

FUN WORKS

CREATING PLACES
WHERE PEOPLE
LOVE TO WORK

SECOND EDITION, UPDATED AND EXPANDED



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301 WAYS TO HAVE FUN AT WORK

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An Excerpt From

***Fun Works:
Creating Places Where People Love to Work***

by Leslie Yerkes

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PREFACE

It seems as though every day I see the word ‘fun’ in a headline; I see it in newspapers, in magazines, in correspondence, and on billboards. In my job as a change management consultant, I hear people talking about it during their workday. I hear it on the radio, on TV, and in the lyrics to songs. From what I hear and what I read, not only are we interested in fun, we are hungry for it.

If we are hungry for fun, we are *starved* for fun at work!

You and I spend more time at work than at any other single activity in our lives. Yet, often our work experience is not fun. We suffer from the lack of integration of fun and work. The intention of *Fun Works* is to challenge our feelings and beliefs that:

- **Fun should exist only after the work is completed,**
- **Fun is silly, superficial, and unprofessional;**
- **Fun is taboo in the workplace.**

Fun Works is also designed to illustrate vividly that there are many people (and entire companies) who daily experience the joy of fun at work while creating impressive results.

In 1996, Dave Hemsath, who sells business books for a living, told me that customers repeatedly told him they wanted to buy books about fun and work but there weren’t any. At that point, the two of us determined we would each fill one of our personal goals in life: write a book; but that we would do it together. We decided that our first (and maybe our *only*) book would be about the things people did to make work fun; about the fun things they did to have fun at work.

The result was *301 Ways to Have Fun at Work*, a happy little book filled with tips, tools, ideas, and examples to spice up your work with fun. That people continue to thirst for more fun at work is witnessed by the fact that *301 Ways* has sold more than 75,000 copies and has been translated into ten languages.

To support that book, I traveled throughout America and Europe, speaking on having fun at work. During those travels, I discovered how universal the collective desire for fun at work truly is. And I discovered that my consulting interest was turning from *doing* fun things to *being* fun. I discovered I was less interested in learning things people did that were

fun, and more interested in finding people who integrated fun and work on a daily basis and analyzing what results that combination produced.

Over the course of 2000, I began to research companies that were known for their successful integration of fun and work. From my original list of nearly one thousand potential target companies, I chose three dozen to research further, eventually whittling the list down to eleven to represent the eleven principles of the Fun/Work Fusion.

In this second edition of *Fun Works*, I have chosen to let the stories of each company stand as originally presented in the first edition. I made this decision for several reasons. First, I feel the original stories are still 100% valid and present perfectly to the reader the principles each company represents. No modification is required; the original case is well-served. Second, I wanted readers to be able to make his or her own judgment on the change and growth of each of our Living Laboratories and determine for themselves whether or not they feel the company has lived up to its original role-model status.

Following each original story is an update, an extension of the original case study, which evaluates and analyzes the level of success each company has experienced over the last six years. Following that is a key which illustrates how to apply the principle.

One of the inherent problems in creating a list of the best of anything is seeing how well that list weathers the test of time. Will a company, once elevated to role-model status, sustain its validity and authenticity and grow? Or, will it stagnate? Even fail? And if it should decline, what are the causes?

As anyone who is or has been in business for themselves knows, it is very difficult to find and/or create new business for an organization; and once found or created, even more difficult to keep it. Creating an organization worthy enough to be chosen for any list of outstanding examples is difficult; staying there is seemingly next to impossible.

That being said, I was thrilled to discover that *all* of our original eleven companies prospered and grew; that not one of them was 'done in' by having a culture of 'fun at work.' I, of course, believe that it is *precisely* the culture of 'fun at work' that allowed them to maintain their position, stay in business, and grow.

With these slight modifications.

One Prudential Exchange (Hire Good People and Get Out of the Way) was technically not a company. It was a program created by Prudential to help change its culture. You will discover in reading this second edition that OPX, as it is known, did its job splendidly and was subsequently retired. As a result of OPX, Prudential has grown tremendously. I think this qualifies as proving the point.

Because of its good-company qualities, American Skandia (Celebrate) was purchased in 2003 by the very same Prudential and exists today as a division called Prudential-American Skandia, its culture still intact.

Employeease (Trust the Process) was purchased by ADT in the summer of 2006 after a two-year business-project partnership with ADT because of its good-company qualities and the positive, mutual working relationship they both experienced. As of this writing, the naming status is undecided but Employeease's personnel and culture will remain in place.

Finally, Will Vinton Studios had a failure of hard science and was purchased by Phil Knight, co-founder of Nike Corporation. Employees of the newly named Laika Entertainment indicate the Will Vinton Studios culture remains largely in place. Will himself has started a new venture, Freewill Entertainment. He promises to focus more strongly on the hard science of finance while continuing to maintain his commitment to the soft science culture of fun at work. Both studios continue to produce outstanding, high-level, animated products.

Clearly, the companies chosen to represent the principles of the Fun/Work Fusion in 2000 were good choices. In the ensuing 6 years, these companies have grown and prospered in spite of national tragedies, natural disaster, growing competition, and changing economic conditions. It is my thesis that they have done so because of the culture they created through The Fun/Work Fusion.

My original research showed: fun was not merely activities applied to the work situation, but rather a way of being; fun, when most effective, was not *input* but rather *output*; fun did not create a good work place so much as a good work place created fun.

During these last six years, I have come to reframe my discussion of Fun/Work Fusion to talk about the culture of a company. Creating places where people love to work is about creating a culture where individuals can freely bring the best of their whole selves to work each day. It is my belief that the resiliency and sustainability the eleven case companies have demonstrated over the last six years can be attributed to the successful interactions of these two things: business smarts and a positive culture. I call these two things hard science and soft science, and think of them as the Yin and Yang of sustainable organizations.

Hard science deals with great product, good strategy, continuous improvement, service orientation, strict fiscal management, and a vision that embraces the ever-changing business environment.

Soft science is about the people, their interactions with and relationship to their individual work and to each other — the culture of the organization. People make the hard science work, or *not* work; they make the organization shine or simply get by.

To be successful, an organization must first have powerful hard science. To be sustainable, hard science must be supported by effective soft science. Hard and soft science are equally important — both must exist to create sustainable organizations. Soft science, however, ultimately differentiates and contributes the most toward long-term, sustainable success.

