

WOW! Just finished your book and it was sharp, hit the mark by not pulling punches and really gave a voice to thousand of workers who believe they are never heard or understood. I really liked the bulls-eye points, because they were simple and direct and something I could do without trying to change anyone else.

—*Librarian*

I found the book didn't overwhelm me by being too long or wordy. It is a good 'how to' book that you can carry around and open to one of the bulls-eyes when the boss or something gets too you.

—*Office Worker*

Finally, a book that talks directly to workers. It is about time that the people doing the job, the workers, have someone talk to them.

—*Foreman*

Sincere and heartfelt. This book can affect lives ... millions of lives.

—*Worker Advocate*

DOING GOOD WORK
matters!

WILLIAM H. MURPHY, PhD

DOING GOOD WORK *matters!*

A 21ST CENTURY GUIDE FOR GETTING MORE OUT
OF YOUR JOB AND MORE OUT OF YOUR LIFE.



TATE PUBLISHING & *Enterprises*

Doing Good Work Matters

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“The Lord gave the word and great was the company of those who published it.”

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Acknowledgments

I dedicate this book to *my love* and to our wee lad. *My love*, for being steadfast, her constant belief in me, and for being my lifelong love. Our wee lad, for being such a joy. He has added to the tapestry of our family and we are blessed having him as our son.

My sincere thanks to many others for sharing your stories. It never ceases to amaze me how many times and how many ways bosses get it wrong—and how workers always remember. If only each and every worker could wake up one day and find that things had changed for the better.

—William H Murphy

Just for Teachers/Trainers

You are welcome to use my “Tips for Teaching the *Doing Good Work Matters!* Guide.” I have found over the years that good support materials can turn a good session into a great one. I hope these materials do the trick for you! Just go to my website (www.williamhmurphy.com) and click on the book cover.

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Introduction

If This Isn't a Management Book, Then What Is It?

Hundreds, if not thousands, of books have been aimed at executives, managers, and supervisors, with hundreds more aimed at manager want-to-be's and soon-to-be's. Nearly all have snappy titles, some with endearing rodents, frogs, or cows woven into their stories to engage executives who enjoy a bit of the absurd while seeking insights. Still others have brought the eye of the academic to bear on management and leadership challenges, lending authoritative (well-cited) commentary to the arena. More will surely come. Some will be lauded as the most important management books of our times. A few will have

lasting qualities that span the years. Most will disappear as quickly as they emerge.

My energies have taken a different path with a different focus.

My thoughts have been on the men and women doing the hard, painstaking work of getting things done on behalf of the company and for the customers everyone serves. So this is not a book about executives, managers, or supervisors—the “bosses’ class.” This is also not a book solely focusing on service workers; service workers sure get their share of grief from poor bosses, and this book will hit home with many. But this book is also for all men and women who are the workers making up the backbone of the economy.

This is a book about and for the many people who do their jobs behind the scenes, whether cleaning or cooking or walking off job sites, knowing they have done a job and done it well. It is also about the workers who hate going to work, hate the long, tiring hours, hate the bosses who seem bent on making work miserable. These workers are the ones doing what their bosses tell them to do, unhappily or even resentfully, day after day, year after year.

This is a book about helping workers regain the respect they greatly deserve. After all, the

worker is the backbone of any economy. It is about time to put a focus on the worker!

There is much expected of workers. There is a lot of pressure put on workers. Yet remarkably little is written for workers, to workers, about workers.

This book should be in the hands of every worker. It gives legitimacy to the relevance and importance of every worker. And it gives workers insights into doing jobs better, enjoying jobs more, and ultimately, making companies better as well.

Bosses—yes, those calling yourselves owners, managers, department heads, leaders, and any other labels you give yourselves—may find some of the ideas uncomfortable. If so, all the more reason to get this book into the hands of your workers. It will force you to improve. These days, you’d better be focused on improving your business, or your customers will be gone soon enough anyway. Your workers are the linchpin to the success of your business. If you didn’t know this before today, starting this moment, you no longer have any excuse for having your workers *Turned Off*.

There are three fast-reading, high-impact sections of this book. The first, “Many Companies Simply Blow It,” talks about some of the ways

bosses get it wrong, making life hell—at least more like hell—for workers. Here, the “Six Laws of Being Turned Off” show the core of what can and does go wrong far too often in company after company. To the ignorance of many bosses, these laws are at work steadily dimming the spirits of workers. The result of this ignorance is a weaker company.

The second, “A Better Way: Workers Aiming for the Bull’s-eyes and Getting Turned On,” gives workers—all workers—important, simple, take-charge ideas; the kinds of ideas that make going to work more tolerable and even more enjoyable; the kinds of ideas workers can think about and use, sometimes despite your bosses; the kinds of ideas that remind you that *your job and you are important*.

The final, “Enjoying Work and Enjoying Life,” is the heart and soul of this book. There is no better reason to take these ideas and make them a way of life. There is no better reason to put effort into doing things better. No matter how much pressure we feel from our bosses and no matter how poorly our bosses treat us at work, what matters is who we are—our actions at work, in our communities, and at home—and how we feel about ourselves.

Each of us can go from being turned off to being turned on. We can start this journey today.

Managers, this is for you too. Even though I said this book is for the workers, *you* should bite the bullet, read this book, and ask yourself, “Am I the kind of boss this book is talking about?” Then take the bold step and give this book to each of your workers. Who knows, your workers might find out something new about you in return—that you want to break down walls, that you value your workers, and that you are the kind of boss they want to work hard for.



Speaking of walls, any time I tell you a worker’s story, I show you a brick wall.

Bosses who “get it wrong” put up walls that workers can’t get around, can’t get over, and can’t get through. These walls end up surrounding workers, creating darkness.

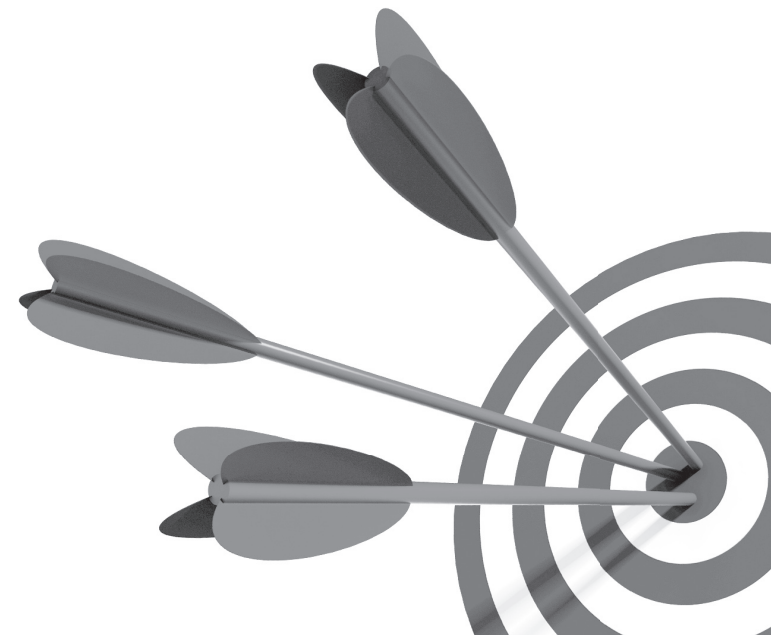
It is possible to break down these walls and bring new light to the workplace. It would be great if this starts with the boss. But workers need to rely on themselves in many, many companies. Your bosses simply aren’t going to be the ones who free your spirits, give you reason to

work hard, and a reason to do good work. For many workers, this can only come from within.

