

# research in brief

## Happy Workers

Does money earned on the job buy happiness? Does educational level predict one's satisfaction with the job? Data from a national sample of workers were analyzed that helped address these questions. Intrinsic and extrinsic sources of satisfaction with the job were compared to different educational levels and occupations. *Intrinsic rewards* were defined as freedom to plan work, a chance to learn or try new things, and a chance to use one's skills and abilities. *Extrinsic rewards* were pay, job security, the relationships with co-workers, and the working conditions.

Three conclusions were drawn from this study. When the occupation had high intrinsic rewards, workers: (1) had higher job satisfaction, (2) were less influenced by extrinsic benefits, and (3) were positively affected by their assessment of the job.

No evidence was found that those with higher educational levels put greater value on the intrinsic satisfaction of the job than those of lower educational levels. Furthermore, the importance of intrinsic satisfaction didn't vary significantly among workers of different occupational status.

Every professional employed by Extension has supervisory responsibility, whether it's to professional and paraprofessional staff, a cadre of volunteers, or a single secretary. Considering Gruenberg's research, ask yourself the following:

1. Which do I find more personally rewarding—intrinsic or extrinsic factors of the job? Why?

2. How are my attitudes toward my job affecting those with whom I work, or whom I supervise?
3. Do I treat those with less education or position differently from those with more?
4. How can I make the work of those whom I supervise more intrinsically rewarding?
5. What are my attitudes toward those whom I supervise?
6. What implications do these findings have for the volunteers with whom I work?

"The Happy Worker: An Analysis of Educational and Occupational Differences in Determinants of Job Satisfaction." Barry Gruenberg. *American Journal of Sociology*, LXXXVI (September, 1980), 247-71.

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