

Fit Matters offers hope, inspiration, and practical tools for finding joy, meaning, and engagement at work.

— **Daniel Pink**, author of *Drive* and *To Sell Is Human*



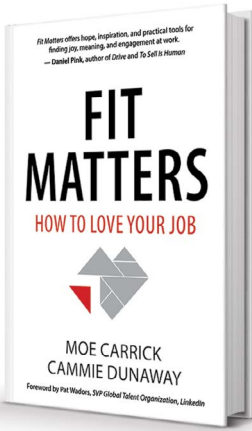
FIT MATTERS

HOW TO LOVE YOUR JOB



MOE CARRICK
CAMMIE DUNAWAY

Foreword by Pat Wadors, *SVP Global Talent Organization, LinkedIn*



Enjoy “Understanding Fit” and “Recognizing Misfit” from our new book, *Fit Matters*

“A must-read for anyone looking for their next amazing opportunity or who wants to tweak their current situation to make the fit just a bit better.”

— **Pat Wadors**, SVP, Global Talent Organization, LinkedIn

“Read this book if you want to find the career of your dreams.”

— **Tim Sanders**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Love is the Killer App*

“We should all love our jobs – and what Carrick and Dunaway prove is that we all can.”

— **Margaret Heffernan**, author of *Beyond Measure* and *A Bigger Prize*

HOW CAN YOU DISCOVER A JOB that really matches your needs? A job that provides meaning to your life? *Fit Matters* shows you how.

Odds are that you want to bring your best self to work. You want a job that feeds your spirit, your mind, and your heart. *Fit matters* – it’s crucial if you’re to perform at your best.

Thought-provoking and practical, the book offers tools and exercises designed to help you evaluate the fit between your needs and the culture of your current or prospective employer, assess and articulate what you really need to thrive at work, and develop options if you find yourself in a company or job where you are misfit.

You’ll learn that self-knowledge, combined with an understanding of six elements of work fit, will help you make decisions that will lead to better job satisfaction and improved performance over the entire course of your career.

A practical guide for job hunters or employees at any career stage, *Fit Matters* offers useful advice, tools, and exercises to help you find the job you’ll love.

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CHAPTER 1

Understanding Fit

People who love their work bring an intensity and enthusiasm that is impossible to match through sheer diligence.

— Gretchen Rubin, The Happiness Project

JOHN REACHED OVER and pushed the snooze button once again. It's been getting harder and harder to get out of bed in the morning. He has a big presentation today and a meeting with his boss, and he's dreading both. The job seemed perfect at first, but in two years it's deteriorated to the point where John wonders if he should update his resume and start looking for a new job. His team is functioning poorly and their results are poor. Tension is high between John and his boss because their values are no longer in sync. He doesn't want to share these problems with his wife because he knows she'll worry. There aren't a lot of jobs in his field in their town; they just moved his wife's mother to a nursing home nearby, and John feels increasingly trapped. Slowly he drags himself out of bed, dreading another day.

Just about everyone can relate to John, occasionally feeling dissatisfied, frustrated, and even disillusioned with the company they work for. John really hoped to fit at his company, and to happily retire from there one day. Instead, he's checked out, looking for a job elsewhere, and clearly not bringing his A game to his current work. John's stress level is high, and it's starting to show in his relationships at home. What had

started out as a match made in heaven – the perfect job – has exploded into a burned-out executive and a job search, expensive for both John and his company.

It's a familiar tale. In more than thirty years of consulting to organizations and leading teams, we've heard story after story of genuine anguish and frustration from people who suffer in jobs and companies that aren't right for them.

Everyone deserves to love their job, and it starts with having a great fit between you and the organization where you work. But, as we said earlier, finding a great fit is neither simple nor easy.

You're Not Alone

If you find yourself struggling with fit at work or longing for more meaning in your job, you're not alone. According to The Conference Board Job Satisfaction Survey (Kan et al. 2016), less than half of U.S. workers are satisfied with their jobs. And a recent Gallup study revealed that only a third of workers say that they're engaged in their current job (Rigoni and Nelson 2016). Unfortunately, instead of pursuing the belief that everyone deserves to be happy and fulfilled in a job for which they're a great fit, many people just give up on the pursuit of job satisfaction, buying into the false belief that work is just a necessary evil, something you have to do to pay the bills.

