

## Choose Work That Fits Your Nature

By *Harrison Barnes*

For as long as I can remember, I have always sat in an office with someone else. For me, this is a useful way to work because various things come up throughout the day and as these issues come up, I want to ensure that I have someone to bounce ideas off of.

I have shared offices with all sorts of people throughout the years. I once shared an office with a guy who was an extremely loud typist. He would bang on the keyboard all day long. He was also very loud when he spoke on the phone, and when he was done speaking, he would always slam the phone down. When he was not on the phone or typing loudly, he would be sighing, putting his head to his hands, and getting all uptight about something. He did this for practically every e-mail and letter he opened. When he would get up from his chair, he would aggressively push his chair back toward his desk. He would open sodas all day long and loudly slurp them down. In addition, he ate small snacks all day long and frequently got up to eat them.

There was nothing wrong with this guy. In fact, he was very successful back then and he is still very successful today. Nevertheless, I hated working with him.

At first, I tried to change him:

- I ordered him an expensive “silent” keyboard from some weird store online.
- I spoke to him on several occasions about being quieter.
- I brought a clock radio from home and put it in the office with a classical radio station on to try to sooth him.
- I taped some felt on his telephone receiver to try to make his telephone conversations quieter.

Despite all of these efforts, none of it worked. Why do you think it did not work? It did not work because being loud and finicky was his nature. He was the way he was and it is nearly impossible to change someone's nature.

I moved him into another office, moved someone quiet into my office, and everything worked out perfectly.

Imagine what would have happened had I continued trying to change this guy. I could have spent months telling him to be quieter. I could have brought this up in performance reviews. I could have requested he start exercising during lunch so he would be more relaxed and, therefore, quieter. I could have made him drink sodas and eat snacks outside the office.

If I had really been serious about changing this man, my idea is that we would have both been extremely unhappy. He would not have liked constantly feeling inferior and might have felt like a second-class citizen. I might have made him feel inadequate and as if there was something wrong with him. There was nothing wrong with this guy—he was the way he was because of his nature.

- Some people are very talkative and excitable in an office setting.
- Other people tend to be very mellow, speak quietly, and never get flustered.
- Other people are something in between.

Regardless of what a person is, you generally are not going to be able to condition someone to be something different from who they are. They are who they are because of their nature. Everyone has a nature and a way of being. Regardless of what you do, it is important that you realize your nature and you live and work in a way that matches your nature.

How many people put themselves in **jobs** and situations that do not match their nature? Whatever your nature is, it is you and nothing really remarkable is ever going to happen until you embrace your nature. A job that does not match your nature, and working with people who do not appreciate your nature, is a recipe for disaster.

Most people spend the majority of their time at work. Work is life. In order to have an extraordinary life, nothing is more important than enjoying your work to the absolute fullest. If you enjoy your work, you enjoy your life. In order to enjoy your work, you need to (1) do work that is in your nature, and (2) work with people who support your nature.

While I have heard various statistics thrown around, I would estimate that less than 50% of people are satisfied with their work. People who do not like what they are doing for a living:

- Come home at the end of each day not excited about starting the next day of work; and,
- When working, are excited for the day to end.

To have a truly satisfying life, you should enjoy your work. If you enjoy your work, you also enjoy your life. Work that you enjoy gives your life meaning and it also makes you feel alive. Arguably, we were put on earth to work and the meaning we get in life comes from growing and giving.

A massive problem in life comes when we think our nature is wrong and that something else is better. Anytime we are acting outside of our nature and trying to be someone we're not, we are likely to be unhappy. For example, if you tend to be introverted and are in a job that requires you to be extroverted you will be unhappy. Being introverted is your nature. Why would you do a job that is not in your nature? This is simply not who you are. No matter how much someone tries to condition you to be someone different, your nature in all likelihood will never change.

Most people pick their **career** and life paths unconsciously and due to things like (1) expectations of those around them, (2) the environment they grew up in, and (3) the proximity of the job to them—instead of based on what their nature is. When you talk to most people and ask them what they do for a living, you'll get many different responses. Ask someone why he or

she is a doctor, a businessperson, a teacher, or something else and the answer you get will often be a mishmash of statements including:

- My parents did the same work.
- It was the best job I could get.
- I got the job through a friend.
- I did not know what else to do.

None of these are reasons to be doing a certain career. A good reason is that it is something you love and that gets you excited and is in your nature. When you are doing something you really love and that fits with your nature, time often flies faster. You look forward to going to work.

If you seek happiness, you need to choose work that fits your nature.

### **THE LESSON**

Everyone has a distinct nature and view of the world; you must understand yours, and choose a lifestyle and work that matches your outlook. Jobs and coworkers who do not match your nature, acting outside of your nature, or trying to be something that you are not will only leave you unhappy. Your nature will likely never change regardless of outside conditioning, so you will achieve your greatest success in a job that you love.

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