

Lessons from A Winner : Mr Narayana Murthy's Speech on Working on Long Hours

I know people who work 12 hours a day, six days a week, or more. Some do so because of a work emergency where the long hours are only temporary. Others I know have put in these hours for years.

I don't know if they are working all these hours! But I do know they are in the office this long. Some put in long office hours because they are addicted to the workplace. Whatever the reason for putting in overtime, working long hours over the long term is harmful to the person and to the organization. My colleagues who are in the office long hours frequently make mistakes caused by fatigue. Correcting these mistakes requires their time as well as the time and energy of others. I have seen people work Tuesday through Friday to correct mistakes made after 5pm on Monday. Another problem is that people who are in the office long hours are not pleasant company. They often complain about other people (who aren't working as hard); they are irritable, or cranky, or even angry. Such behaviour poses problems, where work goes through much better when people work together instead of avoiding one another.

Here is a set of guidelines I believe will be helpful for executives:

- Wake up fresh, eat a good breakfast and go to work.
- Work hard and smart for eight or nine hours.
- Go home.
- Read books/comics, watch a funny movie, dig in the dirt, play with your kids, etc.
- Eat well and sleep well.

Working regular hours and recreating daily are simple concepts. They are hard for some of us because that requires 'personal change'. They are possible since we all have the power to choose to

do them. In considering the issue of overtime, I am reminded of my oldest son. When he was a toddler, if people were visiting the apartment, he would not fall asleep no matter how long the visit, and no matter what time of day it was. He would fight off sleep until the visitors left. It was as if he was afraid that he would miss something. Once our visitors left, he would go to sleep.

By this time, however, he was over tired and would scream through half the night. He, my wife and I, all paid the price for his fear of missing out.

Perhaps some people put in such long hours because they don't want to miss anything when they leave the office.

The trouble with this is that events will never stop happening. That is life!!

Things happen 24 hours a day. Things will happen while you're asleep, but you will have the energy to catch up when you wake. **Hence, "love your job but never fall in love with your company because you never know when your company will stop loving you."**