If you think of yourself as a worker, my hope is that this book gives you a way to lift your spirit—not for your boss, but for yourself.

Section 1

Many Companies Simply Blow It: The Laws of Being Turned Off



Before we can talk about being turned on, we have to understand how typical it is that bosses make us turned off. You are not alone! There are millions of people throughout the world struggling with bosses every day. Bosses who have no idea they are being wrongheaded. No idea they are blowing it with workers. No idea! Worse yet, a lot of bosses seem to have no interest that they could be doing their job a lot better by doing things differently.

Even though this book is not about the bosses, bosses have a lot of power and a huge impact on your day, from punching in, to deciding what you do, to telling you when you can take a break, to telling you when you can go home. Bosses have to be given much of the credit (blame!) for turning workers off.

As you'll see, the laws of being turned off have a lot to do with your bosses.

SNAFU's R Us

(Situation Normal, All Fouled Up)

Before setting off into the laws of being turned off, here are a few stories from men and women who work for companies, some great, some not so great, some making a lot of money, and some just getting by.

These stories are the kinds of events that millions of workers can relate to because bosses do these same kinds of things over and over, across businesses, across industries, across countries. Listen to just a few of their stories; then let's talk about the laws of being turned off.

■ I don't get it. No matter what I do, I never get any thanks from my boss. Its like she figures as long as I'm getting paid to do the work, she doesn't need to say anything positive to me.

The guy is living proof that there are times incompetence is rewarded with a promotion. All he ever did was suck up to the owners. Geez. Now he's the boss and we're all stuck with him.

Our boss runs things like a "boys club". After our last meeting he included a golf outing. At the same time, he arranged a bus for a trip to a shopping mall. After some kidding around about the men's and lady's tees, even the one woman who golfed gave an uncomfortable smile and said she'd head to the mall with the rest of the women. So, we spent the afternoon detached.

Five years with this company. I've made thousands of pizzas. The bosses keep changing; always a fresh face know-it-all barely in his twenties. The one I have now is a real you know what. You see, the company has a bonus thing. Whenever we do a really good job, bosses hand out these scratch cards that can earn 50, 100, or even 150 points toward products in a catalog. The cards say right on them, "Thanks for doing a good job." Anyway, the new boss has been here six months and I just found out he's cashing in the tokens he's sup-

posed to be giving out to us. The white shirts must just trust the bosses with this thing, or he couldn't get away with it.

After all these years, it still amazes me. Bosses always think they have something brilliant and new to tell us about how we should be doing things. You see, every few years or so the same "new" thing comes through the company. But the thing is, the new bosses hadn't been around the last time since they kept getting moved to other jobs or they leave the company. And they never ask any of us. Nope, God forbid they would do that. So they never know this might be the fourth or fifth time the same thing was tried by the crews. We just go along, shaking our heads and doing like we're told. Stupid, isn't it?

I'm bored out of my mind. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad but my boss told me I socialize too much and he said I had to stop talking to people. I could understand if my quality or quantity of work was not acceptable. But, last month they had given me an award for doing a good job. Go figure.

I worked with a team where we got files sent to us on a regular basis. For years we took those files, scanned them into the computer, and shredded the originals. We used to think the department that sent them to us was stupid since the files never came with identifying information that would make it possible to access the documents. I think the bosses thought people like us had better not see the cover pages to the files—as if it was some big state secret who originated the documents or something! We joked about what a waste of time it was, but we just kept doing like we were told.

Anyway, one night I was put on the plastic ski line; I think they were called Fun Skis. My boss told me to razor off the flash, box, insert instructions, and stack them onto pallets. Most of all, the boss said to make sure I hit the hourly target numbers. There I am, a few hours into the night, and I was kind of in a groove. The machine was moving fast, the noise was pretty loud, and I just kept at it. I had been told to hit my numbers, and I was going to make sure I did it. So I kept boxing and stacking. Well, my boss came over and


started screaming at me. He started emptying boxes and telling me I was stupid. He kept demanding to know how I could have kept the machine running when the color had changed! If the color was so important, why didn't he explain it to me before I started? How was I supposed to know?

Yes, these kinds of encounters with bosses are everywhere you look. Bosses are running so many businesses poorly, with workers taking a lot of the grief. And the walls go up, with workers trapped (we all need a paycheck, don't we?). When enough walls surround a worker, darkness sets in and the reason to work hard and do good work often dies.

How does this happen? Why does it happen?

Let's start looking at some of the ways bosses wreck the ability of workers to do a good job. Even worse, how bosses make things so bad for workers that workers stop even caring about doing a good job. Then I'll talk about how workers can—no, must—find ways to knock down the walls bosses put up.

Rework Sucks—And It’s Pretty Normal around Here: The First Law



I had a crew who'd been working with our company for years. They had a product they were installing that was defective about forty percent of the time. They would take the unit off the truck, haul it into the building, and install. Then, if it was defective, they'd be on the phone to their warehouse, saying they needed another. Of course, this meant they had to sit around while they waited for another to be delivered. More often than not, it would put the crew way behind and they ended up working late to get it done. Sometimes even the second unit would be defective, and it

would start over again. Meanwhile, the next crews would be getting backed up because they had to wait until the installation was complete before getting started. It went on like this for years; nothing ever seemed to change. Bosses never fixed the situation.

Great. Just great. A whole damned morning drywalling. Look at it—no home wrap, no sealed joints, the rain's streaming in and making the whole place one soggy mess. For sure, we'll be back on Monday to tear it out. But the boss said put it up. So here we are putting it up. What a waste of time.

Same crap, different day. Our product is terrible, and I spend the majority of my days fixing it with my crew. I mean how many times have I heard customers saying, "Why don't we change the product so we wouldn't have to come back to fix it?" Well, I'm always tempted to say, "It's cheap, and you pay for what you get." Instead, every time I'm going on and on explaining that this is a minor issue, no problem, it will just take an hour to replace, and we'll be out of their hair. The boss isn't considering this in his costs, the idiot!

As these examples show, far too often the causes of rework are obvious, with workers often talking behind their boss's backs about the nonsense going on. In the end, workers find themselves frustrated but powerless. With bosses seemingly indifferent to the ongoing need for rework, pretty soon workers find themselves thinking "so what?" "So what if it's crap?" "So what if it's shoddy?" In the end, 'so what' thinking becomes the norm.

