



Shake Things Up, Do What's Best for You, and Be Grateful

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Several years ago, in the few days before Christmas and New Year's Eve, I went home from Los Angeles to Detroit to see my family. At the time, I was practicing law and also working as a law professor. I had brought a bunch of final exams home with me to grade and sat there grading papers and tallying up my students' final grades for the class for a week or so.

I was not having a good week. I had been working nonstop without a vacation for probably more than two years while practicing law. During that time, I had seen numerous people I worked with get fired or let go for seemingly no reason. I had seen people who seemed to have a massive lack of optimism and excitement about their jobs and futures. I had been working in an environment where people did not cooperate and, instead, viewed each other as competitors.

The entire thing struck me as a fairly strange world, and I was unsure what would become of me if I remained in it. Least but not last, sitting at a desk more than twelve hours a day, I was having a difficult time fitting into my clothes because the last thing I was able to do was get to the gym.

There were just not a lot of warm and fuzzy feelings going around where I was. My body and psyche were all being punished.

A few weeks prior to my vacation, I had a horrible experience that I will never forget. I was tasked with writing a memo for a Swiss bank about an extremely complex issue of international law. The work was important because there were hundreds of millions of dollars at issue and tens of thousands of people rioting in a developing country about getting access to this money. As I worked on the issue, I could see that my feedback would have an impact on world events.

I went into work on a Wednesday morning and did not leave the office until Sunday at 3:00 a.m. I e-mailed the memo to the partner as I was instructed to and went home. I was so frazzled and wound up that I could not get to sleep until around 7:00 a.m. At 8:30 a.m. the phone rang. My wife had to shake me very hard to wake me up. The partner was calling from her car phone on the way to church:

"Where's the memo?!" she demanded.

"I e-mailed it to you a few hours ago."

"I don't have it. Go back to the office and resend it. I will read it when I get out of church."

A few hours later she called back to discuss the memo. She had not received it initially because all the servers in the office were reset every Sunday in the small hours of the morning. We discussed the memo and she requested changes, so I went back into the office to work on it.

At one point, I passed out because I had not slept in four days. I hit my arm so hard when I passed out that I still have nerve damage.

After this experience, I asked myself, is it worth working like this the rest of my career? One all-nighter is fine. ... Maybe even two all-nighters in a row. Four is too much. It makes no sense.

About four or five days into my vacation, I started having a difficult time sleeping at night. I also started waking up after getting to sleep and wriggling around and not being able to go back to sleep. When working, I was usually so exhausted that falling asleep was not that difficult, but here, something was different. I was not able to fall asleep because I was very unhappy. I was unhappy with my job and it filled me with a sense of dread.

At the time, in 1999, I was earning a base salary of \$170,000 a year at a firm that paid the highest salary in Los Angeles. I had recently purchased a home in a nice neighborhood and had been married only a few months. Nevertheless, I was unhappier than I had ever been in my life. Unable to sleep and knowing that something needed to change, I pondered what could be wrong in my life. I wondered if it was my diet. I wondered if I was unhappy being married. I went through one thing after another, and after days of tossing and turning I realized it could be only one thing: *It was my job.*

I did not say anything to my wife or parents. How could anyone in my shoes be disappointed with his career? Despite what I had achieved, I knew I had to quit my job. I did not know when I would be quitting my job, but I knew I would be doing so sooner or later. I had to.

A few months previously, I had leased a small office down the street from my new home. I had also taken out a small advertisement in the Yellow Pages for what I figured would be my new little law firm. The guy who leased me the office was a personal injury attorney who had gotten an LL.M. in taxation from New York University. He too had worked in a large law firm before starting his own firm. He could tell exactly what I was doing and was somewhat sympathetic.

In my Yellow Pages advertisement, I called the law firm "A. Harrison Barnes & Associates." At the time, with the exception of some college friends, most people called me "Andy" or "Andrew" and not "Harrison." By using "Harrison" for the name of the law firm, I was trying to protect my \$170,000 a year job in case I decided I wanted to continue working there. I figured that if anyone saw my ad and I backed out of opening my own firm that, of course, I would end up losing my job.

I knew I could make a living as an attorney working on my own, but I was not all that enthusiastic about opening my own law firm. The practice of law just was not that interesting to me. However, I knew that I needed to change things if I wanted to be truly happy. I was by no means happy in the life I had created for myself.

