

Ep #20: 3 Things to Keep You Happy at Work



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Heather Branscombe

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Welcome to *Clinicians Creating Impact*, a show for physical therapists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists looking to take the next step in their careers and make a real difference in the lives of their clients. If you're looking to improve the lives of neurodiverse children and families with neurological-based challenges, grow your own business, or simply show up to help clients, this is the show for you.

I'm Heather Branscombe, Therapist, Certified Coach, Clinical Director, and Owner of Abilities Neurological Rehabilitation. I have over 25 years of experience in both the public and private sectors, and I'm here to help you become the therapist you want to be, supporting people to work towards their dreams and live their best lives. You ready to dive in? Let's go.

Hi there, friend. How are you doing? I am so excited today. This is the final episode that I'm recording before I go on this amazing trip with my husband. And I'm super excited. Did I mention that I'm excited? I'm so excited. I've said it before, but creating and recording these podcasts have become some of my favorite times of the week. And episode 20 is another mini-milestone to celebrate. So thank you for celebrating it with me today.

And whether this is your first podcast with me or if you've been here since the beginning, thank you again so much. I appreciate you listening. And congratulations for taking a step forward to create a bigger impact for both yourself and for those that you serve. The mission for Abilities, which again, if you didn't know, is the place where I work, that I co-found and that I work as the Clinical Director and CEO. It's to create an outstanding staff experience and an outstanding client experience, knowing that they aren't mutually exclusive.

Happy staff can more easily show up and create a bigger impact for those that they're seeing clinically. So it's in that full belief that I am delivering this podcast for you today. No matter where you work, you have so much more influence on your happiness than you might expect. And I want to explore that with you today.

Now, I want to begin by saying I do understand that not every job is going to be the right fit for you. And if you're questioning that fact, I have a podcast episode

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that might be helpful. Episode 17, When It's Time To Quit, is going to be super helpful for you to help you decide. I also want to say that it's okay to not feel okay at work. And if you want to hear more about that, episode seven of the podcast, Is It Okay to Not Feel Okay At Work, will give you my perspective. And here's the hint that I've already alluded to earlier, it's totally okay.

All that being said, let's look at some things that can keep you happy at work. These are the things that I see every day at Abilities and even now in my own professional life. So let's have you skip the almost 25 years, well, more than 25 years it took me to figure it out and give it to you right now in this podcast. Okay? Let's do that.

The first thing that I want to share, and the first thing that can keep you happy at work is to know how you make a difference for those you work with and those you work for.

Now, as I say that, you might be thinking, okay, I know how I make a difference with those that I work with. I mean, if you're showing up here as a clinician, that's the whole reason that you most likely did all the education that you did to become the clinician that you are today. And yes, I want to say you add so much value to the world, and specifically for the clients that you serve, because of your clinical skill set. There is no denying that. And yet, I want to dig a little bit deeper.

In order to dig deeper, I want to use the coaching model here for a moment. If you're not familiar with the model, I describe it in more detail in episode two of the podcast. But essentially, the model states that the brain makes meaning from the facts that we see in the world through a thought. And that thought creates a feeling, and then that creates actions which then creates a result.

So if we think about the service that you are providing to the client from a client's model perspective, you are a beautiful neutral fact in their model. You are the fact or the circumstance in their model. The brain of your client makes the service that you provide and it makes meaning from that through their own thoughts and feelings, which then creates actions that turn into a result.

So while you don't have full control or influence of your clients or their families' results, you have an amazing opportunity to influence the facts in their lives by

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how you show up as a clinician. You also have a similar opportunity to influence the lives of those you work with, such as those on your team, however you define the word team, by how you show up.

So, while you have the opportunity to influence the lives of others, notice that the model shows us that you can't directly influence how someone else feels. That's because their feelings are generated by their thoughts, not through you and your actions directly. So knowing exactly how you make and how you don't make a difference can help you release any undue and under-serving shame when someone else isn't happy, and specifically not happy about your service.

