



Never Abandon Work You Are Exceptional At

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

In the movie industry, when a movie studio makes a successful movie that becomes a blockbuster, they generally will make a sequel. They would be crazy not to. They have a formula that works. It is the same thing with books, television shows and other products. If you make something that is successful, you start making and doing more of the same.

[Amazon](#) has recently gotten into the business of producing shows and has been coming out with more “pilots” than I can count. It is a brilliant strategy. Some of their pilots will be popular and others will not. If something works, they will scale it up and make more episodes. They have found something that people like. If it works, then you should continue doing it. That makes sense.

Movie studios also use the same stars and over again. They would be crazy not to. The stars work. Making a \$200 million movie with an unknown actor would be suicide for most studios. Instead, they use someone who is proven.

In everyone's life and career, there is a “formula” that works. When you look back on your life, you will find that good things occurred when you applied yourself at something in which you had a certain type of skill or talent.

Your skill could be

- social,
- it could be academic,
- it could be inspiring others,
- it could be leadership,
- it could be sales,
- it could be public speaking,
- it could be being critical and finding fault,
- it could be being detail oriented,
- it could be being funny,
- or it could be singing, writing or acting.

Regardless of what it is, you have a certain type of skill, and this skill is meaningful. This skill is something you need to embrace and work with.

I know a woman who grew up in a household where her parents were always fighting. They had long, hostile and drawn-out fights with tons of screaming. These fights would often result in the police coming to the house, neighbors stopping by and asking them to quiet down, and other embarrassing events.

For whatever reason, when this girl was growing up, she understood instinctively how to mediate these arguments. She would tell her father in simple language why her mother was upset and vice versa. She would calm down the neighbors and police when they came by the house. She had a real skill in mediating emotionally charged disputes. This woman was not very gifted academically; however, when she got out of college, she began receiving promotions in companies where she was used to mediate disputes between different employees and divisions.

Several years ago, she was making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in this type of role for a giant, multinational corporation. She was able to do well and succeed because of her unique skill. Her employers recognized her abilities, she continued to grow, and she has had a good career as a consequence.

I know another person who is so obsessed with details that he literally “goes off the rails” mentally when stuff is out of order. He smokes pot several times a day to calm his mind down because he is always agitated about various details. He, too, was not gifted academically (in fact, he barely graduated from college in six years). Yet, today, he designs complex medical devices that surgeons use in heart surgery. He is extremely successful.

Another guy I knew was extremely interested in girls: their looks, how they presented themselves, and their physical features. I grew up with him and never understood it. He would call me on the phone and discuss various girls for hours at a time. I found it completely boring after a few minutes. I remember often putting the phone down and going into another room. When I would come back, he would still be chatting away. He became a famous photographer. He was so interested in women that he dedicated his life to taking their pictures.

Everyone is very good at something. Your skill could be technical in nature or it could be something else. Regardless of what your skill is, you should do everything you can to honor and develop your talents. This will ultimately make you more successful.

The biggest mistake people make in life and business is not honoring their skills and fully utilizing them. When you find something that works for you, that others are embracing and you enjoy, you should take advantage of it. There is never a need to do something new. Once you find a formula that works for you, just keep repeating it until it stops working.

When a company like [Apple](#) comes out with an iPhone and everyone wants to buy it, Apple does not say, “I’m bored with making iPhones and think I am going to do something else.” It makes as many iPhones as it possibly can sell, continues to improve them, and then makes some more.

This is the same thing all companies do when they have something that works. They do more and more and more of it until people stop buying.

Why is it, then, that people do not understand this same lesson when it comes to their careers and their lives? You should do

more of what works

I have seen a lot of people get on the road to success doing a variety of things:

- I've known very talented gamblers who really knew how to win.
- I've known people with extraordinary talents as scientists.
- I've met great attorneys who really seem to enjoy the work they are doing and are good at it.
- I've come across people who are gifted actors, writers and performers who actually make money doing this sort of thing.

