “settling for less” but refers to your self-sufficiency to persist and endure to fulfill your highest purposes with or without job satisfaction.
- Genuine career contentment can't be purchased by you, given to you or imposed on you. It's a state of mind you choose to recognize from within.
- Contentment represents the agreeable middle ground whereas job satisfaction is an either/or proposition. You either have it or you don't, but you can always be content.
- With contentment as an option, complaining about job dissatisfaction reveals a lack of control over your state of mind and career to get what you desire.

### **Get this - job satisfaction is a condition:**

- Job satisfaction is not a state of mind or feeling you control but an artificial condition budgeted for and controlled exclusively by employers to attract, motivate and retain you.
- In order for you to have job satisfaction, someone has to do something to fulfill your expectations first. You can't simply choose to be satisfied.
- Because you lack control over the people and things that make you satisfied, the probability exists that you may never be completely satisfied.
- The conditions for satisfaction to exist can't be sustained. People and situations evolve and no one and nothing is absolutely perfect. You can always find a reason to complain.
- It's unrealistic to expect that employers can satisfy all employees all the time at the same time. To encourage an expectation for satisfaction invites complaints about dissatisfaction.
- Whether job satisfaction is intrinsic or extrinsic doesn't matter. You can't have either without the job which is controlled by employers. But even without a job you still have a career or choice of work, and control over your state of mind and contentment.

## Recognizing Career Contentment

Contentment is a peaceful state of mind you control independently of other people, material things, or conditions that are satisfying or dissatisfying. It's dependent only on how you think, and by reasoning alone you can choose to be content even if not entirely satisfied.

Applied to career, a contented state of mind enhances your ability to think clearly, make better choices, and to persist and endure with greater resilience despite job dissatisfactions. Career contentment can't be purchased by you, given to you, or imposed on you by employers. You must choose to recognize it from within.

### Do what you love

Choose work that fulfills your highest purpose and you believe is worth fighting for no matter what happens. It may not be what you do best, but what you have a deep interest in wanting to do the most, and you'll not settle for anything less. Courageously pursue the work you love.

### Love what you do

Choose to deliberately apply yourself to loving what you do without complaining, which is too easy and reveals a lack of control over your state of mind and career to get what you desire. If you can't do this, you may be in the wrong job. Complaining is unnecessary when you maintain control over your career.

### Don't expect satisfaction

Choose to recognize the agreeable middle ground as contentment in exchange for the privilege of fulfilling your purpose. There's never enough job satisfaction and employers can't possibly satisfy all employees all the time at the same time. Be realistic but also optimistic.

### Attend to how you feel

Choose to be authentic. Feeling blue or dissatisfied signals something requires your attention. Listen and make the necessary changes to how you think, work or relate to others, or if you think you're off track with your purpose or sense that you're being called elsewhere, consider making a move.

### Surf the highs and lows

Choose to experience your life and career from a contentment point of view that spans the highs and lows with greater peace and resilience. Life is random and meaningless until you assign what happens a meaning and react. You assign the meanings.

### Balance pride and humility

Choose to maintain a mindset that balances working for what you think you deserve and in gratitude for what you don't deserve. Not enough or too much of either will get you into trouble, but staying in the middle helps to maintain your contented state of mind.

For more information please visit the ASTD bookstore during ICE where Jeff Garton will be signing copies of his new book, *Career Contentment: Don't Settle For Anything Less*, and will answer questions regarding the derivative guidebooks and audios used for coaching and training related to career contentment. [www.careercontentment-thebook.com](http://www.careercontentment-thebook.com).