

Sense of purpose



I spent Thursday and Friday at a hospital, with a poorly relative. She was discharged at the end - so no worries there. But I was quite flabbergasted with what the NHS staff must put up with. There was one man, with police escort (so possibly a criminal) who was creating an absolute ruckus. He was swearing, screaming, throwing things and yelling at everything and everyone. The atmosphere was vile. I spoke to a nurse and this was pretty commonplace. I was shocked! I would never want to or expect any of my team at work to put up with such behaviour. Yet the hospital staff did this day in and day out!

So, that got me thinking - what makes them want to come into work? If I had a work environment like that, my initial thoughts were to walk out, irrespective of the money or job that I'd lose. But seeing the staff laugh and joke and be good with patients the next day made me think that there's some factor (way stronger than money or job security) that makes them want to come into work, despite such hooligans, which seems to be a regular occurrence. Speaking to them, I realised that it's the sense of purpose they have - about wanting to help people recover, about making someone feel better and the joy they get when their patients/their attendants thank them for what they've done. They know that they do good for a lot of people in their roles - so they can take these aberrations in their stride. Fascinating! I also recently read an article by a journalist who had been interviewing people in Japan who were above 100 years of age. And the one common factor he found was all of them had a truly clear sense of purpose in their lives. And that helped them live healthily for way more years than a lot of us lesser mortals can hope for.



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A sense of purpose gives us hope, focus and something to live for. Something that makes us want to come into work and take all the pitfalls and negative experiences with aplomb. Don't get me wrong, it's not as if the NHS staff were not upset by our screaming diva - but they could see past it and want to come back the next day with a smile on their faces. The million-dollar question is - do you have a clearly defined sense of purpose? I wouldn't worry if you don't but use this as a trigger to start thinking more about what it should be. A purpose that helps you figure out why you wake up in the morning and get out of bed; why you take a crowded train or road into work; why you put up with the ups and downs that life brings. This sense of purpose, once clearly defined in your mind, will give you the strength, hope and support to go through life.