

The Wisdom of Jane Dutton

A Biographical Sketch

Jane Dutton's research is focused on how organizational conditions strengthen capabilities of individuals and firms. In particular, she examines how high quality connections, positive meaning and emotions contribute to individuals and organizational strengths. Her research has explored compassion and organizations, resilience and organizations, as well as energy and organizations. This research stream is part of a growing domain of expertise at the University of Michigan called Positive Organizational Scholarship www.bus.umich.edu/Positive. Her past research has explored processes of organizational adaptation, focusing on how strategic issues are interpreted and managed in organizations, as well as issues of organizational identity and change.

The following is an excerpt from the preface to her book **Energize Your Workplace:**

When I say I am writing a book on energizing your workplace, people resonate. Very often they have a gut level reaction that registers, yes, I have experiences at work all the time that affect my energy and the energy of those around me. However, most of the stories they tell me are of connections that sap and deplete energy. I call these kinds of connections *corrosive*. They are all too prevalent in the workplace. Stories of organizations that drain and deaden are far more frequent than stories about organizations that revitalize and enliven. This reality has inspired me to set four goals for this book.

First, I want managers to seriously consider energy as a critical, limited, but renewable resource that enables excellence in individuals and organizations. Without effective means for generating and replenishing the energy of individuals in the workplace, no organization can ever be truly great. Further, no organization can retain the people it really wants to retain and have them achieve the levels of excellence they desire.

Second, I want managers to take their role as energy creators or energy depleters seriously. I also want them to see new possibilities for enlivening their workplace through building and enabling high-quality connections. This means having a perspective on how their everyday behaviors and their actions in designing the organizational context can create and replenish energy, contributing to all kinds of important outcomes, including employees' physical and psychological health, task engagement, learning, cooperation, coordination, attachment, and overall effectiveness.

Third, I want managers to have better and more abundant strategies for dealing with corrosive connections at work. Although low-quality connections infect most organizations, it's rare for anyone to have training or practice in how to deal with them constructively or coach others to do so.

Fourth, I hope this book convinces managers of the important connection between the quality of the connections they have at work and their overall well-being. The fact is that most of us spend a good percentage of our waking hours at our workplaces. In those places, we either are enlivened or deadened through the quality of the connections that we have with others. In the short run, these effects show up in performance and other organizationally relevant outcomes. In the long run, they leave lasting traces on our bodies and health. My greatest hope is that the managers who read this book will practice new ways of infusing vitality into the workplace by not only reducing corrosive connections but also increasing the frequency and vibrancy of high-quality connections. Their own lives depend on it.