

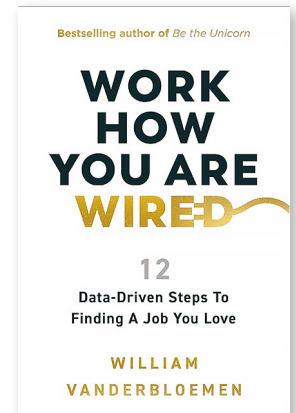


Executive Book Summaries®

Work How You Are Wired

12 Data-Driven Steps to Finding a Job You Love

by **William Vanderbloemen**



Contents

(Almost) Everyone Hates Their Job

Page 2

Swift Success: Finding Happiness as the Fast

Page 3

Deftly Finding Happiness as an Agile Person

Page 4

Anticipating Great Things: Happiness as an Anticipator

Page 5

Tuning In to Happiness When You're Self-Aware

Page 6

Connecting with Happiness

Page 7

Taking Care of Business: Productive Happiness

Page 8

THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

In *How You Are Wired: 12 Data-Driven Steps to Finding a Job You Love*, author William Vanderbloemen argues that workplace unhappiness stems less from industry or employer and more from misalignment between a role and a person's natural wiring. Citing research, he outlines the common culprits: toxic culture, bad management, poor work-life balance, inadequate pay, limited advancement, and lack of purpose. He also frames happiness as a public-health matter, noting that nations with robust social support report higher well-being.

Vanderbloemen identifies six factors that boost life satisfaction and translates them into six workplace keys, then presents a data-driven method for fit. These inputs map to twelve traits from *Be the Unicorn* and provide playbooks so readers align tasks with strengths, minimize frustration zones, and design careers that sustain energy, performance, and satisfaction.

IN THIS EXECUTIVE BOOK SUMMARY, YOU WILL:

- Understand why misalignment between your role and your natural wiring is the hidden cause of burnout, dissatisfaction, and underperformance.
- Explore the six key factors that drive true happiness at work and in life.
- Learn how thousands of data points reveal which environments best match your strengths.
- Discover twelve “Unicorn traits” and how recognizing your strongest ones can guide better career decisions, collaboration, and workplace fulfillment.

(Almost) Everyone Hates Their Job

The stats vary when it comes to the percentage of people who hate their job. Reports vary from as high as 70 percent and as low as 39 percent. A report from Gallup, “State of the Global Workplace: 2024,” found that 62 percent of people were disengaged and emotionally detached at work, and 15 percent described themselves as “miserable.”

Most concerning is the number of younger workers who are unhappy. Yes, it takes a while to find one’s footing, but the numbers don’t look promising for twentysomethings. A Pew Research study done in 2023 found 56 percent of workers under thirty were not satisfied with their jobs. Close behind, 49 percent of people between ages thirty and forty-nine aren’t particularly happy either.

Twenty-five is a long way from retirement age. Heck, even forty-nine is far enough out. When you’ve got that many more years ahead, it’s worth taking the time to find work that makes you happy.

While we’ve all met a few people over the years who didn’t seem to need a reason to hate their job, research shows there are some common factors that translate to being unhappy at work.

Six common reasons people hate their job:

1. Toxic work environment
2. Bad management
3. Lack of work-life balance
4. Bad pay
5. Lack of opportunity for advancement
6. Lack of purpose

Careers are requiring more of us than ever. Older generations could leave work at work. They didn’t have computers, much less cell phones with pinging reminders of work email coming through at all hours. As soon as the office was in the rearview mirror, they could think about other things: hobbies, evening plans, the Manhattan that was waiting for them at home. Forty is a lot of hours, but if those hours stay at work, it’s less devastating to spend them unhappily.

If you’re going to have to work—and most of us do—you’re going to have to like it. Life is far too short to have so much of it dominated by unhappiness or discontent.

Come On, Get Happy

Happiness at work does not necessarily mean you’re going to be happier in the rest of your life, but it’s a key indicator that it will. Likewise, being happy at home can greatly increase your likelihood of being happy at work. The two are intertwined.

