



I/O Psychology for the 21st Century: Finding, Absorbing and Radiating Light

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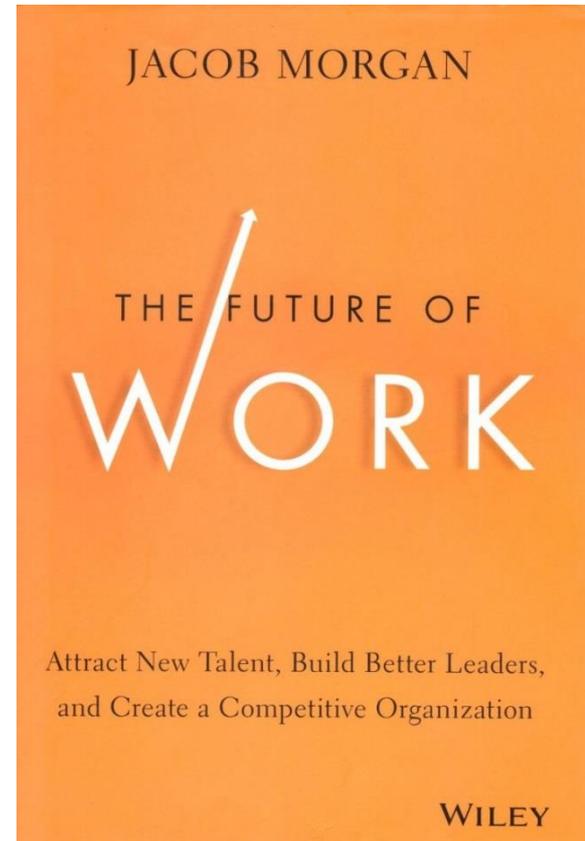
Topics

- Darkness vs light in I/O Psychology
- Future of work
- SA context
- Finding light
- Absorbing light
- Radiating light
- Conclusion



Future of Work: Five Trends

- **New behaviours:** Shaped by social media and the web
- **Technologies:** Shift to the cloud, collaborative technologies, Big data and the internet of things
- **Workforce:** New attitudes, expectations and ways of working
- **Mobility:** Work any time, anywhere, any device
- **Globalisation:** No boundaries



Work in the Hand – Work in the Head

Work in the Hand

Restricted to specific locations

Standardised (models, systems)

Focus on activity

Minimisation of mental distraction

Simplicity, reproducibility, efficiency

Means of production owned by employers

Work in the Head

Always with us

Constantly changing and adapting

Focus on mental effort, invention, possibilities

Personal investment using life experiences

Embracing complexity, valuing individuality

Means of production owned by employees



CREATING AUTHENTIC ORGANIZATIONS

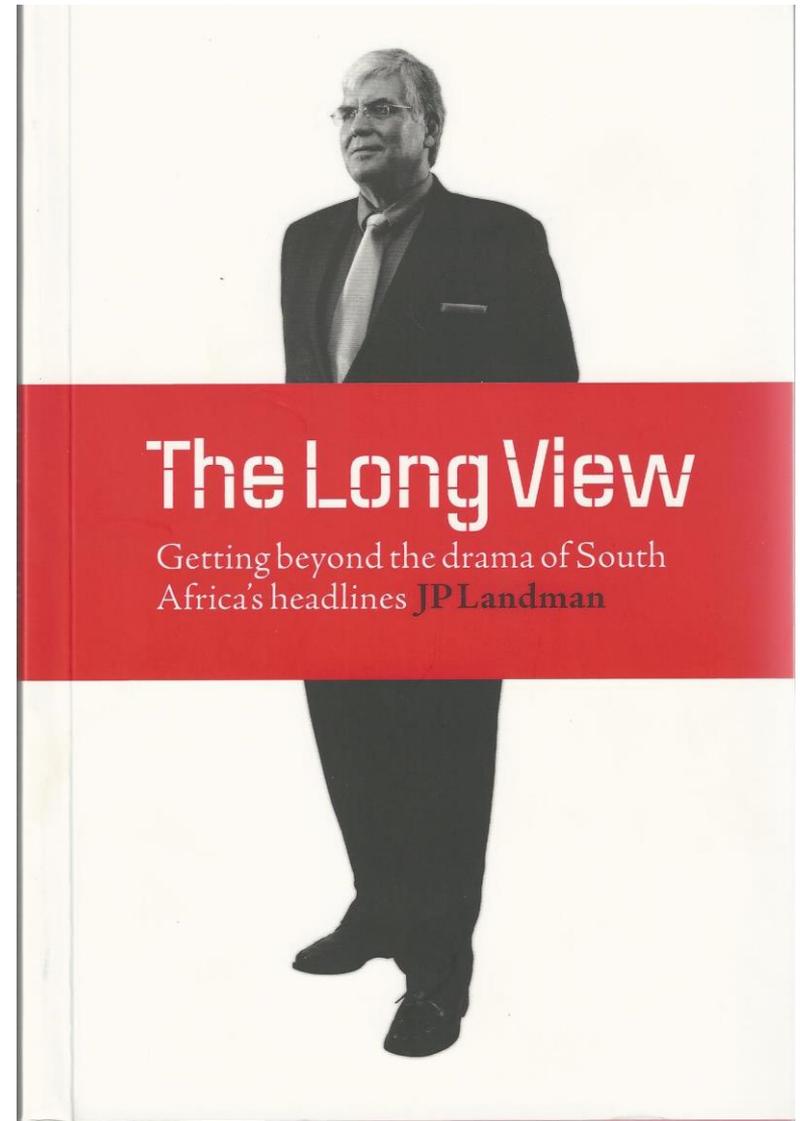
Bringing meaning and
engagement back to work



