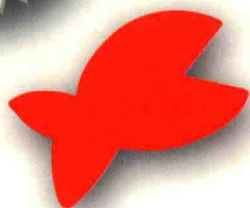


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Apply.
Repeat.*

**A Proven Way to
Boost Morale and
Improve Results**



**Stephen C. Lundin, Ph.D.,
Harry Paul, and John Christensen**

Foreword by Ken Blanchard, Ph.D.,
co-author of *The One Minute Manager*™

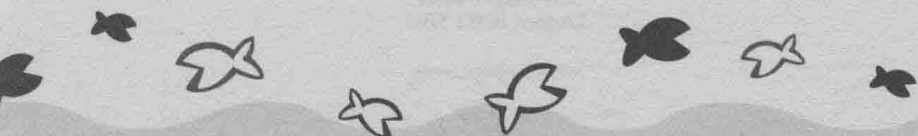
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and John Christensen**

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An Update from the Authors

The FISH! Philosophy has helped millions of people in tens of thousands of organizations around the world—from businesses to schools to hospitals—to deliver amazing service, strengthen trust and teamwork, and bring energy and passion to their work.

The beauty of The FISH! Philosophy is that you can apply it to *every* part of your life. It helps you to be more aware of how your choices impact others, and provides a common language that puts everyone on the same page and shifts conversations toward the positive.

A philosophy becomes real when it is lived. Credit for the success of The FISH! Philosophy belongs to the people who have applied it in ways we never could have imagined. Because their stories have taught and inspired us, we have included a few of them in the back



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of this book so that you can experience some of the amazing ways that people are bringing The FISH! Philosophy to life.

As authors, we are deeply grateful to the millions of people who have read *FISH!* and, most important, put its lessons into action. We dedicate this book to you.

Steve, Harry and John

Foreword

by Ken Blanchard, Ph.D.,
co-author of *The One Minute Manager*

What you have in your hands is a classic tale about transforming your work into your passion. Since its first printing in 2000, *FISH!* has sold more than five million copies in thirty-five languages, making it one of the best-selling business books of all time. It's easy to see why. With captivating storytelling, timeless advice, an easy-to-follow approach, and an inspirational zeal, The FISH! Philosophy is the perfect message for our time.

The story at the heart of *FISH!*—about a woman who transforms her attitude about work and transforms her lifeless workplace into one of energy and fun—grew out of an amazing video John Christensen produced about the fishmongers of the world-famous Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle. Every day the fishmongers wow their customers with extraordinary attentiveness and

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spirit-lifting antics. Their world-class customer care has made the Pike Place Fish Market some of the most successful 1,200 square feet of retail space in America.

People spend about seventy-five percent of their adult waking time doing work-related activities—getting ready for work, traveling to and from work, working, contemplating work, and decompressing after work. If we spend that much time on that part of our lives, we ought to enjoy it and be energized by it. Sadly, too many people still have a “thank God it’s Friday” attitude about work, trading time on the job to satisfy needs elsewhere.

What this timeless book makes clear is that being there for customers and coworkers, choosing to have fun, and making people’s day lead to happiness, meaning, and fulfillment. The FISH! Philosophy works for organizations large or small. It’s just as effective in the public sector as it is in the private sector. In fact, these powerful tools can liven up life at home as well as at work.

This book is not just about selling fish; it’s a love story. Share it with the people in your workplace. Practice the four strategies. Prepare to be amazed by what happens when you tap into the passion, energy, and enthusiasm that are available to every one of us.



LOVING WHAT YOU DO

It is fashionable today to believe that we should not settle for anything less than doing what we love. Write poetry, travel the world on a sailboat, paint—do whatever you love, and the money will follow. We tell ourselves that life is too short to spend our working hours doing anything less than the ideal, and we continue our search for the perfect workplace. The danger is that if our quest for ideal work focuses us on the future, we will miss the amazingly wonderful life that is available today, in this moment.

The fact is that in the real world there are conditions that prevent us from chasing the perfect, ideal job. Many of us have significant responsibilities to family members or to a way of life. For others, a true calling hasn't made itself visible yet. Some of us are under so much stress in our personal lives that there is literally no time or energy to seek a new line of work.

FISH! is a parable, an invented story about finding the deep source of energy, creativity, and passion that exist inside each of us by learning to love what we do, even if at the moment we may not be doing exactly what we love.

Seattle—Monday Morning

It was a wet, cold, dark, dreary, dismal Monday in Seattle, inside and out. The best the meteorologist on Channel 4 could offer was a possible break in the clouds around noon. On days like this Mary Jane Ramirez missed Southern California.

What a roller coaster, she thought, as her mind retraced the past three years. Dan, her husband, had received a great offer from Microrule, and she had been confident she could find a job once they relocated. In



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just four short weeks they had given notice, packed, moved, and found great day care for their young children, Brad and Stacy. Their house hit the Los Angeles housing market just at the right time and sold immediately. True to her confidence, Mary Jane quickly found a supervisory position in the operations area of First Guarantee Financial, one of Seattle's largest financial institutions.

