

FALL IN LOVE WITH MONDAY MORNINGS



*The Career Woman's
Guide to Increasing
Impact, Influence,
and Income*

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INTERNATIONAL

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CHAPTER ONE

The OGIM (Oh God, It's Monday) Syndrome

Look at the bright side. At least Mondays only happen once a week.

GARFIELD THE CAT

There is an epidemic emerging throughout Corporate America and business worldwide. It targets high achieving, results-driven, mid-career women by stalling their advancement and threatening their success. The symptoms are many, and can strike at any time. Typically, sufferers don't see it coming. The disease can incubate for months, even years, before exposing itself in devastating and debilitating fashion. It's called "Oh God, It's Monday Syndrome."

Most commonly referred to as OGIM, the disease begins as a conscious effort to follow the advice and path of other successful individuals. What creates a problem, however, is the path leads to a bleak destination that's molded by outside influences instead of internal

motivation. OGIM affects not only career performance and advancement, but also other significant areas of life: personal relationships, health, wellness, finances, and social life. At its worst, OGIM can hijack a person's entire life, stealing joy and happiness right out from underneath them.

The symptoms are common and easy to recognize:

► **Lost the drive to get up and go to the office.**

Every morning becomes a battle between you and the snooze button. Before losing your drive, you leaped out of bed eager to attack the day ahead. Now you struggle to get the motivation to brush your teeth after your morning coffee.

► **Working harder and longer hours but don't seem to be getting ahead.** Forget the forty-hour workweek.

You are lucky if you only clock sixty hours. Your work load keeps increasing while your pay stagnates. Shifts in business downsize your department, and you are saddled with more and more responsibilities with fewer and fewer people to help. A promotion or a raise? Yeah, right.

► **Discouraged on whether change is possible.** They

say the grass is greener on the other side, but you are highly skeptical. All business is the same. Your peers at other companies face the same struggles you do, so why would you think it should be different anywhere else? Even if you had the opportunity to change, you

doubt if it's reasonable to expect a higher position, more money, passion, and career satisfaction.

▶ **Frustrated at the lack of advancement**

opportunities. When you first started your career, advancement was fast and furious. It felt like opportunity existed everywhere you looked. Now, moving up the career ladder feels the same as watching paint dry before you can apply the next coat. Problem is, the paint is thick and doesn't seem to be drying at all. So, you wait and wait. After all, the color is nice, just not perfect.

▶ **Increased stress and anxiety about the future.**

You blame the extra caffeine in the coffee or your sugar jolt in the afternoon for your anxiety attacks. Stress levels continue to increase as you ponder the fact what you're doing now may be your long-term future if you don't take action to change something.

▶ **Feeling under-utilized, unappreciated, battle weary, and burnt out.**

You know you have much more to offer, but no one seems to care. The stellar work you have accomplished has gone unnoticed. You picked and fought so many battles you have lost count of your win-loss percentage. You tell yourself to just keep your armor up because everyone is out to capture more territory at the expense of others. Co-workers are backstabbing one another. At this point, why bother to fight? Whatever you do, nothing makes a difference in getting your work noticed.

► **Sensing that you are trapped in current circumstances.** You have responsibilities—a spouse, kids, a mortgage (or two), car loans, student loans, saving for college, saving for retirement, lots and lots of bills. The list goes on. At least you know the devil you are dealing with. You feel it's impossible to make any career changes because of the financial load you carry. It's becoming more and more difficult to tap into your dreams.

► **Yearn to make a bigger impact, for your voice to be heard, and to get your groove back taking on work that energizes you.** Deep down inside, you know you are meant for greater things. There is still a fire in your belly—a desire—to do more, be more, and have more. The hunger and longing is there. You possess a vision of greatness, creating success on your terms, being your own boss. You just don't know how to get out of the OGIM funk.

Sunday Night Blues

For many with OGIM Syndrome, the symptoms flare up on Sunday evenings. After a weekend of fun with family and friends, when the clock strikes 5 pm on Sunday night, your energy level noticeably shifts.

Tomorrow is Monday. The harsh realization that in fewer than twelve hours you have to get up and go back to work that drains you starts to settle in. Slowly

the joy and happiness you had over the weekend begins to turn to anxiety. You ruminate about the five days of agony ahead of you. Tension builds in your body. Stress occupies your mind.