Think of all the "so whats" we deal with.

So what ... as long as the work is covered over by the next crew?

So what ... as long as cost overruns from rework can be passed on?

So what ... as long as no one knows, at least until we're long gone?

So what ... as long as the customer doesn't find out why costs blew past bid and can be forced to pay the extra bills?

So what ... as long as no one knows we did it?

"So what" thinking often starts with the boss and ends up with the workers.



The first law of being turned off:

If the boss doesn't care about work done well, workers won't care either ... and rework becomes the norm instead of the exception.

The Boss Demands Obedience: The Second Law

Why are we knocking this down?
... digging this hole?
... putting this up?
Who cares? The boss said do it, so just do it.

I was called to my boss's cube and asked why I went to the men's room down the hall instead of the one just across from my work area. At first I kind of froze, not knowing what to say. Then I said, "Well, the one across the hall smells like a barn, and the one down the hall has a fan." She just looked at me and said since

I'd taken time away from my station I'd have to skip my next break.

Jeez. Why did we do it one way last week and now they've got us doing it a different way today?

Sometimes it's a no win. I tell the boss our problems so often, and nothing is ever being done about it. It's hard to move on since I go through this every day. It makes Monday mornings tough and sure makes it tough to be proud of my work.

She tells us we're lucky to have a job and we should appreciate just being here at all. Who does she think she is, anyway?

Just work.

Just get it done.

Just do as the boss says and don't let him or her catch you loafing.

Just tolerate the unending, backbreaking, mind-numbing day until the bell rings, the horn blows, or the clock signals you can put away your tools and go home.

The list goes on and on. And work becomes even duller. When workers begin to think in "just" terms they can quickly lose their sense of purpose and their desire to do good work. Eventually, workers can lose sight of why doing good work even matters. Often, they find themselves doing little more than obeying the boss and trying to stay out of trouble.

After all, the boss has all of the power.

After all, the boss knows how hard it is to get a job, especially in difficult economic times.

Rare is the worker who seeks out the unemployment line. If mere obedience keeps a worker working and "just" thinking keeps workers on the boss's good side, then smart workers simply obey.




The second law of being turned off:

When bosses expect nothing more than obedience, obedience is all they'll get.


So Goes another Pep Talk by the Boss: The Third Law

I can replace you at any time.


Every night I would come home from work feeling as if I failed because I couldn't handle the rowdy teenagers and take care of some of the patrons who needed help. There wasn't enough staff and we didn't get any monies for programs, so the teens just hung around and caused trouble. I kept reporting this problem to my supervisor and she would nod her head in sympathy then tell me, "just keep doing your best and things will be fine." But, she wouldn't write up an incident report or make arrange-



ments for a security person to visit the library once or twice a night. I know she didn't do anything because she wanted to keep her incident record free and stay in budget—all to keep herself looking good. It made my job really hard. Sometimes I'd go home and just cry.



Our bosses at the bus company put supervisors out on the street without the drivers knowing it. Nope, they were never out there to help. They would follow the bus in an unmarked car and write down any mistakes you made, no matter how small. They would put it into our files, and after you got a few, they'd call you in. It was about the only time the boss would talk with us one-on-one. He would be all-so-serious as he told us how we were bordering on a possible suspension. It never had anything to do with improving conditions or helping us—just to make us worry.



I thought about a way to improve the flow in the kitchen so we'd have a little less chaos. I told my boss. All she said was, "Great suggestion. Now, how about getting back to work and staying focused instead of letting your mind wander."

In their own ways, each of the laws of being turned off relates to the next law: the result of being made to feel unimportant or expendable. There is no better way for bosses to make a worker feel expendable than to be told, "I can replace you tomorrow." But, there are many ways for bosses to show workers exactly who counts and who doesn't. Some bosses make it clear that workers should just keep quiet and do their jobs. Other bosses 'listen' to workers but act condescendingly or respond to suggestions with "great idea". Of course, no changes follow. Still other bosses put up suggestion boxes but seem only interested in appearances—workers figure this out pretty quickly when their bosses don't respond to suggestions or give only lip service to suggestions. The message is clear and strong: your skills are not special; you offer nothing special; you bring nothing to the job that adds value; your job is so easy that replacing you is simple and painless for the company.



The third law of being turned off:

If bosses make workers feel unimportant, workers will come to believe they and their jobs are unimportant.

Purpose. What Purpose? The Fourth Law

- “So what do you do?”
- “Build houses.”
- “Anything else?”
- “Nope. Just build houses.”

Think of the difference if the worker had known to say, “I am a master carpenter building the finest-quality houses in the region, houses that families will love for their design and fine craftsmanship and be proud to have as their homes.”

Way too often, workers are put to tasks with no real sense of purpose behind the task. Most bosses don’t talk with workers about the down-

stream, the outcome of the finished work, the owners and users of the products being made, the houses or buildings being built, and the effects of work on the community.

If all that is expected is for workers to pour concrete, why talk about the huge, vital role of their work on the homeowners about to live in the home yet to be built on the foundation being laid?

If all that is expected is “units of output,” whether pallets filled, miles driven, square feet laid, rooms completed, or bushels filled, then why talk about the vital purpose behind doing good work?

Here again, it all starts with the boss. And workers live with the pressure of meeting the numbers, the mind-numbing numbers the bosses set, and they must deliver.

What is left for workers but to put up with their bosses’ demands?


What is left for workers but to find ways to tolerate their jobs, counting down the hours before they can go home, the days before the weekend, the hope for the next paycheck? After all, what other reason is there to keep working?



The fourth law of being turned off:

If bosses don’t talk of a greater purpose to work, work is simply tolerated while waiting for a paycheck.

Quality Is Us: The Fifth Law



It sucks. Month after month we've got to go to the shop an hour early on Fridays for quality meetings, just so we can have BS hammered at us by the boss and his sidekick quality manager. I don't think the guy has a clue what we do or how hard this job is. In fact, I don't even know what he's talking about most of the time. But, there are donuts and we're on the clock so it isn't a total loss.

So many meetings. So much talk. Some companies put a lot of effort into quality. Many other companies do it because they've been forced to go along with their customer's demands—"do it or we won't give you anymore business," a pretty compelling reason to become a "true believer"

in quality. Still other companies figure that as long as business is good, their quality is good enough so there is no need to invest in quality improvement—after all, it would cut into the bottom line.

But when the time comes that business is tight, many of these bosses become quality believers as well. Knowing they must improve quality, a quality manager is brought on board. Crews are told to attend meetings. The cycle begins.

Way too often, quality then becomes stuffed down the throats of workers. Workers are not part of the quality process. Workers are not asked their thoughts about doing things better, safer, or even faster.

Nope, workers are just given the hard line about complying, about doing the job the way the boss tells them to do it, about the consequences of not doing the job the way the boss says.