Robin Ryde and Lisa Sofianos

The South African Context

- For most of its citizens South Africa is better off than 20-30 years ago, but:
 - Lack of social capital (shared values and norms)
 - Inequality (gap between people)
- Two-thirds of the population is younger than 35 years of age; Critical group is the cohort between 15 and 29 (24% of the population) - affect social stability



The South African Context

- Life expectancy at birth (years): 56 for Blacks; 73 for Whites
- Both parents live in household: 29% for Blacks; 80% for Whites
- Grade 12 education (adults 20 years or older): 30% for Blacks; 75% for Whites
- Median monthly earnings in formal and informal sector in Rand: R2167 for Blacks; R9500 for Whites



The South African Context

- Unemployment: 29% for Blacks; 6% for Whites.
- Living in poverty: 47.4 for Blacks; 0.7% for Whites.
- Dissatisfaction with life: 40% of Blacks; 7% of Whites.
- Life (as it is now) is becoming better: 50% of Blacks and 50% of Whites.
- Better living conditions compared to the past: 56% of Blacks; 52% of Whites.



The South African Context

- More than 80% of employees worldwide are emotionally disconnected from their jobs.
- 43% of employees frequently think about quitting their jobs.
- South Africa has the highest number of actively disengaged workers of 25 countries assessed in the most recent Gallup Survey.



Rothmann, S. (2015). Employee engagement. In M.F. Steger, L. Oades, A. Delle Fave, & J. Passmore (Eds.), *Wiley Blackwell handbook of positivity and strengths based approaches at work*.

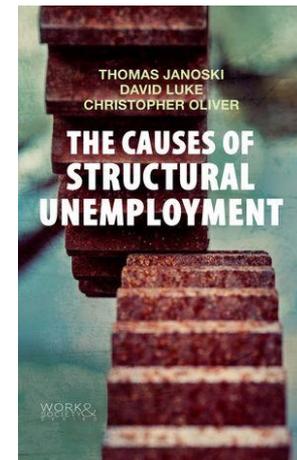
The South African Context

Recent study of unemployed people in SA showed that they experienced the following often:

- Feeling of boredom (71%)
- Difficulty in surviving financially (69%)
- Feel life is empty (54%)
- Feel lonely (53%)

Problem of unemployment is exacerbated by deep structural forces which underlie unemployment globally, including skills mismatches caused by a shift from manufacturing to service jobs, and the rise of advanced communication and automated technologies.

De Witte, H., Rothmann, S., & Jackson, L.T.B. (2012). On the psychological consequences of unemployment in South Africa: Experiences, coping and well-being of unemployed people. *SA Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 15(3), 235-252.



The Context

- Are we conducting adequate research and publish findings and solutions in international journals of good impact?
- “The problems confronting South Africa have a particular national signature, but questions of inequality, racism, patriarchy, environmental degradation, and human indignity are not bounded to one nation or even one part of the world. They affect all of us.”
- SA work context presents opportunity to generate valuable and interesting solutions.



