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## HAPPIER AT WORK

### *The Power of Love to Transform the Workplace*

The American Psychological Association reports that Americans have been experiencing high levels of stress, citing issues such as work, the economy - and even politics. That anxiety is leading to problems on the job, such as diminished productivity and friction with co-workers.

While many workers despair that stress is only going to get worse, a new book offers hope - and practical tips - on how to find greater joy on the job.

**HAPPIER AT WORK: *The Power of Love to Transform the Workplace*** (She Writes Press; June 2017; \$16.95 Paperback) by Gayle Van Gils reveals what companies like Aetna, Goldman Sachs and General Mills have found to be a key to greater productivity and engagement on the job: mindfulness.

Van Gils says that those who are unhappy at work can shift their current situation with small, incremental habits that will not only reduce stress and “ventilate a hectic day,” but also make employees more productive and focused.

“At work, we all have our stories about our areas of responsibility, our domains of expertise, what we are not interested in, and our fixed beliefs about the way things should be done,” Van Gils says. “If we can see our own stories - one of the benefits of a mindfulness practice - then they no longer need limit us. Opening both our minds and our hearts at work allows an incredible wealth of creativity, optimism, shared vision, and talent to transform our workplaces.”

Among her suggestions to transform stress into greater happiness on the job:

- **Understand that you are the key to change.** Why do you care to change your experience of work and your work culture? How will these changes impact you? When you are clear about the benefits, you will gain from your efforts and it will be easier to stick with your resolve to find better solutions.
- **Learn to un-stress your workday.** Learn the value of silence, how to pause and focus and discover your inner space.

- **Transform the energy of fear.** Journaling about the fear faced on a daily basis at work, learning to breathe through what is frightening and understanding the neuroscience of fear can give workers a greater feeling of control and peace.
- **Listen and be heard.** Learning to control knee-jerk reactions to emails, avoiding gossip, staying curious and becoming a better listener can help workers make better decisions and become more creative and innovative.
- **Be kind to yourself.** “How do you care for yourself when you feel like your life is in overdrive or out of control?” This key question can help workers move from their head to their heart as they learn to develop self-compassion and self-acceptance.
- **Connect and succeed.** Shifting from “me” to “we” in a self-absorbed culture helps workers find greater inner peace by rewiring their brains through mindfulness. Instead of getting angry or frustrated with a colleague, workers learn to see others in a new light, triggering greater empathy and compassion.
- **Radiate confidence.** By learning to practice new habits and uncovering their true selves through mindfulness, workers begin to exhibit greater confidence and power. “There’s a common expression: We know it when we see it. But in actuality, we know it when we *feel* it,” she says.
- **Engage and thrive.** Those who are able to make decisions based on their own values, fearlessly take action and are tuned into the emotions of others are the kind of employees who become leaders that inspire loyalty and respect.

“We have the possibility to make different choices and become better people,” Van Gils says. “One by one, we can become leaders who create a future informed by a trust in human goodness and respect for all.”

### About the Author

**Gayle Van Gils** is a mindfulness educator and the founder of the consulting and coaching company Transform Your Culture. She has been practicing and teaching mindfulness for more than 25 years, and is a senior meditation teacher in the Shambhala Buddhist lineage.

Title:           **HAPPIER AT WORK**  
                       **The Power of Love to Transform the Workplace**

Author:         **Gayle Van Gils**

Pub. Date:     **June 2017**

Price: **\$16.95 Paperback; \$9.95 eBook** Pages: **228**

Print ISBN: **978-1-63152-204-3**

e-ISBN: **978-1-63152-205-5**

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