



Use Your Emotion Instead of Being a Critic

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

When I was an attorney, I stopped going out to lunch with other attorneys during the day. The reason was not that I was not hungry. Instead, I stopped going out to lunch because just about everyone I worked with would want to dedicate the lunch to a critique—whether it was critiquing our bosses, coworkers, or others. When these people were not being critiqued, the job itself was being critiqued. When the job was not being critiqued, the attorney's home life was being critiqued.

I am not saying I do not enjoy the company of other people—I do. But what I experienced working inside of a few law firms was the same thing I have witnessed time and time again in my life: *Most people are critics.*

If you take a seat inside of just about any restaurant in the country during lunch you will find critics plying their trade. If they are not coworkers critiquing something, they could be homemakers critiquing something.

There are critics everywhere. In my experience, a substantial amount of people's time is dedicated to criticizing others. Wherever you go, you are likely to hear various criticisms and critiques of others. Most talk shows are critiques of other people. Most tabloid journalism consists of critiques of other people. Being a critic is just something that is part of our group psychology as people. It is as if the country is under a cultural hypnosis to be critical of other people.

Anyone can be a critic. All you need to do is take a critical spin on someone—or something—and you are a critic. Something that very few people can do, though, is put it on the line and become leaders. Your success in this life and the legacy and impact you make will be a product of whether or not you can be a leader.

Being a leader is important because when you are a leader, you are able to live life on your own terms. True leaders are more concerned with designing the life that they want and being themselves than they are with the criticism they might face for living out that life. Leaders are concerned with being fulfilled, being themselves, and living life on their own terms.

- Living life on your own terms may mean getting up at 10:00 a.m. every day.
- Living life on your own terms may be riding your motorcycle each weekend.
- Living life on your own terms may involve staying home and spending time with your kids.
- Living life on your own terms may involve taking trips to exotic locations.
- Living life on your own terms may involve volunteering in an animal shelter.

Whatever represents life on your own terms to you, the odds are very good that you will never achieve this as a critic. Only leaders end up living life on their own terms. Leaders are entirely different from critics.

Most people do not know what they really want—and what a life on their own terms would mean—because they have never tried it. Most people cannot lead themselves. The critical side of most people leads us to believe that our intellect is extremely important. We analyze this and that and make all sorts of decisions with our minds—instead of our hearts. We follow the logical choices and the ones that seem to make the most sense to us—and not the ones we are passionate about.

- Many people select their mates this way.
- Other people select their professions this way.
- Some people even select their hobbies this way.

When it comes right down to it, though, what really gives us energy and what really drives people is emotion—and not being a critic. What gets you more excited, thinking about something you are really passionate about or listing the faults of someone? Most people are moved by passion and emotion far more than they are by their intellect and being critics.

Universities are clogged and bursting at the seams with critics. In every institution of higher learning, you will find countless critics. Many of these people have never done much other than being critics, though. They are not the sort of people that will be remembered when they are gone. Instead, they spend their careers being critics of people who were moved by some sort of emotion to do something significant.

Have you ever been in a situation where something inside of you sparked up and you just went out and did something? These are the sorts of decisions and actions that are typically motivated by emotion and not your critical and analytical side. This emotion is also probably when you are at your best. When you're spontaneous and using emotion, you are also most likely the happiest as well. Emotion is far more empowering than intellect. It is when you tap into the emotion inside of you that you become a leader.

One of the greatest dangers to your happiness is if you get caught up making a living instead of designing the life you want. Many people find themselves saying things like "I've got all these bills to pay," and spend the majority of their time worrying about bills and staying afloat—instead of living the life they want. In order to have the life you want, you need to set the course for your life and go after it. Deciding on the life you want is about being a leader, and being a leader is about tapping into your emotions.

I regularly meet people who work seven days a week. They justify such incredible hours and such an incredible work ethic on the grounds that their [job requires](#) it, or that they have so many expenses and so forth. This rationale for hard work makes sense—but all too often people who work so hard are the same people who are the critics—and not the leaders. Leaders design the life that they want for themselves. People who are being forced to work seven days a week is almost always not designing the life they want for themselves. They are not leaders—they are critics.

On an ongoing basis, I hear all of these stories about various celebrities getting married and divorced. I often wondered about this—why so many marriages? I thought it must be insecurity. If not insecurity, perhaps they are shallow. If not shallowness,

perhaps they are screwed up. I actually have another answer for this, though. Most celebrities are experts in using their emotion to go after the lives they want. People who make it big are experts in not caring what other people think and finding a way to get the things they want. They do not use their intellect, they use their emotions. The world around them is filled with critics and they are the ones who are on stage and in the spotlight. Most people stay in **jobs**, relationships, careers, and geographic locations they do not like. Very few people have the courage to consistently use their emotions to create the lives they want.

A few months ago, I downloaded all of the A&E Biography specials I could find and put them on my iPad. I watched one per day while running on a treadmill (they are about an hour long each). The major theme I noticed after reviewing the lives of celebrities, world leaders, and others was that almost all of these people were motivated by emotion and that this is what took them to great heights. All around them they are surrounded by critics. The critics take their pictures, film them everywhere they go, write about them and editorialize about them—but the people I was watching on the A&E specials were those who were actually doing something. Emotion is what makes people leaders and successful—not being a critic.

You can only be yourself when you are connected with your emotions. Your emotions are unique to you and not part of a “cultural psychology” that you are adopting due to your intellect. You will only be happy when you are using your emotions to design the life you want. Your emotions represent who you actually are.

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