I believe that the single-most important factor in producing sustainable organizations is the creation and development of effective soft science through the use of The Fun/Work Fusion.

I think the Living Laboratory companies in *Fun Works* prove this thesis.

What will *Fun Works* do for you? *Fun Works* will provide you with principles that, if applied successfully, will help you integrate your work with fun, sustain an engaging culture, and develop effective soft science. When fun and work are once again fully integrated in your organization, you will work enthusiastically, enjoy the process, and recover more fully during your time away from work.

The title of this book is itself the simplest benefit statement: fun works. If you follow these eleven principles and *be* them, then fun works. The title is also an aspiration: Can I create a place, a Fun Works, Inc., that produces quality products and services, creates enduring internal and external relationships, and is known for its culture of fun?

If I can, then fun works.

How we think about work is not a constant, it changes. We are now beginning to think about the integration of fun and work and we are beginning to demand working conditions that have an acceptable blend of fun and work. It's time to talk about fun at work and to raise it to a higher plane, to make fun at work important once again. I hope that *Fun Works* will be able to help you do just that.

It is my belief, and I hope it becomes yours — fun works.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leslie". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'L' being particularly large and stylized.

Leslie Yerkes
Cleveland, Ohio
February 2007



INTRODUCTION

The Case for Integrating Fun and Work

Anyone who's worked with contractors on a building project has a story; usually it's a horror story. Contractors, these stories go, are a real pain. They tell you one thing and do another; they substitute materials; they move tradespeople arbitrarily from one job to another so there's no continuity on your project. In short, working with contractors is not fun. Or so the stories go.

My experience, however, is 180° different. My contractor story is a fun one and the payoff, the final product, is award-winning. And it's different because in my story the contractors had fun at work.

It took me two years to find the right space for my new office. For the first five years of my business, I worked from my home (like many entrepreneurs) creating a very successful and profitable change-management consulting practice. Now I wanted to have my own, separate office space — a space in which I could have employees and clients and fun.

My requirements for this space included being downtown on the ground floor with floor-to-ceiling windows that looked out on trees — not an easy task in Cleveland, Ohio. But I persevered. The space I eventually found was connected to a city park and had the windows I needed. Inside the space, however, were rooms and walls and doors. Because of the kind of the business I'm in, one that places high value on the free flow of ideas and information, I wanted a special space that would embody those principles. To me, that meant it had to have no rooms, no offices, no head-of-the-table, no hierarchy.

Fortunately, Bill Mason, the architect who was assigned to me by the building owner, understood my ideas and was able to develop my vision into a physical reality. The successful birth of my new office space depended on the creation of a good plan, and the plan that Bill created was perfect. All we needed to be successful now was a good midwife. We needed a contractor.

Because this was my first 'real' office space, and because it was a unique, non-traditional design, and because I'm a naturally involved and enthusiastic person (some even call me a Hokey-Pokey Person but that's another story), I visited the site twice daily; once in the morning to ask the contractor and tradespeople what was planned for the day, and once in the evening to check on the progress. Because my work with clients deals constantly with organi-

zational development, I was acutely aware that everyone works better when someone's interested in what they're doing and when they're praised for their performance and their results. I was prepared to provide that.

At the end of one working day, as the space changed from wires and nails and dust into something that began to resemble the dream I had in my head of my new work home, I found myself really excited with the day's results. I was filled with exuberance and sudden, uncontrollable energy and, like some character from a Jules Fieffer cartoon, I decided to do 'A Dance of Done Well.' But instead of just performing this impromptu jig by myself I asked the three contractors present to join me. And somewhat to my surprise, they did.

Visualize one blonde lady in a dress, a man wearing paint-spattered bib overalls, and two men in jeans with tool belts around their waists holding hands and dancing in a circle. You now have a picture of 'The Dance of Done Well.'

Over the course of the next several weeks, this impromptu experience developed into a ritual. In the mornings, I would meet with the craftsmen onsite and discuss what they were going to accomplish that day; in the evenings we would celebrate their accomplishments with a dance. If the day's project was drywall, for example, in the evening we celebrated with 'The Dance of Drywall Done Well.' The days that followed became a lot of fun for everyone involved. The work of the day was enthusiastically anticipated by each tradesman and results were at the highest level of accomplishment. Because of these daily dances, each individual contractor and craftsman strove to do their best work — work that would be worthy of a dance of celebration. The space was becoming my dream.

Finally, the office was completed enough for me to move in but, as in many building experiences, there were still a few last-minute details to be handled. On this particular day, two seasoned and highly conservative electricians showed up to install the gallery-style lighting for the sculpture that was commissioned for our office. I explained to them why the sculpture was important to me and our company, what it represented, and how I envisioned this work of art affecting the clients who came into our space. The two men understood and declared that they'd give the project their utmost attention, and then they said to me, "You aren't going to make us dance, are you?"

I was amazed. In the contracting community in Cleveland, I had apparently become known as 'the lady who makes you dance.' I smiled and laughed and told them I wouldn't make them dance but asked them if it was okay if I got excited when they were done. They allowed as that would be all right and went to work.

By noon they had finished and I inspected their work and they showed me how the switches worked and how to change the bulbs when they burned out, no easy task in a space with 14-foot ceilings! I thanked them profusely and shook their hands. This was the point at which I expected them to leave. They had performed their best work and they had been praised for it. All the structures and requirements of the work relationship had apparently been fulfilled. Instead, they stood at the door, silent and expectant, looking alternately at their work and at

me. After several seconds of this waiting, one of them looked me in the eye and said, “Aren’t you going to ask us to dance?”

I had discovered an essential truth about what makes work valuable: Work Needs Fun. If there isn’t fun in work, if there isn’t enjoyment, work doesn’t mean as much to the workers.

So, what did we do? We danced.

THE FUSION OF WORK AND FUN we experienced while building my new office space created a working relationship which all the members of the process valued highly. Not only was it a peak experience for the individuals involved, but the outcome of our work created a peak result: the space was gorgeous. The reality exceeded my dreams. Together, we had created something greater than the sum of its parts. The fusion of fun and work also has bottom-line value: our office space was awarded the AIA Ohio Design Award of Honor and the IBD-CID Award of Merit. To my way of thinking, these awards are the visible, tangible, outside confirmation that fun works. And it works well!