Dan loved his job at Microrule. When he came home at night he was bursting with energy and full of stories about what a great company it was and the advanced work they were doing. Dan and Mary Jane would frequently put the children to bed and talk well into the evening. As excited as Dan was about his new company, he was always just as interested in her day, wanting to know about her new colleagues and the challenges she was facing in her work life. Anyone watching would easily guess that they were best friends. The spirit of each shone in the presence of the other.

They planned their move to Seattle with great care, anticipating every possible contingency but one. Twelve months after relocating, Dan was rushed to the hospital with a burst aneurysm—"a genetic oddity," they called it—and he died of internal bleeding, never

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regaining consciousness. There was no warning and no time to say good-bye.

That was two years ago this month. We weren't even in Seattle a full year.

Stopping in mid-thought, with memories flooding her mind, Mary Jane felt a surge of emotion well up inside her. She caught herself. *This is not the time to think about my personal life; the workday is less than half over, and I'm swamped with work.*

First Guarantee Financial

During her three years at First Guarantee, Mary Jane had developed a great reputation as a “can-do” supervisor. She wasn't the first to arrive or the last to leave, but she was extremely productive and efficient.

She was also a good person to work for. She always listened closely to the concerns and ideas of her staff and was well liked and respected in return. It wasn't uncommon for her to cover for someone with a sick child or important appointment. And, as a working manager, she led her department in production. She did this in an easygoing way that rarely generated any tension. Her direct reports and associates enjoyed working

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with and for her. Mary Jane's small group developed a reputation as a team you could count on.

In sharp contrast, there was a large operations group on the third floor that was often the topic of conversation for the opposite reason. Words like *unresponsive*, *entitlement*, *zombie*, *unpleasant*, *slow*, *wasteland*, and *negative* were used frequently to describe this group. It was the group everyone loved to hate. Unfortunately for the company, nearly every department needed to interact with the third floor since they processed most of First Guarantee's transactions. Everyone dreaded any contact with the operations group.

Supervisors swapped stories about the latest fiasco on the third floor. Those who visited the third floor described it as a place so dead that it sucked the life right out of you. Mary Jane remembered the laughter when one of the other managers said that he deserved a Nobel Prize. When she asked what he meant, he said, "I think I may have discovered life on the third floor." Everyone roared.

Then, much to her surprise, a few weeks later, Mary Jane was offered a promotion to manager of the operations group on the third floor of First Guarantee, a job she cautiously and somewhat reluctantly accepted.

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While the company had great hopes for her, she had major reservations about her new position. She had been comfortable in her present job—and her willingness to take risks had been much higher before Dan's death. The group she had been supervising had been with her during the rough days after Dan's death, and she had felt a strong bond with them. It would be hard to leave people who had shared so much of themselves during such dark times.

Mary Jane was acutely aware of the terrible reputation of the third floor. In fact, if it hadn't been for all of the unforeseen expenses of Dan's hospitalization, she probably would have turned down the promotion and pay raise. So here she was, on the infamous third floor: the third person to have the job in the last two years.

The Third Floor

"Thank God it's Friday," Mary Jane thought as she looked at her email inbox. Five weeks into the job, she still struggled to understand the work and the people on the third floor. While mildly surprised that she liked many of the people who worked on three, she had quickly realized that the third floor deserved its

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reputation. She had observed Bob, a five-year veteran on the third floor, letting the phone ring seven times before purposely breaking the connection by unplugging the cord. She had overheard Martha describing how she handled those in the company who “hassled” her to do her processing faster—she deleted their emails “by mistake.” Every time Mary Jane went into the break room there was someone dozing at the table.

Most mornings the phones rang unanswered for ten to fifteen minutes after the official start of the day because the staff was still arriving. When questioned, the excuses were both abundant and lame. Everything was in slow motion. It was clear that the “zombie” description of the third floor was definitely deserved. Mary Jane did not have a clue what to do, only the knowledge and conviction that she must do something and do it soon.

That night after the kids were asleep, she had tried to work out her situation by writing in her journal:

It may have been cold and dreary outside today, but the view from my internal office window made dreary sound like a compliment. There was no energy there. At times I find it hard to

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believe there are living human beings on three. It takes a baby shower or a wedding for anyone to come alive. They never get excited about anything that's actually happening at work.

I have thirty employees for whom I am responsible and for the most part they do a slow, short day's work for a low day's pay. Many of them have done the same slow day's work in the same way for years and are totally bored. They seem to be good people, but whatever spark they may have once had, they have lost. The culture of the department is such a powerful and depressing force that new people quickly lose their spark as well. When I walk among the cubicles it feels like all the oxygen has been sucked right out of the air. I can hardly breathe.

Last week I discovered four clerks who were still not using the new software installed here two years ago. They said they liked doing it the old way. I wonder how many other surprises are in store for me.

I suppose many back-room operations are like this. Not much here to get excited about, just lots of transactions that need to be processed.