And workers comply. When bosses tell workers to do things differently, they do it. It doesn't matter if it is harder the new way. It doesn't matter if the new way seems worse than the old way. If the boss doesn't want to hear your opinion, then screw it; do the job any way the boss wants it done and just stay out of the boss's way. Life goes on and paychecks keep coming by just staying out of the way.



The fifth law of being turned off:

If bosses don't trust workers with maintaining quality, or if bosses don't value suggestions for improvement, workers will obey but not contribute to improving quality.

Bosses Take All the Credit: The Sixth Law



I don't know why I keep staying late. She never notices anyway.



No matter how good a job I do, it's as if it doesn't make any difference to my boss.



That SOB. We work sixteen-hour days to get the job finished, and he struts around like he did it by himself. Look at him grinning over there with management. Where's our reward? Where's our thanks? Same thing happens every time.

Bosses—sometimes it seems like there are lots of reasons to feel like you can't stand them. If you've been thinking how much your boss is just like any/most/all of the first five laws, then you might already have lots of reasons to be frustrated with your boss.

Bosses like the feeling of being appreciated. Bosses like the feeling of being thanked. Bosses too often forget that workers feel the same way about getting some appreciation for great work. In the end, too many bosses live in the world of the laws of being turned off. As result, some bosses don't even think about how easy it would be to make workers feel better about their jobs, about the company, and about them.



The sixth law of being turned off:

If bosses don't appreciate great work,
workers will stop doing great work.

Summing Things Up: Why So Many Workers are Screwed

The presence of many, or even any, of the six laws of being turned off often leads to a vicious cycle. Workers end up barely tolerating their bosses and then barely tolerating their jobs. Bosses feel justified in treating workers poorly, deciding that workers are good-for-nothing, lazy bums who need constant watching. The walls surround workers, keeping workers in darkness, and gloom surrounds them. Only the promise of a paycheck keeps workers showing up week after week.

With workers seeing bosses as adversaries, many workplaces end up having workers keeping their eyes out for the boss, saying things

like, “He’s gone; now we can take it easy,” or “get going, she’s back.”

Of course, bosses catch on to this, leading to dropping by unannounced or even installing watching/listening devices to catch workers in the act.

This ugly cycle, repeated far too often, doesn’t have to happen. Ideally, bosses figure out the wrongheadedness of the situation and take steps to make things right.

A great starting point would be for bosses to take a look at the laws of being turned off (maybe someone should put this book on the boss’s desk/table/car seat!) and then do a little self reflection. This step is hard for bosses because it requires putting an end to blaming the worker. It means bosses have to start looking in the mirror, taking credit (blame!) for the situation, and changing how they engage workers.

Until that happens, think of all the workers dealing with hard asses for bosses, rotten-to-the-core bosses, bosses who just don’t care, or bosses who don’t know any better. Yes, there are countless workers who end up turned off and resigned to misery.

Of course, think about what this means for you. If you have one of these bosses and you work

just eight hours a day, five days a week, forty-eight weeks a year, you are living with the never-ending challenge of making the best of a very bad situation.

What is the point of saying how bad things can be? After all, many of you are working in exactly these kinds of situations.

There has to be a better way!

The better way is complex and simple. Hard and easy. Risky and safe.

I am saying these things because any time you try something new it seems complex. Any time you try something new it seems hard. Learning how to ride a bike was hard at one time! Learning how to tie your shoes was hard at one time (thank God for Velcro for those who never figured this skill out). The risky part is personal—what if I can’t figure it out? What if other workers make jokes about me? What if my boss is a jerk who’ll get pissed off if I start making suggestions or if I start doing things a different way?

Since your boss has such a huge effect on how you feel about your job and your performance, let’s take a look at how good, or bad, things are for you right now.

Workers—Yes, You!

**You've Read the Laws of
Being Turned Off.**

Now Take the Test!

(How Bad Is Your Boss?)

Pause right now and think about the laws of being turned off. How many of them fit your situation?

On the next page there are eight questions that help you assess your boss.

After adding up the score, you can check to see how good, or how bad, your situation is.

	<i>Not at all like my boss</i>	<i>Some-what like my boss</i>	<i>Sounds a lot like my boss</i>
My boss doesn't care if work is done well	1	2	3
My boss expects nothing more than obedience	1	2	3
My boss makes workers feel unimportant	1	2	3
My boss doesn't talk about a greater purpose to work	1	2	3
My boss doesn't trust workers with maintaining quality	1	2	3
My boss doesn't value suggestions for improvement	1	2	3
My boss doesn't appreciate great work	1	2	3
My boss takes the credit when we do great work	1	2	3

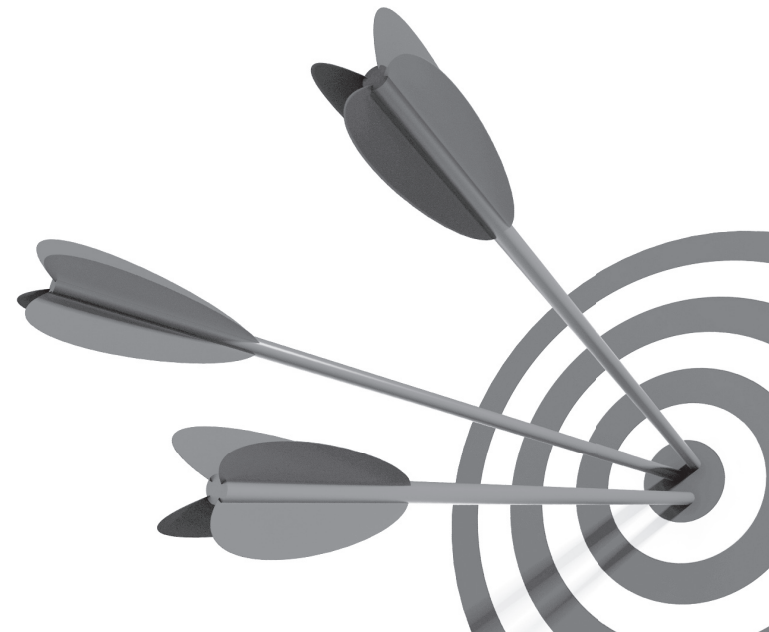
Add up your Boss's Score and put it here _____

What the score suggests for you right now:

<i>Your Boss's Score</i>	<i>What it Means Right Now</i>
8 – 11	You probably have a good boss – you are good-to-go as to aiming for the bullseyes in the next section. You most likely can go ahead and tell your boss you are working on ways to improve by aiming for the bullseyes. Better yet, your boss will likely try to help!
12 – 15	Your boss sounds like he/she is OK – far from ideal but not your enemy. Your boss might even be open to learning how to do things better. Don't push too hard but definitely consider making a go of telling your boss about ways you are going to be hitting the bullseyes!
16 – 24	You almost surely have a poor boss. It looks like you have to make a go of it on your own. As you learn how to aim for the bullseyes, think about quiet ways you can be Turned On – without making your boss mad at you. One day either your boss will turn things around or you will feel ready to find a way up and out of your job and away from your lousy boss (more later on this!).