Still not mentioning anything to my wife and family, I went back to work on January 3, 2000, knowing I had to quit. My advertisement was scheduled to come out that week, I had hired an answering service, and I knew I could not continue in the job I was in. The stress of doing something I did not want to do was too much.

I sent a short e-mail to the people I was working for in the law firm:

Gentlemen,

After much deliberation, I have concluded that my last day here will be two weeks from today. I do not have any firm career plans right now; however, I may be opening my own small law firm.

I have enjoyed working with you and appreciate everything you have done for me. Regards,

Andy

Over the next few weeks, nothing happened. None of the partners I was working for said anything to me. In fact, they just came in and kept giving me assignments as if nothing had changed. I dutifully did my work but was somewhat taken aback. I decided that my bosses must not have received my e-mail. A few days before my last day, a partner came into my office and gave me an assignment that would take me at least a few weeks to complete.

"Did you receive my e-mail that my last day is Friday?" I asked him.

"Of course," he said. "I've known what you were planning to do for months. We share a secretary and I have a good one. A few months ago some guy called about delivering a photocopier to your office. Remember: You always need a good secretary."

With that, he walked out of my office.

I was absolutely mystified. It was as if he still did not realize I was leaving. I set to work on his assignment.

I had told one of my co-workers about the ad for my new law firm, which had been published by that point. He had promised that he would tell no one about the ad, but of course he told everyone about it. I quickly learned that you shouldn't trust people at work with secrets. After that ad came out, people started doing stuff like saying "Hey Harrison," in the hallways. It was a bit embarrassing but I dealt with it.

In case you are not familiar with the dynamic, attorneys at large law firms believe they are vastly superior to those in small law firms. The competition for jobs in a large law firm is fiercer than at a small law firm, and therefore they think they have better skills. Given that, my starting my own little law firm was considered a "fall from grace" and a move from respectability to something less respected in the eyes of the attorneys I had been working with.

If you want to be your own person, though, you need to do what feels right for you. You simply cannot worry about what others think. You need to do what you are comfortable with.

Many people spend their entire lives afraid to take risks. Afraid to be who they want to be. Afraid to take action. You need to be the person you want to be and if you see yourself going in a certain direction naturally, then you need to allow yourself to go that way. That is your heart and spirit telling you something.

Around 11 a.m. on what I thought was my final day of work, the head of the law firm walked into my office and sat down. He smiled at me and without saying anything else said, "What are you doing?"

"I guess I am going to start my own law firm," I told him.

He stared at me quite deeply for at least ten seconds, then said, "No, you're not. If you start your own law firm you will have a hard time ever getting a job in a major law firm like this again. What's the problem with this job?"

"I cannot imagine a future here," I told him. "People who have been here more than fifteen years are losing their jobs. There is a lot of tension in the air. Most people do not seem happy. The firm does not have a consistent amount of work. I am not sure what else to do." I probably said a lot more than that. Knowing me, I would have shared my concerns with him for at least five minutes.

After I was done airing my grievances, he said one of the kindest and most incredible things he could have:

"Listen, I agree with many of the things you are saying. It also sounds like the last thing I am going to be able to do is talk you into staying. But let me tell you something: If you are unhappy here you need to explore your options and talk to other law firms. You should be able to go across the street to Latham & Watkins or another firm and get a job fairly quickly. If you do not like things here—then find a place with greener pastures. You are never going to be able to get a job with a firm like that again if you just walk out of here like you are planning to do today."

To my astonishment, he then told me to continue working at the law firm until at least March until I found a job at a law firm I liked better. I was amazed by this. He also suggested I call legal recruiters and start talking with them about alternative jobs.

Within a few days I was meeting with legal recruiters and started learning about what they did for a living. The best I could tell, they each had a certain number of contacts and jobs. At the time, many of them seemed to be successful at what they were doing. Yet, as I watched how most of them were doing their jobs, I realized that most were not running their businesses all that professionally:

- They could not create persuasive arguments about why a law firm should hire their candidates.
- They did not understand the dynamics of different law firms all that well.
- They viewed their work as a "lifestyle choice" that allowed them to not work that hard.
- Most worked from home.
- The recruiters who were attorneys were not the sort of people that could ever get a job in a major law firm.
- Most were concerned about making money and not about helping people.

I could go on and on about the things that I saw they were doing wrong. I was amazed. The more I saw how the process worked, the more enthusiastic I became about changing it.