Why do so many of us simply accept unhappiness and dissatisfaction as natural elements of work? How do people end up in companies that rob them of satisfaction and even joy? Why do they stay? What are the costs for people and organizations of poor fit alignment? What measures can be taken to increase the odds of landing at a company that's the right fit for you? What should you do if you're suffering at work because of misfit?

We started asking a lot of questions in preparing to write this book. And we found a lot of answers. We found survey data, research, real-world stories, tools, and exercises that not only shed light on why so much unhappiness exists but also on what people – people like you – can do about it. Through our years of experience in consulting to and leading organizations, combined with our research of more than 500 people and over 50 interviews, we've culled potent stories of fit and misfit, as well as

trends that shaped our thinking. You'll hear the voices of the people we talked with throughout the book. We also offer ideas and inspiration that will help you take heart and keep searching for a job that's the right one for you at your particular stage of life. There's a company out there that's a great match for you, and when you find it both you and your organization will benefit.

What Is Work Fit?

We define *work fit* as the degree to which a job with a particular company fits you – how well the job's requirements and the company's values and culture mesh with your expectations, values, personality, and skills. Broadly speaking, it's the match between an employee and the company for which they work. A great fit at work is akin to that perfect pair of jeans that goes on easy and makes you feel good in your own skin. We know it when we find it, but the search is often long and frustrating, and many employees in the United States and around the world haven't found it, settling instead into jobs they keep for financial motivation – but little else.

It's critical to emphasize that great work fit isn't about looking alike or being part of the same social group, class, race, or gender, often called "fitting in." It's about having a common set of values, desires, and expectations that allow you to bring your best self to work.

When work fit is poor, a job feels like this, said Stacy: "The role was lacking in any opportunities for growth or even a lateral move. There was zero flexibility and employees were micro-managed – phone calls were listened to and timed, and even bathroom breaks were timed. It felt like a people factory, not a team environment. It felt like I was punching a time clock and my contributions and ideas didn't matter." And Andrea said, "Every day felt like 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' because it seemed like nothing I did was ever enough to please my management. In one case, this happened even when I did as much as I could with as few resources as possible."

Figure 1-1 is a word cloud showing what people said about poor work fit, or misfit, in a survey we conducted.

When work fit is great, a job feels like this, said Billye: "I have felt pleasure in my job since the beginning. The joy and pleasure of the work

Great Work Fit Word Cloud



Figure 1-2. This word cloud depicts what respondents said about great work fit in a survey conducted by the authors.

Everyone Needs – and Deserves – Great Work Fit

People are not machines. As humans, we’re hardwired to garner a personal sense of value and purpose through our work. Standard thinking about human needs places meaningful work, which is connected to self-esteem and self-actualization, near the top of the ladder, behind physiological and safety needs. Current researchers and thinkers have elevated connection to others, engagement, and contribution as even more basic to our humanity, closer to our most basic needs for food and shelter.

Researcher, author, and TED notable Brené Brown (2010) emphasizes the importance of wholeheartedness (the capacity to engage in our lives with authenticity). She says that connection and belonging – both of which are needs we bring to the places we work – are as important as other basic human needs. Similarly, Patrick Lencioni (2002), blockbuster author on teams and organizations, suggests that, more than anything else at work, people crave being seen and valued and feeling like they contribute to work that matters (in any role at any level).

Healthy workplaces and great fit between employee and employer are critical to activating great performance and powerful human connections. We believe that everyone can enjoy great work fit, but finding the right match is challenging since people and workplaces are unique.

Professionals in the United States and worldwide spend a great deal of time at work – more than they do sleeping, eating, playing, engaging in household activities, or with family and friends (U.S. Department of Labor 2014). For many of us today, a large number of our needs must be met in the workplaces we join, so happiness in life largely correlates to happiness at work. When you feel good at work, you have energy and the capacity for creativity and partnership. This in turn creates a virtuous cycle in which the better you feel, the more you contribute to work results. People are drawn to partner with you, and together you get things done well.

