Your Journey into Working Life

A Guide for Young Adults

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Introduction

Starting work is an exciting but sometimes challenging transition.

Working life differs from school in many ways.

You are expected to take responsibility, collaborate with different people, manage stress, and solve problems as they arise.

No one knows everything from the beginning, and making mistakes is a normal part of the learning process.

What matters most is how you learn from your experiences and continue to grow over time.

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Working life is not only about completing tasks and meeting expectations. It is also about building relationships, communicating effectively, leading yourself, and developing the ability to cope with challenges and setbacks.

What Employers Often Value

Many young people believe that the most important thing is to know everything from the very beginning.

In reality, employers often value other qualities just as much, if not more:



1. Being punctual and arriving on time
2. Showing respect toward colleagues and customers
3. Being willing to learn and develop new skills
4. Taking responsibility for mistakes
5. Being able to work well with others
6. Asking questions when something is unclear
7. Maintaining a positive and solution-focused attitude

Remember: Employers do not expect new employees to know everything.

They are often looking for people who are reliable, eager to learn, and willing to contribute positively to the workplace.

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Common Challenges in Working Life

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Situation 1: You Make a Mistake
(Remember: Everyone makes mistakes!)

Examples:
- You forget to complete a task.
- You enter incorrect information.
- You arrive late for work.

Common mistakes people make:
- Trying to hide the mistake.
- Blaming others.
- Becoming passive out of fear.



A better approach:
Acknowledge the mistake.
Inform the responsible person.
Suggest a solution.
Reflect on what you can do differently next time.

Example:
"I realized that I made a mistake with the order. I apologize for the error. I have already contacted the customer and am looking into how we can resolve the situation."

Common Challenges in Working Life

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Situation 2: Receiving Criticism
No one enjoys criticism, but feedback is a natural part of working life!



Try to:

- Listen until the other person has finished speaking.
- Avoid becoming defensive immediately.
- Ask questions if you do not understand.
- View feedback as an opportunity to grow and improve.

Example:
"I understand. Could you show me how you would like me to handle it next time?"

Common Challenges in Working Life

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Situation 3: Feeling Insecure
Many young people believe that everyone else knows exactly what they are doing.

The truth is that almost everyone feels unsure at times.

When you feel uncertain:

- Ask questions.
- Seek support.
- Write down instructions.
- Remember that learning new tasks takes time.



Common Challenges in Working Life

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Situation 4: Conflicts with Colleagues
People think differently, work differently, and have different personalities.

When conflicts arise:

- Speak directly with the person whenever possible.
- Describe the situation without blaming anyone.
- Listen to the other person's perspective.
- Focus on finding solutions.



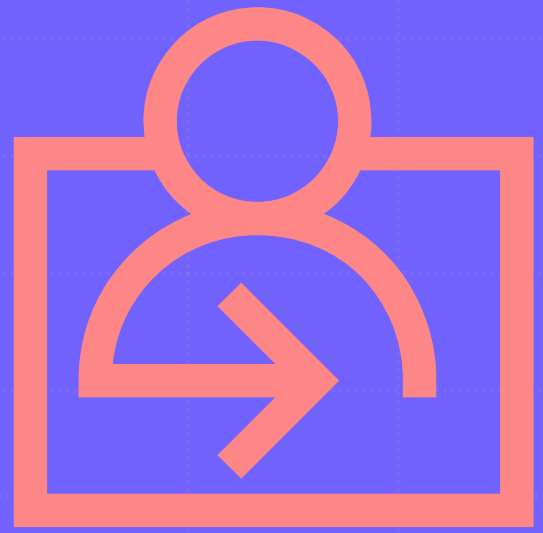
Example:
"When work tasks change without me being informed, I become uncertain about what is expected of me. Could we find a better way to communicate?"

Common Challenges in Working Life

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Situation 5: Stressful Periods
Sometimes workloads become heavy and demanding.

Signs of stress may include:
- Difficulty concentrating
- Headaches
- Irritability
- Fatigue



Strategies for managing stress:
- Prioritize the most important tasks first.
- Take short breaks.
- Ask for help early.
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish.

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Building Positive Workplace Relationships

Workplaces function best when people trust and support one another.

Try to:

- Greet people and be friendly.
- Show interest in others and get to know your colleagues.
- Keep your commitments and follow through on what you say you will do.
- Treat everyone with respect, regardless of their role or background.
- Offer help and support when you can.

Strong workplace relationships help create a positive work environment and make collaboration easier.

Many job opportunities and career advancements come through positive relationships, professional networks, and a good reputation.

Your Digital Identity

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Employers may sometimes look at information that you share online.

Reflect on the following questions:

- What do my social media profiles say about me?
- Would I be comfortable if a future employer saw this content?
- Are my comments and interactions respectful and professional?

Your digital identity is not about being perfect.