My new space also allowed me to attract and retain employees and clients whose values were in alignment with mine. Because my workspace so perfectly represented my energy and values, people who entered it for the first time would immediately feel comfortable and energized themselves — or they wouldn’t! Either way, I now had a first-line screening tool to help me select people who would best improve my business.

My contractor story is one example of how when fun and work are successfully integrated both the process and the resultant product are improved.

IF WORK AND FUN ARE BEST WHEN integrated, how did we get to the current state where the common perception is that fun is an add-on? That the only *time* we are allowed to have fun is *after* work is over; that the only *way* we can have fun is to *earn* it through hard work? Work hasn’t always been perceived in this way; work and the perception of work have changed and evolved. As you can see from The Timeline of Work Attitudes, work has evolved from Aristotle’s ‘work is for slaves’ to Calvin’s ‘work is a commandment;’ from ‘work is a virtue’ to ‘work is who I am.’

We adopt the attitude toward work that our parents taught us; or we assimilate the attitude currently held by the strongest influence: our peer group or our employer. For many of us, work has become who we are. It is how we define ourselves. Unfortunately, that often means that work is life without fun, without friends, without family. In *The Working Life: The Promise and Betrayal of Modern Work*, Joanne B. Ciulla says “...work sometimes substitutes for the fulfillment we used to derive from family, friends, religion, and community.... One of the first things Americans do when they meet someone new is say, ‘What do you do for a living?’”

Regardless of where society happens to be on the work-life timeline, it is possible to intentionally adopt individual elements into the current prevailing attitudes. Specifically, it is possible to reintegrate fun into our work. I say reintegrate because for long periods of time fun and

THE TIMELINE OF WORK ATTITUDES

THE TRADES

Working with your hands as a skilled artisan is highly prized. Payment provided for work. With the onset of the Renaissance, work and art are merged.



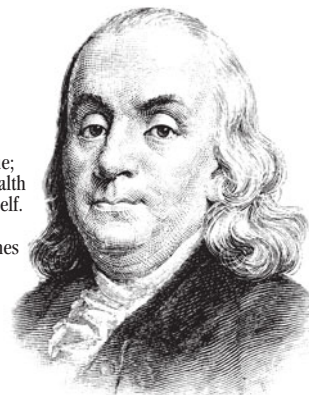
CALVIN & LUTHER

Work as a commandment and moral obligation. The evolution of the Protestant Work Ethic.



BEN FRANKLIN

Advocates work as a virtue; not a means to amass wealth but as a contribution of self. America is the land of opportunity. Work becomes the key to wealth.



EARLY GREEKS

Focus not on work but on personal development. Work was completed by those enslaved. The emergence of the concept of 'liberal arts,' and the pursuit of knowledge.



CRAFTSMEN VS PROFESSIONALS

Separation between people who work with their hands and professionals who work with their heads. The bias is that working with your head is a more esteemed vocation.



UNIONS

Unions help workers defend their ability to earn a livelihood against managers and owners who see employees as objects.



1990s

Empowerment, Building the Team, and Reengineering begin the decade. Downsizing at the end of the decade completes the near total loss of loyalty as an organizational value.



2000s

Because we spend more time at work than at any other activity, we begin to question whether we live to work or work to live. The beginning of the Fun/Work Fusion.



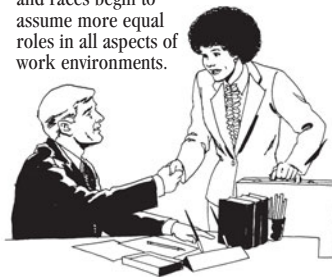
1950s

The beginning of understanding of the culture of work in terms of Theory X and Theory Y.

Loyalty to the organization becomes the expected norm.

1970s

Democracy comes to the workplace. Sexes and races begin to assume more equal roles in all aspects of work environments.



1980s

Gurus abound. How to make work meaningful. TQM becomes the newest program of the corporate culture.



INDUSTRIAL AGE

The birth of Scientific Management Theory.

THE TIMELINE OF WORK ATTITUDES

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work co-existed. During the agricultural age, for example, work songs helped turn dreary tasks and repetitive actions into activities that, if not fun, at least contained an element of anticipation and comfort. If they had to work, at least they could sing while they did it. Barn raisings were changed from a task impossible for one or two people into a picnic-style community event during which barns seemed to be born full-grown in a single day. The element of fun turned an impossible task into an anticipated one, one at which friends, family, and neighbors worked side by side for the common good, caught up on old times, and shared food with one another. Vestiges of this behavior can be seen today when groups of people get together on a Saturday to clean up a ball diamond, paint a senior citizen's house, or build a playground. Throughout history, there are many such examples of the integration of 'fun' with activities replete with the most boring and worst imaginable elements of work.

When the United States of America broke away from the Old World, Thomas Jefferson and the Founding Fathers put these words into The Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights. That among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." During the last 150 years of industrial work behavior, the element of fun began to be isolated from work and treated as a discrete, separate, and segregated concept and activity. We had decreed fun to be separate from work. We had made fun at work taboo. Apparently, we no longer had the unalienable right to enjoy work while we pursued Happiness.

Today the concept of work is again in the midst of change. We are beginning to rediscover that fun belongs with work. It is my premise that fun and work naturally go together. That fun works and that work pays off better when it is fun. That for us to go forward, we need to unlearn 150 years worth of taboos about fun and work.

The integration of fun and work isn't about *what* you do, it's about *who* you're being when you're doing your work. Fun isn't the prize — it's the work. The enjoyment that comes with Cracker Jack® isn't simply the prize. The fun of Cracker Jack® is the process of finding the prize while you're eating the caramel corn and peanuts. If the fun were *only* the prize, that's all that

would be in the box! But it isn't. Without the process, without the work, the prize would be meaningless. Enjoyment is a result of the integration of fun and work, of the Fun/Work Fusion.

When fun is integrated *with* work instead of segmented *from* work, the resultant fusion creates energy; it cements relationships between co-workers and between workers and the company. When fun is integrated *into* work, it fosters creativity and results in improved performance.

Over the years, companies have worked hard at improving things like their customer service and at improving their quality. Many dozens, if not hundreds, of books have been

"Love and work are
the cornerstones of
our humanness."

SIGMUND FREUD

written and published on these two very important elements of successful business. What has been overlooked is the inestimable value of fun in work.

