



See Your Job and the World from the Bright Side and Not the Dark Side

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

For about as long as I can remember, I've been taking one course or another about different subjects every several months. I take courses in just about every topic you can imagine and love taking these courses. Typically, the courses I take are three or four-day affairs, and executives from one company or another are always flown in for these events by their companies to attend. I'm at one of these things today that's about to start within the next couple of hours. Incredibly, for the next several days, I'm going to be listening to Tony Robbins, of self-improvement fame, speak about how to run a business.

In my years of attending these seminars, however, I've noticed a particular pattern that I'm sure also plays itself out at various companies around the United States and the world. It's a dangerous pattern and one you would be wise to do everything within your power to avoid.

A couple of years ago, I took a Karass Negotiation Seminar. These are the seminars that are promoted inside in-flight magazines and so forth. After more than a decade of seeing ads in in-flight magazines, I decided one day that this was something I needed to go to. I signed up, and one Monday morning, found myself sitting in the Sheraton Hotel in Santa Monica, California, with around 30 other people also learning about negotiation.

I remember during the seminar I'd been seated next to a particular woman who did not seem to be enjoying the seminar very much. She was someone in her late 50's I would guess, and was angry that her company had sent her to this seminar. In fact, she told me she hated seminars and also disliked her company quite a bit. She told me that regardless of the subject matter, most of these seminars were "all the same" and not to be enjoyed, but tolerated with agony.

Every few minutes she would make one remark or another about:

- how bad the seminar was
- how poor the presentation was
- the fact that something the man was saying was wrong
- the quality of the audio/visual materials
- the look of the other students
- the lack of education of the speaker
- the quality of the hotel suite the event was being held in
- and on and on and on

For about the first couple of hours of the seminar, I thought the woman was quite funny. However, after some time, I started to get annoyed. While I thought the seminar itself was actually pretty decent, I started to look at the seminar in the sort of negative light she was. I started to see the seminar as not being that good and started thinking along the same lines she was about the material. I started paying attention more to what was wrong with the seminar than what was right. I started to feel as if this was a bad seminar. At the end of the first day of the seminar, I went home and felt as if perhaps I'd made a giant mistake attending the event. I woke up on the second day of the seminar and wasn't even sure I was going to go.

On the second day of the seminar, I sat with someone else, and the seminar ended up being one of the most useful days of attending a seminar I'd ever experienced. I learned a great deal and came away feeling very good about the seminar and the material. In fact, I closed a multimillion dollar deal a couple of weeks later and really attribute my ability to do this to having attended the seminar. The seminar was really no different the second day than it had been the first. It was just the woman I was sitting next to that was different.

I realized after this incident that the quality of the seminar had been directly related to the person I was sitting next to. In fact, the seminar quality had more to do with this than anything else out there.

In just about every organization, there are numerous "veterans" who have been with the company or organization for a long length of time, but who nevertheless manage to earn a decent living and stay employed with the company year after year. These people can make a decent living with the company despite a bad attitude and numerous accumulated bad habits. Many of these people are incredibly unhappy and, privately, nothing they have to say about where they work and their jobs is all that positive.

Several years ago in our company, we had an older employee who was under the habit of taking younger employees under their wing. It was no secret that this older employee had some negative opinions about the company and how it was run, and had negative opinions about companies in general. However, the largest issues with this particular employee was such a source of concern, was what would happen to the employees this older employee had contact with.

Generally, the younger employee would be extremely enthusiastic about their job and the people they were working with. They would do assignments on time and do them well. They would be constantly improving at the work they did. They would also be someone who was on the way up. They may have received very rapid raises after having joined the company.

At some point, the older employer would ingratiate themselves with the younger employee, and things would begin to change. For example, the younger employees would gradually begin appearing less enthusiastic and excited about their work. The young employees would also start appearing late for work, missing deadlines, and so forth. Pretty soon, in a short length of time, the young employees would either quit or lose their jobs. When this happens a few times, it's not something you think about; however, when it happens several times, it's something you start to notice. It should be no secret that there are people out there who can be cancerous and really impact how you do in your job. In fact, these cancers are something that can do tremendous harm and ultimately change the course of your career.

