

#WORK EVOLUTION

How to Re-motivate yourself at Work in 2025

If you are entering the New Year with the same old sense of blah, here's how to shift your outlook and find your lost motivation.



It's a new year, but work feels like the same old one. You want to be excited, but there's just not that much to be pumped about, you're not in line for a big promotion or raise. And there's not some innovative new project on the horizon. So, what do you do to re-motivate yourself in 2025? Here are some techniques that may help you to recommit to your jobs.

Be grateful for what's good

Sometimes you can become so fixated on what's wrong with your job that you forget about what's right. Try to think through any of the things that make you happy. Maybe, it's that you get to work from home two days a week or that you like your co-workers or that there's free coffee in the breakroom.

Lock in your schedule

Maybe you can't change much about your job scope, but you could up-level your time management so that your schedule works optimally for you. If you're working longer hours than you prefer, that could look like practicing planning, prioritizing, and cutting back on distractions to log off on time and not have to get back on later at night. If your hours are already good, see if you can be even more efficient to create space for what's important to you, like working out at lunch or leaving in time to make it to your son's soccer game.

Having a personal incentive to up-level your productivity can gamify better time management and make work seem less onerous.

Ask for what you want

Sometimes some small shifts in your work could make a big difference in how motivated you feel to perform. Think

Examples

- **Mentorship:** Ask if you can have some consistent one-on-one meetings with your boss or another leader, who are primarily focused on your professional development, instead of just covering task completion.
- **Development Road Map:** See if you can have a discussion with your manager about a personal road map for your growth. Where could you be in one year, three years, and five years? What experience would you need to develop to hit those goals?
- **Flexibility:** Maybe, you want to leave early one day a week to attend a class or pick your kids up from school. There may be room to ask for those accommodations, particularly if you have a clear plan on how to make up the time.

Don't dismiss the upcoming year before it's even started. With the right mindset, you can create a motivating job situation in 2025.



A child gives a victory sign in front of a statue in Aleppo after rebel groups seized control of the city.



fter a decade of warfare, the conflicted Syria had settled into a violent, protracted stalemate and the country was in a humanitarian crisis, with an estimated 90 per cent of Syrians living below the poverty line, and 60 per cent being food insecure. Millions of Syrians had been displaced, with about 5.5 million in neighbouring countries, while most of those involved in the initial anti-Assad protests were either dead, in jail or in exile. But, in spite of all this, the feeling was that President Bashar al-Assad was there to stay.

For more than half a century, the Assad dynasty appeared to have an impregnable hold over Syria, relying on a formidable security apparatus, repressive use of force, and powerful allies like Russia, Iran, and Hezbollah. It had withstood multiple uprisings, and the regime had lost control of parts of the country in the civil war. But in recent years, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, whose government had been sanctioned and sidelined from regional and international forums since 2011, had regained some of his standing, as the Arab League reinstated Syria and there was talk of sanc-

tions relief. Yet, all that changed in a matter of days with a rare moment of events. It is hard to overstate how incredible the collapse has been, given the history of the war in Syria. The stunning collapse of the 53-year Al-Assad family rule has been described as a historic moment, nearly 14 years after Syrians rose in peaceful protests against a government that met them with violence. The situation in Syria has now dramatically shifted, radically altering the prevailing status quo.

The Chronology of Events

On 08 December, the Islamist rebels of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the Syrian Liberation Group, or HTS took control of Damascus while Russia announced that Assad had taken refuge in Moscow. On 09 December, HTS leader Abu Mohammad al-Jolani met with Prime Minister Mohammad Ghazi al-Jalali to "coordinate the transfer of power." The entire affair had taken less than two weeks, with little bloodshed.

HTS is an alliance led by Al-Qaeda's former Syria Branch and has faced accusations of human rights abuses including torturing detainees. The group is fighting alongside other factions, with units under a joint command. The lightning HTS offensive appears to have been pushed initially by Turkey, which had long protected the rebels in their stronghold in Idlib, in Northwestern Syria.

The astonishing sequence of events that allowed HTS to bring down the Syrian regime had many causes, including Israel's decapitation of Syria's ally Hezbollah and the destruction of much of the group's missile arsenal, the erosion of Iranian power and influence due to the degradation of Hezbollah, a breakdown in talks between Ankara and Damascus over reforms to the Assad government, Syria's underpaid and demoralized Army, and Russia's preoccupation with the war in Ukraine.