IN MY EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND THE importance of the Fun/Work Fusion, I have formulated eleven principles for integrating fun and work. Principles which, if applied to your work, to your work relationships and to your company or business, will unleash creativity, foster good morale, and promote individual effectiveness.

In the creation of *Fun Works*, we researched companies whose behavior, attitudes, and systems illustrate the validity of these principles and also support the integration of fun and work with regard to each principle. Although I found dozens of companies who qualified, I chose to feature the ones that best represented each of the eleven specific Principles of Fun/Work Fusion. I spent months traveling to each company, interviewing key staff members, walking the facility, and witnessing the company at work. I took pictures and gathered collateral material. And I observed how each company embodied the principles of fun at work and determined which one they illustrated best. Their stories are located in Part Two: The Principles of Fun/Work Fusion.

Following are those principles, a brief explanation of each one, and a description of how that principle is represented by its case company.

PRINCIPLE ONE: GIVE PERMISSION TO PERFORM

Allow individuals to bring the best of their whole self to work each day. This principle requires a superb leader if it is to be effective. Leadership is essential to organizational well being. The leader creates the vision; the leader sets the tone for the journey; the leader holds the value that only by integrating fun and work can the best results be achieved. John Yokoyama, owner of Pike Place Fish in Seattle, Washington, World Famous home of the flying fish, believes play is the most important tenet. Employees interact with customers using play; they toss fish, they tell jokes, they dance with the customers. And when the play is done, Pike Place Fish has created employees who visit the fish market on their day off and customers who have committed to being customers for life.

PRINCIPLE TWO: CHALLENGE YOUR BIAS

Remove self-imposed obstacles to the release of your full being. We spend more time at work than any other single place, yet our biases prevent us from enjoying that time to its fullest. Our belief that 'when the work is done we can have some fun' may be the strongest obstacle we face to integrating fun in the workplace. Harvard University Dining Services (HUDS) actively encourages its employees to enjoy their work, to interact with Harvard students, and to think beyond the box. When new systems threatened old habits and comfort levels, HUDS encouraged its employees to consider the students first and do what was best for them — not necessarily what was best for themselves.

PRINCIPLE THREE: CAPITALIZE ON THE SPONTANEOUS

This is not a program but a philosophy. Fun doesn't necessarily happen on schedule; it grows in a culture that fosters its existence. Southwest Airlines (known for irreverent flight attendants, unassigned seats, and low fares) is a culture in which fun grows easily and quickly. And it generates profits, as well. The Southwest Philosophy is to hire nice people and create a working environment that is fun. They succeed.

PRINCIPLE FOUR: TRUST THE PROCESS

You can't muscle energy. A laugh that is forced is not a true laugh. Americans are experts at task orientation: we thrive on to-do lists. We need help, however, with process orientation: we need to trust our people and trust the process and then stand out of the way. Employease is an Internet Business Application Service Provider that offers web-based Human Resource services to a wide variety of companies. Their philosophy is: 'Successful management requires a lack of ego. Surround yourself with good people because it has a snowball effect. Good people give off more energy than they consume.' Employease has created a process that its employees love and follow with outstanding results.

PRINCIPLE FIVE: VALUE A DIVERSITY OF FUN STYLES

We don't all do it the same way. There is no right or wrong way to engage in serious fun. Be inclusive and share your fun energy with all constituents inside and outside of your organization. Blackboard, Inc., is a Washington DC based provider of Internet access for schools and their students, a place where both assignments and grades are posted for individual access by each student and each instructor. The wide variety of employees at Blackboard, Inc. has given rise to a wide variety of expressions of fun. Their philosophy is that work is hard but it's fun; that fun should exist before, during, and after work; that if work weren't fun, they wouldn't be doing it.

PRINCIPLE SIX: EXPAND THE BOUNDARIES

Don't start making rules to limit the process. The ideal balance of fun and work is only achieved when all individuals involved understand the boundaries of the playing field. At Process Creative Studios, an architectural firm in Cleveland, Ohio, the boundaries they have established along with the boundaries they have eliminated allow them to create award-winning designs, play a customer's original-music blues CD as their telephone on-hold music, and incorporate three large dogs into their daily in-office work lives.

PRINCIPLE SEVEN: BE AUTHENTIC

Where do you begin? All that is required is willingness: if you want to share this part of yourself with others, the opportunity will arise. To truly understand how work and fun integrate is to accept that it is a 'being' state, not a 'doing' state. Isle of Capri Casinos, Inc., one of

the darlings of Wall Street, is a gaming industry leader in preferred-customer-marketing. Their 'Isle Style' attitude is not a veneer that's applied to a new employee, it's an internal quality that's naturally exhibited. Isle of Capri searches out authentic people who enjoy life and enjoy being around people, and then trains them in specific job skills *after* they've been hired.

PRINCIPLE EIGHT: BE CHOICEFUL

Embrace the whole person. To be choiceful means to give *yourself* permission. True fun is not something you choose to do, it is something you choose to be. Fun is deciding to bring the best of your whole self to work every day. Russell-Rogat was a Cleveland-based outplacement firm that valued 'Family First' and 'If it isn't fun we're out of here.' Success with the outplacement for the Panama Canal attracted the attention of Lee Hecht Harrison, a national outplacement firm highly respected in the industry. Because their cultures and values matched, they chose to merge. Their choices were appropriately rewarded.

PRINCIPLE NINE: HIRE GOOD PEOPLE AND GET OUT OF THEIR WAY

If you trust your employees with your organization's most valuable assets, why not trust them to use their judgment on bringing fun to their work? When the fun is 'in' the work and results from the satisfaction of good work and working relationships, then there is little risk of 'when the cat's away the mice will play.' One Prudential Exchange, a team of Prudential employees charged with the creation of a new culture for the insurance giant, was successful because Prudential hired for the team people who had passion for their work, confidence in their abilities, and the willingness to be vulnerable. And then they created an environment in which these people felt safe to say what was on their mind and lead the company to the achievement of their goals.

PRINCIPLE TEN: EMBRACE EXPANSIVE THINKING AND RISK TAKING

A culture that learns how to harness and develop the full potential of its employees is a culture that is comfortable with risk taking and expansive thinking. To be successful at risk taking, we must overcome our fear of failure. Will Vinton Studios, creator of the California Raisins and the M&M's commercials, believes in '...the value of taking risks and having fun while you do it. . . What we learn isn't as important as the learning itself. The most important thing we can learn is *how* to learn. . .risk taking for a company is essential. If you don't risk, you don't grow.' They live by their beliefs and their success is the yardstick by which these beliefs are judged.