Nevertheless, I decided to delve into my job search full force and talk to lots of law firms. Over the next month or so, I had probably thirty interviews. I went on callback interviews, lunches, and so forth practically every day of the week. The market in early 2000 was probably the best it has ever been, and I rode it like a tidal wave. I was traveling all around the country and having a pretty good time with all the interviews.

Very quickly into the entire process, though, I realized that I would not be taking any offers. Instead, I was more interested in learning about the recruiting world. I started building little databases of all the openings and quizzing my recruiters on which openings they knew about. Most knew about less than 20% of them. I started interviewing the hiring partners inside of law firms to see which recruiters they liked the most and why. I started asking the recruiting office at the law firms where I was applying to see the letters that had been written on my behalf. Most of the letters were so typo-ridden and filled with factual and other errors I could not believe it. One letter said I had gone to the University of Minnesota for law school when in fact I

have never been there in my life.

The more I saw how the recruiters worked, the more I realized that this was something I would be good at. By this point, I had given most of my workload back to the partners and was enjoying being paid \$170,000 while I did an all-out job search. I even received a \$25,000 bonus at the beginning of January. Things were going well.

Then it hit me: I needed to start recruiting.

It must have been in the second week of January when I started recruiting while simultaneously practicing law. During lunch or on days when I did not have any interviews, I would cold call various people I considered marketable. I was good at it. Very quickly I had a small stable of candidates I was marketing to firms. I was having lots of fun. Meanwhile, my new wife was extremely puzzled trying to understand what exactly was going on.

In between my interviews, traveling, and recruiting, I was also busy doing “intake” at the new law firm I had started. I would meet potential clients in a large conference room at the office I had rented. Before I took out the infamous ad, I had researched the practice areas that were most likely to lead to my getting business. I settled on (1) family law, (2) criminal law, and (3) personal injury. I crafted three small ads (which collectively were scheduled to cost me \$900/month) to attract clients in these practice areas. Within days of the ads coming out, the clients started coming in right off the street:

- One woman was a waitress in a restaurant and confided in me she was sleeping with two cooks, a waiter, and the manager. She also had two kids and was not sure whether the second one was her husband’s. She wanted a divorce.
- One man worked in an animal hospital and was fired for not coming to work on time. He wanted to sue his boss because he believed the termination was due to the fact that his boss was “hot for him,” although he had no evidence of this.
- One kid was stopped coming back from Vegas drunk and with cocaine in his system. He wanted me to defend him in court.
- One mother came to my office hysterical, claiming that a teacher was biting her 5-year-old son at school. To my astonishment, this turned out to be true and within days I was receiving threats from a giant law firm hired by the school system.
- One man (an extremely prominent and well-known person) came to me seeking a divorce. He had been married ten years, had an 8-year-old daughter, and had only had intercourse with his wife once. They slept in separate bedrooms their entire marriage.

As I listened to this drama, I began to feel more and more like I did not want to practice law with my own firm. Many people had retained me, and within a few weeks I had at least \$15,000 in various checks from people seeking help. Since I was not confident this was something I wanted to spend the rest of my life doing, I did not deposit any of the checks. Nevertheless, I started working on the cases while also employed at the law firm.

While I was recruiting, I also used my middle name since my first name was still on the law firm website. In addition, I had the benefit of having an answering service for “A. Harrison Barnes & Associates”—which I also used for my recruiting firm. I even managed to put up a small website for the recruiting firm within a few days of launching it.

A moment soon came that I will never forget. I was in downtown Los Angeles interviewing with a law firm that no longer exists, Riordan & McKenzie. It happened that one of my recruitment candidates already worked at this firm and was looking to get out. When I walked into the law firm my worst fears were quickly realized: I was handed an interview schedule and discovered that I was scheduled to interview with my own candidate that day. This was the same person I was representing in his search for a job.

In short order, I realized that the candidate I was interviewing with had figured out that I was also his recruiter. He had told a few of the associates I was interviewing with about what was going on. I was sitting in an office waiting for my second interview when I heard a few people outside the door talking: *“We’ve got to cover for him. A recruiter interviewing with one of his own candidate’s for a job? This must be the most amazing thing that has ever happened ...”*

I do not know how I did it, but I managed to plow through some six hours of interviews. I had a very awkward lunch. My final interview, with a partner who was a former U.S. attorney, walked me to the elevator after the interview. As we were waiting for the elevator, he said something that almost made my knees buckle:

“I guess you’ve got to make some hard decisions now.”

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“Well, the feedback we have received from your interviews today is that you would be good at both recruiting and practicing law. You’ve got to decide which is right for you.”