Happiness at work is a matter of public health. It’s simply in everyone’s best interest for people to be happier.

What Makes You Happy

Six Factors That Contribute To Happiness

1. Positive connections
2. Being thankful
3. Good health
4. Resilience and perspective
5. Learning
6. Purpose

What contributes to a person’s happiness at work?

Six Keys to Being Happy at Work

1. Having a good boss
2. Work-life balance
3. Making enough money
4. Autonomy and flexibility
5. Professional growth
6. Meaningful work

No great shock that the list of why people are happy in their jobs is pretty much the inverse of why people hate their jobs. And it’s also no coincidence that there’s 50 percent overlap between what makes a person happy in general and what makes a person happy at work. Positive connections, continuous learning, and a sense of purpose are good for your mental health no matter where you are.

The Methodology

Now that happiness has been covered, it’s time for application. Thousands of people were surveyed to find:

- How happy people were at work—the survey looked at both happy and unhappy people
- Their Enneagram, Vander Index, and DiSC personality test scores

Happiness at work is a matter of public health. It's simply in everyone's best interest for people to be happier.

- Where their personality caused points of friction or flow at work; which traits caused them to be especially happy or particularly miserable
- How long they've been in a particular field
- Their favorite subjects in school
- What their ideal job looks like

Using all these data points, clear trends helped identify which jobs worked best for each of the twelve Unicorn traits discovered in *Be the Unicorn*. **The traits are fast, authentic, agile, solver, anticipator, prepared, self-aware, curious, connected, likable, productive, and purpose-driven.** Knowing where you excel among the twelve traits helps you better understand the circumstances under which you might be happiest.

Swift Success: Finding Happiness as the Fast

Paralysis by analysis or being overwhelmed by other aspects of life stop too many otherwise solid leaders and bright thinkers in their paths. But this isn't so for the Fast, the first trait tackled in *Be the Unicorn*.

Nothing gets past the Fast. Noticing things others don't is part of what makes them successful and happy. The Fast Unicorns share two essential traits: attentive and decisive.

One of the key elements that contribute to the happiness of our Fast Unicorns is the ability to stay constantly engaged. They thrive in environments that demand quick decision-making and high levels of attentiveness.

Another factor that plays a significant role in Fast Unicorn job satisfaction is the sense of accomplishment that comes from making prompt decisions and seeing immediate results.

Careers where the Fast work best:

- Stockbroker
- ER/trauma surgeon
- Track star
- Emergency vet

- Police officer
- Gamer
- Auctioneer
- House flipper / Realtor
- Personal assistant
- Executive assistant
- Trial lawyer
- Crisis response
- Television producer
- Triage nurse
- Emergency medical technician (EMT)
- Water ski team member
- Jamaican bobsled team member
- Professor/archaeologist turned protector of antiquities

Because of their efficiency and adaptability, the Fast often find themselves frustrated by certain workplace dynamics that others cope just fine with. They don't like to wait for others to catch up. Workplace environments that lack clear priorities are a constant source of irritation for the Fast.

Getting Real: Finding Happiness as an Authentic Person

If you're an Authentic person yourself, you know you have an uncanny ability to connect with people in a way that can completely disarm them.

Not all Authentic people are happy. But the Unicorns who have been studied who are strongest in authenticity and are happy at work share three micro traits.

Honesty: Authentic Unicorns know they're not always going to make people happy. Their honesty can sometimes be off-putting. But the happiest Unicorns know how to be honest and kind at the same time.

Originality: Most of the happiest Authentic Unicorns initially struggled with their authenticity, but the successful ones have learned to embrace it.

Transparency: When people see that you don't cover up mistakes or hide from your flaws, you'll go further.

You've never felt a strong urge to fit in, if you're authentic. You're an individualist through and through. You can cry and laugh in the same breath because you know your feelings are part of the true you. You're the first one to speak up against something you don't think is right and the first one to apologize.