PRINCIPLE ELEVEN: CELEBRATE

There is nothing more fun than the celebration of a success or a shared win. The celebration itself creates energy for ongoing efforts. What gets recognized gets repeated; what gets celebrated becomes a habit. Individual recognition and group celebration fuel high perfor-

mance. American Skandia, a manufacturer and wholesaler of insurance and financial planning products and services to brokers and financial planners, takes great pains to make the effort to catch and compliment people doing something right. Like many of the successful companies featured in *Fun Works*, American Skandia hires for attitude and trains for skills. And they celebrate every success they can find.

IN ADDITION TO BEING ILLUSTRATED BY A CASE COMPANY, each of the Principles of Fun/Work Fusion has a key which, if turned by the reader, will help to unlock the principle so that it can be applied individually and/or to a company action plan. These keys are thoughts, actions, and behaviors that, if applied, will increase your ability to employ the specific principle in your life.

Because we human beings love to know how we rank in categories ranging from ‘How good is your sex life?’ to ‘Do you know the three secrets to overnight financial success?’, we have included in Part Four your own personal ranking test: The Fun/Work Fusion Inventory. This questionnaire should give you an indication of how much fun you are having at work and help you identify areas in which you can improve. Several action steps are suggested to help you get started in the full integration of fun and work.

Part Four also contains additional inspiration for you to use as you journey along the path of integrating fun and work.

***FUN WORKS* IS INTENDED** to provide you with examples of companies who have successfully achieved the integration of fun and work in the hope that you, too, will discover the value of this natural condition and choose to create and live it for yourself.

We hope the process is as much fun for you as it was for us.





PRINCIPLE ONE

Give Permission to Perform

ALLOW PEOPLE TO BRING THEIR WHOLE SELVES TO WORK EACH DAY

The concept of work is not static, it is fluid. As the world changes, so do our attitudes toward work. We are currently at a crossroads, at the creation of yet another attitude toward work. The new economy requires that we rethink what work is and what work should be. If work is going to attract the best people today and retain them tomorrow, then in addition to providing the resources to live, work must also be fulfilling.

People are demanding more from their jobs than merely a paycheck. They expect to enjoy what they do and they will search and move until they are satisfied with their work experience.

The shift to this new attitude toward work is not complete. We are still in the throes of breaking the bonds of traditional hierarchy in which employees won't take action without first getting permission.

- 'No one told me to do that.'
- 'It's not my job.'
- 'Do you have permission to do that?'

These are symptomatic phrases of our current status. If work is to be truly fulfilling for the worker, then our attitudes toward it will have to change. We will have to learn to trust ourselves and our co-workers to follow agreed upon guidelines rather than to consult the hierarchy before taking any action.

Instead of rules, restrictions, and limitations, we need Permission to Perform. Permission to Perform should include requirements for success, parameters of behavior and operation, and the permission to fail as well as the expectation to succeed. Permission to Perform is nothing more than empowerment as seen through the eyes of an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs often don't have a hierarchy to consult. In fact, entrepreneurs often start their new businesses as an escape *from* someone else's hierarchy. Since they must get things done without the resources of a traditional hierarchy, entrepreneurs often hire independent contractors and/or outsource their work using only the conditions of Permission to Perform:

- 'Here's what I want and when I want it.'
- 'Don't spend more than this. Now, do it.'

- ‘I don’t need to hear from you until you’re done.’
- ‘You’re the expert — that’s why I hired you to do the work.’

Permission to Perform reduces the control of negative hierarchical guidelines and increases the opportunity for success of the worker. Historically, negative hierarchical guidelines for work outnumber and outrank the positive ones. We know what we can’t do, what will get us in trouble, what not to say to whom, how far we can stretch deadlines, and how close to the line we can stand before we feel the wrath of the boss. What we don’t know is how much of our selves we can and should bring to the job every day. Permission to Perform allows us to bring our whole selves to work each day. Bringing our whole selves means that fun and work must once again be integrated; the two can no longer be held apart.

Somewhere, sometime, some leader told us that work should not be fun; that work and fun cannot successfully coexist if a company is to be profitable; that fun at work is taboo. Since then, we have behaved as if fun cannot be part of our work experience. The companies profiled in *Fun Works* have shown, however, that fun and work can coexist, and do it both successfully and profitably. And, they have shown us that this coexistence is what workers want. The coexistence of fun and work is the emerging belief system on The Timeline of Work Attitudes.

To successfully transition to this new attitude toward work will take leaders who understand that fun and work *can* successfully and profitably coexist, that today’s worker demands this integration; leaders who wholeheartedly and enthusiastically give Permission to Perform. It took leaders to create our current taboo against fun at work; it will take leaders to break that taboo and replace it with a new attitude. We need to become those leaders. We can no longer wait for permission, we must assume it; we can no longer wait for our employees to ask our permission, we must make them understand they already have it. That they have Permission to Perform.

There is no risk or downside in the long run to giving permission; the only risk we take is in withholding it. To succeed in business, give Permission to Perform and stand out of the way. Encourage employees to bring their whole selves to their work each and every day and everyone will reap the rewards.



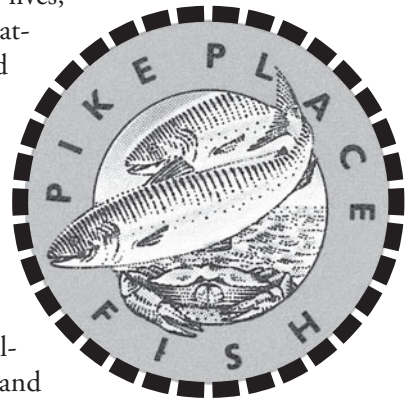
World Famous Pike Place Fish

The closest I've come to seeing a flying fish was in the early morning twilight in Seattle. I had seen the signs when I entered that read, "Caution, low flying fish," but I wasn't really prepared to see a 12-pound King Salmon fly through the air accompanied by a chorus of cries that said, "Pieces and fillets for Cleveland." And what was a new experience for me, throwing fish and yelling instructions like a Greek Chorus, is standard operating procedure for the Fun Works living laboratory of Give Permission to Perform, Pike Place Fish.