In virtually every organization, there are people who:

- Resent people who work hard and are achieving a lot because they may make them look lazy, unproductive, and so forth. They will do whatever they can, either consciously or subconsciously, to ensure the achiever settles down and works at a slower pace and doesn't achieve as much.
- They complain about the employer, the world and those around them. They view the world in a negative way and aren't enthusiastic about their jobs. They also tend to blame the company and those around them for their lack of success and aren't accountable.
- They don't take interest in the latest information out there about how to improve at whatever they are doing or stay current in what is going on in the industry. In their eyes, they already know everything there is to know, and they don't believe their company, or the world, is a good place.

Regardless of the organization, there are always people wherever you are going to work that are going to be similar to these types of people. You need to stay away from people like this. These people have negative energy, and this energy will always rub off on you. When it rubs off, the results are never good. You will find yourself getting the same results they are and will be unhappy with your job and the people you are working with. You will carry this line of thought with you throughout your career, and it will never do you any good.

What is the alternative? The alternative is to seek out the people who are succeeding and already doing great things in their careers. These are the people who know something others don't and who will always succeed in any sort of organization they join. These people can also be found in every organization and can assist you in reaching your goals of constantly improving.

Early in my legal career, I had an office next to a guy who absolutely hated practicing law. My first job inside a law firm was with a really great group of people and the law firm did very important work. However, I had an office next to a guy who had been practicing law at the firm around 10 years and really disliked it. He had to commute over 90 minutes to work each day because his wife refused to move. Because the commute was so long, he frequently slept in the back of his car in the parking lot. Because he was never home, he also suspected that his wife might be cheating on him.

In addition to his long commute, he had shown up to work his first day as an attorney at a large law firm during a recession and been laid off ten years before. He worked at a series of small, un-prestigious firms for years before finally getting a job in the law firm he was currently in. In his first job, he worked in an insurance defense firm that gave him over 500 cases to handle, as the only attorney, his first day of work. For several years, he worked nearly seven days a week and slept less than 8 hours a night because he was spending all of his time at work.

He trusted no one and never kept anything other than a small picture of his wife on his desk, that was small enough to fit in the pocket of his jeans. Over the years, he had seen so many people fired from various law firms for seemingly no reason that he was like a war victim with post-traumatic stress disorder.

"You literally never know when you are going to lose your job inside a law firm. It just comes out of nowhere, and it can happen instantly," he told me.

Because he was so afraid of getting fired, he decided that he needed to have other productive ways to earn a living. He soon discovered Ebay and created a business literally out of his office selling comic books, pinball tables, and other collectibles he liked to buy and sell. His secretary became a partner in crime and would assist him in coordinating deliveries of pinball table parts and accessories and other "game parts" and then getting these on Ebay.

One day, I was sitting in his office and he told me about how he had been sitting home on a Sunday afternoon enjoying a beer and then had gotten a call that he needed to take an overnight flight to Florida for a meeting. He flew all night, and then spent several hours in a meeting. Exhausted after the meeting, he went back to his hotel room to sleep for a couple of hours. Apparently, after this meeting, a partner in the law firm had tried to call him on his cell phone and had been unable to reach him for an hour. He had received a serious lecture about the necessity of "attorneys always needing to be available."

Notwithstanding, I looked at this guy and his example and decided to myself that this lifestyle was nonsensical and not something I wanted. However, I'm almost 100% confident that had I not shared this attorney's view of the world and latched onto someone who was a true superstar in the law firm, and very enthusiastic about the work and the job, I would perhaps still be an attorney today. Within six months of becoming friends with this attorney, I ended up deciding that I no longer wanted to work in this law firm and quit.

I love what I do, but cannot help but realize that I might have been still practicing law today if I had made sure I only associated with the people in the law firm who loved what they did. Your success and happiness with your employer will come down to seeking out those who love what they do. You should learn to see your job and the world around you from the bright side and not the dark side.

THE LESSON

Avoid people with a negative worldview, and who are unenthusiastic about their jobs. Their negative energy will rub off on you if you allow it, and you will find yourself experiencing the same negative results and unhappiness as them. Seek out people who are succeeding and doing great things in their careers, and who love what they do. Learn to view your job and surroundings from the light rather than the dark side.

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- [Are You a Critic](#)
- [Sick Crows, Your Attitude and Being on the Winning Team](#)