

Chapter 1

Introduction: Choose a Job You Love...

ABSTRACT

Chapter 1 introduces the purpose of the work by briefly discussing concepts such as job satisfaction and the impact emotion can have on an individual in the work setting. It establishes the particular scope of the work – that is, academic librarianship to include community college librarianship – while leaving itself open geographically. The chapter briefly introduces the concepts of emotional labor, emotional exhaustion, and burnout, describing why it is important to study these concepts within academic librarianship at both the individual and the organizational level. The chapter also introduces emotion-related concepts and effects for the individual and organizational levels, not limiting itself to the context of academic librarianship. It also briefly examines workplace bullying and academic incivility. The chapter also introduces the topic of why the emotional dimensions of academic librarianship have not been more studied, acknowledging that the authors will propose some issues but recognizing that more research is needed to fully understand the emotional dimensions of academic librarianship before more meaningful and focused solutions can be identified.

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INTRODUCTION

There is an old saying, often but debatably attributed to Confucius, which asserts: choose a job you love, and you'll never work a day in your life. Anecdotally and informally speaking, I seldom hear people in non-library professions exhort "I love my job!" as often as I hear librarians declare it. If one relies on the *anecdotal* evidence job satisfaction among librarians is remarkably high. If one examines the *empirical* evidence job satisfaction among academic librarians seems less so, with significant geographic fluctuations. From the United States to Nigeria to Pakistan to Taiwan, job satisfaction seems to vary significantly, depending on a variety of factors including race, compensation, benefits, autonomy, and supervision (Damasco & Hodges, 2012; Khan & Ahmed, 2013; Odunlade, 2012; Peng, 2012; Peng, 2013).

Without digging too deeply into the issue of job satisfaction (that comes later), suffice it to say that one's experiences on the job have an impact on more than one's level of job satisfaction. Those experiences impact the individual as a professional and a private person for certain; it may be difficult to compartmentalize those experiences. How often have you had a negative experience at work – maybe a patron yells at you, or a respected colleague announces their retirement – and experienced an emotional reaction that colored the whole day, the whole week, or the rest of the year?

Or maybe you have had a positive experience at work – maybe you help a patron find exactly the resources they need for their research, or you get a pay raise – and you have an emotional reaction to that experience. It likewise colors the whole day, the whole week, and even the rest of the year. We must be careful to consider that not all emotional dimensions of work are negative (even if some days it feels that way). However, regardless of the nature of those emotional experiences, positive, negative, neutral, confusing, etc., it must be acknowledged that they have some sort of impact or effect which can have ramifications – some expected, some unexpected.

To a degree, this is all rather self-evident. Emotions are reactions to stimuli and experiences, and human beings are subject to such stimuli and responses. While the purpose of this book is not to explore the philosophical nature of emotion or the philosophical nature of academic librarianship, it is worth noting at the outset that emotion is as a phenomenon multifaceted and complex. It is not our purpose to define the nature of emotion or to definitively define

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