

Ten Tips to Start 2015 with Impact

Want impact?

Are you ready to start the year strong?
To create more great work?
To own your career?

I thought so.

This ebook is for you.

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*There are two mistakes one
can make along the road to
truth. Not going all the way
or not starting.*

-Gautama

Engaging, exciting,
enriching careers are a
possibility for everyone.
Yes, *everyone*. Really.
Here are the best ways to
bring impact to any job.

#1: Harness your relationships.

What holds any project together? Relationships. So often, we jump straight into 'action' and our relationships become transactional, when they should really be the backbone of our capacity to create. Relationships need shared purpose, commitment, continued growth. And fun! Instead of rushing to action, take time to really get to know your people and understand *why* they're doing this work with you. Ground your work in relational value - *then* dig in and get it done.

#2: Celebrate more.

Organizations should be doing three things: meeting, acting, and celebrating. But, we tend to spend 60% of our time meeting (frequently in useless, counterproductive meetings where everyone doodles and avoids eye contact), 35% acting, and only 5% celebrating. What a pity! How can we keep others (and ourselves!) motivated if we don't celebrate all those great things we do? Take time for team dinners, mid-week donut runs or after-work happy hours. You've worked hard - take pride in what you do!

#3: Make a plan to grow and learn over time.

What is the biggest reason people leave organizations? They aren't learning, they aren't challenged and therefore are less likely to commit to work. How do you change this? Create apprenticeship teams at work. Find an accountability buddy to learn from. Mentor younger, newer employees who need a helping hand or a leg up. Learning new things and engaging with new employees makes work life feel new and fresh again!

#4: Know yourself and your values.

It's easy to get caught up in what others offer us and forget to check in with our own motivation. What makes you come alive? What makes your heart beat fast? Focus on your energizers - what you enjoy. Once you know what lights your fire, freedom will follow.

*Life isn't about finding yourself.
Life is about creating yourself.*

—George Bernard Shaw

#5: New technology has changed the rules, but you don't need to be connected every.single. minute.

Create set times to unplug. Maybe it's after 6pm, in the morning, on the weekend, or just a two-hour break. We all need the freedom to disconnect so we can truly open up the mental and emotional space to stay creative.

#6: Design work that keeps you motivated.

When work is well-designed, it creates more motivation and higher quality work, because the people doing it care about it.

The five keys to designing motivational work:

Task identity: when work is completed, it's clear what your contribution was. Nothing is worse than working all day and thinking "What did I even accomplish?!"

Task significance: the work makes a difference in some way. You see the connection between what you're doing and the difference you're making.

Skill variety: It's not same old, same old repetitive work. Engaging lots of different skills = fantastic.

Autonomy: This doesn't mean that you always get to do what you want. It means you get a domain of choice about how you're doing your work.

Feedback: This helps you SEE the difference that your work is making.

#7: Think of time as an arrow, not a cycle.

Paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould wrote that time is sometimes a "cycle" and sometimes an "arrow." Thinking of time as a cycle helps us to maintain our routines, our normal procedures, annual budget, etc. Thinking of time as an arrow, helps us focus on making change. We begin our work at a specific moment, we end at a specific moment, and in between there is change. See? Doesn't that feel better?

#8: Remember what your resources are.

We often think of money as the only resource: the typical cost-benefit analysis approach. But really? Our greatest resources are people and time. How will you work with people and use your time effectively? Don't just think in terms of "How much will I get paid?" Think "What are my resources?" and the money will follow.

“*Go to the people. Learn from them. Live with them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. The best of leaders when the job is done, when the task is accomplished, the people will say we have done it ourselves.*”

-Lao Tzu

#9: When you're demotivated, MOVE!

Our bodies provide as much information as our heads, but we usually ignore them in our work lives. You know that simply taking a walk while talking about important things makes the conversation more meaningful. So why do we sit in conference rooms instead of walking and talking? To think creatively, keep moving. What do I do? Dance breaks! Seriously.

Here's my impact soundtrack, in case you like to listen to freedom, too:

1. Just Dance, Lady Gaga
2. The Element of Freedom, Alicia Keys
3. Where Them Girls At, David Guetta
4. You Gotta Be, Des'ree
5. Beautiful Surprise, India Arie

Dance when you're broken open.

Dance if you've torn the bandage off.

Dance in the middle of the fighting.

Dance in your blood.

Dance when you're perfectly free.

- Sufi port Rumi

#10: Create your space.

One of the most zen-i-fying things you can do for your creative mind is creating a clean workspace.

And if you know you're more productive at a library or coffee shop - go there! Test spaces around the office that enhance your workday.

Remember, a clean, clutter-free space creates the conditions for better work and more fun!

For more, check out some great books on finding impact in your career:

- *Uncertainty* by Jonathan Fields: A key determinant of a next generation change agent is the ability to manage high degrees of uncertainty and ambiguity.
- *Disciplined Dreaming* by Josh Linker: This guide is a practical map to integrate your 'dreaming' and 'doing' and to enhance your creativity at work.
- *The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield: Resistance is what holds us back from our life as an artist. Learn how battle your resistance and master your craft.
- *Leadership on the Line* by Ronald Heifetz: To lead is to live dangerously when you lead through difficult change. Leadership is about challenging what people hold to be truths: their norms, habits, and loyalties.
- *Theory U* by Otto Scharmer: Presencing is what Scharmer calls learning from the future as it emerges. Theory U is a leadership methodology that embodies what one cares most deeply with an open mind, heart, and will.
- *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul*: What enables us to be resilient, happy, intelligent human beings? Our capacity to PLAY. Play energizes and enlivens us, eases our burdens, and opens up new possibilities.
- *Getting Unstuck: A Guide to Discovering your Next Career Path* by Timothy Butler: This book provides a practical, hands-on road map for moving past your career or personal life impasse, recognize patterns of meaning in your life, and take action for change.

- *The Power of a Positive No: How to Say No and Still Get to Yes* by William Ury: Real strategy is about what you won't do, not what you will do. Saying No is more important than ever to focus in today's world, yet saying no in the right way, is crucial. A positive no may be your most valuable skill.
- *Mindfulness* by Ellen Langer: To be mindful, says Langer, leads to free rein to intuition and creativity, and opens us to new information and perspectives. If you would like to be more creative in your work, if you would like to be more mindful and awake, read this book.
- *Making Ideas Happen* by Scott Branson. Ideas that never happen are because of work avoidance. And real work is uncomfortable. In this book, Branson calls all your BS and gives you the conceptual and practical lens to get your art into the world.
- *Flow* by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: You know the feeling -when you lose yourself in a project, sport, conversation or hobby. This is "flow" or the suspension of time and the freedom of complete absorption in activity. Find freedom in your work when you get to flow, one of the most enjoyable and valuable experiences a person can have.

*Whatever you can do, or dream you can,
begin it. Boldness has genius, magic, and
power within it. Begin it now.*

-W.H. Murray