

## Th Joy Factory Podcast – S1/E5 - Owing Our Happiness at Work

Welcome to the Joy Factory, where we explore the art of happiness at work. I'm Susan DeFazio, your host and founder of Be Future Ready Today, where we develop toolkits that simplify our world of work and empower the how for happier and healthier outcomes so that people and businesses can truly thrive. Our podcast guests come from all walks of life, and today we're delighted to welcome Fiona Martin. So welcome, Fiona.

Hi, Susie. It's great to be here today.

It's lovely to have you. I'm going to just introduce you, if you don't mind, just a little bit about Fiona's background. So Fiona is a business leader, an executive coach and consultant, and a board member and mediator in HR. And also Fiona is also a fellow judge with me on the HR Network magazine's national awards. So we have a tremendous amount of fun and enjoy when we're doing that. I know that Fiona believes that happiness and life and work are essential to our quality of life. I'm also told that Fiona has a very sweet tooth. So whilst I can't tempt you with a delicious cake today, Fiona, I do hope I can tempt you to talk about your thoughts on the theme for this week's episode, which is owning your own happiness at work, where we're going to explore why it matters, owning our experiences, and what you can do to take control. But first, I'd like to start the conversation off by asking you, Fiona, what does joy mean to you? 1.3s

Hi Susie. It's great to be here today. 69s Thanks Susie. It's lovely to be here this afternoon. And I think this is such an important topic. So for me, John at work actually manifests in physical feeling. It's like bubbling up of excitement and energy and positivity. And I think it is so important to each and every one of us at work. 1s I think we've seen huge links between joy and happiness at work, in health and wellbeing and how we feel both about ourselves and about our colleagues and our organizations. 2s Also, I'm very reflective about the fact that none of us leave, finish work for the day and come home and completely leave it all behind. But I think very few of us. And so I think being happy at work is hugely important because of the impact it has, not just while we're at work, all on our mental well-being, but also on our life.

Oh, I think it has a huge impact on your home life. I think it also has a huge impact on how each of us delivers at work, on the relationships that we form and how much we achieve. I know that there are a number of studies which show that people who are happy at work are hugely innovative. They're more creative, they achieve more. So it seems to me that happiness at work brings big wins, not just for us as individuals, for us in our personal life, but also for 1s the organizations that we work in. So for me, this should be a real priority, both for us in taking ownership of what we can do and also for organizations and employers.

Yeah, because 1.8s I suppose it's equitable, isn't it? An employer has a responsibility in the workplace to create the right conditions for us to thrive. But 2.1s rather than just waiting for your leader or your boss, or 1.1s more broadly, your employer, to sort of create all the bells and whistles of a great environment, why do you think it's really important to take, if you like, personal accountability for creating your own happiness at work? I'm curious to hear your thoughts on that. 2.7s

53s I think it's hugely important to take personal responsibility for your own happiness at work. Probably as a result of some of my own experiences where I've worked with colleagues, with individuals who perhaps haven't been as happy and fulfilled at work as they deserve, and 1s that's not necessarily been 1s something that's been wholly within their control. 2s What each of us can do is recognize that 2s we do have power, we have choices. And 2s it's a huge step to recognize that 2s each of us has the ability to make changes and to do things to help us be happy, fulfilled at work.

And actually, the consequences of not doing that can be really significant in terms of our home life, our health and wellbeing.

So 2s I think it's hugely important that 1s we spend time understanding ourselves and understanding 2s our personal values and the things that matter to each of us as individuals at work. Now, there will be things that are really common and I think we all want to feel that we are treated fairly, we all want to be recognized for what we contribute as individuals. 1s But there will be things that are personal to each of us that 2s we're will make a huge difference in terms of how what we get from work and whether or not we feel 1s happy and work. 2s And I think it's much easier to think about what we need and what we can do 2s before we have any difficulties. Because what I've seen and at points in my own career experienced, is that trying to work out what to do 1s what I need 1s when things are less good is actually much harder than having thought about it early on and doing that kind of check in to make sure that everything's going in a way that is rewarding. So one two for me has been really work out what it is that you're looking for from work 1s and do that early and then keep checking in to see 2s how that's progressing.

You? Yes, Susie, that's exactly what I'm saying. And 2s I'm acutely conscious that there are others in a work environment who will impact on us. If you look at the rule of 2s your direct manager, 1s their skill, your relationship with them, it will have a significant impact. So I don't wish to in any way under play or fail to recognize the impact that others can have on us. But setting all of that aside, each of us still has 3s the opportunity to make choices about what we can do to ensure that we are as happy as we need to be at work. 27s Thank you.

Yes, I have a rather quirky example, 3s so I'd love to say this was hugely well planned, but it was definitely learning in action. So there was a time very early in my career when 2s I wasn't happy. I didn't feel heard and I didn't feel included. And 1s I decided, 1s I think with a little bit of feistiness, I was going to deal with that by putting some red lipstick on and turning up and smiling, and, as I would describe it, trying to exude happiness. 1s And I made it my ambition that every interaction I had, all my dealings had my red lipstick on, my big smile, and 1s even those were times when I really didn't feel it inside. 2s And 1s what happened surprised me. So 2s there were two themes that happened. 2s Firstly, I found myself being approached by colleagues, often 1s on a personal basis, where I was getting really positive feedback about how it was coming across and how they noticed a change and how much they welcomed it and how great it was. So 1s that was interesting for me to see how my change in demeanor impacted on how other people viewed me. 1s But the second area of which surprised me even more was that I felt happier. And I've read the books, fake it till you Make It, all of that stuff I really didn't expect, just by the act of turning up and

trying to be happy, that it would actually have a physiological change in how I was feeling. It was huge, and it's a life lesson for me that I will never, ever forget. 40s Thank you. 33s Thank you. 60s I love that example. I think one of the reasons that I feel recognizing we can own our own happiness is so important is we can achieve so much with a positive mindset. I think when we're not feeling positive, it's much easier almost to spiral into an even less positive mindset. Said so.

