



Get Dissatisfied

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

I recommend spending a Saturday afternoon in an exotic car dealership where they sell sports cars that cost \$200,000-plus. Here, you will learn a success secret of the sorts of people who purchase these cars (and those who prey on them).

I have never driven a Ferrari, but for educational purposes I believe that Ferrari dealerships impart the lesson the best. A Ferrari serves almost no social utility. They are very fast, but they are not known to be particularly good cars. All they really do is look good and go fast.

Saturday around 11:30 a.m. customers start rolling into the Ferrari dealerships. There are generally a few types of men who show up:

- First, there are men who show up in minivans (or similar vehicles) and bring their kids with them to stroll around and admire cars.
- Second, there are men who show up in lesser cars like a Mercedes and so forth and may have a wife or girlfriend.
- Third, there are men who show up in exotic cars like Ferraris and Lamborghinis.

I have decided that the entire [job of a salesperson](#) in an exotic car dealership is to make whoever shows up feel uncomfortable with his or her current station in life.

The men who show up with children in minivan-like vehicles are generally ignored. They walk around looking awkward and telling their kids not to touch various cars and so forth.

Men who show up with wives or girlfriends are immediately approached and told all about the cars. The salesmen (they are almost all men) seem to spend a lot of time with them. The reason for this, I think, is that they think the men will want to impress the women by purchasing an expensive car. The presence of the woman may also make them bargain less so they do not look cheap—I don't know.

If the man is driving an exotic car, the salesperson will grudgingly acknowledge the car he is driving and engage in a pleasant conversation about the car, but he will always point out a better, faster version of some type of exotic car. The new exotic car might have a bigger motor, more electronic features, or some other advancement. Regardless of the details, the person who showed up feeling like a big deal in his exotic car will leave knowing something newer, bigger, and faster exists.

It is the people who are already driving exotic cars who interest me the most. Men who normally would seem extremely proud of their cars often seem to me to be visibly agitated that something better exists. Invariably, whether it takes two minutes or twenty minutes, almost all the time I have noticed, the salesmen will make sure the men in exotic cars know that something much better exists before they leave. At least 30% of the time the man showing up in the exotic car will utter the words "What do you think I could get on a trade ..." at some point in the conversation.

These exotic car showrooms are so interesting to me because they attract very achievement-oriented men. Inside these showrooms a ritual is going on. The dealership and its salesmen are providing a service to these customers more significant than it may first appear: *They are making the men dissatisfied with their current level of achievement.*

Inside an exotic car dealership, a car becomes a symbol of achievement—and the better the car, the higher the level of achievement. The ritual between the men in the Ferrari dealership involves the men coming in, being made to feel dissatisfied and wanting more and—by implication—being given a reason to go out in the world and work harder and work more. An intelligent car salesman at these sorts of dealerships knows the role he serves. From what I understand, many men end up trading their cars in every year (and taking staggering losses) just to keep going with this dance.

One of the most fundamental and important decisions you need to make in your life is whether or not you want to expose yourself to pressure and tension—or whether or not you want to spend your life avoiding pressure and tension. A man who steps into a Ferrari dealership is exposing himself to tension. There are lots of other ways to expose oneself to tension, though, that are likely to be far more rewarding. Surrounding yourself with people who have high expectations for themselves is one way to expose yourself to tension. Setting high goals for yourself is another way to expose yourself to tension. Working in a job that constantly challenges you is yet another way to expose yourself to tension.

We must master tension in order to have a successful and balanced life. We must expose ourselves to tension in order to constantly be pushing ourselves forward.

Pressure and tension are what drive most of our actions:

- People eat because they feel tension that drives them to want to eat.
- Many people exercise because they feel tension.
- People seek out mates due to tension.
- People work because of tension.
- People improve because of tension.
- Some people abuse alcohol or drugs due to tension.
- People commit crimes due to tension.

In fact, without the force of tension very little that is either good or bad would happen in the world. Tension and pressure are forces that can either drive us to great heights or drive us to great lows.

If you want to change your life, you need to get dissatisfied with where you are and you need to use tension to your

advantage. Tension is a power that can create massive change in your life.

One of the best ways to create tension is to surround yourself with people who are better than you and represent what you are trying to become. These people could be experts in your profession, or they could simply be people you admire for one reason or another. Being around people you admire and want to be like is an excellent way to find positive tension—this force of tension surrounds us all and controls how we live our lives.

The people you choose to spend your time with will determine whether or not you feel tension. For example, if you surround yourself with people who exercise every day and are interested in improving their bodies, you are likely to pick up this sort of tension as well. If you surround yourself with very good chess players, you are going to want to get better at chess as well. When you surround yourself with people who are better than you in whatever you are trying to get better at, you create tension that helps you notice the distinctions between where you are and where you want to go, who you are and who you want to be. This makes you feel dissatisfied and your brain starts to notice the distinctions that you need to make in order to realize your goal of becoming the person you want to become.

I have not yet seen the movie *Social Network*, about the founding of Facebook. I need to go see it. I have not avoided the movie due to the fact that I think the movie will not be a good one—I am sure it is a good movie. I have avoided the movie because back in 2001 I purchased a domain name called “ContactCommunity.com” and hired a programmer to start building a site with similar functionality to Facebook. I am not saying that the site would have turned into a site anywhere near what Facebook became—but watching the movie would simply remind me of my failure in following through and completing this site. It would also make me feel that I lacked vision.

After a couple of days of working on the site, the programmer I hired for the **job** went looking for a pizza one afternoon and never returned. If I were to watch the movie I am pretty confident that I would be reminded of my own failure over and over again. Since I have been in the Internet business for more than ten years, the movie would surely remind me of what I have done wrong and I would feel a tremendous amount of pressure that reminds me that I have not reached my full potential. Watching this film would actually make me more competitive, want to work harder, and make me feel pressure.

Your ability to consistently create pressure in life is what allows you to make changes and become a different and improved person. You need to take advantage of the power of feeling dissatisfied—the pressure associated with being dissatisfied gives us power.

The benefit of being dissatisfied is not that it gets you to do things. The real benefit is what it can make you as a person. When all is said and done, what is most important is who you become as a person. You need to use dissatisfaction in a way that empowers you to go in the direction you want.

THE LESSON

In order to make substantive changes in your life, you must start with dissatisfaction in your current position, and leverage that tension to your advantage. Tension and dissatisfaction will push you forward, as they are the drivers of most of our everyday actions. By constantly creating pressure in your life, you motivate yourself to make necessary changes and bring yourself closer to your goals. Implement dissatisfaction in a way that empowers you to go in the direction you want.

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