Those people at the law firm were some cool people. A few days later they called me back for another meeting. I never went. I was pretty confident that it was going to be an offer.

After a month or so of interviewing, having gotten offers from some nice law firms and having established both a functioning law practice and fledgling recruiting firm, I told the law firm I was leaving to start my own law practice.

On my last day with my old firm, I had enough legal work at the new firm to keep me busy for weeks. Despite having so much work, beyond my retainer checks I did not have any money. I took out a home-equity loan for \$17,000 (the most I could qualify for) that I figured would keep me going for some time if I decided not to continue with the law practice. Now I had enough money to stay afloat, and I knew that everything would work out. My wife, who was skeptical at first, became very enthusiastic when I explained to her that I had weeks of work to do and in all likelihood would be making a better living as a solo practitioner than I had working in the law firm. More importantly, I would be happy working on my own.

I had purchased some law books so that I had a decent little legal library and I was ready to go on my first Monday morning as a free man away from the law firm. I sat down at 8:00 a.m. and organized all of my work in front of me—ready to jump in.

At the time, people were still using faxes a lot more than they were using e-mail. I had also placed a bunch of small advertisements online on various job sites, and every minute or two my fax machine would ring and a new resume and cover letter would come over the fax. Each time a new resume would arrive, I would walk over to the fax machine and get it. I would look at the resume and think to myself: “They would be perfect for that one job I saw,” or “I wonder what this other firm would say about this person.” On top of that, my phone kept ringing with calls from attorneys, law firms, and others.

By the end of my first day of work, I had done zero legal work and spent all of my time in recruiting-related pursuits.

On my second day of work, I found myself shooting out of bed at 5:00 a.m. because I was excited to do some recruiting

work. Overnight, more faxes had come and there were more resumes to be reviewed. In all my years of practicing law, I had never gotten up that early to do work. I knew that I must be doing something that I really enjoyed for me to have gotten up so early to work.

It was the same thing the next day ... and then the day after that.

By the end of my first week, I had not done any legal work whatsoever. My wife seemed concerned. She did not understand why we had all these retainer checks (which had not been deposited) and why I was working at a job I had not been trained for (recruiting) when I already had a job I could be doing (legal work).

By the end of my second week of work, I decided that I needed to get rid of all of my cases and concentrate on the legal-recruiting work exclusively. Most of the cases were easy to get rid of. For example, there were lots of people that were interested in the personal injury cases. There was also a lot of interest in the drunk driving cases. The one case I was most concerned about, however, was the complex divorce case I had involving the public figure. For this case I knew I needed to find a good attorney.

I have noticed that in India when you give beggars money, they usually take the money and turn around and practically run away. They do not say thank you and simply disappear. It is as if they are afraid you will change your mind. This has always amazed me because I always want to help beggars. However, it is their lack of gratitude that makes it somewhat distasteful giving them money.

I noticed when I gave business to attorneys in the United States they were like the Indian beggars. They were not thankful and, instead, acted like complete jerks. I would do something nice to give them business (expecting nothing in return) and they might fire me off a letter like the following:

Dear Mr. Barnes,

This confirms you have given our firm the matter of X v. Z. We owe you no compensation for your having given us this case. There is no relation between our firm either implied or explicit and we owe you nother.

Sincerely,

X. Attorney

I found this amazing. Out of the ten or so clients I gave away, only one attorney (a very nice drunk-driving attorney named Miles Berman--he has ads all over LA calling himself the "Top Gun DUI Attorney") ever thanked me for referring them a case. I could not understand how people could be so rude despite my helping them. I never cashed a single one of the checks I received from my legal client and gave away all of my cases.

The final straw for me came when I gave away my big divorce case. This case would have resulted in fees well in excess of \$200,000. The case was extremely complex and had multiple businesses, lots of property, and other factors involved. In order to find the best attorney for this case, I turned to the State Bar of California Mentor Program and called someone who held himself out as being an expert in family law and willing to advise young attorneys. After some discussion and an in-person meeting, he told me he would take the case.

Despite his being "an expert" I realized he had never handled a case as big as I was giving him. An estate of \$100 million was involved and the client was a public figure. I knew that this was going to be the most important and biggest case of this attorney's career. I could practically hear him salivating on the phone when I started telling him about it. I also think he thought it was a joke.

