

Do Not Stop Seeing Opportunity: Step Outside Your Mind's Comfort Zone and Begin to Dream

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Several years ago, I was sitting with someone in Carl's Steakhouse in Detroit coaching him about his [job search](#). The person was telling me about how he wanted to get a job and start a new career. He was in his early 50s and hadn't had a real job for over two years. During that time, he'd been doing landscaping work around Detroit and not making very much money. The job was way beneath his skill level. He had a master's degree from a top college and a variety of semi-important jobs before getting laid off a few years before.

The person sounded quite serious about a new career, and my dinner went from ordinary to exciting in just a few minutes. I love talking about careers and jobs, and when people are ready to ask my advice, I am eager to share it. I knew in the next few minutes I could literally give this person the key to going from ordinary to extraordinary and having the career and life he wanted. I was excited because so many people do not know how to [look for a job](#) and get one. If this person would let me, I could help them go from mowing lawns to working in an air conditioned skyscraper somewhere in Detroit. I was about to provide the person the key to make this happen.

The key to the lives we want is all in our minds. Everything that happens to you is the result of how you think about your life and career. Your entire existence is shaped by how you use your mind. You can use your mind to your advantage or you can use it to your detriment.

What I failed to realize in this conversation, however, is so many people have long ago given up on their dreams. This person was no different. The more we talked, the more I realized he'd given up on life and his potential long, long ago.

When we're young we all have wonderful dreams. During a camping trip when I was 13 years old, the Headmaster of the school I attended sat down a group of about 10 boys, including myself, around a campfire. He asked each of us what our dreams were and who we wanted to be when we were 35. Some people wanted to be doctors and cure cancer. Others wanted to be astronauts. Others wanted to be the CEO of a major company, and still others dreamed of winning Wimbledon as tennis players. I remember this so well because I, too, had great dreams. I believe I may have said I wanted to be President of the United States.

I still know some of those people who were sitting around that campfire, and while I do not remember what each of their specific dreams were today, I am confident none of them are living the wonderful dreams they had for themselves when they were so young. (I still have not given up on my dream and will never give up on it. I want to inspire you as much as I want to inspire our country as to what is possible!) What happened between now and then that made them forget about their dreams? Why did they suddenly stop dreaming and pursuing those goals? What was it that got in the way for them?

I believe somewhere along the way many people stop trying and expecting so much of themselves because they have been disappointed and experienced "pain." They do not want to be disappointed again. People have a "comfort zone" they stay inside that demands they do not step outside it. Despite not living up to their full potential, people stay inside this "comfort zone". They surround themselves with people and a life that is not going to disappoint them.

People will always do a lot more to avoid pain than they will to experience pleasure. Once people know certain actions will prevent some disappointment, or a certain action may cause some stress, many will avoid all of this stress by not acting at all. These people have stopped pursuing their dreams.

Nothing is more harmful or destructive than not pursuing your dreams of getting the best job and making the most of yourself. By making the most of yourself, you can have the life you want. Whatever your definition of success is – whether it's making a lot of money, helping a lot of people, being very respected, or having a lot of power – it's all within your grasp. The only thing holding you back is you, and what you believe your capabilities are. You need to develop the habit of focusing on the positive and the life you can have for yourself. What we focus on is what we get.

As I sat there in the steakhouse, I became increasingly excited and animated about this person's prospects. I started telling him about the things I thought he needed to do. A lot of what I was telling him was about believing in himself and making sure he followed through with his results. I told him despite all of the disappointments he'd had in his life, that:

1. Today is a new day.
2. You can choose to start your career and be successful now.
3. There are opportunities in the market if you know where to look.
4. You are smart, intelligent and skilled.
5. You do not need to think about the past. You should focus on the future.
6. You can bring incredible value to any organization.
7. You need to tell an employer where they can create value.