On 30 November, HTS took Syria's second city, Aleppo, in a single day and swept Southwards to Damascus. As they did so, there were spontaneous rebellions against regime rule in Sweida and Daraa in the South and Deir Ezzour to the East. On 05 December, they captured Hama, Syria's fourth largest city. Two days later, they took Homs, the third largest city, which lies on the road linking Damascus, to the regime's Alawite heartland in the mountains looking over the Mediterranean coast. The rebels' extraordinary momentum combined with the government's drastically eroded base of support was far too great for the Assad regime to withstand.

A Shift in the Middle East

The rebels' takeover of the country marks a tectonic shift in the Middle East. As recently as a few weeks ago, the Biden administration was working with the United Arab Emirates to lift sanctions against Syria in exchange for

A Tectonic Shift

HTS is a US designated terrorist group with little popularity in its home territory of Idlib. Thus far, its leader, Abu Mohammed al-Jolani has been careful to take a conciliatory stance, not just with Syria's many minorities but also with former regime officials. The question of whether this tone will remain and whether other insurgent groups and opposition factions will follow his lead is another question.



People gather at Saadallah al-Jabiri Square in Aleppo as they celebrate the end of Bashar al-Assad's 24-year authoritarian rule.



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Assad distancing himself from Iran and blocking Hezbollah arms shipments, according to multiple sources who spoke to Reuters. But the fall of Assad also shows how interconnected, and in unpredictable ways, the region's various conflicts are, and the thinness of the membrane of normalcy that covers them. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict shared this fate. The sudden re-eruption of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with Hamas' 07 October attack led to Israel's war in Gaza and Lebanon, the Houthis' campaign in the Red Sea and a volley of attacks between Israel, Iran and Syria. Middle East's protracted conflicts had all come to the fore.

Though questions are being asked about how the HTS will govern the country and manage various groups competing for influence, but the fact is that the region has been transformed in more ways than one. The Syrian war saw Russian intervention to prop up the Assad regime and expand its own military influence. For the first time, since the end of the Cold War, Russia was engaging in a major conflict outside of its 'near abroad.' Russia has also cherished its access to its only warm-water port in Tartus on Syria's Mediterranean coast as well as its control over the Hmeimim airbase near Latakia, in Western Syria.

Since the collapse of 2024, protection from Turkey, and established a civilian government in its area of control in Idlib, even as it ruled with an iron fist. During those years, the rebels never lost sight of their overarching goal, to depose Assad. Then, in early November, negotiations between Damascus and Ankara, over creating conditions that would allow Syrian refugees in Turkey to return home safely, which has become a driving issue for Turkey, fell apart again because of Assad's intransigence, an event that may have led Erdogan's government not to stand in HTS's way when they decided to break out of Idlib a few weeks later.

Among the regional countries, Turkey has more influence over the future course of events in Syria, given its significant links with some of the rebel groups in control of certain areas in the country. In the end, hardly any Syrian proved willing to sacrifice any more of the region. The Syrian Armed Forces also did not put up more than token resistance for the most part melted away.

On 06 December, Russia recalled its troops and diplomats. The fall of the Assad constitutes a major blow to Russia's foreign policy and prestige. Not least among the setbacks is the prospect of possibly having to face the loss of its only overseas naval base, located in the port of Tartus, which has strategic implications. It will not just undermine its influence in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, but will also impact its military power projection in the region.

With dwindling options, Iran also withdrew its militias, recognizing that fighting for Assad would be futile. In the East, Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and Arab and military groups in peaceful deals with regime forces to seize regime-controlled areas of Deir Ezzour and, most significantly, the Al Bukamal crossing with Iraq, cutting off the regime's supply lines from Iran and Iraq. As the rebels approached Damascus, remaining Russian, Iranian and regime forces also withdrew from their positions throughout the Northeast.



Dry January

Alcohol use has been part of different cultures and societies for thousands of years. While many people find that alcohol is an enjoyable part of their lives, it can have a tendency to create some difficulties and even throw their health out of balance. Some of the things people want to avoid may include the calories from alcohol that can create weight gain, as well as the cost involved with drinking alcohol. Taking the month of January to reset and rebuild new, healthy habits is what Dry January is all about.

Conclusion

The rebel offensive was possible, in part, because of dynamics beyond Syria's borders. But transition is never easy in a fractured political environment with a complex mosaic of groups with diverse ideologies and interests. The involvement of external forces will be a strong factor in how things develop in post-revolution Syria.

To secure a stable and unified country, regional and international support will be needed to establish a civilian government, encourage reconciliation and start rebuilding the country. The world has previously witnessed the fall of Arab regimes in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Iraq but the stability, governance and development, that was expected in most of these countries post-regime change, has not been reassuring.

At present, the HTS nature and intentions regarding maintaining a secular country can also not be taken at face value. The political alignment of HTS, and whether it has renounced the ideology of its AQ affiliated roots, is the immediate challenge in an already uncomfortably complex outlook.