In each of the examples above, the people were genuinely talented at doing something but decided to do something completely different. In almost all cases, when you are really talented at something but ignore your talent, it does not go well. Regardless of why you have a given skill, you do, and you need to take advantage of this skill.

I know a very successful attorney who went to medical school and then had a difficult time getting a job. I once saw a very talented scientist give up a very successful job to become a stand-up comedian.

Who cares why something worked? The fact is, you did something and it worked so you should continue doing it and do everything you can to get more mileage out of it. This is what businesses do, and you are a business too.

Not too far from my house, there is a theater that puts on a show every few weeks from bands and musicians that are all but forgotten: Jefferson Starship, Wilson Phillips, Burt Bacharach, and The Tubes. These musicians have not had a hit in decades, but they are still "milking it" for all it is worth. They have something that people are willing to pay for and they continue travelling around the country selling what they have. They found a winner long ago and are doing everything they can to extend this and reuse it.

These singers and bands do not get up and sing new songs that no one has heard of. They perform the songs that made them famous decades ago. They sing what worked in the past because that is what people want to hear.

When you find something that you are good at and that works, the smartest thing you can do is to continue doing more of the same. The more you repeat this process, the better you will do in the long run. Many people are constantly interested in new paths and ways of doing things. This is not the smartest position.

I know a guy that makes an incredible amount of money in the financial industry. Despite his massive success, however, he is always interested in trying and doing new businesses. Over the past several years, he has started one business after another (outside the financial industry) and has failed. He has come very close to losing everything his family owns several times. In a recent conversation with his wife, she expressed doubts to me about their future together. She felt they could lose everything at any time.

In contrast, everything this guy does in the small corner of finance seems to work. He understands this intuitively, seems to enjoy it, but for whatever reason seems to get bored and try new things all the time. This is crazy. He should do what he is good at. I have no doubt this guy will one day lose everything in his business ventures outside of his specialty.

One of the most successful products in history, [Coca-Cola](#), made the reckless decision to change its formula in 1985. Within days, the company faced an avalanche of letters, phone calls and angry customers protesting the decision. Within three months, the original brand was returned to store shelves. They had taken a product that worked exceptionally well and tried to change it.

In 2012, J.C. Penney hired Ron Johnson (a former [Apple](#) executive) to be its new CEO. For years, J.C. Penney had a very successful strategy of offering constant sales and prices that were not "real". For example, if they wanted to sell a coat for \$50, they would tag it at \$100 and then mark it down to \$50 during a "blow out sale."

For years, J.C. Penney has been losing market share to larger companies in the retail industry. Johnson believed that J.C. Penney could reverse its sales slide by discontinuing the "on sale" strategy and just having "everyday low prices" instead. In addition, he redesigned all of the stores to have a more modern feel.

This strategy was a disaster and sales plummeted, nearly putting the chain out of business. Instead of embracing the lower prices, consumers assumed that the products were of lesser quality (people like to feel they are getting a \$100 jacket for \$50 and assume a jacket that is just \$50 is of lesser quality).

RCA was once the largest television manufacturer in the United States. In fact, it was the first company to mass market television in the United States. However, beginning in the mid-1960s until the mid-1980s the company expanded into an incredible variety of fields: (1) It bought the car rental company, [Hertz](#), (2) the frozen food maker, Banquet, and even (3) Random House publishing. These acquisitions ended up making the company unmanageable. Even though the company expanded its product offering, it stopped doing aggressive research and development in its electronics businesses. When the company realized its acquisition strategy had not worked, it tried competing in the television market again; however, by this time it had to compete with Asian manufacturers who were now producing better products. RCA was eventually sold to [General Electric](#) in 1986.

Conclusion

If you are very good at something, you should improve on it (try to stay inspired) and continue doing it. The biggest mistake you can make is abandoning something that is working. Do what you are good at.

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