After several minutes of talking to this person, I realized something quite amazing: *He'd given up completely*. He was talking about how he wanted to get a job, but regardless of what I was about to say, he'd given up on going after the career he wanted. While he was talking about how he wanted to get a new job and change his life, deep down he did not believe he could accomplish it. He was afraid of accomplishing this because he did not want to experience pain.

The conversation continued for some time, and I told the person various different methods he could use to look for a job. As I talked, he frowned. He started picking at his food in a nervous way. I do not think he really wanted to hear, or understand, all of the opportunities available to him. Instead, he wanted to talk about his desire to get a job, but not take steps to go after one. He started giving all sorts of excuses about why none of what I was talking about applied to him:

1. He was too old.
2. He did not have a good enough resume.
3. He had not gone to the right schools.
4. People would never hire him because they would find out he was fired from a job years ago.

The excuses and reasons he would never get hired were so numerous, I cannot even remember them all. (One reason I cannot remember them all is because I simply do not want to allow my mind to focus on so many negative thoughts.) We all have excuses for why we are not living the lives we want, and he was not different. In fact, I could have sat there for hours listening to excuse after excuse.

The conversation I had with him is no different than the many conversations I've had with a variety of people over the years. Recently, I had this same conversation with a Wall Street titan I was coaching, who was used to making \$5,000,000+ a year. This person's assessment was there would never be another job in his lifetime because the market was so bad. The person also offered the insight that America was bankrupt, all its institutions were corrupt, there was no money in the financial system, and virtually every bank in the United States was headed for failure. Accordingly, this person decided he would never work again. After getting off the phone with this person, I needed to go for a run because his assessment of our country was so depressing I needed to think about something else.

If you look at the world through dark glasses, this is what you see. The same energy you think with is what will come back to you. Thoughts are things, and the energy out there is something we simply cannot understand. The power of our minds is an incredible thing. Have you ever been with someone and had an idea of what they were thinking about – were you completely right? Have you ever had a premonition? Do you believe there are forces which people simply do not understand?

I do.

The one force I truly believe in is if we focus almost exclusively on negative things, that is exactly what the world is going to be. We will see a world that is negative, and this energy will come back to us. I am sure the Wall Street titan I was coaching is still sitting around thinking about how bad things are. What good is this going to do him? Why not go out there and look for a job?

I charge thousands of dollars for coaching people on how to get a job, but my coaching methods are not that complex. Being a good coach, in my opinion, is simply reminding people of who they are, and then ensuring they take full advantage of that person. Everyone has such incredible skills within them waiting to be tapped. While I give people an aptitude test to assess their work skills, the majority of my coaching is spent making sure the person focuses on his strengths and then takes action. This is the gist of a very expensive coaching program. It's what I do, what anyone can do, and what you can do even without hiring me to coach you. You just need to realize who you are and ensure you do not give up on your dreams. Then you need to take specific actions to get a job.

When I look at the job market around me, I see incredible amounts of opportunity. I see so much opportunity that watching people who are unemployed makes me crazy. The idea that people spend a lot of time searching for a job makes no sense to me. 99.9% of people go about searching for a job the wrong way. Regardless of your profession, there is a very good possibility there are tons of jobs available for you (and the number of jobs open to you is virtually limitless if you are geographically flexible). You just need to know where to look.

Getting a job is very, very simple. I get upset when I think about people not finding jobs because they are out there waiting for you. People look for jobs for years. It is so stupid!