Section 2

A Better Way: Workers
Aiming for the Bull's-eyes
and Getting Turned On



I Call It as I See It—A Lot of Workers Are Screwed

(So, Are You Going To Take It
or Do Something about It?)

Bosses like to run things. Better yet, they like to control things. Most of all, they like to hit their numbers.

For the past one hundred years or so, bosses-to-be have been trained to believe in a code of running businesses. This code makes a lot of sense, but it ignores the consequences of having bosses believe the code is the only thing that matters.

The code holds that jobs should be simplified to their component parts, thus reducing the exper-

tise needed of workers. At the same time, processes should be improved, creating efficiencies to churn out more product, build more houses, paint more walls, lay more bricks, pick more crops, serve foods faster—well, you get the idea!

The code also says that automation and data management systems must be embraced, assuring cost efficiencies and enhancing the bottom line for bosses.

Many good things are supposed to happen by following the code. First, by reducing the skills needed from workers, bosses gain greater certainty that work is consistently done time after time and day after day, even from inexperienced workers. Second, work will be done more quickly, with jobs finished, crops picked, pallets filled, trucks unloaded, walls painted, holes dug, offices cleaned faster. Third, overall quality will be improved by using processes and systems that “guarantee” consistency. All of these actions, from driving down labor costs, increasing consistency, and producing more results at a faster pace are surely good. So say the bosses.

The problem with bosses living by this code is that in the end, way too many bosses end up creating a workplace that is dehumanizing.

Bosses forget about the need to treat workers

with respect and end up ignoring the uniqueness of each worker. The laws of being turned off can become a reality for workers in these situations.

Fact: As long as the company you work for is making acceptable profits, hitting growth goals, etc., company leaders will tend to assume that your bosses are doing things right.

Unfortunately for workers, this also means that your boss often runs things anyway he or she wants to run them. As many workers know far too well, this also means that whether you are turned on or turned off is not even part of your boss’s thinking.

As the laws of being turned off suggest, many bosses are blowing it *big time*. Today’s success is blinding these bosses to the reality of how they are jeopardizing their businesses in the long run for sure, but also here and now. You should know, when bosses think the code is all that is needed to guarantee business success, while not realizing workers are the most important key to business success, they are being stupid. Bosses following the code while not caring that workers are turned off is worse than stupid—it is idiocy!

In job after job and in industry after indus-

try, workers are frustrated and bored, working for bosses who reflect too many of the laws of being turned off. All told, there is an avalanche of effects, all contributing to harmful consequences.

Far too many workers feel unimportant.

Far too many workers do not have a greater purpose to their work.

Far too many workers are uninterested in doing jobs better.

Sadly, the result is that far too many workers do not realize that failing to do great work has consequences, huge consequences. Often, these consequences only become clear when the company finds itself in trouble. Complaints rise. Frustrated customers call, angered by the unacceptable work the company puts out. Former customers are no longer letting the company bid on jobs. Former shoppers are now shopping at other stores. Former diners are now eating at other restaurants. Profits fall. Bosses fear losing their own jobs or businesses. Desperation typically leads to desperate actions.

The first action is usually dead wrong. Taking problems out on workers is a common, dead-on-arrival action taken by desperate bosses—demand

more, threaten more, push more. After all, workers are already turned off, and now that the business is in trouble, it must be the workers' fault!

When this weak, sometimes cruel attempt at returning to success fails, bosses, if they are still in business, often discover a better path.

A huge fact: Companies need great people doing jobs in consistently high performing ways. An energized, turned on worker brings better value to the company.

Okay, let's run once more through the situation millions of workers just like you face. Driven to make the numbers look good (usually profits or market share, but lots of bosses focus on cash flow; you know, cash coming in versus cash going out), many bosses focus on old beliefs, relying entirely on the code for running their businesses. They work at automating more, simplifying jobs more, reducing the skills needed to do a job, and improving their ability to control workers more. While these efforts are driven toward increased productivity, what is often neglected or forgotten is the value and importance of the worker.

Just think about your own situation and look around you. It is easy to find lots of workers

turned off and usually hard to find workers turned on! When the numbers start looking bad (times can't always be good), a lot of bosses clamp down, thinking they can push workers even harder (by insults, threats, or worse) to regain "the good old days" of business prosperity.

Millions of other bosses aren't cruel. But many of these bosses have been trained in the code and it makes a lot of sense to them. The code sucks them in, and they rely on it and it alone to achieve business success. These are not bad or evil bosses. They just go about their business not really knowing how they've turned off their workers.

In the previous chapter, as you took the test and scored your boss, you got a sense of the challenge facing you; so much depends on your boss.

Now that you have your boss's score, some of you know you have decent enough bosses and you can dive in right now, aiming for the bull's-eyes, even sharing the ideas you are learning with your bosses. As you get turned on, you'll find yourself becoming a better worker, relating better with your boss, enjoying your job more, and feeling really good about life overall.

Some of you might get a new understanding of your boss's efforts to involve you in quality

improvements, even finding yourselves appreciating your quality manager, if you have one.

Some of you can start encouraging other workers to do the same, with more and more workers aiming for the bull's-eyes, getting turned on, and making work better for everyone.

Yet many, many other workers will have to be quiet about your actions—you know who you are, workers with bosses in the 16–24 score range; I am sad just knowing there are millions of you. Don't give up! You are about to be given a way of thinking and tools for making your work life better.

A gigantic fact: No matter what your situation, all workers can take actions that keep your spirits from dying when you go to work. Even better, you can be more confident and more certain about your worth, making life better for you and your family.

Going from turned off to turned on and making your work and your daily lives better is up to you. Only you can decide how to live your life and take more control of your future.

Getting Turned On: I Know I Am Important



You're a bricklayer. Or you work on a production line. Or you work in an office, or in a kitchen, or in any of thousands of other jobs. Far too often you've been reduced to labels, as if you are just another cog in the machine, with no reason to take pride in your work.

You know, a bricklayer would have been considered a tradesman years ago. In industry after industry, jobs should be seen as important, crucial to the success of the company. Too often, this has been forgotten. Workers need to remember that they build homes that families and friends live in. Workers don't just work on a production line;

workers assemble and build and prepare what the world drives, sits on, works with, and eats.

You are a part of that important, even vital, effort, and you should be proud of it.

Where did it all go wrong? What can you do about it?

The things that prevent workers from finding their potential and from becoming *turned on* instead of *turned off* are heard far too often ...

You are stuck in a job with seemingly no way out. The bills have to get paid. The routine has become a tolerable pattern. You know you have to outlast the jerk of a boss you work for. Life goes on.