You're authentic, and you just want everyone to feel as at peace with themselves as you do.

Consider these careers if you're Authentic:

- Artist
- Designer
- Chef
- Artisan
- Guide
- Welder
- Plumber
- Electrician
- Carpenter
- Clergy person
- Sommelier

At this point you know yourself and the factors that will make you happy at work. You are a naturally happy person because you don't spend time and energy being something you're not. Don't lose sight of yourself, no matter how bad it gets.

Deftly Finding Happiness as an Agile Person

For the Agile, the next step doesn't take any thought at all. It's automatic.

The happiest Agile Unicorns share two micro traits:

Resilience: The cornerstone of agility. You can't be agile if you're stuck on the last thing that didn't go your way. Or, as Taylor Swift put it, "Down bad crying at the gym."

Growth mindset: The Agile view roadblocks as opportunities to learn. They adapt easily, thanks to a growth mindset. They're open to new ideas and are more willing to take risks.

Part of being Agile and happy is knowing your circumstances so you can know what your resources and

limitations are. The Agile can handle just about anything, but they prefer to have some ground rules.

Consider these careers if you're Agile:

- Residential plumber/electrician
- Entrepreneur
- Security
- Copywriter
- Construction
- Architect
- Trapeze artist
- Bounty hunter
- Pilot
- Air traffic control
- Mechanic
- Seamstress/tailor
- Hospitality
- Concierge
- Cakemaker
- Event planner
- Consultant
- Engineer

When the tasks and projects they engage in resonate with their values and passions, it ignites a deeper level of commitment and enthusiasm for an Agile person.

Figuring Out the Key to Happiness as a Solver

The happiest working Solver Unicorns shared three micro traits: imagination, patience, and discernment.

Imagination: The Solver knows that they need to think bigger to find the best solutions.

Patience: Sometimes you get a light bulb moment, and the solution comes to you instantly. More often, it takes patience.

Discernment: Often, the most important part of solving a problem is figuring out what the problem actually is—and if it's really a problem.

If you're a Solver, you get frustrated by small-minded people. You can't tolerate "that's the way we've always done it" as a reason for doing anything. You need a job that will fulfill your need to sink your teeth into a problem and work it all out.

You are a naturally happy person because you don't spend time and energy being something you're not. Don't lose sight of yourself, no matter how bad it gets.

Consider these careers if you're a Solver:

- IT developer
- Programmer/Coder
- Firefighter
- Marketing/PR
- Financial analysis
- Orthodontist
- Analyst
- Therapist
- Engineer
- Consultant
- Agent
- Coach, any kind of coach
- Diplomat
- Plastic surgeon
- Systems engineer
- Eldest daughter

Anticipating Great Things: Happiness as an Anticipator

Anticipators share one strong micro trait that helps them see the future—whether five seconds or five years from now.

Micro traits of the anticipators include thinking things through.

Unicorn Anticipators have some pretty big-deal jobs. The stakes are high for them. They need to anticipate before the “do” because the “do” is so extreme. It could mean whether or not millions of dollars in research and development pay off, or the difference between life and death.

The happiest Anticipator Unicorns are ones with clear goals and unlimited freedom to find the best ways of achieving those goals.

Careers where Anticipators thrive:

- Architect
- Engineer

- Executive assistant
- Fashion buyer/designer
- Trauma surgeon
- Concierge
- Logistics specialist
- Pilot
- Event planner
- Production stage manager
- Project manager

Anticipators are always thinking at least one step ahead, so it's important that they see the six workplace happiness factors present in their work. If not, chances are they're already halfway out the door.

Prepared for Happiness at Work

Prepared Unicorns are ready to respond to unexpected opportunities and challenges with confidence and resilience. At work, this takes the form of being proactive rather than reactive and being able to turn obstacles into stepping stones toward success.

The micro traits of the happiest and most successful Prepared Unicorns are proactive, imagination, and meticulous.

For someone who is Prepared, happiness at work is the culmination of foresight, planning, and a proactive approach to their responsibilities.