1. There are jobs on large commercial job boards (which is where everyone is searching, so it is not always the best place to look).
2. There are jobs in newspapers all over the United States, large and small (there are so many newspapers out there it is hard to count. People need to see the jobs in all of them!.)
3. There are jobs on association websites. (There are so many association websites it is difficult to count. There are huge volumes of associations in libraries, and most of these associations have websites.)
4. There are jobs on small job boards (there are so many small job boards it is hard to count. The numbers of small job boards are phenomenal. They pop up daily.).
5. There are jobs on employer websites (the majority of employers now put their jobs on their websites instead of advertising them. Very few people look there! It is crazy to me.).
6. There are jobs on bulletin boards (there are jobs out there on bulletin boards all over the country.).
7. There are jobs which are open but not advertised. You can find, and often get, a job by doing a mass mailing to employers in a given area (which is often 1000s of letters, but it works). This is an incredible way to get a job. Many employers "informally" have job openings they are not advertising, but occasionally interview people for, if they get a decent referral. Other employers always look at resumes as they come across their desk, and will bring people in if it looks like a good fit. Still other employers will file your resume away, if you send it to them, and call you if something comes up. Doing a targeted mailing of your resume is an incredible way to get business – and it works! I am so enthusiastic about this method of searching for a job because it virtually guarantees you will have exposed yourself to every employer for whom you can possibly work. With multiple interviews and opportunities, you will have a wide variety of offers at different salary levels, have the opportunity to work in firms with different cultures, and more.

I have literally dedicated my life to helping people find jobs through these search methods because I know they work, and they have worked every time someone has "gone all out" and followed my advice. Through [EmploymentCrossing.com](#) you can see virtually all the jobs on numbers 1 through 6 (above). On [Hound.com](#), you can look at jobs just on employer websites. And if you do a mailing (the most incredible way to get a job I know of), you can approach every single employer in whom you might be interested. You can do a mass mailing through another one of our companies, [EmploymentAuthority.com](#). This is the way to get jobs. You need to ensure you track down every available job, and this is how you can do it. Anyone can do this, but so few people do.

In order to get these jobs, you also need to package yourself correctly and know how to go after them. This is one real benefit of coaching people often do not get on their own. For example, I was coaching an executive recently who had an [exceptional resume](#), but was having a difficult time finding a job. He was used to sitting behind a desk and not going out a lot. Prior to this job, he had a position in business development. I told him he needed to focus on business development in

packaging himself because we are in a tough economy, and he needed to look like a "revenue producer" and not a "cost center" to potential employers. I made sure he understood he needed to package himself as someone who would give incredible value to his next organization, and not someone who would simply take.

Most people never take all of these actions to try and get a job, however. I think it's because they simply do not believe in themselves. They will somehow argue that approaching employers through a mass mailing is a horrible idea, that applying for so many jobs is a horrible idea, and doing so will hurt their reputation. To me, such thinking is incredible because the person is already unemployed! What is the worst thing that can happen? Someone can say, "I cannot believe this person applied to work here?" This makes absolutely no sense to me.

The human brain works to avoid pain. There are so many extraordinary people whose careers and lives are totally paralyzed because they are working so incredibly hard to avoid pain. They associate taking action with pain, so instead of chasing the life they are entitled to and deserve, they do nothing at all. Positive thinking and the life you want requires focusing on what you do have and what you can become.

This is a word of advice for you. You need to always be packaging yourself as someone who will give far more than you receive to your organization. This is a secret that will change your career and the way you market yourself forever. Far too many people focus on what an employer can give them, rather than focusing on what they can give.

The point is there are tons of jobs, and the way most people look is simply not conducive to finding one. The process of finding a job is not difficult if you know what to do, but most people do not give their all to a job search. Most people simply give up and do not try their hardest. Somewhere along the line, I think people come to believe they should expect very little so they will not be disappointed.

Not concentrating on the positive and what you can do with the limitless possibilities which exist is the ticket to the destruction of your dreams. You never want to destroy your dreams. The power to live your life and career is within your grasp, and you can have it right now if you want. It is very simple. There are rules to success. Find them, go after them, and claim your life right now.

THE LESSON

Nothing is more destructive than not pursuing your dreams, and in order to do this you must step outside of your comfort zone. The way you use your mind shapes your entire existence; focusing on positive things and your goals, therefore, does much to make those things a reality. Similarly, focusing on negative things can actually invite those elements into your life and hinder your success. The power to live your dreams is easily within grasp if you can harness your mind's incredible power.

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