Shopping at Pike Place Fish, located in the Public Market in Seattle, Washington, is an event everyone should experience once in their lives; applying Pike Place Fish's philosophy to business and life is a strategy that can be employed by anyone who wants to become world famous!

When you get close to Pike Place Fish, you know something's different, that this is going to be an experience. Your first clue is a three-deep, half-circle of people standing around stainless steel carts loaded with whole fish, cooked crabs, clams, and other seafood delights, covered in layers of crushed ice. Then you notice that each face wears a smile and that they are laughing and giggling and poking each other. When you realize that many of them are taking money out of their purses and wallets, your first impression is that there must be a street performer in front of the chilled mackerel. In a way, you're right; the employees of Pike Place Fish are performing for their customers. They are working the crowd, making them happy, and priming them to buy fish. Lots of fish, I might add. I never thought that working in a fish market could be as much fun as these folks seemed to be having.

The avowed goal of Pike Place Fish is to be 'World Famous.' Pike Place Fish is one of three fish markets located on the Public Market Dock on Puget Sound in Downtown Seattle.



"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are

What makes Pike Place World Famous is a philosophy that integrates fun into their work, and lots of hard work means lots of fun. When John Yokoyama bought out the previous owner in 1965 for the sum of \$3,500, Pike Place Fish was merely a fishmarket, unremarkable in many ways. It was a business that survived because of hard work, tough pricing, and keeping customers honest. In short, Yokoyama says, it wasn't a lot of fun. "Everyone here hated their jobs. I can remember the owner counting out loud the number of steps it took him to get a dozen clams for a customer and then complaining about it. So, when I took over, I operated the business the same way. We behave in ways we see others behaving. I was no different.

"For a long time, no one working here had fun. I was an angry manager; I was an angry owner. The days were long and the work was hard. All the tools in my managerial tool kit were fear-based." Everyone had 'rules' to follow that were based on nothing more than 'how we've always done it here.' And no one had the permission to perform.



The change at Pike Place Fish started about ten years ago when the owner, managers, and employees decided they wanted to be world famous. And do it without spending a dime! The impetus for that change came after John attended an EST training session and followed that up with The Forum. "I let go. I decided that I didn't have to do it all. I let go of my ego. I realized that instead of demand-

ing that the employees do things my way at my rate, I would empower them if I shared my vision." By sharing his vision with the staff, John had given them the permission to perform. They now had the opportunity to bring the best of themselves to their work every day. Nothing was holding them back. No longer was it acceptable to treat work as, well, work. If Pike Place Fish was going to be world famous, then work was going to have to be fun. And they had the permission to make it that!

"If we wanted to be world famous," John recalls, "then we had to decide to do it and act the way world famous fishmongers would act." John transformed from a yelling whip-cracker to the Fish King. His job now is to check the mood and make sure the energy is present. And to see to it that everyone on staff takes full advantage of their permission to perform.

Once Pike Place Fish came to their collective understanding, employee and owner attitudes and performances improved. And so did business. With these improvements came the creation of a Pike Place Fish style that was responsible for generating a new level of awareness.

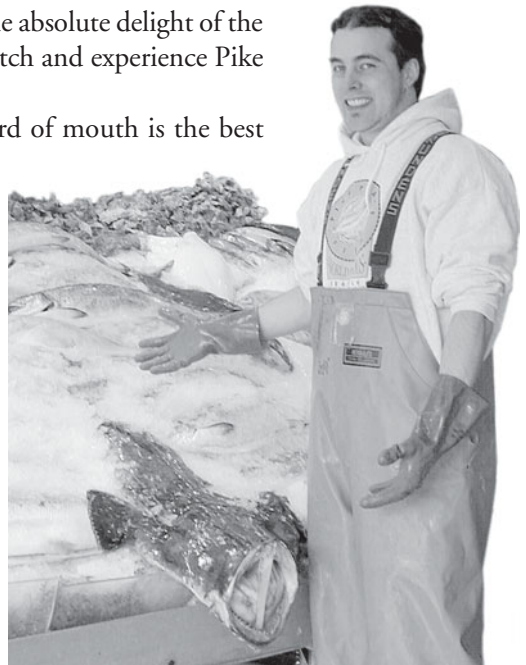
created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator

After years of struggle and improvement, Pike Place Fish found itself in the apparent position of being an ‘overnight success.’

This success drew the attention of various media including Chart House International’s John Christensen who created one of the top selling documentary videos in the United States, *Fish*. In that video, Yokoyama described for the first time the Pike Place Fish Philosophy: Play; Make Their Day; Be There; Choose Your Attitude.

One of the interesting things about the Pike Place Fish style is that it is clearly visible. The first thing I noticed, for example, when I visited Pike Place Fish was the play. In order to interact better with the customers, and in order to make play easier, sales people stand *in front* of the stand with the iced fish *behind* them. This allows the employees to interact more directly with the clients. That interaction takes the expected form of talking and the unexpected forms of hugging, joke telling, praising, and fish throwing. When a customer decides on their purchase, a sales person, like Justin, will pick up the product, like a 12-pound King Salmon, and throw it over the rack of iced fish and the counter, some 10 to 15 feet, to someone like Bear, who will catch the fish, weigh it, wrap it, and collect the money. The flying fish toss, which looks like something out of Monty Python’s Flying Circus, is accompanied by the yelled instructions from the sales person — “Pieces and fillets for Cleveland.” Immediately, everyone behind the counter echoes “Pieces and fillets for Cleveland” in a chorus. This sort of behavior goes on constantly to the absolute delight of the customers and the throngs who have gathered to watch and experience Pike Place Fish.

We all know that Marketing 101 says that word of mouth is the best advertising. What Marketing 101 doesn’t tell us is how to create word of mouth. “We deal in service to people,” Jim B. says. “We give them the product they want but we also give them a show. We see people walk in here and they’re stressed. We say hello and make them smile and they watch us having a good time. When they leave, whether they buy a fish or not, they’re in a better mood. We’ve changed their attitude. We’ve made their day. And they tell people and maybe the next time they’re in they buy a fish. At lunchtime, the younger business crowd comes in with their cartons of yogurt and watches us interact with the people. We call them the Yogurt Dudes. And when they go back to their sterile offices, they take something of us with them. We helped make their day.”



with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life,

It's interesting to note that Pike Place Fish employees focus on making their customer's day, not on making the employees' day. When the focus is no longer on you but on your customers, play happens. Having fun is much easier to do when you get the focus off of you and onto those around you!