Prepared Unicorns excel in various roles that require meticulous organization and readiness. Their happiness comes from the confidence in their ability to handle tasks efficiently, the fulfillment of seeing their efforts result in positive outcomes, and the peace of mind knowing they are always a step ahead.

If you're a prepared person, consider these careers:

- Day care worker
- Nurse
- Teacher
- Wedding planner

- Tax accountant
- Patent attorney
- Judge
- Choir director / orchestra conductor
- Dentist
- Truck driver
- Home repair / handyman
- Skilled tradesperson
- Cosmetologist / makeup artist
- Reporter

As a prepared person, you'll be ready when the right opportunity comes along. Keep your eyes and ears open and take your chances when you get them.

Tuning In to Happiness When You're Self-Aware

Being self-aware is kind of a mind-bender.

The happiest Self-Aware people share two key micro traits. They're observant and sensitive.

Observant. Being observant allows the Self-Aware to pick up on subtle cues and details in their environment. This heightened awareness can help them understand the needs and emotions of those around them, making them more effective in their interactions.

Sensitive. They know whether to push or give space when someone is avoiding eye contact. They know by the way their boss sat down at their desk if they're in a good or bad mood.

The happiest Self-Aware Unicorns thrive in jobs where they know their self-awareness is guiding them in the right direction.

At the same time, the Self-Aware can be almost too aware, so it's best when they're in steady environments that aren't liable to change too much.

The Self-Aware can be successful in any position. They're chameleons that way, but some positions will make them happier than others.

Consider these top careers for the Self-Aware:

- Life coach
- Yoga instructor
- Social worker
- Actor

- Model
- Human resources
- Sales
- Mediator
- Classical musician
- Consultant
- Project manager
- Hostage negotiator

The Curious and Curiouser at Work

Some people just know that everything's going to be okay. They don't know how, but they know it's all going to work out. And along the way, they're going to see everything, learn everything, and do everything they can. That's the Curious person.

Micro traits of the Curious include; they ask questions, they love learning and are genuinely interested, they pay close attention.

When you've got above-average curiosity, you thrive on the unknown, spontaneity, and that childlike sense of wonder people find either endearing or annoying. You need a job with questions to answer, opportunities to get your hands dirty, plenty of space to learn and explore new topics, and a team of like-minded people.

Consider these careers if you're one of the Curious:

- Journalist
- Scientist
- Researcher
- Archaeologist
- Museum curator
- Art historian
- Zoologist
- Explorer
- Marine biologist
- Geologist
- Software developer / IT person
- Astronaut
- Detective

Curious people are remarkably resilient. You can make almost any subject interesting, and you can find value in even the most mundane tasks.

When you've got above-average curiosity, you thrive on the unknown, spontaneity, and that childlike sense of wonder people find either endearing or annoying.

Connecting with Happiness

Being Connected is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

Your empathy and ability to pick up on other people's energy is a blessing and a curse, but lucky for everyone you interact with, it's always a blessing for them.

Being Connected allows you to build and maintain relationships with a variety of individuals in a variety of professions and positions. It's no different from having a diverse stock portfolio. Being Connected pays off.

The happiest Connected Unicorns share two important micro traits. They're strategic, and they've got the memory of an elephant (or an equally robust system to make it seem like they do).

Strategic. The Connected can network with anyone, but equally important is their ability to discern whom to connect with. Determining which leads are worth pursuing and which relationships are worth pouring into takes a level of strategy that others may not have.

Memory. Mind like a steel trap (or a good way to take notes). The Connected know that having a good memory is invaluable when it comes to forging and maintaining meaningful relationships.

Consider these careers if you're Connected:

- Publicist
- Sales associate
- Recruiter
- Community manager
- Lobbyist
- Politician
- Fundraiser
- Hairstylist
- Agent
- Entrepreneur
- Contractor

You're charming, you're great with names, and you know a guy or gal for every job. Everyone in town knows your name. If you wanted to, you could successfully run for school board tomorrow.

