

**AARP®**

Real Possibilities

# LOVE YOUR JOB



The **New**  
Rules for  
Career  
Happiness

**BY KERRY HANNON**

AARP Jobs Expert and Bestselling Author



## Additional Praise for **Love your Job: The New Rules for Career Happiness**

“Millions of older Americans will have to work longer to achieve a secure retirement, but burnout can be a big obstacle. Now we’ve got a thoughtful, fun-to-read action plan for staying engaged and passionate about work from one of the best experts on careers after age 50—Kerry Hannon.”

—**Mark Miller, retirement columnist for Reuters, Morningstar, and WealthManagement.com**

“Work should offer more than a paycheck. Work is also a big part of the daily search for meaning, the desire for a sense of fulfillment, the pursuit of community and connections. Kerry Hannon has written an indispensable guide for people looking to find or reignite purpose and joy in their job. *Love Your Job* reflects the wisdom she’s gathered over the years interviewing, thinking, and writing about jobs and careers—insights she brilliantly translates into practical strategies for us to consider.”

—**Chris Farrell, author of *Unretirement: How Baby Boomers Are Changing the Way We Think About Work, Community, and the Good Life***

“Kerry Hannon demonstrates that loving your job is not a mysterious process, and it does not depend on the power or whims of others. She succinctly explains the specific set of behaviors, actions, thoughts, and beliefs that lead to meaningful job satisfaction now and in the future.”

—**Bruce Rosenstein, Managing Editor, Leader to Leader, and author of *Create Your Future the Peter Drucker Way***

“There’s a lot to love about Kerry Hannon’s *Love Your Job: The New Rules of Career Happiness*. It’s a fresh and inspiring guide to recasting work into something that’s meaningful and motivating. The result is a thoroughly researched and beautifully written book, putting solutions squarely in the hands of the reader with many practical ideas on making virtually any kind of work more engaging.”

—**George H. Schofield, PhD, author of *After 50 It’s Up to Us***



**Love Your Job**



# **Love Your Job**

**THE NEW RULES FOR CAREER HAPPINESS**

**Kerry Hannon**

**WILEY**

**AARP®**  
Real Possibilities

Creative Director: Scott A. Davis

Cover Design: Lesley Q. Palmer Photograph: © Elizabeth Dranitzke, Photopia

Copyright © 2015 by Kerry Hannon. AARP is a registered trademark. All rights reserved..

Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey.

Published simultaneously in Canada.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, (978) 750-8400, fax (978) 646-8600, or on the Web at [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com). Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at [www.wiley.com/go/permissions](http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions).

Portions of the material originally appeared in NextAvenue.org and AARP.org. Reprinted with permission.

**Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty:** While the publisher, AARP, and the author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. If professional assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. The publisher, AARP, and the author shall not be liable for damages arising herefrom. The fact that an organization or website is referred to in this work as a citation and/or potential source of further information does not mean that the author, AARP, or the publisher endorse the information the organization or website may provide or recommendations it may make. Further readers should be aware the Internet websites listed in this work may have changed or disappeared between when this was written and when it is read.

AARP produces print and e-books on a range of topics. Visit [AARP.org/bookstore](http://AARP.org/bookstore).

For general information on our other products and services or for technical support, please contact our Customer Care Department within the United States at (800) 762-2974, outside the United States at (317) 572-3993 or fax (317) 572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com).

***Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:***

Hannon, Kerry.

Love your job : the new rules of career happiness / Kerry Hannon.

pages cm

Includes index.

ISBN 978-1-118-89806-2 (paper); ISBN 978-1-118-89804-8 (ePDF); ISBN 978-1-118-89805-5 (ePUB)