The idea of why anything matters other than getting to work on time, doing your job, staying out of the line of sight of your boss, and going home has been long forgotten. This is no way to live. It is no way to spend day after day, month after month, year after year.

Sure, you can't fire your boss.

Sure, you can't change jobs (at least not yet, but the skills and mindset you are about to learn will give you more choices if your boss doesn't step up and improve).

You can take control.

You cannot simply give up and be resigned

to a dismal work life; your life and time are too important for this!

A universal fact: You are an important person. There is only one you on the entire planet. There is no one else who has your unique smile, your unique laugh, your unique way of going about your life.

Never let a boss take this awareness away from you. Never let a boss run down your spirit. Keeping a positive attitude about who you are, always knowing you matter, can help you get through any job situation and help you survive any boss. This book is about you. The first bull's-eye is a challenge to you to think every day, no matter how tough things are, about your importance.



Bull's-eye Number One

I know I am important, and I don't forget it!

Getting Turned On: I know How My Work Affects Others



Sure, I like doing my job. I clock in at 7:00 p.m. and get my supplies. Then, starting on the fifth, I empty the trash and vacuum, offices first and then the halls. Mary takes the fourth floor. We take our breaks then go to the third and second floors. Then we get thirty minutes to eat. Next, we hit the bathrooms, top to bottom floors. We finish the night on first, waxing floors at the end. Nobody bothers us. The boss covers four buildings, so he stays mostly out of our way. It's a great job.

Workers everywhere are busy doing jobs that matter. What is usually missing is the knowledge

of how each worker's work affects other people. In an office building, the cleaners are seldom commended by their bosses ... only when offices are dirty or the trash bins run over is attention given. In a restaurant, bussing staff go about their jobs while receiving scant praise for good work ... only when diners or wait staff complain is attention given. The same goes for workers in any industry - many workers are simply never told how important their jobs are. Many workers are simply never let in on the basic truth that their work affects others in important ways.

It is far more likely for bosses to tell workers they'd better not do their jobs poorly than to hear bosses talk about how work done well will put smiles on customers' faces, will give the next people working down the line an easier time, will make the company stronger and jobs more secure. Sadly, far too many bosses seem to only concentrate on what you'd better not do "because I'm watching you."

Think about your own boss. Are you told about the importance of your job? Do you sometimes find yourself almost invisible, invisible even to your boss? Can you remember the last time you heard your boss say the entire company would be stronger and healthier and jobs would be more secure for everyone at the company because of

you? Has your boss ever said it? Probably not. Too many bosses never think this way.

Fact: Your job, no matter how small it seems sometimes or how trivial your boss tries to make it, is important. The company needs your job. Your job affects others in important ways. Your job affects the success of the company you work for.

How well a foundation is laid completely affects the rest of the house. The next stage in building counts on it. The amount of future rework depends on it. The happiness of the homeowner, especially if the basement chips, peels, cracks, or takes on water after the first rain, depends on it! How well you do your job affects people, sometimes a lot of people!

Doing your job well makes life easier for the next workers in the line. It makes life easier for the group following yours in construction projects. It makes life easier for workers in the buildings and offices you've just cleaned. It brings happiness to the families who've just eaten the food you've prepared. You need to know that what you do matters because it affects so many people.



Bull's-eye Number Two

What I do is much more important than just keeping my boss off my back. I know that the work I do affects people.

Getting Turned On: I Know Why Doing A Great Job Is Important



I don't see the point of killing time cleaning up when we'll be back in the morning mucking the place up again. Geez, we'd probably be able to hang another door if we weren't wasting time on clean-up.

Way too often workers can't figure out why bosses have them doing some of the things they are told to do. Way too often, workers have learned not to even ask. "Just do what you are told to do" is the sure-fired way to stay on the boss's good side

so it is exactly what workers do. So, workers go about their days mumbling about the work, not offering suggestions for improving the work, and feeling turned off and frustrated.

Sadly, once disengaged from understanding the importance of the work and their critical role in assuring good work, workers are far less likely to strive to do great work. Lacking purpose to tasks, workers can soon end up doing the bare minimum to get by, with little pride in the outcome. With the door hanging crew, the impact of end-of-day cleanup is that later that afternoon a real estate agent could be showing a family through that house. Believe it or not, a family walking into a cleaned-up house could make the difference in whether or not they like the look of the house and later decide to buy.

Fact: Doing great work is important—not just to please your boss but for you.

Having a greater purpose for doing a job well makes a huge difference.

What if every time you went on a job you knew the person or family who'd be living in the house you built was your priest, your pastor, or any other religious leader you respected?

What if every time you prepared food you knew the customer was a close family member or a close friend?

What if every paint job, every product assembled, every crop picked, and every office cleaned was being done for someone who mattered to you?

Would you focus more?

Would you try harder to get it right?

Would you tell others around you to put their best effort into the job?

Fact: Someone important ends up getting the results of your work. That person, no matter who it is, is important (just like you are important: bull's-eye number one).

There is a greater purpose to everything you do. Every job you do, no matter who the customer is, ends up being for someone important, someone who is surprisingly a lot like you. Most people spend their days working to earn a decent paycheck, hoping to earn enough to pay the bills, to put food on the table and to buy things for their family. Each and every one of these important people, including you, should be able to trust

that work was done as well as it possibly could be done.

Because many of you are living turned off, you might think this is stupid; after all, if all you do is dig a ditch or pick crops or lay bricks or assemble products or ship goods, you probably think, *Screw this; I'm just doing what my boss tells me to do, and that is the end of it.* If this is what you are thinking, it is because your boss has turned you off from the importance of you and of what you do.

You think this way because your boss has messed up your mind so much that you have forgotten, or never knew, why you are important and how your work affects others. And you've forgotten or never knew that there is a greater purpose to doing great work.

Find and remember your greater purpose. Know that every job you do is important to someone. Know that every job you do is a reflection of *you*. Yes, your work affects others. It is a fact! Every job has a rippling effect on everyone else in the company and on customers. Speaking of customers, everything depends on customers, yes, the people who pay money for the things your company sells. Some of this money goes into your paycheck. Some of this money pays every worker in your company. If your customers

are happy, they keep coming back, bringing more money into the company and keeping every job a bit more secure.

Once again, customers are people, important people, just like you. Treat every job as if it is being done for someone important. Realize that by doing great work you help make these important people like your company a little more. Realize that pleased customers come back again and again, making your job and the jobs of workers around you more secure.

Huge fact: Every customer is an important person (just like you), and your good work is about serving them.

We know that many workers live with an additional sense of purpose. You are one of these workers if you turn to a higher authority, sensing a spirit-filled connection that compels you to do a good job. Here again, this is made possible because you know, you truly believe, that you matter and your work matters.



Bull's-eye Number Three

I understand the greater purpose behind doing a good job—doing a good job is about me and about the people who depend on me.

Getting Turned On: I Can Be Better Despite My Boss

(No matter how hard he tries, my boss won't stop me from being great.)



