

You Need to Enjoy What You Are Doing

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

One of the greatest lessons you can ever learn is that you shouldn't be doing anything you don't enjoy. In fact, your job and your entire life should be one big bowl of monkeys full of excitement and enjoyment. You should enjoy getting up for your job each day. You should like the work you do and be so interested in it you think about it at night. You should like the people around you and should never do anything you don't truly love and enjoy. There is nothing wrong with suffering through certain classes when you're in school and there's nothing wrong with doing certain types of grunt work; however, you really shouldn't be doing something you do not enjoy.

Nothing good ever happens and nothing good will ever come to you when you're doing tasks and jobs that don't interest you. So many people go through their lives doing things they don't enjoy. This is totally unnecessary.

Somewhere inside of you, I'm sure you know what you're interested in. You need to find that. I love when I go into small businesses around the United States. For example, if you go into a skateboard store, you may find a guy in his 40s who loved skateboarding as a kid and still does. He has made skateboarding his passion by opening up a skateboarding store. The people he works with typically love skateboarding as well. In my house I have a saltwater aquarium and every few weeks someone comes to service it, partially drain it out and replace some of the salt water. He loves fish and so do the people he works with. Fish are a passion to them and excite them. In fact, some people that work with him drive from over an hour away, because they want to work with a guy who has passion for his work. It is a wonderful thing when we like what we do. There is nothing more important than loving our jobs and what we spend our days doing. You should avoid doing what you don't like doing at all costs. If you don't choose to do what you enjoy, someone else will decide what you should do. This is never good.

Regardless of how stupid you think what you enjoy doing is, the chances are you can make a very good living doing it if you really get passionate about it. If you like saunas like I do, you could make a great living doing something with those. I know of a guy who did this. If you like clear air, you can do the same. If you like roses, you can do the same. If you love killing bugs, you can do the same. In fact, I know a guy who had a big CPA practice and quit it to start a bug killing business. He couldn't believe how high the margins were for one of his clients that was in the business and walked away from a big CPA practice to start driving around with some bug spray, setting people up on bug killing service plans. He's never been happier. You can do whatever the heck you want, and should, if it makes you happy.

In my job, I work with people who absolutely love and enjoy what they do. I have people working with me who are up early each morning and go to bed late each night, the entire time loving what they do. These fortunate souls are living lives of satisfaction where they are excited daily about what they do. They send me press clippings of themselves in the news all the time. They seem to do better and better each year. They improve at what they do all the time. When you meet them and talk to them, you can't help but get enthusiastic about whatever it is they are talking about. They just simply love their jobs. This is how it should be. People who like what they do never fail to improve. This is the person you want to be.

Conversely, there are people out there who really dislike their jobs. Often times, these people can con their way into a job by saying the right things in an interview. Additionally, many employers make the mistake of hiring them. These poor souls do work that doesn't interest them. They leave early, ask if they can take an extra day off all the time, and plan vacations and time away from work every chance they get. Most of these people aren't too happy doing what they do and it shows up in the results of their careers and lives. If they just did what they liked and enjoyed, everything could change for them. There is no need to spend time doing stuff you don't enjoy. This is a waste of your time and effort. You should be excited about your job all the time.

I remember several years ago, when I was studying for the Bar Exam. I'd ordered a class that came in a big box with tapes and books so I could study at home while working. I remember being bored to tears with what I was studying each night. I mean, this stuff was boring, boring, boring! I got so bored that I called the school I'd bought the course from:

"How many hours should I be studying a day?" I asked them.

I was in a real bad way studying this stuff, mainly because I couldn't stay awake and kept thinking that I'd rather be watching *Gomer Pyle* reruns than studying for the exam late into the night. For me, studying this gibberish was a complete nightmare.

"At least eight," the school told me.

"Eight hours?"

"Yep, eight hours."

That was almost too much for me to handle. I knew right then and there that I wouldn't be an attorney for too long after this ridiculous exam. Who the hell wants to study eight hours a day for a complete month? I simply didn't like what I was studying enough. There are people out there who really do like what they study when preparing for the Bar Exam. They really get into it. It is fun for them. The material interests them, not just a little, but a great deal. These are the people who did the right thing going to [law school](#) and becoming attorneys. No doubt about it, if you like something, you want to do it all the time.

For example, if I was listening to stories told by some Southern guy with bad grammar talking about how to sell asphalt sealer to businesses and home owners, how to apply asphalt sealer after a rain, how to heat tar without destroying it and more, eight hours a day, I would have been enraptured. My eyes would have grown to the size of softballs and I would have listened to this guy talk around the clock. My fiancée would have yelled at me for listening to him so much. People could be arguing two feet from me and I wouldn't have even known what was going on.