Every member of the Pike Place Fish team is aware of what's going on around them all the time, of who's saying what, of what a customer is saying or even what they're *not* saying! When you ask an employee a question, you can tell that they're actually listening to you. Even if the question you're asking is one they hear and answer 20 times a day. Their goal is to be there for you because when it's time to buy fish, they want to be there, too!



Along with the opportunity to be themselves that permission to perform gives the employees of Pike Place Fish comes a responsibility — the responsibility to choose their attitude.

Selling fish is a long and tiring job. Pike Place employees begin at 6:30 in morning and wind up their day at 6:30 in the evening. Most employees work the entire 12-hour shift. In order to achieve their goal of being world famous, employees are encourage to choose their attitude. "It's a long day," says Justin, "and it could be boring and tiring. Or I can choose to have fun.

It's really that simple. It's up to me. I have the permission to perform and the ability to choose my attitude. When I choose to have fun, the time goes faster and I enjoy myself more. I don't want to get up at quarter to six each morning, but I do. And I decide to be happy. It's a simple choice and I make it." That choice makes it easier to be there for the customers, make their day, and turn a hard job into play.

But all this success doesn't just happen. It takes concerted effort. Pike Place Fish keeps on top of things with coaching; Jim B. is the business coach. "Everyone has the permission to coach anyone on staff. The lowest entry-level employee is allowed and encouraged to coach anyone, including John." Sammy, the assistant manager, explained the coaching as, "You're not telling them to make them wrong, you're telling them to make it right. It's up to them to decide to listen and make the necessary changes."

The staff of Pike Place Fish works on their development and relationships at bi-weekly meetings held in a casual setting over dinner. It's their goal to reconnect every two weeks with their intentions, including their intention to become world famous. The conversation, unlike the banter that takes place with their customers, is quite deep. Because they have permission to perform, individuals freely bring up their desires, their thoughts, their ideas, and readily acknowledge their responsibility to make Pike Place Fish world famous. Because they feel ownership, they provide constant input. When there is a breakdown between employees, they assume the responsibility to 'recreate the relationship' in order to have a breakthrough.

Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

“When you make a stand for your vision,” Jim explains, “the actions required for you to achieve that vision just seem to follow. Even breakdowns between employees or in our systems are not necessarily negative. Every *breakdown* has the ability to become a *breakthrough* if you have the right attitude and talk about it.”

The changes at Pike Place Fish can be traced to John Yokoyama’s decision to let go, to give permission to each and every employee to perform by bringing their whole selves to their job; by giving them permission to have fun with their job. The shift to giving permission to perform has impacted Pike Place Fish in external ways which the customers see and feel every day, and also in



internal ways — the business is now valued at 1000 times more than John’s original purchase price some 35 years ago. Pike Place Fish transacts more business per square foot during the Christmas season than any competitive grocery chain in the area. The business has expanded successfully into e-commerce, speaking engagements, training, and consulting. They have been the background for numerous films, television commercials, NBA announcements, and print ads. In addition, Pike Place Fish has been featured in two more Chart House International videos: *Fish Sticks*, and *Fish Tales*.

The vision of Pike Place Fish has also expanded. “We are not just fishmongers any more,” explains John. “People buy here because of the relationships we create. Now we want to share the power of positive work relationships throughout the world. We want to promote world peace through goodwill.”

Pike Place Fish is a Fun Works living laboratory of how Give Permission to Perform can change the lives of everyone it touches, improve the quality of life in the world and, in the process, make you world famous.

Without spending a dime!



THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, JULY 4, 1776

Update: 2006

How does one measure success? Terry Malloy, Marlon Brando's character in "On the Water Front" would have been happy to have been a heavyweight boxing contender, pleased to be remembered as being better than most but not quite good enough to be champion. In Terry's mind, the reason he never quite made it was not a failing on his part but was due instead to things beyond his control; things that conspired to keep him from achieving his dreams.

When the members of Pike Place Fish did their dreaming, they decided they wanted to be world famous. Once they reached that decision, they didn't wait for anyone to crown them champ. They simply assumed the throne by calling themselves World Famous. And then they acted World Famously. The secret to Pike Place Fish' success was that they gave themselves permission to be world famous; they moved from *doing* things that might make them money to *being* world famous. Once the cores of their beings were aligned with World Famous, world fame found them. It's perhaps the ultimate example of self-fulfilling prophecy.

At least once a year since I first interviewed John Yokoyama and the fishmongers of Pike Place Fish six years ago, I find myself in Seattle. Sometimes it's to visit friends, sometimes to

"The biggest mistake we could ever make in our lives is to think we work for anybody but ourselves."

BRIAN TRACY

do consulting, and several times to work on another book of mine, *Beans: Four Principles for Running a Business in Good Times or Bad* (a story about a successful coffee shop located four blocks up the hill from the Seattle Market that Pike Place Fish calls home).

Even when my trip to Seattle is tightly scheduled, I find the time to get down to Pike Place Fish. My rou-

tine is to anonymously slide into the back row of the crowd of customers waiting eagerly to

spend their money on great fish and enjoy the good times. Each visit, I watch with joy the tossing of fish, the Greek chorus of “pieces and fillets,” and the earnest and open conversations the fishmongers initiate with their customers, first-timers and regulars alike. And I smile at the smiles I see on the faces of fish purchasers, happy from the experience and glad to have been even a small part of Pike Place Fish’ continuing story of success.

I stop by each time I’m in town to check up on that ‘continuing story of success’. Too often when companies receive the adulation and world fame that has come the way of Pike Place Fish, it changes their nature and their culture and they crumble and fall apart. Under the thorny crown of fame, companies and individuals can lose themselves and everything they’ve worked for. Thirty years of toiling to become an overnight success can disappear quickly, the proverbial flash in the pan.



If I have concerns that Pike Place Fish might fall victim to the downside of being World Famous, they are quickly dispelled when Jason or Bear looks up from the relationship he’s just created with a customer, spots me, and waves, calling out a hearty ‘hello.’

Soon we’re standing off to the side, engaged in deep conversation. When I eventually walk away, in addition to purchased pounds of salmon and crab, I take with me a sense of comfort and peace that comes from having shared deep conversation with a fellow human being.