Changing jobs is exhausting, but the toll taken from continuing in an environment that's a misfit is incredibly high. Poor work fit erodes employee health and well-being, which leads to stress-related illness, stress on families, and stress among coworkers. We know that stress manifests itself in chronic long-term illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes, anxiety and depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and cancer. It also results in fractured family and community systems. These trends affect the health of employees, their quality of life, their relationships at home, and their efficacy in the communities in which they live.

A Better Way - The Virtuous Work Cycle

When you enjoy and feel successful at something – a hobby, a sport, a relationship – you look forward to it and want to devote time and energy to doing it well. And it's certainly the case with work. When you love the work you're doing, when it truly uses your skills and experiences in a positive way, it creates a virtuous cycle (see Figure 1-3). Because you enjoy your job, you don't mind working hard, and you're able to tackle challenges with confidence and enthusiasm. Your peers and bosses can see that you're going the extra mile to solve issues and generate ideas, and in turn they respond positively to your efforts. Simply put, the more you like your work the better work you do, the more positive feedback you receive, and the greater your enjoyment becomes.

UNDERSTANDING FIT

The evidence, as well as our own experience, confirms that feeling good about work leads to better performance and greater success. Research by Jessica Pryce-Jones (2010) reveals that people who are happy at work:

- Get promoted more
- Earn more
- Get more support
- Generate better and more creative ideas
- Achieve goals faster
- Interact better with colleagues and bosses
- Receive superior reviews
- Learn more
- Achieve greater success

It makes sense – when you're happy and at ease you tend to be more productive. You're more open to learning new things and less frustrated by obstacles and challenges. This confidence means that you make fewer mistakes, and that you're more likely to learn from them. You can view problems as opportunities for growth rather than reinforcement of all the things that are wrong. When you're in a virtuous work cycle, relationships with coworkers and superiors go more smoothly. We're naturally attracted to people who enjoy what they're doing, and we're more likely to give them support or to seek out their input and involvement.

This happiness and sense of purpose spills out into our personal lives. Indeed, the connection between feelings about our work and satisfaction with our overall lives is supported by hundreds of articles and academic dissertations going back to the mid-1930s. One of the most far-reaching studies occurred in the 1970s, when Angus Campbell at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan undertook a massive research project to understand how Americans defined the quality of their life experiences (marriage, parenting, health, etc.) and the impact of those experiences on the quality of their lives overall. Campbell found that satisfaction with work was one of the strongest predictors of overall well-being, accounting for almost a fifth of the variance among those

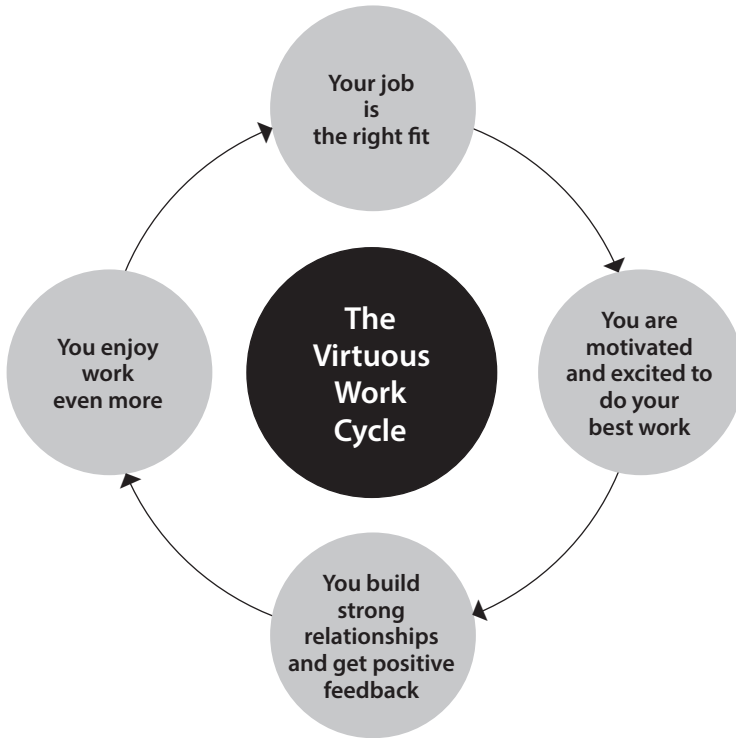


Figure 1-3. The virtuous work cycle is the result of loving your work.