Nkomo, S.M (2015). Challenges for management and business education in a “developmental” state: The case of South Africa. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 14(2), 242-258.

I/O Psychology
in the 21st Century:
Finding Light



1. Focus on Attitudes and Behaviour

- It is possible to assess and influence what people think, do and feel.
- Learning principles can be applied to change attitudes and behaviour: e.g. to advance health and well-being.
- Meta-analysis of 58 independent studies showed a strong linkage between employee attitudes and behaviours and customer satisfaction.
- Individuals who flourish, are 7 times more inclined to be engaged in their work (compared to languishing individuals).



harambee
WORK FOR WORK

Hong, Y., Liao, H., Hu, J., & Jiang, K. (2013). Missing link in the service profit chain: A meta-analytic review of the antecedents, consequences and moderators of service climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 98*, 237-267

2. Focus on Implications and Policies

- Ensure that whatever research you do has a practical implication or can influence government policy.
- Understand the processes at work behind various policy challenges that society faces and build on this understanding to develop appropriate policy responses.



Is it Possible? How?

- Yes, it is: **Example:**
Development of an employee health and wellness policy affecting 1 million government employees in South Africa.
- Participative approach: bottom-up (community members, managers, employees in organisations, and different levels of government).



Another Example: Unemployment Research

- No research without Advisory Board from Community, Government (local and national): listen to the voices



3. Consider the Situation and Context

- To fully explain behaviour, we must begin to understand how the situation (job characteristics, social characteristics, and managerial practices) influences behaviour.
- To substantially increase predictive validity, assessment should be contextualized – situational assessment.



Examples: Situational Approach

- Conventions, i.e. agreements in a society about how things should be done should be studied to understand individuals' beliefs, feelings, and actions.
- Resilience (positive adjustment to hardship) relies on a socio-ecologically facilitated process in which individuals navigate towards, and negotiate for, health-promoting resources, and their social ecology, in return, provides support in culturally aligned ways.

Poortinga, Y. H. (2011). Research on behaviour and culture. In F. van de Vijver, A. Chasiotis & S. Breugelmans (Eds.), *Fundamental questions in cross-cultural psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ungar M. (2013). Resilience, trauma, context, and culture. *Trauma Violence and Abuse, 14*, 255-66.

4. Understand Sustainable Flourishing

- How can work/learning be done in ways that are sufficiently intrinsically motivating not to undermine further interest in work/learning?
- How can managers/leaders manage/lead in ways that keep their joy of management/leading alive? Imagine if people were equipped to avoid the sneaking effects of exhausting their internal/personal resources – if they knew the keys to lasting flourishing, and can avoid detrimental habits to form before they do.



People Flourish When They ...

- Feel satisfied with their lives as well as different life domains
- Experience positive emotions
- Are psychologically well
- Are socially well

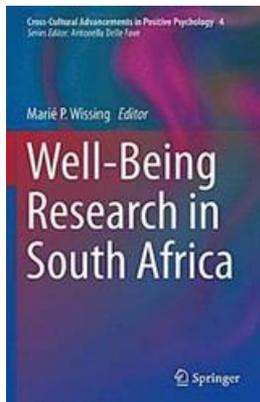
繁榮

[blossom, boom, prosper, succeed, prosperity, fanfare, flourish]

Flourishing in Life



| Sample | Languish | Moderate | Flourish |
|----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| General population (N = 1050) | 20.0% | 67.8% | 12.2% |
| Pharmacy students (N = 782) | 2.7% | 57.0% | 40.3% |
| IT professionals (N = 205) | 3.9% | 58.5% | 37.6% |
| Managers (N = 507) | 3.0% | 48.5% | 48.5% |



Rothmann, S. (2013). From happiness to flourishing at work: A southern African perspective. In M.P. Wissing (Ed.), *Well-being research in South Africa: Cross-cultural advances in positive psychology - Volume 4* (pp. 123-152). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.