1. Job satisfaction. 2. Career development. 3. Employee motivation. I. Title.

HF5549.5.J63H276 2015

650.1-dc23

2014043441

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



*For my mom, Marguerite Sullivan Hannon*



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>xi</b>
What My Dog Taught Me about Loving My Job	xi
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>1</b>
Curing the Workplace Blues	1
Should You Switch Careers?	3
Chin Up!	6
Take It Up a Notch	7
Loving Your Job	8
The “HOVER” Approach	9
Get a Grip	10
How to Use This Book	12
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>15</b>
Creating the Blueprint for Your Dream Job	15
Map Your Future	16
Your Past Isn’t Prologue	16
Nothing Is Forever	18
Look at the Big Picture	19
What Would Make You Love Your Job?	21
What Are Your Work Goals?	23
Adopt New Ways to Envision Your Career	24
Chapter Recap	27
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>29</b>
Do an MRI on Your Work and Your Life	29
Create Your Job “Budget” Sheet	30
What Does Your Work Really Mean To You?	32
Write in Your Journal Every Day for a Week	35

## Contents

Is Your Pay What's Really Bothering You?	38
A Can-Do Philosophy	38
Consider Taking a Self-Assessment Test	41
Get Ready to Love Your Job	44
Chapter Recap	44
<b>Chapter 4</b> Refresh Your Attitude: The Keystone to Your Love Your Job Action Plan	47
Attitude Adjustment	48
Create Your Own Purpose	49
Write It Down	50
A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words	51
Build a Bear	51
Practice HOVERing	52
Mental Games	57
Adjusting Your Attitude	59
What to Do If You're Bullied at Work	60
Step Right Up and Enroll in My Three-Step Fitness Program	64
Chapter Recap	71
<b>Chapter 5</b> Beyond the Job Description	73
Take Time for Renewal	74
Volunteering and Mentoring	77
Adding Value to Your Job	85
Take Control of Your Time	94
Get Involved in "Extracurricular" Activities	96
Chapter Recap	98
<b>Chapter 6</b> How to Build Flexibility into Your Job	99
Work Flexibility and Happiness	100
A Myriad of Flextime Options	102
How Is Flextime Working?	104
Is Telework for You?	109
The Risks of Working at Home	111
Chapter Recap	119

## Contents

<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>How to Upgrade Your Game</b>	<b>121</b>
	The Benefits of Learning New Tricks	122
	Learning and Healthy Aging	123
	Getting Over the Hurdles	128
	Chapter Recap	135
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>How to Have the “What’s Next?”</b>	
	Talk with Your Boss	137
	The Time Is Now	138
	Questions to Ask Yourself before the Big Meeting	140
	Your Plan-and-Prepare Strategy	142
	Carrying Out the “Ask”	146
	Chapter Recap	158
<b>Afterword</b>		<b>161</b>
<b>Resources</b>		<b>165</b>
	Ideas for Further Reading	165
	Helpful Career Happiness Web Sites	169
<b>Acknowledgments</b>		<b>173</b>
<b>About the Author</b>		<b>175</b>
<b>Index</b>		<b>177</b>



## Introduction

# What My Dog Taught Me about Loving My Job

**A**ll I really need to know about loving work I learned from Zena, my Labrador retriever. My resolution has always been to try as hard as I can to follow her example.

**Start the day with gusto.** Zena wakes with a mission. She's motivated. And she's determined to motivate me. She stands beside my bed, rests her head on the mattress, her eyes level with mine, and stares piercingly, willing me to get up.

She's always eager to face the outside world. In fact, she charges into it, and returns to dive into her breakfast with delight. Then she's ready for a vigorous workout to stay physically fit. That's a 40-minute-plus walk either around the sidewalks of the city or through the woods and fields, depending on where we are that day.

**Focus on a task.** Zena's singular ability to concentrate all her mental and physical energy allows her to achieve winning performance. She's a pro at what she does, and she devotes her whole heart and all her abilities to every project. She's absorbed with every sinew and nerve. She's vibrant and alive.

Throw a Frisbee, ball, or stick, and she's off, tearing down the field, knowing instinctively when to pivot and leap to catch it. She dives with abandon into ponds, and swims with the strength and pure beauty of a canine athlete, making a direct beeline to her goal in record time.

As far as I can tell, she never blocks out the pure enjoyment these moments offer by letting other matters distract her. Admittedly, she *is* free from worrying about finances, fitness, or health. Instead, she delegates those matters to me.