who reported a high satisfaction with life and those who did not. Satisfaction with work was more important than satisfaction with finances and friendships, and equally important as satisfaction with family life (Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers 1976).

Organizations Need Great Work Fit

The costs of poor work fit are staggering. When an employee leaves after only a short employment stint, that vacancy leaves a wake of destruction. Many studies have shown that the total cost of losing an employee can range from tens of thousands of dollars to twice that person's annual salary (Bersin 2013). The cost of an employee leaving is astonishing.

But when employees stay in poor work fit situations the cost is even greater. It's expensive enough to replace an employee who leaves, but imagine what it costs when an underperforming employee doesn't leave but simply lingers on for years. By some estimates the loss of productivity due to employee disengagement costs between \$450 billion and \$550 billion per year in the United States alone (Gallup 2013).

Companies large and small simply do better when their employees are thriving. They make more money, accomplish their missions, produce more, engage happier customers, create less waste, make better innovations, and develop more productive vendor and partner alliances. For the foreseeable future, the human capital of organizations – the employees – will be the main factor in determining which companies will endure and which will churn and burn. Thus, it's good for business to ensure a good match between the employees and the culture of the organization. Period.

There Is a Path to the Right Fit

Take heart: great work fit is possible. There's a great fit for every job seeker and job provider; we know it ourselves and we've seen it happen for other people and other organizations.

Throughout these pages we'll share practical advice, reflective exercises, and real-world stories designed to help you advance your understanding of great work fit and how you can achieve it. We'll talk about the importance of getting to know yourself – and how you can go about doing just that. We'll explain the six essential elements of work fit, and we'll discuss how your prioritization of these elements changes over the course of your career, and how to weight them for yourself. And we'll look at how everyone can – and must – handle work misfit.

The Six Elements of Work Fit

We've identified six essential elements of work fit (see Figure 1-4). While it's unlikely that all of these elements are great at any point in time, we need at least some of them to be working well in order to feel that we fit well in our organization.

- 1. Meaning Fit** – Meaning fit is great when you feel that what you do matters.

The Six Elements of Work Fit

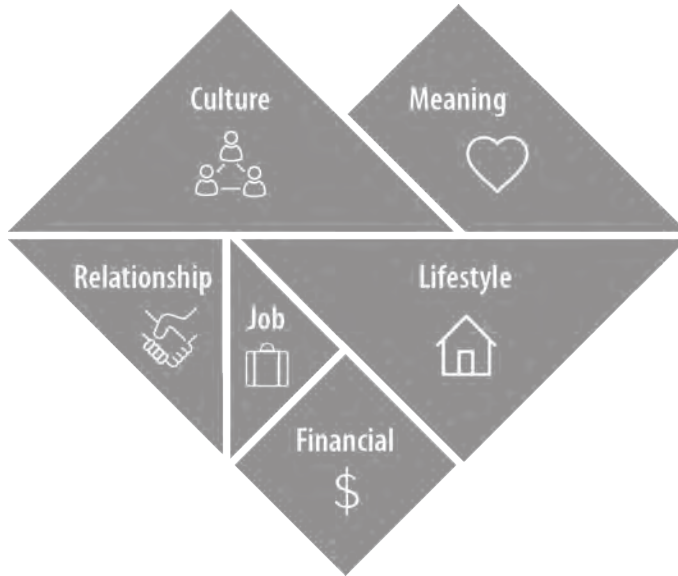


Figure 1-4. At least some of these elements of work fit need to be working well in order to feel that you fit well in your organization.