It is about being aware of how your online presence may be perceived by others. **Make thoughtful choices about what you share.**

Responsible online behavior can help you build a positive personal and professional reputation.

Self-Leadership

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Self-leadership means taking responsibility for your own behaviour, actions, and personal development.

It involves being aware of your strengths and areas for improvement, setting goals, and making conscious choices that help you grow both personally and professionally.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- What did I do well today?
- What could I improve?
- What do I need to learn?
- What goals do I have for the future?

People who succeed and grow in working life are often not those who know the most at the beginning, but those who continue to learn, adapt, and develop over time.

Remember: Growth is a journey. Every experience, challenge, and mistake is an opportunity to learn and become better.

When Something Doesn't Feel Right

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Sometimes you may encounter:

- Harassing or inappropriate comments
- Bullying
- Discrimination
- Unsafe working conditions
- Unreasonable demands or expectations

If this happens:

1. Document what has happened.
2. Speak with your supervisor or workplace mentor.
3. Contact HR, a union representative, or another trusted support person if needed.
4. Remember that you have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

In the end of this presentation, you find a list of Finnish Labor Unions in various sectors and some useful links!

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Final Message

No one starts their working life as an expert.

What matters most is not always succeeding, but having the courage to try, learning from mistakes, and continuing to grow.

Courage does not mean never feeling afraid or uncertain. It means taking the next step even when something feels new or unfamiliar.

Stay curious, ask questions, and remember that every experience contributes to your personal and professional development.

"You do not need to know everything when you start. The most important thing is to be willing to learn."

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For New Employees

As an employee in Finland you have both rights and obligations, and **working life is governed by different rules.** You can find out more about this from this link:

Employee's rights and obligations - Career and employment - Job Market Finland.

Find your Union: SAK Liitot.fi or Which trade union should I join? - Työelämään.fi check the three last slides to get a clue on which Union might be the right for you.

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A breakdown of key Finnish labor unions by sector includes:

Manufacturing & Industry (SAK) Trade unions by sector - SAK

Industrial Union (*Teollisuusliitto*): Represents workers in metal, chemical, wood, and other industrial manufacturing sectors.
Paperworkers' Union (*Paperiliitto*): Represents employees in paper, cardboard, pulp mills, and paper conversion.
Finnish Electrical Workers' Union (*Sähköliitto*): Represents electrical and automation workers.
Finnish Food Workers' Union (*SEL*): Represents workers in the food and drink processing industries.
Finnish Construction Trade Union (*Rakennusliitto*): Represents workers in building, infrastructure, and asphalting.

Transport & Logistics (SAK)

Finnish Transport Workers' Union (*AKT*): Represents truck drivers, port workers, and road transport employees.
Finnish Post and Logistics Union (*PAU*): Represents postal, delivery, and logistics workers.
Finnish Seafarers' Union (*FSU*): Represents maritime and inland waterway personnel.
Finnish Aviation Union (*IAU*): Represents ground handling, airport, and aviation service staff.
Railway Union (*RAU*): Represents locomotive drivers and traffic control staff.
Finnish Air Line Pilots' Association (*SLL*): Represents airline pilots.

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Public Sector, Healthcare & Welfare (SAK, STTK, Akava)

Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors (*JHL*): SAK-affiliated union for municipal, state, and wellbeing services county workers (including security, transport, and cleaning staff).
Union of Health and Social Care Services (*Tehy*): STTK-affiliated union for registered nurses, midwives, and public health nurses.
Finnish Union of Practical Nurses (*SuPer*): STTK-affiliated union representing practical nurses and early childhood/social care staff.
Trade Union *Jyty*: STTK-affiliated union representing municipal and private sector administrative and service staff.
Trade Union of Education in Finland (*OAJ*): Represents teachers and educators across all school levels.
Negotiation Organisation for Public Sector Professionals (*JUKO*): Akava's peak organization for high-level experts in the public sector.

Private Services & Commerce (SAK, STTK)

Service Union United (*PAM*): SAK-affiliated union for retail, hospitality, restaurant, cleaning, and private security workers.
Trade Union Pro: STTK-affiliated union representing clerical staff, IT experts, and supervisors in the private sector.
ERTO: STTK-affiliated union for private sector professionals, employees, and experts in social services, IT, and logistics.

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Culture, Media & Sports (SAK, Akava)

Theatre and Media Employees in Finland (*Teme*): SAK-affiliated union for theatre, film, and media professionals.
Finnish Musicians' Union (*Suomen Muusikkojen Liitto*): Represents musicians, freelancers, and orchestra members.
Finnish Elite Athletes' Union (*SHU*): SAK-affiliated union representing professional athletes.

Academic & Managerial Professions (Akava)

Academic Engineers and Architects in Finland (*TEK*): Represents master's-level engineers and architects.
Finnish Union of University Professors (*FUURT* / university unions): Represents academic researchers and teaching staff.

Good Luck on Your Journey!



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