I'll always remember our boss coming out and inspecting the work of both crews. Our crew cared about the work and we always did twice the work in the same time as the other; but the boss never mentioned anything to either crew. The boss only cared about total output. No extra pay or even thanks to the hardworking crew and no extra pushing for the slower crew. Pretty soon we all could have cared less about

our boss and his attitude. Either we were going to keep working to be the best and take pride in the work, or not. It was entirely up to us.

No matter how hard it is to remember, especially if you have a boss who doesn't thank you for it, always know that doing good work has value. In fact, doing good work makes a huge statement about you and it has a huge effect on others. You already know that your work affects a lot of people, including other workers in your company, crews from other companies who work at the same job sites, customers, or even people working for companies who get materials, supplies, or products from your company.

Most of all, how well you do your work affects customers, and because of this you have a significant impact on your company, your family, and you.

Fact: Doing little things like taking the time to clean up a work area, treating customers like they are special even when you are beaten down at the end of a long shift, or double-checking that a job has been done right makes a huge difference. It may even help you keep your job. You have a huge impact on your own livelihood.

A good boss understands the value of extra

effort and actually thanks you for your hard work. But many workers (maybe you are one of them) have a jerk for a boss who gets off on his or her power, treats workers poorly, ignores good work, and makes workers end up hating their job. Many of these kinds of bosses have no idea that they are causing damage to their workers. Worse yet, many of these kinds of bosses don't care what workers think anyway.

If you have one of these bosses, a boss who has put up walls that close you in, the most important thing to know is that you can—you must—rise above your jerk of a boss.

What you do on the job says a lot about your pride in yourself. You have to make the decision that your boss cannot, will not, get the better of you. Every day you have to decide to do a good job, even if you are dealing with the worst of the worst bosses. Doing good work has payoffs, huge payoffs, for you. It doesn't matter if your boss is lousy. This is about you.

Fact: You can take control. How you do your job is about you and only you.



Bull's-eye Number Four

My boss can't stop me from being great.
I make the decision to be great.

Getting Turned On: I Can Tell When Things Are Wrong and I Make a Habit of Finding Ways to Do Things Better



It used to be so bad that guys would go to a job and, in no time at all, I'd be getting a call about parts they needed or equipment they needed. So they'd all just sit around for the morning while another truck would bring over supplies. This was normal! I put together a simple checklist, and I went the

boss to agree that before a team would go to a job site, the checklist had to be signed off by the crew leader. Not only did it cut way down on fielding calls from crews needing parts, but we even got fewer complaints from customers. Now, our crews are always working and it is all because we fixed this stupid thing. I feel pretty good about being the guy who fixed it.



You know, I was focusing on just getting through the day and taking the easy way out. But with having to do redo work so much and going back to the same job sites over and over, it got kind of old. I was feeling worse and worse about myself because I knew I could do better. So I figured if I just put on an extra layer of adhesives before setting the flooring, we'd get fewer complaints and less rework. I just did it myself because I knew my boss would go nuts about the extra adhesives costs. But we stopped having so many complaints, and pretty soon I got all the guys to do the same thing.

Yes, a light bulb can go off, and you can make a difference in your job.

You can take control!

Work can be better, better for the company, better for your customers, and most of all, better for you!

Fact: When you find ways to do your job better, the payoffs spread all around.

Doing things better is not just about big things. Even small things can make a big difference in your work. Find something small that has been bugging you about your work. It might be something really, really small, but it has bugged you over and over. What would it take to make it better?

The same idea can be used at home. You can make a habit of thinking about the things that aren't quite right (or are really stupid) and then thinking about how a few simple changes could make a big difference. Then give it a try!

Once you get in the habit of finding ways to improve, you'll see how much better you feel about your job. The daily grind might still be tiring, but you'll get through it with a happier heart.



Bull's-eye Number Five

Finding ways to do things better
is at the heart of who I am.

Getting Turned On: When I Find a Way to Do Things Better, I Tell Others



Just by talking to the other guys when we took breaks or at the end of the day, simply giving someone a heads-up on something has saved me so much grief!



I realized that if I went that little bit further at work, I was helping my buddies. I'd always thought of it as helping the boss to make more money. But now I see it as ensuring my buddy has less hassle during the day, less call outs, and even makes sure he can finish on

time so we can actually go get a beer before heading home.



By focusing on improving the job for those around me, I can see that I'm making the day easier for them. There are fewer frustrations and fewer problems. People are in a better mood. It makes a better day for me!

There is a reason lights have on and off switches. So do workers. I want your light to be on! You can have the same kinds of experiences. You can make a difference!

Talking with other workers can go a long way to making things better. I'm not talking about the "pissed off at the boss" talks. Sometimes you need to have those kinds of talks just to release some tension. Go ahead and have those talks at times.

I am talking about the "ways to make work better" kinds of talks.

It really is about you and the workers around you. You really can make a difference.



Bull's-eye Number Six

I tell other workers and I tell my boss about ways to do the work better.

Getting Turned On: If All Else Fails, I Control My Future



The best news of all: aiming for the bull's-eyes and becoming a better worker means that I have more to give to any company. I can be more productive. I can add more value. I am worth more.



The fact that the company is a loser could eventually turn me into a loser. My life is too important to let this happen.



If I have tried everything and I still hate what I'm doing, I'm going to change it! It doesn't matter if the pay is the same, but at least I'm making a change and trying to make it for the better. If I am happier at work, I'll be happier at home.

Enormous fact: It is within each and every worker to be better. Being better is about you and only you. Your boss cannot take this away from you.

Do everything you can to make the job better—better for yourself, better for other workers, and better for your customers. While you are at it, you will be changed. While you are at it, you will be a new person.

You will feel better about yourself. By feeling better, you will have more confidence. By feeling better, you will be able to see new opportunities for yourself. And if your boss keeps putting up walls that turn you off, dimming the light that shines in you, you must know that you will be ready to give the best you can to another employer.

And whenever you decide it is time to look for other work, you will get jobs easier and faster.

I know this is true because you will be a more confident and more capable person and you will go after your next job with a positive self-assured attitude.

The enormous fact above is true for you and true for each worker you know. You can and should take the skills and energies you have to a company with bosses who understand the importance of workers.

