

# ■ I'm Important, You're Important, We're All Important

## *20 Down-to-Earth Ideas for Building Self-Worth in Your Workplace*

by Tom Terez

When I spent two years interviewing people about their work and workplaces, the concept of “self-worth” came up time and again. “I don’t feel important.” “I’m a worker bee.” “I’m just not valued.” Worth emerged as such a dominant theme that it’s on my list of the 22 keys to a meaningful workplace.

No, worth can’t be measured like ROI or turnover. But it sure as heck can be increased. Below are some thought-provoking ideas for nurturing a stronger sense of self-worth among employees in your workplace. I hope you’ll print the list and use it to stir conversation, discovery, and action.

1. Those hallway hellos really do matter. Make them count.
2. Someone somewhere in your organization has the answer to that problem you’ve been struggling with. Turn off your computer, and surf the sea of knowledge that surrounds you.
3. We’re obsessed with knowledge, skills, and abilities. Shouldn’t we also tap into our deep interests?
4. Internal competition always produces at least one loser, which is one too many. Especially when we’re the loser.
5. The fancy award dinners and wall plaques

aren’t essential. This is: thank you.

6. Let’s have a month when everyone is named employee of the month.
7. Co-creation may be the most time-intensive, frustrating, exhausting, and surest way to foster true empowerment and a deep sense of worth.
8. People are moved by compelling missions—not by run-on mission statements.

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**Plenty of organizations have complaint departments. Will someone please create a **compliment department**?**

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9. Plenty of organizations have complaint departments, complaint forms, and complaint-resolution personnel. Will someone please create a compliment department?
10. Who should have easy access to all customer input? Easy answer: everyone.
11. Employee attitude surveys are an exercise in tree-killing unless they’re used to generate rich dialogue and focused action. Save a tree: Just say no to employee surveys that are destined for a dusty shelf.
12. It’s a cliché, but it’s so true: Respect takes years to nurture but can be destroyed in seconds.

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## ■ I'm Important, You're Important, We're All Important *continued*

13. Can you cite one example of a performance evaluation that truly informs and inspires?

14. Few people expect high pay. Everyone expects fair pay.

15. For years, we've used terms like boss, subordinate, my people, your people, and upper-level. Should we be surprised that some employees feel like second-class workplace citizens?

16. Space matters. If some people are jammed into tiny cubicles while others get cavernous offices, what kind of message is being sent?

17. If you don't think Dilbert is funny, you need to worry.

18. If you think you're turning into Dilbert, you really need to worry.

19. If your workplace is a Dilbertesque universe, engage in random acts of positive change management. Focus on the one positive thing you can do instead of the 100 things you can't do.

20. If you're unwilling to do a thing about it, stop off at the local office-supply store, buy some resumé paper, and get busy. A better situation awaits—but only if you seek it out and seize it.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Terez is a speaker, consultant, and author of *22 Keys to Creating a Meaningful Workplace*. His Web site, [BetterWorkplaceNow.com](http://BetterWorkplaceNow.com), is filled with tools for building a great work environment. Write to [Tom@BetterWorkplaceNow.com](mailto:Tom@BetterWorkplaceNow.com) or call 614-571-9529.

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