Flourishing at Work

| Emotional Well-being | Psychological Well-being | Social Well-being |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Positive affect | Autonomy | Social contribution |
| Negative affect | Competence | Social integration |
| Job satisfaction | Relatedness | Social actualization |
| | Meaning and purpose | Social acceptance |
| | Engagement | Social coherence |
| | Learning | |

Flourishing at Work



| Sample | Languish | Moderate | Flourish |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| Fast moving consumer goods (N = 779) | 8.0% (62) | 56.1% (437) | 35.9% (280) |

Predictors of flourishing

- Overload: 0.02
- Job insecurity: 0.03
- Compensation: -0.03
- **Advancement: 0.46****
- **Work-life integration: 0.19***
- **Authentic leadership: 0.28****



- Rautenbach, C., & Rothmann, S. (in press). Flourishing at work: The psychometric properties of a multidimensional scale.
- Rautenbach, C., & Rothmann, S. (in press). Antecedents of flourishing in the work context.

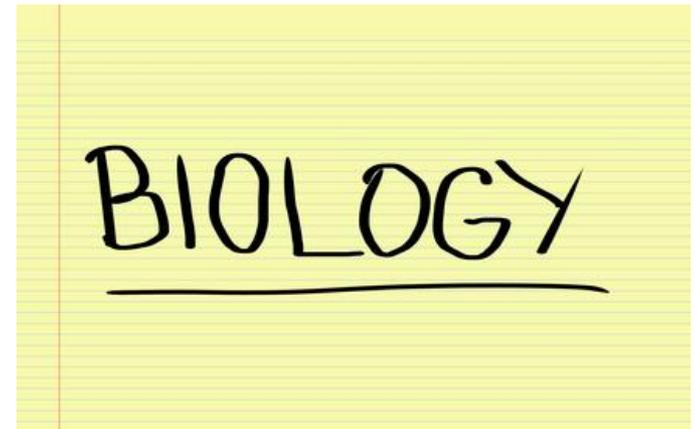
5. Understand Person-Environment Interaction

- To experience meaningfulness at work, people strive to fulfil their fundamental drives (which are not necessarily fully accessible) through a complex interaction between the situation and person. When we understand this interaction, we will better understand motivated behaviour at work.



6. Integrate Biological Research into I/O Pursuits

- I/O Psychology seems removed from actual people and hence, it seems as if the field is rather uninterested in what we are learning about the physical workings of the brain. Beyond measuring cortisol levels to demonstrate that certain work factors affect stress, wouldn't it be interesting to do an eye-gaze or imaging study to examine what people are likely to do to process information in meetings and briefings.



7. Pay Attention to Emerging Skills

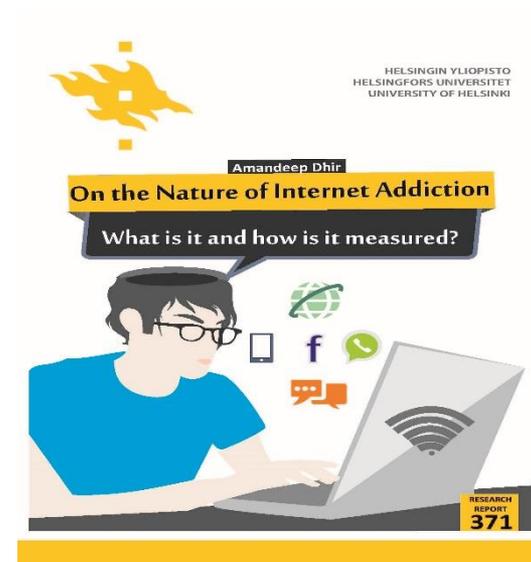
Employees

- prefer work that provides independence, challenges, and opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills
- might find it difficult to escape from job demands.
- are less likely to have full-time contracts and little life-long job security.
- want empowerment, involvement, and participation.
- have to master the tasks of a specific job, but need personal and interpersonal competence.
- need to become computer literate and well-educated – often lack basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- may come from different cultures, age groups, languages, backgrounds, and expectations.



Positive Computing ...

Technological progress (and the use of the internet) is a poor proxy for well-being of people. The question arises how the use of technology and the internet can make a positive difference in people's lives.



Calvo, R.A., & Peters, D. (2014). Positive Computing: Technology for wellbeing and human potential. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press

8. Improve Research Quality

| Criterion | Implication |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Making meaningful theoretical progress | Research should not only refine theories, but should lead to the development of new theories. |
| Addressing an important problem | Research should address important national and/or international problems |
| Employing suitable research designs and statistics | Making causal inferences from our research findings is a highly desired end state. Familiarize yourself with the validity standards underlying quasi-experimentation; Bayesian statistics. |
| Using well-designed measures | When developing theories, measurement is often treated sloppily. Measurement is the lens through which we operationalize focal constructs, measurement precision should be paramount even in the specification of the theory. |

Aguinis, H., & Vandenberg, R. J. (2014). An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure: Improving research quality before data collection. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, 1, 569-595.