This is what I almost did.

In my final year at the [University of Chicago](#), I'd been one of the few students in my class who'd been nominated for a Rhodes Scholarship. I cannot believe how good my grades were at that point. One guidance counselor told me she estimated I was in the "top 1%" of my class, whatever that meant. In my junior year of college, the school even asked me to co-teach a class and I did.

I couldn't believe all these stuffy academics, however. I was eager to work outdoors and start my [dream job](#) of being an asphalt contractor. These academics would wear the same khaki pants for days on end and sit around reading all the time. The more I thought about this situation, the more upset I became. How on earth can someone sit around reading when all around them there is asphalt in the roads, in parking lots and driveways that need maintenance? In the very least, they could go out and purchase a line machine and freshen up the lines in parking lots in their neighborhood!

Asphalt everywhere needs freshening up. I can remember driving back from seeing my grandmother in my pick up truck with a line machine in back. I might pull up to a convenience store to get a Diet Coke and notice that its lines were in bad shape. I'd shake my head then walk back into the store to have a word with an astonished cashier/owner in the middle of his 24-hour shift who barely spoke English.

"I'm sorry but your lines in the parking lot look horrible!" I might tell them. "They really need to be freshened up! I have some instant dry paint in my line machine and I can redo your lines right now. I would normally charge about \$250 for this job but for the sake of the neighborhood I'll do them right now for \$150."

"Okay!" the cashier would invariably say.

I'd put my Diet Coke on the hood of my truck, pull out my line machine, and within 45 minutes I'd be back on the road with \$150 more in my pocket.

I'd thought about going to law school but by December of my senior year of college, I hadn't yet taken the Law School Admissions Test so it looked like this was out of the question.

I think my guidance counselor at the University of Chicago had a PhD in something or another. One of my teachers, who was the head of a department, had contacted her about having a serious discussion with me about enrolling in the PhD program at the school for some [social sciences](#) program. I met with her around November and she told me that I could go study at Chicago for free if I applied to this program and they would see about a "stipend."

"How much money are we talking about for a stipend?" I asked.

"Maybe as much as \$10,000 a year."

"Huh?" I thought. I could make that in a day or so if I was a big time asphalt contractor. Moreover, the last thing I wanted to do was to spend a lifetime in academia. No offense, but these guys can get pretty serious and deep.

Believe it or not, there are a bunch of programs in [construction management](#) at schools all over the United States. There was even a big one in pavement management at the University of Alabama. I started asking the guidance counselor about these programs and she just sort of stared at me. She didn't know what to say. I mean here I was, one of her best students, and all I was interested in was "construction management?" She seemed absolutely perplexed.

I remember after that meeting I was a little depressed that the school wasn't helping me pursue my dream, but I wasn't all that worried about it. I started calling the deans of various construction management schools around the United States.

"Yeah, right now I have three trucks, two sprayers, a Crackflo machine, and we are doing really well, but I can see this operation going big time and getting some state contracts in the next couple of years."

I could tell by the tone of voice of the guys I was speaking with that they were a little perplexed as well. In fact, there were always long pauses after I related my enthusiasm for building a construction business to these guys.

What I figured out later was most of these construction management programs are actually part of the engineering programs of most schools. The programs are more engineering programs than programs for working guys. So the guys I was speaking with were pretty academic as well. Instead of dealing with PhD's in sociology, for example, now I was dealing with [PhD's in Engineering](#). These guys were math nerds!

I couldn't decide what was worse.

I decided that even a masters degree in something construction related and taking a bunch of engineering classes with guys who had pocket protectors was worse than sitting around pontificating about completely useless shit with a bunch of pot smoking, socialist intellectuals.

I ended up going to law school after taking the LSAT in March. It was a huge mistake in so many ways. I was miserable during law school and I was miserable for the three years that I practiced. That is a total of six miserable years of my life. This makes no sense.

Are you making a similar mistake to the one I made? I certainly hope not. Do you enjoy your career and life? I certainly hope so.

What I'm trying to get you to understand is that you need to do what you enjoy. You need to spend your working time doing something that lights your fire. You need to go where you feel welcome and among people who are like you. When you do this, your life will begin to change.

THE LESSON:

You shouldn't be doing anything that you don't enjoy. Nothing good ever happens and nothing good will ever come to you when you are doing tasks and jobs that do not interest you. Spend your working time doing something that lights your fire. Additionally, go where you feel welcome and among people who are like you. When you do this, your life will begin to change.

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