Along with the legacy of years of international sanctions and economic mismanagement, the prospect of a new civil war, and yet further instability across the region, cannot be discounted with Syria being a foothold for extremist groups.

While the prevailing mood may be celebratory, but unfortunately, the deserts are full of mirages and the future is unwritten. Hence, an inclusive, secular, democratic Syria with good governance may still be elusive.

Israel, taking advantage of the prevailing chaos, has now attacked Syrian targets and seized control of a demilitarized buffer zone created as part of the ceasefire in 1974. It has captured Mount Hermon and attacked Syrian Naval assets. In other words, it is doing all it can to take advantage of the flux.

At the same time, Erdogan, was losing patience with Syria's refusal to compromise and reconcile with Turkey, and even Russian President Vladimir Putin, Assad's close ally, was frustrated by the regime's unwillingness to find some measure of accommodation with the opposition. Meanwhile, HTS had evolved from its status as the Syrian branch of Al-Qaeda into an Islamist group that abjured transnational jihadism, centering its fight squarely on the Assad regime. Hiding its time, it had made alliances with other groups, moderated its message, gained

protection from Turkey, and established a civilian government in its area of control in Idlib, even as it ruled with an iron fist. During those years, the rebels never lost sight of their overarching goal, to depose Assad. Then, in early November, negotiations between Damascus and Ankara, over creating conditions that would allow Syrian refugees in Turkey to return home safely, which has become a driving issue for Turkey, fell apart again because of Assad's intransigence, an event that may have led Erdogan's government not to stand in HTS's way when they decided to break out of Idlib a few weeks later.



The HTS (Hayat Tahrir al-Sham).

#FACT CHECK

Understanding Hangovers and Tips for Prevention

The best way to avoid hangovers is, of course, to avoid drinking too much.

Waking up with a pounding headache and a queasy stomach from a hangover can leave anyone desperate for a quick cure. The best way to avoid hangovers is, of course, to avoid drinking too much. But if you need a cure, a recent trend is using hangover IV drips to feel better after a long night.



Other hangover remedies: Do they help?

There is no shortage of old-school tips and tricks that claim to help cure a hangover. What should you avoid and what might help? MYTH: Coffee helps a hangover. A hot coffee might sound like the perfect fix, but does coffee help with hangovers? Coffee is a stimulant that can give you a quick energy boost. However, it can also dehydrate you more, which may make your symptoms worse.

So do they help? Here, Sandy Wang of the University of Rochester Medical Center breaks down the facts and provides simple tips to avoid a hangover altogether:

Do hangover IVs actually work?

The answer is... maybe. A hangover IV drip usually contains fluids, electrolytes, vitamins, and sometimes medications. These ingredients help rehydrate your body and ease hangover symptoms like nausea and headache. However, IV fluids are not always needed. In fact, it is not recommended to give IV fluids unless a patient cannot keep anything down, especially water.

Before giving IV fluids to a patient, their bloodwork should be checked as it could be dangerous to some. Starting IV fluids can even prolong a hospital/emergency room stay. Drink lots of fluids, including water, electrolyte beverages, broth, and other non-alcoholic beverages to reduce dehydration. To be sure that you're getting enough hydration, drink IV fluids until your urine is clear.

Why do we get hangovers?

Hangovers happen for a few reasons. ● Dehydration: Alcohol is a diuretic, which makes you lose more fluid than you take in. ● Electrolyte Imbalance: Drinking too much alcohol causes your electrolytes to become unbalanced. ● Congeners: Darker liquors like bourbon and tequila contain

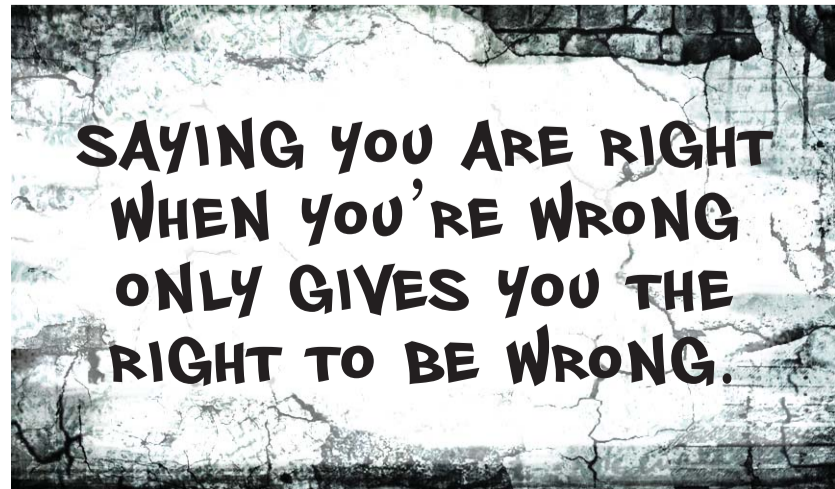
more congeners, which are chemicals created during fermentation, that can worsen hangovers. ● Toxic Byproducts: When your liver breaks down alcohol, it makes a byproduct called acetaldehyde. This byproduct is more harmful than alcohol and can cause symptoms like nausea and headaches. Liquid IV and other sports drinks are designed to boost hydration. Like a hangover IV drip, they can help with dehydration, which is one of the primary causes of hangover symptoms. It's not a miracle cure, but it might help you feel a little better faster.