I arranged an in-person meeting with my client and the attorney one Saturday morning. It was one of the more memorable meetings of my life. The meeting started out innocuously enough, but within a few minutes I realized that the attorney I was giving the case to was afraid that I might try to take the case back. He started insulting me in front of the client, trying to make me look bad and flat out telling the client he had made a huge mistake trusting me with the case. In his eagerness to make me look bad, he even started reciting various legal-oriented rules and procedures to make himself look like an expert. At least a few of the things he said were wrong.

While I am not an expert in family law by any means, when I took the case I made sure I knew what I was doing. I probably spent thirty hours familiarizing myself with the law and studied everything I could so I did not miss anything.

Instead of undermining the attorney, I sat there quietly and let the meeting play itself out. When the client had left, I stood up and stood over the attorney who was sitting at his desk. His secretary had also come in the office. To the astonishment of him and his secretary I stated:

"I am not sure why you felt the need to attack me during this meeting, but you are not a mentor. In fact, it is people like you that have led me to get out of this profession. I just gave you the biggest case you'll ever handle and you are so lack-oriented that your biggest fear here is that I'll take it away from you. I have not even asked you for any money and never would.

"I got this case because I am a good attorney and the attorney who gave me this case did so because he knows I am a good attorney. You have never gotten a case like this because you have gone through your entire career scheming, trying to get the one up and more concerned about yourself than doing a good job. I listened to you talk just now and with less experience than you have, I can see several mistakes you are already making with this case. If I was still in this profession, I can assure you that I would deal with you much more severely than I am right now."

With that I walked out of his office. This was the last time I ever practiced law and my very last client.

Sure enough, a few days after my meeting with this attorney, I received a letter stating he owed me nothing and so forth.

Dealing with attorneys as I did when I was giving away cases taught me a lot about the importance of gratitude. None of these attorneys earned any favor from me because they had zero gratitude. Gratitude helps you get more of what you want.

Do you want to know how to be happy? Do you want to know how to keep success coming your way no matter what happens? Practice gratitude.

Hypothetically, let's say you are my employee and I give you a \$5,000 a year raise. And you say to me, "Gee, only \$5,000. I'll take it, but it's not going to help me all that much." Six months later I give you more and you say the same thing. I am sure you can imagine that after some time I am not going to have much interest in giving you more raises.

Now what if I give you a \$5,000 raise and you act overjoyed, grateful beyond belief, excited, and practically hug me. You say to me, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. I'm so grateful." Heck, right there I want to give you another raise just to see you act that way again. I feel so good about helping you.

Well, the universe works like this too. If you are negative, downtrodden, always looking at the glass as half empty, you are going to create more of what you focus on. Similarly, if you are grateful for every little thing in your life, you create the place to receive even more.

What I realized in dealing with these attorneys was that their lives would never change because they were always going to be coming from a sense of lack and that they never would have gratitude. I hope you understand this point because if you do, it can change your life. In order to truly reach your potential you need to set up the world, the people around you, and everything else to be something that wants to give to you more and more.

Well, after that day in the attorney's office I started recruiting with all my heart, body, mind, and soul. I threw myself into it like nothing I have ever done. I gave at least 250% to every single attorney I recruited and helped find a job for. I worked eighteen hours a day and I loved every minute of it.

About three months into my recruiting, I still had not made a single placement. I had started to dip into my home equity to make my house payments and pay my expenses. My wife's friends and family started calling the house very concerned about me. I knew the calls were about the state of my mental health when my wife would take the cordless phone and walk outside to the front lawn to talk on the phone. I could tell my wife was very worried about my future.

I do not know how to explain it, but even though I was on the verge of losing everything in my life I kept throwing myself into it more and more. I made sure my work product was exceptional. I did everything I could to ensure I did the best job I could possibly do with my work. I was passionate about what I was doing.

One evening, my wife had several of her friends over. It was a Saturday night around 10:00 p.m., and they were all drinking and having a good time. I was working in my home office. I had started working seven days a week. A couple of her friends came into my office and were quite tipsy.

"What are you working on?" they asked.

I explained that I was working on one of my candidates. For the next few minutes I started discussing all of the things that made her such a special candidate and how enthusiastic I was about the candidate. They were asking me questions to mock me, but I could not tell it at the time. At one point I briefly turned away and when I looked back one of them was moving his finger around his head in a way to indicate that I was crazy.

I will never forget that. At that point in my life my wife, family, and everyone around me thought that I had lost my mind.

Soon four months or so had gone by and I had not made a placement. I was almost out of money and had never been happier in my life.