- 2. Job Fit** – Job fit is great when the responsibilities of your job align with your talents and provide opportunities for growth.
- 3. Culture Fit** – Culture fit is great when your values and beliefs are compatible with the practices of your employer.
- 4. Relationship Fit** – Relationship fit is great when you like and respect the people you work with and receive appropriate support and trust to do your job.
- 5. Lifestyle Fit** – Lifestyle fit is great when your life outside of work is supported by your employer’s policies and practices.
- 6. Financial Fit** – Financial fit is great when you feel that you’re paid fairly and when what your employer offers (salary, bonus, benefits, perks, and allowances) meets your needs.

UNDERSTANDING FIT

It takes effort to find the path to great fit – and to stay on it. For many of you it begins with asking the question, “How well do I fit in my current situation?” Or, “Am I thriving here?” Chapter 2 will assist you in recognizing whether you’re a misfit today and start you on the path to great work fit.

It’s time for a new way to work that’s compatible with human health, well-being, and satisfaction, and is also good for business and productivity. Suffering in a job should *not* be an essential part of anyone’s career path. Accordingly, we have created The Fit Manifesto (see Figure 1-5) as a guide and inspiration for individuals and organizations committed to ensuring great fit between people and their organizations.

The Fit Manifesto

1. It's possible to feel engaged, happy, and valued at work.
2. People are healthier in mind, heart, and soul when they feel satisfied in their jobs.
3. Individuals who find the right work fit do better outside of work and help create resilient families and strong communities.
4. Work fit varies based on time of life; needs change with circumstances.
5. Organizations do better in all ways (profit, performance, quality, mission) when employees are right for the work and the culture. Companies succeed when the people in them succeed.
6. There is a place for everyone to thrive at work. What works for one person might not work for another. The fit equation is highly personal.
7. A focus on work fit benefits people, organizations, communities, and the world.
8. Fit matters! The global economy demands that people everywhere feel connected and relevant so that they bring their best work to work.

Figure 1-5. The Fit Manifesto is a guide and inspiration for individuals and organizations committed to ensuring great fit between people and their organizations.

CHAPTER 2

Recognizing Misfit

When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be.

— Lao Tzu

FOR SOME OF US, there's a sudden, lightning-bolt moment when we realize that where we work is not aligned with who we are. For others, it takes longer to discover that it's not the right workplace. In either case, a moment comes when we realize that we just don't fit at our workplace anymore.

The dictionary describes a misfit as a person whose behavior or attitude sets them apart from others in an uncomfortably conspicuous way. In our experience, although being misfit at work may not always be conspicuous, it's always uncomfortable.

Tammy has experienced misfit firsthand. "During the interview process, I expressed my need and desire for flexibility since it was something I had at my current job. I also expressed my desired job role and how I felt I could contribute the most. I took the job, and within two weeks I knew it wasn't a fit. The culture was one of coworkers 'keeping score' – what time did someone come in/leave, how long did they take for lunch (remember that flexibility thing?). Didn't matter if work was getting done. The role was completely different from what was explained to me. I wasn't doing what I thought I'd be doing, and the work was boring, not

challenging, and any opportunities I expressed to help the company in its efforts were shot down.

“I felt that my boss was dishonest with me in describing how the company operated. I now had a sour taste in my mouth because I left a job I loved for this one. I quit after four months – a great decision. During the six months that it took to find a new job I did some consulting work to help me get by. It was worth the wait. My current job is one of the best jobs I’ve ever had.”

Tammy realized quickly that her new job was obviously a misfit. Sometimes, though, discomfort stemming from misfit comes with a more gradual realization that things just aren’t working. Over time you may feel less enthusiastic about work, your performance reviews aren’t as strong, your mind drifts during meetings, and you find yourself being short with colleagues. Perhaps you entered a new stage of life, such as becoming a parent, which caused a shift in your values. Or perhaps you’d mastered the basics of your job and craved new challenges.

Sometimes it’s not you but the organization changing in ways that alter the work fit. It might happen when a boss leaves and is replaced by someone you see as incompetent or difficult to get along with. The company might be acquired by an organization with a vastly different culture, which happened to Jason: “I knew when we got bought out things would change. At first it seemed the acquiring company would preserve our culture and way of doing things, but as shared services began to occur and efficiencies became critical, the life got sucked out of our small company. I knew it was not going to be the right place for me for long.”

