

fresh start

a beginning which involves moving on from past errors, mistakes or disagreements



When we start a new job we are often filled with good intentions; we might promise ourselves that we will get to work in plenty of time, really give 100% and make the best of the role we are in.

However, as time goes by in a job, it can be easy to slip into bad habits. Bad habits can erode our sense of self esteem and even our enjoyment of our work and the worst thing about them, is that often we don't realize we are doing them!

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit. ~ Aristotle

Regardless of the kind of work you do, here are some ways to blank the slate and help yourself to get a fresh start, even in your current role:

Assess Yourself Take the time to do an *honest* assessment of yourself at work; your strengths and weaknesses and your positive and negative habits. What are you good at? What do you struggle with? What habits support you and your work and what habits drain you or stop you enjoying or achieving as much as you would like to in your work?

It **is** worth walking through an 'average' day in your job and seeing where you spend your time and how you really feel about the things you do and how you do them. If you have been in your role for a long time, much of what you do at work may be done on autopilot. Take a step back and look objectively at how you work and see if there are any changes you could make that would make a difference to your experience of work or how you perform.

For example, if you are consistently rushing and feeling stressed about getting to work on time, what could you do to change that habit? Could you get up ten minutes earlier? Prepare everything for work the night before? *Breaking bad habits is about making life easier and more efficient*. What would your work day be like if you starting arriving prepared and relaxed? A small change can make a big difference.

Decide what works for you and what doesn't. Everyone is different. For one person, not having a break could be their bad habit whereas for another person, the bad habit may be that they are constantly taking breaks, which interrupts the flow of their work. Be honest about what works and doesn't work for you.

Get Feedback It can be difficult to see ourselves and our behaviors objectively and if this is the case it is worth asking for feedback from someone you trust at work. You could ask a colleague or supervisor that you feel comfortable sharing with to give you feedback. If this is done as part of an appraisal you could use the appraisal system to support you in changing your habits by setting goals for yourself for the next meeting.

What could make the most difference to our performance at work isn't always immediately obvious to us. Most people do the things that they know will work, but a good mentor or coach can be instrumental in helping you reach the next level. Often a small change in behavior or outlook can make a big difference.

Beginners Mind Do you find yourself thinking some things at work cannot be changed (including yourself and your own behaviors)? If this is the case, catch yourself and remind yourself that you are creating a new start and fresh perspective around your work.

Have you ever noticed that newer colleagues often brings ideas to the table that longer serving colleagues have given up on? Catch cynical thoughts as they arise and recommit to a new perspective. Refuse to be drawn into cynicism or gossip about "things never changing".