

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

How Did I End Up in This Job? It’s not What I Thought It Would Be!

When a job comes along that fits your general skills and offers the right salary, it can be tempting to jump straight in without further investigation of the company's culture or specific requirements. For some people, it can be an unhappy experience as the realities of a new workplace sink in.

Sometimes the situation can be turned around. A good discussion with your boss, leading to a revised job description, might be all that's needed. In other instances, however, it quickly becomes clear that the job—or sometimes even the career—won’t result in a good fit right away. If this is the case, consider the following advice to get you settled in your new job more easily.

Tips and Tools You Can Use

It's important to identify whether your unhappiness stems specifically from your current job or from the career function itself. Once this is determined, you can follow the right path to arrive at solutions. Here are some tips to get you going:

Problem diagnosis. Take some time to think about your new job and its duties to get to the root of the problem. Start by:

- Listing the elements of your job that you dislike
- Reflecting on whether the problems you identify relate to current job requirements, the company’s culture or the career you've chosen
- Checking to see if your job description reflects actual job requirements
- Considering whether problems stem from work overload or from a lack in skill requirements
- Deciding if the company culture fits your personality

Job issues. Now that you’ve identified any problems with your job and its duties, it’s time to act upon these issues. Consider:

- Talking with your boss about discrepancies between your job description and actual requirements
- Keeping a positive attitude. Problem solve with your boss to create attainable goals and deadlines that you both agree on
- Proposing enrollment in company-sponsored courses or on-the-job training that could increase your effectiveness, if necessary
- Beginning a job search while still in your current job, if the company culture conflicts with your personality

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Career issues. Issues with your current job don't stop there. Negativities may be part of a bigger problem that will affect your career in the industry and any future job search. Here's what you can do to strengthen your career goals:

- Reflect on the aspects of your current career that you dislike. This will help to show you what to avoid in your next career
- Consider seeking guidance from a professional career counselor
- Begin self-assessment in order to match your strengths with occupations
- Understand how to determine your strengths and what occupations would suit you best

While your new job may not turn out to be all that you thought it would, the situation won't get any better unless you take action. By reflecting on your career and taking steps toward confronting the issue, you may soon find that your new job actually can be all that you had anticipated. But remember, don't be afraid to ask questions and get clarification, where needed. After all, you're new to the position, and feeling unclear at the start is to be expected.