Sometimes fit can be dramatically affected by a downturn in the business cycle. Perhaps a new senior leadership team makes major changes that affect the way employees interact and get work done. The circumstances can vary, but the outcome leaves you feeling like a foreigner in a place you used to enjoy.

This was the case for Pam. When she was in her early twenties she took a temporary job at a high-tech company, thinking that she would be there for a year and then return to grad school. She ended up staying for sixteen years and thriving for the first fourteen.

“What made me fall in love with the company was that I could speak up and voice my opinion and that if I had good ideas, management was all ears,” Pam says. “My initial role was an entry-level position focused on

tracking global inventory – basically I had a spreadsheet and a telephone. I immediately became interested in why certain policies existed and how we could do things better, and I started making suggestions. Pretty soon I found myself in meetings with vice presidents. I felt like my opinions mattered, and the supportive environment gave me the confidence to tackle bigger and bigger challenges. The company culture was focused on the customer and on getting things done. That really jelled with who I am and how I like to work.”

Pam never left the company for grad school. For fourteen years she found herself getting promoted almost every year to positions of ever-expanding responsibility. Then things began to change. A more challenging business climate led to the internal environment becoming more political. Sharp elbows were thrown as execs jockeyed for position and power. A senior leader whom Pam admired was passed over for a major job and left the company. The remaining senior leaders were highly political and the culture of speaking up and championing new ideas disappeared. “Gradually more and more of the people I enjoyed working with left. It got so that I couldn’t stand going into the office. I just couldn’t muster the energy to give a damn about my work. And on top of that, I felt guilty about my feelings and a little disloyal to the company I had loved for so many years.”

Pam realized that she needed to make a move so that she could continue to thrive and do her best work. Her job search lasted six months and led to a position with a young, fast-growing company where she again experienced the joy of knowing that her opinion mattered.

“The energy at my new company is palpable and contagious. People are smart, getting things done, and having fun. I feel like myself again.”

How Bad Is It?

Let’s be crystal clear: We all have bad days – even bad weeks – when we don’t feel satisfied in our jobs. Every job in every company brings with it hard times, days when getting out of bed is a laborious chore, or times when team dynamics make it such that we dread seeing our colleagues in the halls or at the lunch table. Every supervisor can be the poster child for a bad boss on any given day, and every organization goes through life-cycles of progress and accomplishment as well as darkness and struggle.

One bad day or even a bad week doesn't necessarily mean that you and your job are suddenly incompatible. When you're misfit at work, discomfort spreads over months on end, and going to work seems like an insurmountable chore day after day. There's a difference between a bad spell and a serious case of your company no longer being the place for you. Our friend Katt describes it like this: "Leaving a company is never an easy decision, but when you wake up morning after morning hating your job, it's time for a change."

The signs of misfit can vary, but here are how several friends, clients, and survey respondents describe their symptoms:

1. You dread going to work.

When you find that getting up is a chore and that you're living for the weekend, things aren't working. The root problem may stem from any number of factors, but the need for change is clearly being signaled.

2. You're getting sick more often.

Our bodies frequently tell us we have a problem even before our minds acknowledge it. When people suffer from deep misfit, they often struggle with stress-related physical symptoms such as headaches, colds, heart palpitations, and general body aches and pains.

3. You have trouble sleeping.

Insomnia has many causes, but if your inability to get a good night's sleep kicked in right when you started managing a more intense or difficult work situation, it's likely related. Stress-induced insomnia occurs when anxiety takes its toll on you so intensely that it robs you of your ability to sleep.

4. You feel bored and underutilized.

If you find yourself watching the clock or spending more time on social media or other online channels during work hours, chances are you need more challenges or opportunities to contribute more of your skills.

5. You don't like your boss and try to avoid them.

A poor relationship with your boss is one of the most common causes of misfit. This also probably means that you're getting

little in the way of the positive coaching or feedback that we all need to thrive.