**Stay present.** Zena is wholly present, in the moment, with all her being—a state that comes naturally to her. Her attentiveness to what she's engaged in is never clouded by her future ambitions or the need to return e-mails, to tweet, or to juggle three jobs at once to keep her business prosperous.

**Value yourself and charge accordingly.** Zena doesn't do anything for free. She gets paid in the form of barter, of course, but she gets paid well for her services. There are no pay cuts, layoffs, or furloughs in her world.

She commands benefits we can only dream of scoring. Her bosses adore her. She knows this, but she doesn't take it for granted. She has a contract, albeit implied, that includes all-expenses-paid, first-class accommodations wherever she roams; high-quality and nutritious meals; vacations; spa treatments such as massages and pedicures; and other enviable employee fringe benefits.

**Look at what goes right.** Zena concentrates on the positive aspects of her job. She doesn't dwell on the negative or complain or whine about the long hours when she's parked under my desk while I work and her talents aren't being put to their best use. In a nutshell, she's optimistic.

**Push in fresh directions.** Zena is always on the lookout for new opportunities. She takes advantage of every walk. Smells and sounds lead her from one new place to another with openness and a fresh sense of excitement. She never fails to gain from social gatherings and networking events with her dog pals. She rarely turns down an invitation to a dinner party at our friends' houses.

She regularly keeps her skills sharp and adds new ones by attending training classes and workshops with internationally renowned dog trainers Jack and Wendy Volhard, authors of *Dog Training for Dummies* (Wiley, 2004), and participating in an engaging rally class that keeps her on her toes as she moves through a course designed to test her skills and obedience. Her goal? Progress, not perfection.

**Network more.** Zena may have a comfy job running our homes and lives, but that doesn't mean she stops networking. She's proactive



about her networking efforts—attending events and reaching out to professionals in her field whose work she respects. She is always going out for walks to reconnect with longtime contacts, even those she has known since puppy kindergarten—anything she can do to keep old relationships solid and grab opportunities to build new ones.

**Go places.** Zena knows the importance of travel, of going new places and experiencing new sights, sounds, and cultures. Her official job title: Road Manager. We log more than 25,000 miles a year rolling from Washington, D.C., north to Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Boston, and south to Virginia, South Carolina, and beyond.

Each time out the door, out of the comfort zone of her fluffy dog bed and the safety of her fenced yard, she learns valuable skills—and maybe even gets some insights into how to manage me better.

She trots out to the car and pops in without looking back. No questions asked. She props her front feet on the console of my Subaru Outback and stares fixedly out the front windshield as if asking, “What’s next? Let’s go!”

“By the way,” she silently commands. “Can you roll the window down? I want to pop my nose out, feel the wind on my face, soak up the smells—and use all my senses to enjoy the ride.”

Why the “lessons” from Zena? I share these teachings with you because whenever I feel lost, or resentful, or bored with my job, I look at Zena and remember that life is for enjoying and pushing boundaries and learning. She personifies the purity of loving your job. In the following chapters, my hope is that you, too, will experience a Zena-like “aha” moment and find ways to discover real joy in your own job. Let’s go!



**Love Your Job**



# CHAPTER

# 1

## Curing the Workplace Blues



**W**hen was the last time you were so passionate about your work that it didn't seem like work at all? Or truly excited by all the new stuff you were learning on your job? Or genuinely couldn't wait to get up and head to the office because your bosses and colleagues were so much fun to work with? Has it been a while since you felt the eagerness and butterflies you had during your very first week at your job? Has that professional spark been doused, or is it still flickering, just waiting to be reignited?

Choose a job you really love and you will never feel like you're working another day. But what should you do if the thrill is gone? Is it really possible to get your groove back? Yes! What if you never had it in the first place? Yes, you can get in the groove.

If you're not there yet—and I assume you're not if you're reading this book—you've got company. About 50 percent of workers say they're unsatisfied with their jobs, and only 15 percent say they are very satisfied, according to a recent report by the Conference Board, a business membership and research group that has been conducting surveys about worker happiness since 1987.

Workers are least satisfied with promotion policy, bonus plan, training programs, performance review, and recognition, according to the most recent survey. Not surprisingly, high-income earners are more satisfied than lower-paid workers—and the gap has been