

## Immanuel Kant and What Good Hiring Managers Should Look For

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Many people who make hiring decisions really do not know what they are doing. In fact, they often make mistake after mistake when hiring.

- They put too much emphasis on skills and experience.
- They are overly impressed with interviewing skills.
- They think in terms of who is going to work the hardest.

Are these sorts of things important? Of course they are. But the single most important aspect of hiring is evaluating the person's unique outlook on the world. If the person does not have a positive outlook on the world, the following are likely to happen:

- The person will bring down the morale of the people they work with.
- The person will harm the company through their negative outlook.
- The person will abandon the job for something that looks better.

When people go into interviews, they are trained to act like they have a good outlook. The best interviewees know how to say all the right things. But when it comes right down to it, it is generally very easy to see if the person is likely to do well in their next job: *Do they have a habit of being optimistic, helping the company, and improving even when the grass may look better elsewhere?*

The reason this is so important is that eventually the grass will look greener elsewhere no matter what job we are in. One company may be able to pay a higher salary. Another company may be considered a "hotter" place to work. Another company may be considered a place that is more fun to work. When you start evaluating everything around you and comparing apples to oranges, another job is always going to look like a better thing—eventually. It is for this reason that many people tend to move between jobs (and often relationships) with some frequency. In terms of how these people look at the world, they can never actually find happiness.

Hiring people who do good work and are always able to find happiness should be the number one objective of hiring managers.

Several years ago, I was on the freeway going to work when a man jumped to his death off a highway overpass around 20 cars in front of me. For around an hour I sat in the car in traffic while police and accident scene investigators cleared up the scene. It was not a pleasant scene in the least.

While the accident happened far enough in front of me that I did not see the man's face, the image of the man's body coming off the bridge in his last few moments of life sticks in my mind to this day. There was simply nothing happy, or inspiring, about what I saw. It was a tragic end to someone's life brought about by their inability to see the happiness in the world.

Everyone looks at the world around them in different ways. Take two separate people and put them in an exactly same situation and they will have opposite impressions. Some will consider what they are seeing to be bad; others will consider what they are seeing to be quite good. It is like this with jobs as well. There are people who are able to see the good in jobs and there are those who never see the good in jobs.

Metaphysics is the study of reality and asks questions about (1) what is there (2) what are the features and relations of things? One of the most famous studies of metaphysics was done by Immanuel Kant in the [Critique of Pure Reason](#). Here, Kant argued that metaphysics can only be scientific if it describes not the way the world is itself, but how we experience the world. Kant believed that one can never actually know how the world is in itself. For example, space and time are not objective aspects of the world as it is in itself, but are forms of our experience of the world.

Under Kant's interpretation, reality is simply our experience of the world. It follows from this that since two people will perceive the world in different ways, each person has a different reality. Some of our realities can be very positive and inspiring—other realities can be nightmares. The key to this is that we are all experiencing reality in a different way. Experience in structure by our minds and everyone's mind is different. Kant describes this sort of "experience knowledge" that is gained from experience as "a posteriori" knowledge.

The man who jumped off the bridge could have decided that he had many reasons to be happy. For example, he could have been excited about the good weather in Los Angeles, the relatively good economy at the time, the proximity to the beach, and the fact that if he decided to, he could certainly improve his life and standing in the world. Instead, the man had come to the conclusion that the world was not a happy place and that he no longer wanted any part of it.

I have been a recruiter and in the career business most of my working life. I make my living when people are investigating finding new jobs. I have made a ton of hiring mistakes in my career; however, the thing I have seen time and time again is that it is very easy to tell if someone will be successful in their next job. Look at how long they were at their previous job. No job is fun all the time. The key to success, in my opinion, is if people have the power to stick it out in jobs and find happiness wherever they are. This is all about how you look at the world.

### THE LESSON

Many people in hiring positions make mistakes because they do not truly know what they are looking for, and place too much emphasis on skills and experience. Instead, they should focus on a person's outlook; those with a negative worldview can bring down the morale of those around them and ultimately harm the entire organization. Learn to find happiness

whatever your job or position, and you will make yourself more appealing to top hiring managers.

---

<https://www.harrisonbarnes.com/>