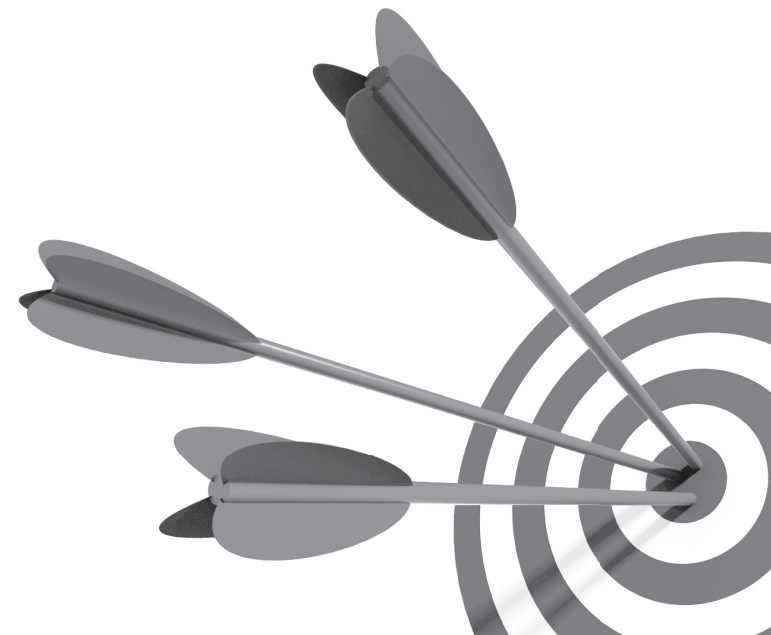


Bull's-eye Number Seven

If all else fails, by being turned on I know
I can find other, better places to work.

Section 3

Enjoying Work and Enjoying Life



As far too many workers know firsthand, bosses can make it really hard to enjoy work. Bosses can even make it hard to feel good about life. The stories I've told are about real people in real situations. The laws of being turned off affect far too many workers.

The bull's-eyes are about making work a better place and about making a better you. I've encouraged you to think about seven bull's-eyes. I've gone so far as to ask you to make the bull's-eyes your own. None of the bull's-eyes are earth-shattering revelations. I didn't build them up with any huge confusing charts or academic words. The ideas are presented in a simple way because I am not focused on impressing anyone—this is about making a better and happier YOU.

And, I assure you, every single person who is reading this book can take ownership of the bull's-eyes. Yes, aiming for and hitting the bull's-eyes is within your reach.

Just seven bull's-eyes. Just good common-sense steps we can all take as workers. We can be better. We can enjoy our jobs more. We can give ourselves more choices in life.

After all, this book is about having a better life.

Enjoying Work More is Really About Enjoying Life More



It just sucks. I get up at five, slog my butt out of the house, head out to a job site, and deal with crap. And it goes on and on day after day.

But there is a game this evening, and that's what I'm looking forward to. Besides, I love the guys I work with. I can focus on those things, suck it up, and just get through my day.

Life seems crazy at times. We have no choice but to spend a lot of time, a *huge* amount of time, doing nothing but getting up early, dressing, grabbing a quick bite to eat, walking, biking,

driving, bussing, or even paddling to work. And what do we get at work? Nothing but long, back-breaking hours, boring hours, lots of repetition, occasional if not frequent risky situations, bosses who are pains in the asses, then heading back home filthy, smelly, tired, hungry, and knowing it starts again all too soon.

Time is limited. Work it out. Pull out a pen and jot down:

Hours getting ready for work each day _____

Hours going to and from work each day _____

Hours working at your job or jobs each day _____

Hours at home thinking about your job or talking with others about your job _____

Hours spent cleaning up from your job once you get home _____

Yes, keep adding up all the time you spend working or preparing for work.

Add it all up. Then add the hours you sleep, or at least try to sleep , each day.

Once you've added up all those hours, think about how many of the total hours in a week are left just for you!

Each week has just seven days, each with twenty-four hours. We never get any more and never get any fewer. This means that for most workers, a huge part of our lives is spent at work. So we have to make the best of it.

The attitude we bring to work, the decisions we make at work, the impact we have on our own lives and others around us—these are in our hands. These are in our control.

I know it is tons easier for me telling you that *you* have to make your job feel important and *you* have to find ways to do things better than it is for you to do it. Harder still if you have a real jerk for a boss or a boss telling you he can fire you whenever he feels like it.

But you and only you can decide how you work and how you run your life.

Learn how to start hitting the seven bull's-eyes, and you will be better.

You will like your job more (or survive it easier).

You will be a better person, and you will feel better about life.

You will come home from work more prepared to enjoy your family and friends.

Life is too short to miss out on living the fullest life you can live. I promise you that your heart and spirit can overcome lousy bosses. Maybe you've already been thinking about or even doing some of the things I've been sharing with you. Maybe this is the first time you've ever thought about these ideas.

Today is a good day for you to take the important step of making the bull's-eyes part of your daily life. Watch what happens.

Just seven bull's-eyes.

Make the bull's-eyes yours.

Start aiming for the bull's-eyes.

Start hitting the bull's-eyes.



My Personal Bull's-eye List

Bull's-eye Number One

I know I am important, and I don't forget it!

Bull's-eye Number Two

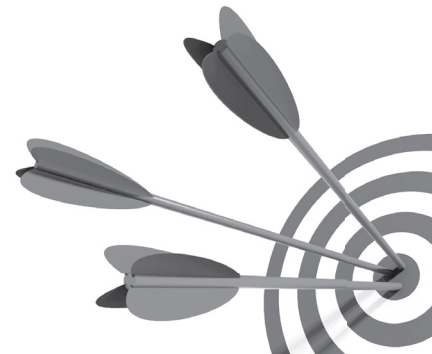
What I do is much more important than just keeping my boss off my back. I know that the work I do affects people.

Bull's-eye Number Three

I understand the greater purpose behind doing a good job; doing a good job is about me and about the people who depend on me.

Bull's-eye Number Four

My boss can't stop me from being great.
I make the decision to be great.



My Personal Bull's-eye List

Bull's-eye Number Five

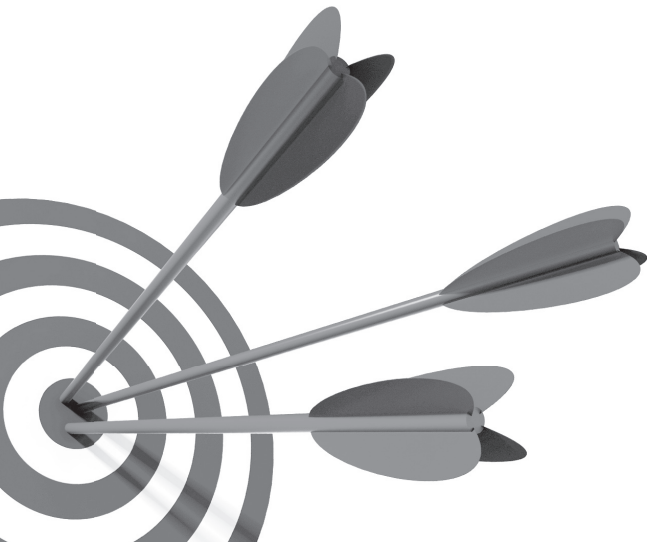
Finding ways to do things better is at the heart of who I am.

Bull's-eye Number Six

I tell other workers and I tell my boss about ways to do the work better.

Bull's-eye Number Seven

If all else fails, by being turned on I know I can find other, better places to work.



listen | imagine | view | experience

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