Light Gets in through Cracks ...



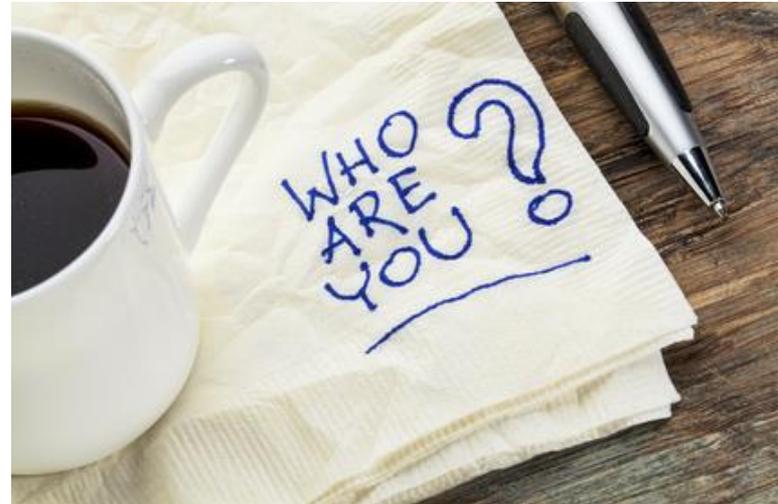
“Ring the bells that still can ring;
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything;
That's how the light gets in.” (Leonard Cohen)

I/O Psychology
in the 21st Century:
Absorbing Light



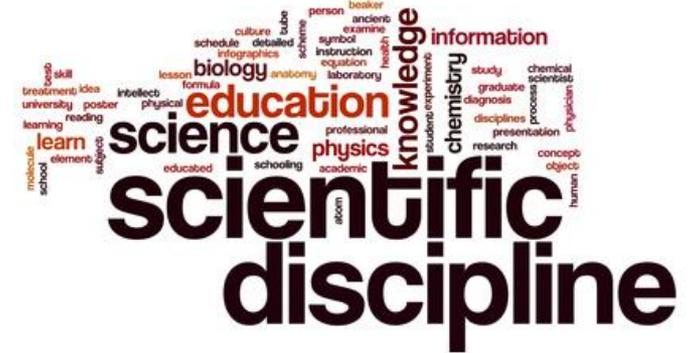
1. Develop a Clear Identity

- Develop a clear identity and invest in flourishing as an I/O psychologist.
- Absorb a climate for autonomous motivation to change from all age groups in SIOPSA.



2. Collaborate with Other Disciplines

- Break boundaries with other branches of psychology (and social sciences) and do not treat a job as a disjoint part of life (and go beyond work-life balance), join forces with ethnographers who study the workplace.
- Don't be introspective, work with other disciplines (e.g. economists, engineers) to get your message across.



Examples of Interdisciplinary Projects

- Manufacturing wheel chairs in a facility in Orange Farm (involving I/O psychologists, engineers, community psychologists).
- Engaging learning strategies (with University of Helsinki in Finland)



Examples

Imagine SIOPSA could at the conference (or a meeting in a branch):

- focus a discussion on the most pressing problems/opportunities in society and/or organisations ...
- focus at the conference on policies in organisations or government which are problematic, and discuss how such policies could be tackled on different levels ...
- have a session devoted to interdisciplinary collaboration ...
- devote a discussion (at the conference) to the identity of I/O psychologists
- launch a competition for senior students to develop a creative project to optimise potential of people ...



I/O Psychology in the 21st Century: **Radiating Light**

MAKE A DIFFERENCE



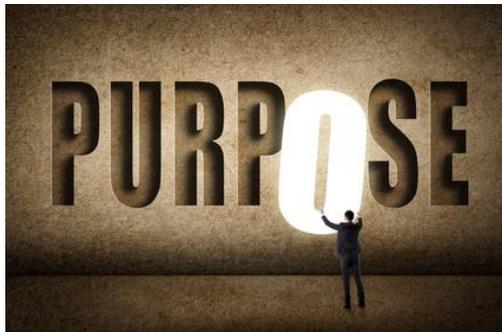
Radiating Light



“Darkness cannot drive out darkness;
only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate;
Only love can do that.” (Martin Luther King)

1. Focus on Three Important Issues

- **How people organise what they do:** people build reputations and sharpen skills through new ways of organising (open source business models); enjoyment-based intrinsic motivation drives creativity of people; people work to have fun, to master challenges and to give back to the community.