One Sunday my wife and I were sitting in the living room getting ready to watch *60 Minutes*. As we sat there, the largest cricket I had ever seen in my life hopped up above the fireplace and started singing. The cricket must have been the size of my hand. I had never seen a cricket like that in California.

"A cricket means good luck," she said.

The cricket then disappeared behind a floorboard or something and proceeded to sing off and on all night.

The next morning, a Monday, I was at work at 7:00 a.m. At 7:30 the phone rang and it was Latham & Watkins—the same firm I had been told to go work for when I quit my job.

"Is it early enough for you?" the recruiting woman on the end of the phone asked.

She was calling to make a candidate of mine an offer. It would be a \$60,000 placement (that is, I would make \$60,000 from him getting hired). I got my candidate on the phone later that morning and he accepted.

Over the course of this particular week, I made more than \$250,000 in placements. One after another, law firms just kept calling making my candidates offers and each and every candidate accepted their offers.

By the end of the year, I had made over \$1 million in placements, had opened offices in New York and Chicago, and was having the time of my life. Over the course of the next few years, this business would expand and I would start others.

To me, what was so meaningful about what I was doing was that I was able to help people who (without me) I am confident would never have found the sorts of jobs they did. I put incredible effort into what I did and brought out their best. I looked for the best in people and fought for them as hard as I possibly could. I fell in love with the stories of my candidates and what they were capable of. I was more grateful than you can imagine for the law firms that helped me start my career.

Never forget the people who helped you get where you are.

January is a time when people make New Year's resolutions. For me, for the past decade or more, I have held firm to making drastic changes in my life every January. Since I first quit that job more than ten years ago, I have realized the power of shaking things up. For me, January represents a time when you can completely remake your world—and the world of others.

I view January as a time to turn around the direction of my life, the direction of my career, and make fundamental changes that will leave me and the world better off than the year before.

By undertaking such massive changes each year, I always end up making great progress in my life. January gives me something to look forward to, and I know that I can correct the compass and get on the right track each January compared to where I was the year before. January is a time to create new habits, create new goals, examine who you are, and understand who you want to become. I do not think there is anything more important to a successful life and career than continually reexamining your life.

In my experience, success in your life and career is 95% mental. Your intelligence, unique skills, and so forth certainly have some part in what ends up happening to you; but ultimately your success in this life will come down to how you run your mind. I know of no other way to create an incredible life than running your mind in the correct way. Each January I allow myself some breathing room to start establishing new beliefs, habits, and so forth that will end up controlling what happens to me throughout the course of the year.

January, for me, is the most important month of the year. I generally work every single day in January. I also work as hard as I can. The reason for it is the symbolism of the New Year, and every January I try to "put the pedal to the metal" and work as hard as I can to make some sort of shift in my perception of the world. I also make changes in my body and mind so I can look at the world differently.

Last January I told myself I would exercise every single day of 2010--and I did! This has changed me mentally and physically and given me more energy to help others.

The year before that, I told myself I would write a helpful career article every single day of the year to help people--and I did! This helped me see the world and ways for people to help themselves in many incredible new ways.

Five years ago I went to work in India for just about the entire month of January. I started work at 9:00 a.m. and worked until around 8:00 p.m. every night. Then I got so enthusiastic I started working until 10:00, then 11:00, then 12:00, then 1:00, and finally until around 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. I would walk through the streets at 3:00 a.m. back to my hotel, and at that hour everything is run by dogs. You do not see them during the day because they are off sleeping somewhere and the streets are clogged with thousands of people. During the evening, stray dogs control and "own" the streets and patrol various areas.

Working a month in India helped me shift my perception. Spending that much time in a different culture helped me see the world I am in at home much differently.

Do you think you will accomplish more in your life this year than you did last year?

Are you further along in your career this year than you were last year?

At least once per year, it is extremely important for you to "get your mind right" and get out of doing things the way you are doing them and look at the world differently. I have been doing this every January for years. Since it is the beginning of the year and a symbolic time, I make sure that each January I adopt at least one new habit, or make at least one major change in my life to re-examine where I am and where I am going. I believe the more work you put into yourself each January, the better off your year will be.

Take action and do something this year that is going to change the direction of your life and the lives of others. January is the time to do it.

THE LESSON

Be the person you want to be; if you see yourself naturally going in a certain direction, then you must allow yourself to go that way. Be grateful for every little thing in your life, and you will position yourself to receive more good things. You must hold the correct mindset to achieve a successful life and career; "get your mind right", look at the world differently, and get away from your established ways of doing things.

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