

# Today Counts: Leading and seizing each day with gratitude and value

By Carol A. Poore, Ph.D., MBA

While in the lobby of a service organization, I overheard a typical conversation between two employees.

“How’s it going?” asked the boss.

“Well, it’s not Friday, but one day closer,” the employee responded, followed by an artificial chuckle.

The supervisor’s response was uninspiring: “Well, hang in there.”

My heart sunk! Not only did the conversation leave a bad impression on customers waiting in the lobby, it was a painful reminder that many employees seek to fit into a TGIF mindset and workplace culture rather than seizing the day and finding joy in the moment.



TGIF thinking in the workplace robs us from considering our potential impact and blessings each and every day. It negatively impacts employee engagement, and can stunt our ability to live in the moment, with fullest potential.

How big is the problem?

- [Aon Hewitt’s 2017 Trends in Global Employee Engagement report](#) reveals that employee engagement is falling globally. *More than a third of all employees fall into “Passive” or “Actively Disengaged” categories* – how they speak about the organization, their desire to be part of the organization, and the desire to go the extra mile on behalf of the organization.
- The study noted that during times of disruptive change, *engaged* employees become an even more powerful *asset* while *disengaged* employees become an even greater *liability*, blocking goal and performance achievement.
- [Ron Carucci in his Harvard Business Review article](#) writes about “*transference*,” when leaders transfer their feelings (such as TGIF) onto someone else. While we all experience both good and bad days, TGIF leaders inspire the culture of TGIF, while joyful leaders inspire a daily culture of meaningful, serviceful and purposeful work.

Sadly, while many live for TGIF and the weekend, they often fail to experience meaningful joy even when the weekend comes around.

So how can leaders authentically, from the inside out, inspire a new message for employees in the face of a rampant TGIF culture?

The answer is found in finding *joy* and *value* in today. Acclaimed researcher and author/speaker Brené Brown emphasizes that joy comes from being grateful... and that all leaders must first find their own daily gratitude, because “we cannot give away what we don’t have.”

Gratitude is a [practice](#), and [with a conscious practice of gratitude](#), leaders can lead by example, sharing and *living* this powerful message for employees: **Today Counts! You count! And today, you have opportunities to make an important difference!**

In addition to gratitude, the mindset of “TODAY as an irreplaceable asset” is a secret weapon against a TGIF culture. Anyone battling cancer knows that each day is a valuable gift. In fact, it’s well-documented that a joyful, optimistic attitude is vital for healing.

Time management expert [Craig Jarrow](#) reinforces this serious wake-up call with the following tips:

- **Today always beats tomorrow.** There is no competition! In the battle of getting it done, today always wins. Don’t put off what you can do today.
- **Live It Like It Was Your Last.** You never know how many *today*s you have. Live each one to its fullest.
- **Today and Every Day.** Discipline is how big things are done. Consistency wins in the long run.
- **You Are What You Do Today.** Many people say they have good habits. Yet, their daily actions do not reflect it. Want to know your true nature? Look at what you are doing today.
- **Just Do It Now.** Today is about action. Take the initiative. Don’t procrastinate. Just Do It Now.
- **Today Is Your Best Friend.** Tomorrow may promise you many things, however it is a fair-weather friend. Today is there for you when you need it.
- **Tomorrow Can’t Deliver Without Today.** Dreams don’t come true without true work. Do the work today.

In summary, to counter an unproductive TGIF culture, leaders inspire workplace joy by cultivating a personal practice of gratitude. They also value the power of TODAY and every day, *including* Friday!

## **References and Resources**

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