Moving from profit-maximising to **purpose-maximising** organisations

- **How people think about what they do:** People's behaviours are not rational (Kahneman) – they might do things for backward-looking reasons, but even more, for significance-seeking, self-actualizing reasons

Motivation!



Autonomous motivation is of great importance for all economic activities

How do people do what they do:

Algorithmic tasks are replaced by heuristic tasks; Routine work can be outsourced or automated; artistic, emphatic, non-routine work not



Work is enjoyable, creative, and self-directed rather than routine and boring

2. Promote Autonomous Motivation

- Promote the freedom to operate, the freedom to speak, and the freedom to actualize of individuals in work and organisational contexts.
 - Freedoms fighter (authenticity)
 - Head of learning and development (adaptation)
 - Interpreter (alignment)
 - Accountability steward (accountability)
 - Occasional interventionist (Action)



Autonomy
matters ... and
not only in
Europe!

Examples

Example 1: The unemployment problem: Lefu's dream about a frog farm in Boipatong:
Participate, inform, coach, support.



Example 2: The Orange Farm Story: Be relevant - communities help themselves: battle with policies which prevent them to make progress,



3. Build Strengths through Education

- Social navigation
- Rhetoric
- Good character



4. Communicate Research to a Broad Audience

- Communicate your research to a broad audience, not just other psychologists, use the media to show how important what you do can make a difference in people's ordinary lives



5. Address Diversity Issues

- Facilitate processes for the work place to be a space for all ages. This implies transforming multi-generational workplaces into intergenerational workplaces. Intergenerational can be thought of as inclusionary - creating a stronger, more cohesive environment through shared values and understanding among the generations.
- Look at all company policies through an inclusive lens so that policies and decisions can attract, engage, and retain employees of diverse groups.



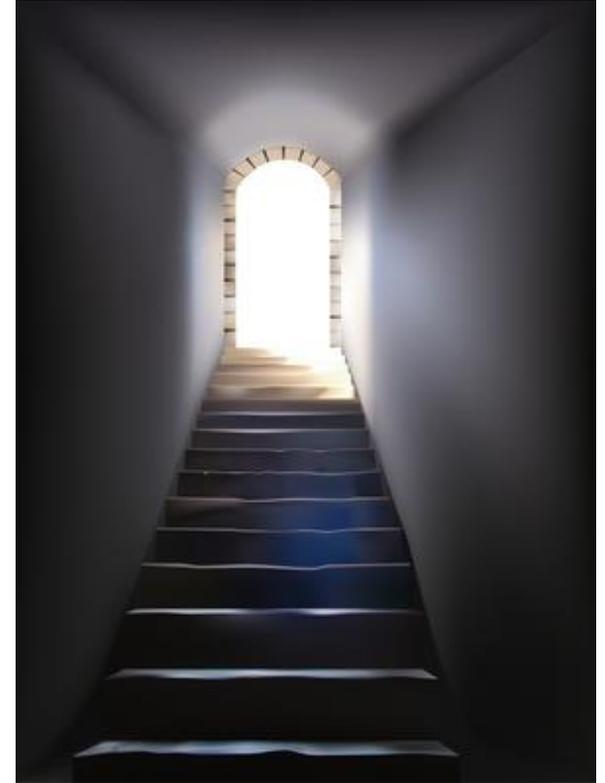
- A positive affective disposition predicts work engagement
- For individuals with a negative affective disposition, experiences of meaningful work lead to high levels of engagement.
- Engage with meaning!



Steger, M. F., Littman-Ovadia, H., Miller, M., Menger, L., & Rothmann, S. (2013). Engaging in work even when it is meaningless: Positive affective disposition and meaningful work interact in relation to work-engagement. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 21, 348-361.

Finally ...

“Finding light, absorbing light and then radiating light is why we are here. Darkness will always be there, but ... light chases away darkness: the more we take in and give out light the better we can deal with darkness.”



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