Don't let bad circumstances dim your light and the goodness that you bring to the world. Other people believe in you, and you should too.

What's Not to Like? Finding Happiness at Work When You're Likable

The happiest Likable Unicorns share three key micro traits. They're thoughtful, inquisitive, and outgoing.

Thoughtful. You can't be Likable if you're not thinking, especially about others.

Inquisitive. Most people like talking about themselves. Ask them questions, and you're off and running.

Outgoing. You can be Likable as an introvert, but you get a lot further when you're an extrovert, sharing your warmth and geniality to any and all.

If you're Likable, you know that the effort you make toward others will come back around for your own benefit. As such, you need a job that will allow for some kind of transaction. You need to be your Likable self, and you need a way for that likability to shine back on you in some way.

Consider these careers if you're Likable:

- Creative director
- Interior designer
- Real estate agent
- Sales director
- Buyer/purchaser
- Life coach
- Banking/investing
- Flight attendant
- Consulting

- Personal shopper
- Motivational coach
- Tour guide
- Entrepreneur

Taking Care of Business: Productive Happiness

The happiest Productive Unicorns reported three traits, over and over again. They are: perfectionism, drive, and organization.

As much effort as Productive Unicorns make to fit the model for what they should look like on the outside, they have brains that work even harder.

If you're Productive, you have no problem starting at the bottom. You know you won't be there long. And once you're in charge, buckle up.

Consider these careers if you're Productive:

- Attorney
- Project manager
- Surgeon
- Business owner
- Architect
- Landscaper
- Consultant
- Investment banker
- Interpreter
- Chef
- Copy editor

You value order, independence, and precision, but lots of people don't. Don't waste your time trying to fit in where you're not appreciated.

The Purpose-Driven at Work

You can lead a rich, full life without achieving self-actualization. But you can make a much bigger impact if you have.

If your strongest trait is Purpose-Driven, you might be on your way to, or already arrived at, self-actualization.

The happiest Purpose-Driven people share three micro traits; selflessness, focus on greater good, and resilience.

Meaningful work is essential to you. And the straighter and shorter the line you can draw between your work and tangible positive impact, the better. When you're Purpose-Driven, you need a problem to solve, the freedom to take action, and a team to work with and benefit from your efforts.

Careers where the Purpose-Driven thrive:

- Guidance counselor
- Lawyer / public defender
- Government official
- Physical therapist
- Server
- Nonprofit director
- Social worker
- Financial planner
- Personal trainer
- Beautician
- Nurse
- Funeral director
- Human resources manager
- Chaplain
- Teacher

Conclusion

You deserve to be happy. You deserve a job you love and a life that fulfills you. Life is short, precious, and fragile. Stop doing what doesn't serve you and to start doing what your heart and brain implore you to do.

We can learn a lot from others, famous and otherwise, who love their jobs and who hate their jobs. But the biggest takeaway here is this: The most important person to learn from is yourself. When you know who you are—truly what makes you you—you can begin to narrow your wide ocean of options and draw that much closer to finding the work you are wired to do.



William Vanderbloemen is the founder and CEO of Vanderbloemen Search Group. He pioneered executive search for faith-based organizations, growing his firm from humble beginnings in 2008 into a global leader in talent. A noted speaker, author, and workplace culture expert, he has conducted more than 3,000 executive searches and 30,000 interviews, uncovering the traits that distinguish effective, fulfilled leaders. He is also the bestselling author of *Be the Unicorn: 12 Data-Driven Habits that Separate the Best Leaders from the Rest*.

Work How You Are Wired: 12 Data-Driven Steps to Finding a Job You Love by William Vanderbloemen. Copyright© 2025 by William Vanderbloemen. Published by arrangement with HarperCollins Leadership, a division of HarperCollins Focus, LLC. ISBN: 9781400253807. Summary published by Soundview Executive Book Summaries®. Copyright 2025 Soundview, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. For permissions and reprints, please contact service@summary.com. 4728