Now, I don't mean by saying that, that you have a license to do whatever you want and then you get to justify it through the idea of the model, that it's the thought that creates other people's feelings. But the fact that you're here tells me that's not likely the mistake that you're going to make. What happens much more frequently, because we are hardwired for connection as people, is that we make it mean when someone we work with or someone we're working for, like our clients, when they're not happy we make it mean it's mostly because of us.

And then we either get defensive to show how that's not true, or we people please because we believe it is true. The truth is you have full control over yourself and much less control, meaning no control, over others. So as we believe that fully, we can take other people's interests, wants and needs into consideration from a place of full choice instead of from a place of obligation.

It's the difference between I choose to or I get to, instead of I have to. And notice as I say those two things, I choose to and I get to versus I have to, notice how those two options feel different.

This brings me to my second thing to keep you happy at work, which is knowing the choices you have in any given work situation. As I talk to clinicians about challenging work situations, the number one theme I notice is some kind of flavor of them not seeing choice in the situation or the challenge that they're describing. And I get it, I do that myself all the time.

One of the more powerful ways to start to untangle what feels like a challenging work situation is to ask yourself, what control or influence do I have in this

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situation? Now, if you're anything like me, when you first ask yourself that question, your brain is going to say some version of nothing or I don't know. And that's totally fine as a first quick answer. And that is definitely the more primitive part of your brain talking.

So to access that higher part of the brain that can help you to truly answer that question we're going to access that higher part of your brain, or the prefrontal cortex, by giving it a bit more time. We might need to sit with that question for a minute. We may even need to play with it. You could even ask for help to see the potential choices from a trusted mentor or a coach.

We may even need to acknowledge that the choices that we come up with or feel like we have don't even feel ideal, they may even feel horrible. But I guarantee you that there are always choices that you have in any given situation nonetheless.

So you might be asking why work so hard to discover choices that don't feel ideal? I get that. First I want to say by opening up to the concept of choices, more ideal choices may come into light. And even if they don't, actively choosing between less ideal choices is much more empowering and will affect your happiness more than feeling like a victim of your circumstances.

Finally, I want to offer that you focus on progress, not perfection. As I was thinking about this principle, one of the things that I thought about was how often this kind of theme comes up. It caused me to reflect on why that might be true.

First off, I think we as clinical professionals have high standards as a rule. That's amazing until it isn't. That thought of striving for more can really serve us until it doesn't. It doesn't serve us when striving feels something like it's not enough or you aren't enough unless you're striving. It also feeds into our brain's natural tendency to like all or nothing thinking. That can sound something like if we aren't striving, then what's the point?

And I want to offer that progress doesn't have to feel hard. Progress can feel easy. Perfection feels hard because it is hard. It's impossible. Perfection, or the search for perfection doesn't serve us. Perfection feels like judging and shaming ourselves for progress. Compassion allows progress to occur much more easily.

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Now, if this isn't an issue for you, first, I love that for you. And I want to say that I've yet to see someone who is actively working on compassion, specifically self-compassion, and use that against themselves. So if you really feel like you need to perfect something, may I suggest that it be self-compassion.

My experience tells me that working on compassion and self-compassion only results in greater overall happiness. Try it for yourself and see what happens. And if you feel stuck, reach out and let's talk about it.

So which of these three things to keep you happy at work do you think you'll try next? Will you gain a deeper knowledge of how you make a difference for those you work with and who you work for? Will you gain a deeper knowledge of the choices you have in any given work situation? And or will you focus on your progress instead of perfection?

Let me know what you choose. And I'd love to hear more. I honestly can't wait to see the impact that you create with these tips. See you soon.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. And if you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you could leave a rating and review to let me know what you think and to help others find *Clinicians Creating Impact*.

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Thanks for joining me this week on the *Clinicians Creating Impact* podcast. Want to learn more about the work I'm doing with Abilities Rehabilitation? Head on over to abilitiesrehabilitation.com. See you next week.