You? Yes, absolutely. And I think 4s you can stand back, you can think about what the key challenges are and you can work out how best, whether that informally or formally, 1s to raise concerns and explore and try and resolve them.

So 2s I think 1s mediation creates, to my mind, a brilliant opportunity for different people to come together and in a safe environment gain a much clearer understanding of how 1s each person let's assume in this instance, it's two people, actually, to understand, 2s firstly 2s the individual's perspective, as in, if I am going into mediation, what's brought me here and what's been the impact? And what is it that I need to be different, to move forward? And ultimately, if I'm not able to find a resolution that is going to be successful, well, what does that mean in terms of my future choices? So it helps each of us as individuals really work out in our own heads, quite clearly where we are. But then, in bringing people together, you are creating a safe environment for them to hear from the other person and to understand different perspectives. And 2s professionally, I might say, that can be amazingly transformative. 2s The time when it happens. And you see that shift in understanding where people 1s where individuals recognize how someone else is feeling and how actions of impact and what the consequences, which often weren't intended, have been. It's like it's like a piece of magic, because that creates this incredible platform for individuals then to say, now I understand what needs to be done, and then to work out 1s jointly what they can do. And when you're invested in that, you're really thinking about, okay, here's a range of practical things that we can do, but this is also how we're going to keep checking in just to make sure that things are different. And 2s I've seen some incredible results coming out of mediation. So I'm a huge, huge advocate. 2s You?

I totally agree with that. And I think 2s there's two elements for me. One is it's so important 2s and this circles back, actually to the organizational culture that you were talking about earlier, Susie, and that psychological safety, because. 4s It's really great to ask 1s those kind of questions. What you need from me? What could I do differently? 1s What would help you most? However, people need to feel 1s that it's safe to speak out, and they need to feel that they're not going to be going to be no comeback from saying, well, actually, 2s I think our meetings could be shorter, more focused, whatever it is that's driving them nuts. So I think having the right culture is really important and also building that understanding. 1s I was talking to a friend 2s about what it was because I think this is such a fascinating topic that made her happy at work. And she said to me, well, actually, the two things for me is really important to me to learn. 1s I want to be learning all the time. I want to be learning new things. I do a lot when I'm not work to try and improve my skills. And I want to see that when I'm handling a piece of work, I want to see that I'm getting better at it, because I can see that I'm actually demonstrating that learning. 2s I find myself thinking, I wonder if her manager knows that I wonder how tuned in they are, what it is that she's looking for from

work. So I think the importance of that shared understanding can go a huge way to 2s helping managers. The best out of the colleagues are working with. 159s Susie, you've drawn out beautifully. 1s The very fact that. 4s For me, people responded differently and that was simply about the way that I showed up. 1s It was very powerful learning. 1s There's also something, if I can just flip it a little bit, 2s just about 1s maybe our response responsibility to 2s others at work. And 2s I'm thinking about 1s certainly there have been times when I've either seen or I myself have 1s maybe been in a rush and 1s it's only on reflection afterwards, but I've maybe thought, did I treat that person in the way that I would want to have been treated? Or did they receive what I was intending in the way that I meant it? And I think sometimes there's 2s unhappiness because 2s of how others perceive our actions. I think it's hugely important that we own and recognize our ability to make changes in order to maintain, develop, to be happy and fulfilled at work. We've also have a responsibility not to 1s certainly, deliberately and definitely inadvertently cause damage or harm to others. 52s Thank you.

Oh, I think that's a brilliant example of both modeling, reflection, learning openness 1s and creating 1s a culture that is inclusive and is safe. 3s Sometimes it can be the smallest and most unintended actions that have impact not just on maybe the person who feels the most, but those that see it. And conversely, 1s just holding your hands up and saying actually, that wasn't the way I would have wanted to deal with that. I'm sorry, I got that wrong. The intention was 3s hugely powerful and I think 1s the vast majority of people, what they need is to hear that, acknowledgement that recognition and to know that it wasn't something actually that was wrong with them or something that they deserved it. 105s Oh, it does. And I think one of the questions that's under used is 1s is everything okay? Because I think if we can see that a colleague isn't just not quite 1s working normally or presenting or turning up in the way that they normally would, or if it seems that they're having a bad day 1s rather than leaping into 2s what may become conflict, taking a pause and just checking in with them about how they are doing. If you would kinder and we did that more often, we might help others and ourselves. 95s Absolutely. 4s One of my of reflections. Too many reflections today is how much the lessons and happiness at work apply to life. 1s That's another conversation. 11s That is what we'll have to have you back on again. Well. 1s Thank you, Fiona. I've thoroughly enjoyed our conversation. I hope you have too. 1.2s It's been fascinating. Thank you, Susie. Once again. Thank you, Fiona. That was a wonderful discussion. And to all our listeners, please join us on the next episode when I'll be chatting to our next guest and discovering their thoughts about how we connect and create happiness for ourselves and others. 11.1s