

## 15 Quick Ways to Renew Your Spirit at Work

1. **The Feel Good File.** Maintain a regular hanging file where you keep notes of appreciation from clients, cartoons you like, birthday cards with meaningful wishes, and other items that make you smile or feel good. When you need a lift, open the file and review its contents.
2. **Random Learning.** Like many other professionals, your office probably contains a plentiful array of great reference materials—periodicals, audiotapes, books, and manuals. At the very least, you probably have an Internet connection. Get curious about a topic or a challenge and see what more you can learn about it in a half-an-hour. Read an article, scan a book chapter, search the Internet and see what comes your way. Apply what you have learned right away.
3. **Audit Your Rituals.** We all have habitual ways of going through our days—things we already do on a regular basis. Do these daily rituals have a positive, supportive impact on your work and life? If not, try some new ones. Examine your rituals for preparing for work, entering the workplace, conducting your business, eating lunch, ending the day, and interacting with others. Design more supportive habits that fit your style such as saying “good morning” or “good night” to coworkers, starting each day with a chapter from your favorite book, a long look at the mountains, or savoring a cup of tea before diving into email and voice mail.
4. **Your Personal Menu.** The benefits of self-care are well known, yet it can become just one more “to do” that didn’t get done. Consider instead making yourself a personalized menu of items that nurture you, that you would look forward to doing, and that you can order any time you want. Examples might include bringing your favorite CD to play in the background at work, making a bowl of fresh fruit for lunch, taking the scenic route to work, or drawing a little cartoon to slip in your daughter’s lunch box. Consider larger items as well, such as a weekend in the mountains, leaving early to go a matinee movie, buying a new outfit for your big presentation, or relaxing into a spa day.
5. **Bite-sized Inspiration.** There are many places to obtain small doses of inspirational thinking that can kick-start our creative processes. Consider books of quotations, daily email distributions, calendars with daily sayings, a joke-of-the-day, spiritual readings, audio clips, or just opening to a random page in any book. Allow yourself to really take in the message.
6. **Sit in Silence.** Risk doing nothing for a minute. Just stop. Breathe deeply, relax your shoulders, close your eyes and just sit for a while. If you are worried about others seeing you, face the wall, go to a conference room, or an out-of-the-way isolated spot. Connect with your spiritual underpinnings. Listen for guidance. We are paid to think, to be creative and apply ourselves. Sometimes that means we need to stop the activities and allow ourselves the time and space to rest. Twenty minutes will do wonders.
7. **Touch Nature.** Take a brief walk outside and touch the leaves of the trees as you pass, watch the sun set, or enjoy watering your plants. Listen to the birds, admire the squirrel’s feistiness, notice the majestic arch of the oak tree. In just a few moments, we can reconnect with the planet we live on and the life forms that inhabit it.



8. **Connect with a Friend.** Seek the warmth of friendly connection. Call, email, fax, or leave a voicemail just for fun. If schedules are tight, even just setting a time to hook up in the future can help you feel the connection. Tell your friend how important they are to you, or what you value about their friendship. Find a long lost friend on the Internet and get in touch.
9. **Smile.** Smile at everyone, including yourself. Answer the phone with a smile, start your conversation with a smile. Smiles create warm connections between people and help lift spirits. Laugh at the absurdity of whatever you are experiencing. Try smiling while looking yourself in eye in the mirror, then smile back.
10. **Give.** Selflessly giving to others generates meaning in our lives. You can authentically respond to an inspiration to give to others. It might take less than a minute. How can you be of service to the person right in front of you? Give your time, resources, ideas, food, a hug, or a small gift. Broaden your giving circle to include new people who enter your life. Try anonymously giving flowers, or surprising an associate across the country by sending them a book, card or photograph. Give the gift of your undivided attention, your curiosity and your experience especially when there is no potential personal gain.
11. **Attend to Aesthetics.** Look around your office. Is it pleasing to the eye? Consider adding something beautiful that has meaning to you. Improve your enjoyment of your personal space with plants or flowers, a new “in-basket”, desktop fish tank, room fresheners, a small fountain, music, toys, candy, or a wall hanging – whatever expresses your taste, and aesthetic enjoyment.
12. **Reflection.** With a pen and paper, reflect on the past six months. What have you accomplished? What are you proud of? How does what you are working on relate to your personal mission in life? What challenging situation can you look at more objectively now? Look for patterns, insights, and underlying structures for how events unfolded.
13. **Tell the Truth to Yourself.** What is really in your heart right now? Write it down for yourself. Listen to your truth and acknowledge it. Even if it is unwanted, just allow it to be. Consider carefully your truths, what do they suggest?
14. **Appreciate.** What can you appreciate about yourself? Most people have a hard time recognizing their positive characteristics. Start with your body: generate a feeling of gratitude for your health, and the physical form that enabled you to come to work. Appreciate the hands typing in front of you, moving with such graceful dexterity. Appreciate the agile mind, working on many issues at once. Keep appreciating the small triumphs in your work. Extend your appreciation to others and their successes.
15. **Acknowledge Purpose and Context.** If you were writing the story of your professional life, at what point in the story is today? What is important about this time? Are there specific factors that contributed to you arriving at this moment? Look to the future. Where might your career go from here? Knowing the past and future context that brackets our present work adds meaning and depth to what we do today.



**Jessica G. Hartung** is the founding principal of Integrated Work Strategies, LLC, a professional development firm. Jessica's 16 years of professional experiences with a variety of organizations — government, non-profits, Fortune 500, small businesses, and entrepreneurial ventures — have provided strength and flexibility to her skills as a coach and consultant. She is known for her straightforward and compelling style that moves individuals and teams to develop the skills necessary to meet and exceed their goals.

Jessica's areas of expertise include interpersonal communication, remotely managed teams, managerial development, group dynamics, teambuilding, behavioral change, and professional development planning. She is frequently called upon as a trusted advisor to senior leadership teams.

Prior to launching Integrated Work Strategies, Jessica was a Vice President of Marketing and Communications in the healthcare information industry, and held other positions in corporate communications and computer consulting. Jessica holds a Master of Science in Management from Regis University in Colorado. She completed her bachelor's degree in Sociology at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Recent client engagements include strategic planning facilitation, leadership team retreats, executive coaching, design of peer-to-peer learning sessions, board development, conference facilitation, and mentoring for new managers.

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