It was the practice of deep conversation that took John Yokoyama’s nearly bankrupt fish business from the edge of disaster to the height of success. Twice a month, for nearly ten years, the staff of Pike Place Fish has gathered for dinner and deep conversation centered on who they wanted to become, who they wanted to be. The key to the success of those conversations was that they gave each other and themselves permission to perform. No one trampled on another’s ideas, thoughts, or plans. Everyone allowed themselves to dream, to reach for the moon. From those conversations came the dream to be World Famous. These conversations also developed the concept of “It’s over here” which says you have ultimate authority and power over who you are and who you want to become and no one else does. You decide to be happy, you decide to get up, and you decide to become a contender or even be World Famous.

As Pike Place Fish achieved its goal of being World Famous, it used these deep conversation dinners to envision its new future: World Peace, An Idea Whose Time Has Come.

John says to achieve this goal, just like they achieved their first goal, each member of the team has to be world peace. “We can’t do this as a group. Groups don’t accomplish things. Only members of groups acting and thinking individually can accomplish goals. It’s up to each of us to be the things we want to achieve.”

Pike Place Fish’s success can also be measured in many standard ways. Dun & Bradstreet statistics show sales in 2005 of nearly \$5,000,000. In addition to selling from their single location in the Seattle Market, shoppers can order fresh and frozen fish and seafood products from the web and have them delivered overnight packed in World Famous boxes and dry ice.

Pike Place Fish stories have appeared in a dozen books, twice as many magazines, and four times as many newspapers. They have been on television, on the radio, and in the movies.

John Yokoyama and the fishmongers (‘the boys’) have each written books that detail their success and lay out how the reader can achieve similar results. Four videos have been produced and sold worldwide by outside companies not affiliated with Pike Place Fish. And John and The Boys now give public speeches and seminars on how to run a business the Pike Place Fish way.

This, to me, is the ultimate measure of success: other people use *your* model to improve *their* lives. Clearly, the Pike Place Fish model has given others permission to unleash their fun selves.

To exemplify the *Play* portion of the Fish philosophy, Kent State University’s Communication and Marketing division has created “Pete The Perch,” a stuffed animal that is awarded

monthly to a “deserving, hardworking, pleasant UCM staffer.” Recipients come from nominations submitted by colleagues, clients, or members of the university community. UCM’s *Be There* team created the Guppy Award for a student employee who “exemplifies the qualities and principles established by the FISH! Philosophy.” The *Make Their Day* team has the Catch of the Month Award for teams or persons contributing to marketing projects.



When the president of First Essex Bank of Lawrence, Massachusetts decided that the bank would benefit from what the folks at Pike Place Fish had developed, he realized a top-down approach would most likely result in just another ‘management idea’ reaction. To avoid this, the bank’s trainer held a contest to determine which employees had the best sense of humor. The winners in each department became the cadre that helped implement the Pike Place Fish concepts throughout the system. Eventually, the majority of employees gave themselves Permission to Perform and soon the solid First Essex Bank was experiencing Fun/Work Fusion.

Consumer Impact Marketing (a Canadian outsourcing firm focused on events, promotions, sales, and merchandising management) has fun as an explicit part of its mission statement. By

using the techniques developed by Pike Place Fish, their staff has improved its ability to add fun to their work, ensuring that clients and staff receive greater joy from their work.

Other notable companies who are finding the same sort of results include Thomas Cook Travel Agency, Community Bank of St. Louis, Tower City Title Agency in Cleveland, The Universalist Church of West Hartford, CT, and the Golden Colorado Police and Fire Dispatch Center. (Their success in applying the Pike Place Fish principles was so effective that they were given an award by the National Emergency Number Association for “Outstanding performance as a team in providing professional emergency communications to the citizens of Golden.” The \$100 cash prize that went with the award purchased a fish tank into which each dispatcher has placed at least one fish as a reminder of their commitment to the team.)

Because John Yokoyama gave himself Permission to Perform, he created an environment in which his employees felt comfortable to give themselves and each other Permission to Perform. Through its books and seminars, Pike Place Fish is reaching out and giving anyone who’s interested Permission to Perform, encouraging others not to do exactly what Pike Place Fish does, but to be themselves in their own way. To *be* what inspires them and to commit to *being* who they say they are.

Many are those who are catching the fish being tossed their way by the folks at the Fun Works living laboratory of Give Permission to Perform, Pike Place Fish.



“The human race has only one effective weapon — and that is laughter.”

MARK TWAIN

The Doing vs Being Key

THE ‘DOING’ STATE IS REINFORCED by American culture. We admire doers; we proudly admit to our Type A Behavior of ‘get it done *now!*’ Performance appraisals recognize the ‘doingness’ of our work contributions but they fail to ask the question: “What were you ‘being’ while you were getting the job done?”

Before we can successfully give or receive permission to perform, we must choose to experience our lives fully; we must learn to ‘be’ not just to ‘do.’ Before we can successfully integrate fun into our work, we must shift from a ‘doing’ state to a ‘being’ state.

To ‘do’ something fun is momentary; to ‘be’ fun is forever. ‘Doing’ feels like something that is outside of you — something that can be checked off a list. ‘Being’ comes from the inside — it is a deep reservoir that fills you up and is released like a breath, to be felt again with your next breath.

The two can coexist. The integration of fun and work is actually achieved when you are ‘doing’ *while* you are ‘being.’ The ‘being’ state is a connection to our inner core of thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and values. ‘Being’ is the true driver of ‘doing.’ It is far too easy, however, to become disconnected from ‘being’ under the pressure of time, focusing only on ‘getting it done.’ When you find yourself simply ‘doing,’ breathe some ‘being’ back into your life; bring some of your fun self to the project at hand. How do you ‘be’ fun? You choose it. ‘Being’ is a choice.

‘Doing’ your life is tiring; ‘being’ your life is revitalizing. ‘Doing’ takes energy; ‘being’ creates it. Imagine how effective we would be if we chose to shift from a culture that says ‘Just Do It’ to a culture that says ‘Just Be It.’

To successfully receive or give permission to perform, choose to ‘be.’



*“Stress is the enemy.
It reduces your capacity
for engaging your fun self.”*

LESLIE YERKES

this material has been excerpted from

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Creating Places Where People Love to Work***

by Leslie Yerkes

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