

## GLOBE AND MAIL (March 23, 2007)

### Thank God it's ... Monday?



*A simple shift in mindset can turn dread about the start of the workweek into enthusiasm, a coach tells WALLACE IMMEN*

WALLACE IMMEN

Friday, March 23, 2007

 [Printer Friendly version](#)

*"Monday Monday, can't trust that day. . . Whenever Monday comes, you can find me cryin' all of the time."*

Aimee Deziel might be able to relate to The Mamas and The Papas' classic song. In fact, her trepidation about having to return to the rat race at work started halfway through her weekends.

"I called it 'the Sunday night dreads,' " says Ms. Deziel, account director of 76design Inc., a unit of the Thornley Fallis Group in Ottawa. "It got to the point that I couldn't enjoy half my weekend and I thought: 'Is this what a career is all about?' "

It's a question that many Canadians may ponder in the days after they "thank God it's Friday."

But that mindset is unwittingly self-defeating and destined to put the brakes on career success, says Eileen Chadnick, principal with Toronto-based Big Cheese Coaching.

"Monday gets a bad rap, because most employees think of it not as just one day but a metaphor for the challenges in the whole week ahead," Ms. Chadnick says.

"But if you can change that mindset and look at the start of the week as an opportunity for a new beginning -- rather than the end of your weekend freedom -- you can say 'thank goodness it's Monday,' " says Ms. Chadnick, who writes a blog called TGIM Work-Life.

The adjustment can be easier than you imagine, she adds. It comes from shifting your focus away from the negative aspects of the job to the positives that will come from doing your work well, she says.

"It's really about finding a purpose in your work and creating a strategy to feel more in control of the situation. And that purpose doesn't have to be of the lofty 'save the world' kind. It comes from making your work align as closely as possible to your personal strengths and passions."

To help find that purpose, she suggests taking a few minutes at the end of each day to write out what you have achieved and what you hope to achieve in the days ahead. This will steer your thinking toward progress and personal advancement, she explains.

At the same time, it's important to clear away things that are bothering you, Ms. Chadnick recommends. "Ask yourself: 'Why am I paying so much attention to this? I should put it in perspective and shift the view to all the things I am achieving, rather than what may be holding me back,' " she advises.

What if you're not in what you'd consider your dream job? You can still think of it as something that serves your long-term goals, Ms. Chadnick suggests.

Think: "This may not be the perfect job but I'm gaining experience in areas which will serve me as I move towards the next step in my career."

"Remember, it's not only up to you. It takes two to tango and your employer can do a lot to ease the stress you feel on Mondays, as well as the rest of the week," she adds.

If it's clear you aren't gaining new experiences, she recommends discussing your goals with your boss and asking for an assignment or a training program that will stretch your range of experiences, and get you closer to that job you want.

"Rather than the workweek being like serving your time while you are living your real life, consider this a journey, and find ways to enjoy it," Ms. Chadnick says.

That's what Ms. Deziel resolved to do last year. "I can clearly remember coming back to work after a week off for the holidays. I was thinking not only is the week looming, but the entire year," says Ms. Deziel, who had been in her current job for two years at that point.

"I realized the reason I dreaded Mondays was because I really didn't have much control over my own work life and how I structured my work."

She vowed to become better organized and keep records of how she spends her time and how her tasks line up with what she wants to achieve.

"Making lists of goals and tasks helped me get a handle on where I was and, right away, that made things feel more manageable."

In addition to practical, physical changes, she realized she also had to make mental adjustments -- what she calls a "to-be list," to review each morning the challenges and opportunities the day presents.

That made her realize that she spent so much time looking forward to things that were scheduled later in the day or week that she was seldom fully engaged in the tasks at hand, she says. "Now, I go into each meeting telling myself that this is the only task that matters at the moment."

That has made a big difference, she says. "I find I am more effective and we get more done in the meetings I am running because, by being focused on immediate issues, I get through the agenda more quickly."

To further take the sting out of Monday, she plans something pleasant on Sunday night to take her mind off the looming workweek.

And she makes it a habit to plan something outside the office during the week, such as a lunch with friends or an evening event completely different from work.

So what's facing Monday like for her a year later?

"I feel completely different. I am energized and excited. It is 180 degrees from what I used to feel. In fact, now I feel a 'Sunday night enthusiasm,' " the 30-year-old Ms. Deziel says.

"My focus is on coming back to a community, rather than thinking of the office just as the work at hand. I look forward to seeing my co-workers. We have a planning meeting for the week on Monday morning and the first 10 minutes or so is devoted to catching up on what people did on the weekend," she explains.

"We all leave the meeting more enthusiastic and feeling connected and ready to plunge into the week."

She believes the effort she took to make clear goals and a more structured workday will help her to more quickly reach her goal of rising into senior management.

"I'm more effective, and I would hope I am more enjoyable to be around," Ms. Deziel says. "That's got to be good for my career."

She feels much less stress, she adds, "because I've realized my career is not a race, it is a journey."

\*\*\*\*\*

## MANAGING MONDAYS

Want to be able to say thank goodness it's Monday?

Here are some tips from Eileen Chadnick of Toronto-based Big Cheese Coaching:

**Organize ahead.** Before you leave on Friday, clear the clutter and write down an agenda for the next week. This way you can know where you left off, and start with a clean plate on Monday.

**Focus on the positive.** Think of at least three things you look forward to at work, such as camaraderie with colleagues, meeting clients or learning something new.

**Make the mountain easier to climb.** Break down looming projects into small, manageable tasks, which will help you feel like you can move in on Monday and achieve success.

**Write it down.** To create a sense of progress, make a "to-do" list and check off tasks as you complete them.

**Keep it simple.** Don't schedule a big meeting on Monday and keep your morning agenda light.

**Find a challenge for the day.** Having something you want to accomplish makes it more interesting and easier to get back to work.

**Encourage interaction.** "If people are fired up about working with others as a team, it adds a lot more meaning to the day," Ms. Chadnick says.

**Renew and review.** Make Monday morning a time to meet informally to go over progress and plan the rest of the week.

**Create variety.** Think about ways to make your work different and more creative. Ask your boss if there are new projects or initiatives that will help you stretch your skills.

**Anticipate good times.** Have something to look forward to by planning a lunch or a special evening event during the week.

**Make down time your time.** A dinner with friends, a movie or other diversions on Sunday evening will keep your mind off the work week ahead.

*Wallace Immen*