As you are washing the dishes from dinner, your four-year-old daughter bounds into the kitchen. She beams you a smile as she holds up her favorite toy asking you to play with her. Your mind is preoccupied. You don't hear her. She continues to plead with you, "Mommy, play with me—please." When you finally hear her little voice, as sweet as it is, it sounds like yet another demand on your time. The stress and anxiety about the week ahead rushes over you. You lash out, "No. Can't you see I'm busy?" Her beautiful smile turns upside down as she drops her head and slowly walks away. You stop washing the pot in your hand—the water continues to run in the sink. Immediately you wish you could take back that moment, and you realize something has to change.

Dishes are done, but feelings of despair continue to build within you. You move into your go-to avoidance technique—either watching mindless television or attempting to get lost in a book. You curl up on the couch. Your heart is racing, and your shoulders feel tight. How can you relieve the tension? Sleep seems impossible, so you reach for a glass of wine to ease the strain. That glass becomes two, then three, until you finish off the bottle. Dread for Monday morning.

You ask yourself, *What happened? How in the world did I get here? This isn't what I wanted or expected.* Monday morning depression is negatively impacting other aspects of your life. You can't deny it anymore. Your relationships are suffering. Your family is on edge. Your finances are a mess. You have no social life. You've gained weight and lost the energy to engage in the activities you love. You desperately want things to be different, but you just don't know where to start.

You're not alone.

In 2013, the Gallup Organization released the report "State of the American Workplace" based on data collected over the previous five years. Of the approximately one hundred million people in America who hold full-time jobs, seventy million workers are not engaged, meaning that the vast majority is not reaching their fullest potential. The majority of people in the workplace are just plain checked out. Studies have shown workers who are disengaged and emotionally detached from their work are less likely to be productive. Obviously this creates a considerable negative impact on a company's bottom line, but it also impacts an individual's bottom line. When business struggles, its employees struggle as well. Financially, the impact on the employee's bottom line appears as stagnating wages, no profit sharing or bonuses, and certainly no advancement opportunities.

Business cultures unknowingly escalate the problem when they allow groups of disengaged employees to congregate. Negative thoughts swirl throughout an organization, pulling individuals down further. At its worst, the culture can implode vigorously into a swirl of gossip, conflict, and contempt. News outlets focused on fear-based reporting add fuel to the fire with reports of financial collapse, despair, and constant worry about fluctuating markets. As an individual, it becomes more and more difficult to step outside these strong forces. Eventually, you find yourself backed into a corner with no foreseeable way out of the stress.

Perhaps you listened to your peers and well-meaning mentors to help you chart your career path. Each step did bring some form of success, but not fulfillment. Even with the financial benefits, you know deep down where you are in your career now is not where you want to be. You might have been able to deal with the situation for a while, but eventually OGIM Syndrome consumes your Sunday nights and leaks into every day of the week. It is costing you emotionally, mentally, financially, and even physically. You feel stuck trying to make the best of things as they are in your life.

Do not lose hope. There is a way out. OGIM Syndrome is a temporary condition that can be reversed. You know you are destined for greater things, but you just don't know where to start. I can help you. How do I know? I've been there—multiple times.

In the next chapter I will tell my story in more detail, but as a woman in a male-dominated industry, I often found myself stuck and held back by circumstances outside my control. But over the years I found ways to push through these road blocks and my feelings of disengagement. Remember that this won't always be a one-time fix—the symptoms can resurface throughout your career and you may have to jumpstart yourself again. Equipping yourself with the proper tools will make this process easier each time. For me, every time I shifted my mindset in this way, it resulted in my succeeding in creating opportunities, building influence, increasing my income substantially, and falling in love with Monday mornings again.

▶ FUEL FOR THOUGHT ◀

- Oh God It's Monday (OGIM) Syndrome is a common affliction affecting high-achieving, results-driven, mid-career women by stalling their career advancement and threatening their success.
- Symptoms include discouragement, frustration, despair, and feeling under-utilized, unappreciated, and burnt out.
- OGIM Syndrome affects more than just your career. It impacts your personal relationships, finances, health and wellness, and social life.