Can you prevent a hangover?

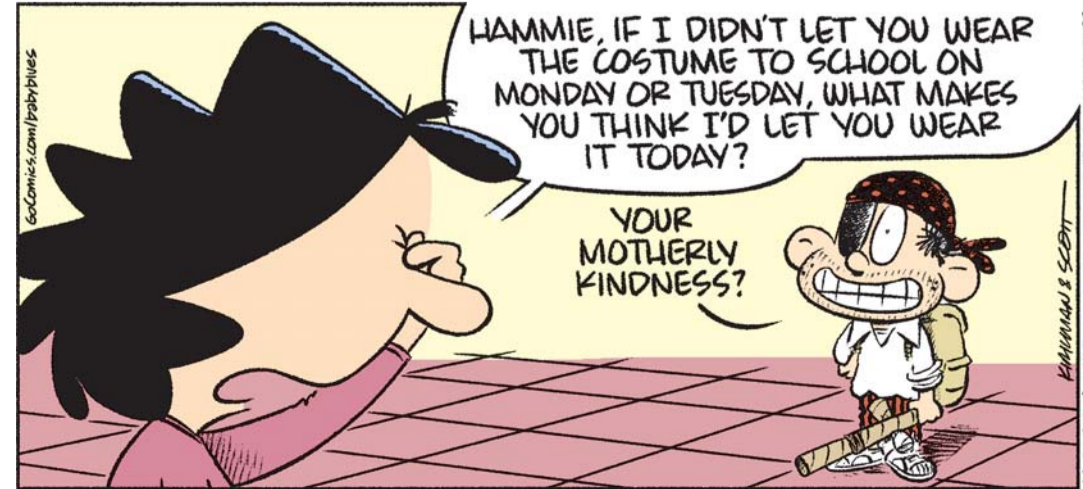
The best cure is prevention! Follow these tips to wake up feeling better the next morning! ● Stick to one drink per hour. ● Stay hydrated. ● Don't drink on an empty stomach. ● Choose clear alcohols. ● Get a good night's sleep. ● And remember, never drink and drive.



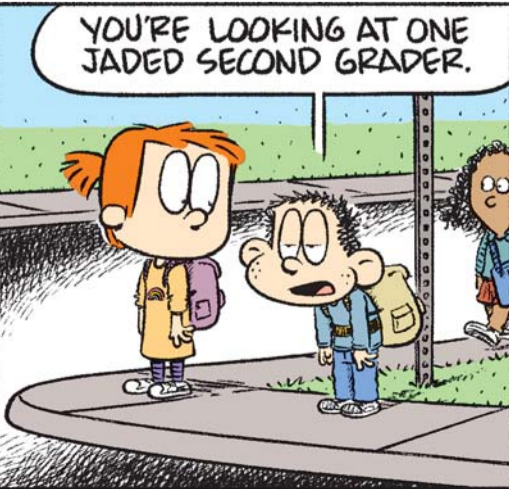
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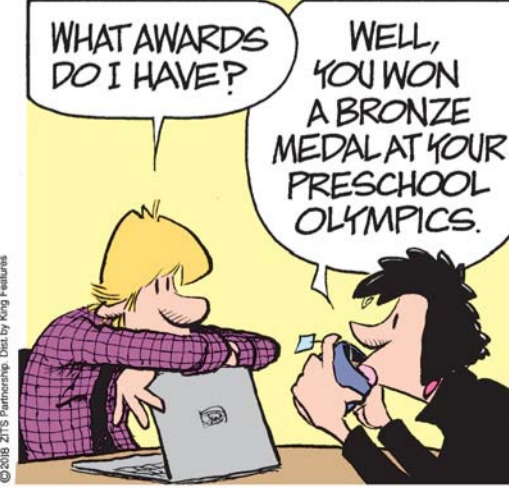
BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman