



# RR Monthly Free Press

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## Labour Day



### The Holiday Canada Gave the World

Ottawa - Welcome to Labour Day, the holiday that is now so much a part of our culture that Canadians rarely pause to consider its true purpose and meaning.

Today, Labour Day is often more associated with fairs and festivals, and a last summer weekend at the cottage, than with what it was meant to be - a heartfelt celebration of workers and their families.

That's too bad, but perhaps not surprising. In a way, the holiday has become a victim of the labour movement's enduring success in improving the lives of working Canadians.

Today we take paid holidays, safe work places, medical care, unemployment insurance, fair hours, union wages and "the weekend" for granted. But how many of these advances would have happened if it were not for the long-forgotten heroes who fought so hard to make unions, and Labour Day, a reality in the first place?

Labour Day began in Canada on April 15, 1872, a mere five years after Confederation. On that historic day the Toronto Trades Assembly, the original central labour body in Canada, organized the country's first significant 'workers demonstration.'

### 'Criminal conspiracy'

At the time trade unions were still illegal, and authorities still tried to repress them, even though laws against "criminal conspiracy" to disrupt trade had already been abolished in Britain.

Despite the obstacles, the assembly had emerged as an important force in Toronto. It

spoke out on behalf of working people, encouraged union organization and acted as a watchdog when workers were exploited. Occasionally, it also mediated disputes between employers and employees.



Carpenters' Union, 1888 - National Library of Canada

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By the time the landmark parade was organized in 1872 the assembly had a membership of 27 unions, representing wood workers, builders, carriage makers and metal workers, plus an assortment of other trades ranging from bakers to cigar makers.

One of the prime reasons for organizing the demonstration was to demand the release of 24 leaders of the Toronto Typographical Union, who had been imprisoned for "crime" of striking to gain a nine-hour working day.

The event took on a life of its own and was one that authorities could not ignore.

### **10,000 people through the streets**

Held on Thanksgiving Day, which was then observed in the spring, the parade featured throngs of workers and a crowd estimated at 10,000 Torontonians who applauded as the unionists marched proudly through the streets, accompanied by four bands. In speeches that followed, trade union leaders demanded freedom for the ITU prisoners and better conditions for all workers.

It was a defining moment in Canadian labour history, opening the door to the formation of the broader Canadian labour movement over the next decade and sowing the roots of what is now an annual workers' holiday around the world.

The Toronto parade inspired leaders in Ottawa to stage a similar event. A few months later, on September 3, 1872, seven unions in the nation's capital organized a parade more than a mile long, headed by an artillery band and flanked by city fireman.



1949 Labour Day Parade, Halifax

The Ottawa parade passed the home of Sir John A. MacDonald, the prime minister. He was hoisted into a carriage and taken to City Hall where, by torch light, he made a ringing promise to sweep away "such barbarous laws" as those invoked to imprison the ITU workers in Toronto.

The 'Old Chieftain' kept his word. Before the year was out the hated laws were gone from the statute books in Canada.

### **CLC formed in 1883**

The Toronto Trades Assembly was replaced in 1881 by the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, which in turn played a major role in founding the Canadian Labour Congress in 1883.

Labour Day celebrations in the United States began in the 1880s, inspired by the beginnings made in Canada.

Initially, Labour Day was celebrated in the spring but that did not last long. After it was declared a legal holiday by the Parliament of Canada on July 23, 1894, the celebration was moved to the early fall, where it has remained ever since.

Around the world today Labour Day is celebrated at different times. In Europe, Latin America, Africa and Asia it is known "May Day" - or International Workers' Day - and it is celebrated on May 1. In New Zealand, it is held on the fourth Monday in October, and in Australia the date varies from state to state across the country. ([www.nupge.ca](http://www.nupge.ca))

# Are You Too Self Conscious?

## Learn how to stop obsessing about yourself.

When children are over- or under-protected, they miss out on being curious and playful, on making mistakes, on learning. They may grow up to lack confidence in their ability to make good life decisions and to keep themselves safe. This perceived lack of competence often causes them great anxiety and leads to spending too much time and energy critiquing their every thought, word and action.

If you struggle with being overly **self-conscious**, you are likely high on self-awareness and low on self-acceptance. Begin now to acquire a healthy sense of self that will involve taking risks, making mistakes and, if you're doing it right, being silly. You owe it to yourself and to the next generation; and anxious, overly self-conscious parent often produces a child with the same crippling approach to life.

### Some indicators that you're self-obsessed:

- You think everything that happens or doesn't is somehow about you.
- You try to control other people's feelings and accuse them of controlling yours.
- You sift everything that happens through your sense of entitlement, worth, needs.
- You feel vulnerable or victimized most of the time.
- You waste time and energy monitoring the way you walk, talk, look, perform and still feel you've messed up.
- You constantly rehash every daily event, berating yourself or revelling in every moment of glory.
- You think people are focusing on you more than they really are and you edit your behaviour accordingly.
- You dress for the approval of others rather than your own quirky sense of style.
- Your every communication starts with "I" and focuses on what you are thinking, feeling, doing, etc.
- You commandeer every conversation with your own — worse or better — experience.
- When you look up the word "narcissism" it sounds like you.



## **- continued from previous page - Are You Too Self-Conscious?**

### **Ways to obsess less and enjoy life more:**

- Tackle one issue at a time (i.e., shyness, low self-esteem, negative attitude).
- Trust friends who tell you to get over yourself when you become self-focused.
- Be realistic; perfection doesn't exist.
- Give yourself time to learn how to balance your perspectives and enjoy life more.
- Decide that when it comes to rating yourself, good enough is good enough.
- Get a handle on what's made you so uptight and talk it through.
- Deal with your emotional extremes; be curious and not critical.
- Listen to your instincts when you sense unsafe people or situations nearby.
- Relax. Trust yourself. You're in good hands—yours.



(<http://lifestyle.sympatico.msn.ca>)

## **Job Connect Services**

Job Connect is an employment program funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities catering primarily to youth between the ages of 16-24 (exceptions possible). The program, coordinated by Operation Springboard, aims to assist unemployed Ontarians obtain sustainable employment as well as to bridge the gap between individuals seeking employment and employers with human resource needs. There are 3 components including: Information and Referral Service (IRS), Employment Preparation Program (EPP) and the Job Development Placement Service (JDPS). Each component provides an array of services including job search strategies, workshops and possible job placement. Training incentives are potentially available for employers through the JDPS segment.



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# Four Ways to Make a Bad Job Good

The best way to be happier at work is to take personal responsibility for your workplace well-being. Any job can be better than it is right now.

Here are four ways you can improve your job instead of relying on your boss or your company to change:

## **1. Make a friend at work.**

People with one friend at work are much more likely to find their work interesting. And people with three friends at work are virtually guaranteed to be very satisfied with their life, according to extensive research from Gallup published in the book "Vital Friends" by Tom Rath. These findings are independent of what a person's job entails, and what their home life is like.

On one level, this isn't surprising. We're better equipped to deal with hardship if we have friends near us, and we have more fun when we're with friends. So a friend allows us to deal with the ups and downs of work much more easily.

We often think of work and life as separate, and consequently fortify our home life with friends. But we need different friends for different contexts. Having someone you can count on at work to care about you and understand you feeds your soul in a way that used to apply only at home.

Of course, once you have this information, you have to figure out the most effective ways to make friends at work. Because friends don't just materialize in your cubicle -- you need to cultivate them.

## **2. Decrease your commute time by moving closer to work.**

More than three million people have a commute that lasts more than 90 minutes. Many of them justify this commute by saying that their job is worth it, or that it allows them to have a bigger house. But the commute may be doing them great harm at home and at work.

Humans can adjust to almost any amount of bad news, according to Harvard psychologist Daniel Gilbert. In his book "Stumbling on Happiness," he shows that we think losing a limb will be terrible, but in fact we adjust to it pretty well. In fact, in the long run it generally doesn't affect our level of happiness.

A commute is different, though. It's impossible to adjust to because the way in which it's bad changes every day. So the tension of not knowing what will be bad, and when it will be bad, and not being able to control those things, means we're unable to use our outstanding mental abilities to adjust.

Here's the clincher, though: Even though people tell themselves it won't happen to them, a bad commute spills over into the rest of the day for almost everyone. If you have a bad commute on the way to work and you walk into the office in a bad mood, that's the mood you're likely to have all day. And if you have a bad commute on the way home, you'll probably still be grouchy by the time you go to bed.

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### **3. Know when it's not about your job.**

I'm not certain whether this is good news or bad news, but the connection between your job and your happiness is overrated. In general, the kind of work you do isn't going to have huge bearing on whether you're happy or not.

To be sure, your work can make you unhappy (see No. 2 above, for example), but work isn't going to give you the key to the meaning of life or anything like that.

Still, you can do a quick check to make sure you have a job that's good for you. A good job:

- Stretches you without defeating you
- Provides clear goals
- Provides unambiguous feedback
- Provides a sense of control

If you have these things in your job and you're still not happy, it's not your job -- it's you.

So maybe it's time to start looking inside yourself to figure out what's wrong, instead of blaming everything on your job. I'm a big fan of getting help when you feel stuck. Sure, we can all get ourselves through life, but it's often easier to get where you want to be faster if you have someone to help you overcome your barriers.

To this end, you need to know if you need a career coach or a shrink. And if your job meets the criteria on the above list, you could probably use help from a mental health professional in order to find ways to get happier.

### **4. Do good deeds.**

Help people. Be kind. Don't think about what you get in return. Just be nice. In this way, you can make the world a better place in the job you have right now.

Take personal responsibility for your happiness during the day, and do things that make you feel good. You've heard a lot of this before. If you go to the gym, your mood will get better (and your mind will be sharper). If you eat healthy food, you feel better than if you go to McDonald's for lunch. And if you do random acts of kindness, you get as much out of it as the person you're being kind to.

But most importantly, stop looking for your work to give your life meaning. The meaning of life is in your relationships. Cultivate them. A good job is a nice thing to have, but only in the context of larger meaning.

If you're happy outside of work, where you don't rely on your boss or your company, then finding happiness at work will be that much easier. (<http://finance.yahoo.com>)