6. You can't think of anyone at work you enjoy spending time with.

Work colleagues don't need to be best friends in order for you to be successful, but if you feel like you don't like anyone in your organization, chances are you need to move on.

7. You're consistently getting poor performance reviews.

When you're in the right job, you're able to do your best work. This doesn't mean that you won't make mistakes and face occasional failures, but it does mean that you should feel successful and supported.

8. You don't feel valued.

Feeling like your work matters is one of your most basic needs.

9. You find yourself complaining a lot.

If you catch yourself constantly complaining about work to your family, or even to another colleague, something needs to be addressed.

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- Which of the nine signs of misfit ring true for me, if any?
- How would I rate their intensity (1=low, 9=high)?
- What might be the implications for my happiness, health, and well-being at work and home?
- How might misfit be impacting my performance at work?
- Have I felt misfit before? How does this feel the same or different?

So What Now?

Once you acknowledge that you may be a misfit at work, the next step is to diagnose the source of the misalignment. While unhappiness can make it seem like everything about your job sucks, the reality is usually

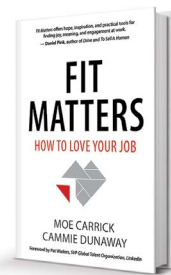
more complex and nuanced. Job content and corporate culture might be okay, but a new boss might be making you miserable. You may be unhappy with growth opportunities, but glad that your job allows the flexibility to work from home. By examining the six elements of work fit in Part II of this book, you'll be able to determine what specific elements of work fit aren't working for you and therefore what needs to change.

Moving forward in achieving great work fit also means getting a clear understanding of your needs and desires and having a process for understanding the trade-offs between the elements. Part III goes into detail about why fit matters. Part IV provides useful tools and exercises for self-reflection and decision making. And, finally, Part V provides tips to help you make the best of the situation that you're in when changing jobs isn't possible (at least not at the moment), or while you explore your options for moving to a different organization.

Everyone can and should find a job where they'll thrive rather than survive. Despite the fear and tension that admitting to misfit can bring and that recognizing that the journey to reach a better work fit might be a long one, we believe that the effort is worth it. Consider the words of Greg: "Deciding that this job was not in my long-term best interests was painful, stressful, and depressing. But looking back from the other side, it was wonderfully invigorating, spiritually fulfilling, and full of warm satisfaction."

Now is the time for you to start looking at the specific elements that create great work fit so that you can love your job!

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or share this excerpt with a friend**



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Moe Carrick is Principal and Founder of Moementum, Inc., a Certified BCorp and consulting firm dedicated to the vision of creating a world that works for everyone, using business as a force for good. Her diverse client portfolio includes Prudential Financial, REI, ABB, Nike, Nintendo, Hydroflask, The Nature Conservancy, and others. Moe writes regularly for the Work Smart Blog and Conscious Company Media, and was a featured consultant in *Fast Company* magazine. A frequent presenter, she has spoken at South by Southwest (SXSW), TEDxPeachtree, TEDxSanJuan Island, the Women's Center for Leadership, the American Public Works Association, and the Human Resource Management Association. She is a Coach, a Certified Daring Way Facilitator, a Certified Senior Human Resource Professional, and holds an MS in Organizational Management from Antioch University.



Cammie Dunaway is a Global Chief Marketing Officer, Brand Consultant, and Public Board member. She most recently served as U.S. President and Global Chief Marketing Officer of KidZania. Previously she served as Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Nintendo and as Chief Marketing Officer at Yahoo! after having spent more than a decade in various leadership positions with Frito Lay, where she was named one of the 100 Top Marketers by *Advertising Age*. Cammie sits on the Board of Directors for Nordstrom Bank, Red Robin, and Marketo. A frequent presenter, she has spoken at The Conference Board's Summit on Corporate Brand and Reputation, TEDxHarkerSchool, South by Southwest (SXSW), and Venture Beats Growth Conference, and for numerous companies including General Mills, LinkedIn, PayPal, and Unilever. She holds a BA from the University of Richmond and an MBA from Harvard Business School.