

Planning, Grass Seed, Saunas, and Your Career

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

We are always fixing things.

Always.

We are always doing everything within our power to fix this or that, and we are continually trying to improve things because nothing is ever perfect for us. However, one of the biggest explanations for this is that we often fail to plan and obtain more information before we act on anything. This puts us in a situation where we end up having to do some *clean-up* of sorts, or worse yet, all-out *damage control*. In contrast, the people who plan properly and who relentlessly seek out information seem to be the ones who do the best in everything.

- They spend less time fixing what they have already done.
- They do not worry about things breaking.
- They put their energy into new projects instead of old ones.
- There are fewer *kinks* along their way.
- They are generally more at peace with everything around them.

There is a huge case to be made for planning and making sure that everything you do is thought out ahead of time. In order to really do well at everything we undertake, we need to prepare, which means to gather information, first and foremost. The more time we spend on planning before acting, the less time we will ultimately need to spend time fixing things. It just makes for a smoother ride all the way around.

I am replanting the grass in my lawn and have been working on it for weeks. Several months ago I was in Home Depot and, while my wife was looking for light bulbs I noticed that they were having a huge sale on something called "winter rye grass." I thought about our lawn and how it looked really bad, and decided to spend \$200+ purchasing several bags of this seed. When I got home I spread a bunch of the seed around. Within hours our entire lawn was covered with seagulls and crows who were feasting on the seed. This continued for a few days. I asked the guy who mowed the lawn about it and he told me I needed to plant some mulch. I went to Home Depot again and got some mulch, in this case known as manure. I spread this all around over more grass seed that I purchased. The crows and seagulls stayed away but within a few days the entire yard was infested with flies. I told someone else about this new dilemma and she told me that I needed to use a different type of mulch, something other than manure. Here, for weeks we had been unable to open the windows of our house. It was like a scene out of *Amityville Horror* outside because there were flies everywhere.

Nevertheless, within a few weeks my new grass was finally growing and I was very happy about it. There were some close calls, however, because for one thing, I did not realize the grass needed to be watered every single day in order to survive. I had not planned on watering the lawn every day, and as a result the grass almost died.

It is only recently that I realized I have planted a *winter grass*, which will die under summer conditions. How stupid. Now I am faced with having to get more new grass, since I did not plant grass that would last permanently. This lawn venture has turned into a long term project, and I should have thought it through before getting started in the first place.

Now I have had a chemical sprayed on the grass to completely kill it so I can put in the right new grass. My entire yard is brown and I have hired a landscaping company to dig up and remove the old grass. There are actually some grass farms down the street, and I am going over there in a few weeks to pick up a new lawn and have it delivered. I hope it works this time. What all this is about, however, is planning. If I had planned this correctly from the outset, none of this would have happened. I have wasted many frustrating weeks on a seemingly simple, straightforward project, due to a complete lack of forethought. I mean *what a complete disaster*.

I also like old cars. I have two old Aston Martins I have been working on for about five years now. They have spent years collectively sitting in repair shops around the country. I have fixed their electrical systems, their switches, and just about everything about them. They still keep breaking down. Every single time I try to take one of the cars out for a spin, almost without exception, it ends up breaking down. My wife refuses to allow our daughter to even ride in either car. I am continually doing one thing or another to fix these old cars, whether it means replacing batteries, sending the vehicles out of state to special mechanics, working on them during the weekend. The last three times I have taken my wife out to dinner in one of these cars, once we arrive at our destination, we can't get the car to start up again. We end up taking taxis and riding home in tow trucks. It is ridiculous. Some of the same tow truck drivers have taken us home more than once. I pay AAA extra money so I can get longer tows. This is how it works: When you do not plan your life you end up like one of these old cars. You never can go that far.

I also drive a truck, a Ford F-450 dually. The truck has never broken down because it is well made and new. Luckily, when I bought the truck I did not have to factor in seemingly limitless trips to the mechanics, and extended AAA coverage. The point is, this truck could take anyone anywhere. This is what planning can do for your life: It can take you anywhere.

When I think about my life and the lives of people I know, I am astounded to think about the lack of planning I see. Our lives and our ability to thrive and do well in the world are in large part determined by our ability to plan. The advantage is that you are often able to do tasks once and then not have to go back and fix them over and over and over again. Planning means spending a few minutes or hours, or possibly even weeks, depending on the scope of a project, before you start a task; you spend this time deciding exactly what you are going to do, and how you are going to do it before lifting a single finger. This is the smart way to accomplish things, and in my mind it is the proper way to do things. However, most people, myself included, prefer to be impulsive most of the time. And impulsiveness usually leads to things not being done correctly, and all

of our energy being redirected into fixing what we did incorrectly. In carrying out new tasks it is simply better to plan.

Last night my wife and I had a nice woman over for dinner. She is Irish Catholic, having grown up in a small town in Ireland. In Ireland there apparently never used to be such a thing as divorce. You planned to get married around a certain age; you got married; and then you basically stayed married forever. That was always the plan. Apparently, this woman had gotten divorced, which was a huge deal to the people she knew, because divorce simply is not acceptable where the woman was from. People just planned to stay married forever. In contrast, many people in the United States seem to go into marriage with an opposite idea in mind and end up bouncing around a lot.

When I finish planting the new lawn, I know that I am going to be interested in getting new flowers, bushes, and so forth to place around the lawn. In a sense, I will never be done with my little landscaping project. I will probably go to the Home Depot and see some new plants I like and then select and plant them. Based on how things have gone so far, they will probably be the wrong plants and I will repeat this process over and over again. That is, *unless I plan*, or else hire a landscape architect or someone who knows something about these things.

The idea is that we should always try to plan out what we are going to do.

And then there is the matter of what I do for a living. I spend 12-15 hours a day finding this and that wrong and then fix the things that go wrong with the businesses I run. My most successful businesses are the ones I spent the most time planning before I started. For example, I run a site called LawCrossing.com, which I spent two years planning before launching the site; it is very successful. Another site called Hound.com I spent a long time planning as well, and this site also does very well. These are just two examples of how planning pays huge dividends in everything we do.

Our company has a guy who goes around doing various types of maintenance work for us. When the air conditioning goes down in our office he will repair it. If we need painting done he will assist us with this. Yesterday the guy came out to my house and was installing an old steam unit I have in my shower in our bathroom for me on his day off.

I am all about leisure products. For example, my favorite past time is to sit in the sauna and then jump in the pool. I keep my pool as cold as possible in order to make this more and more enjoyable. I have been going in the sauna daily for years and I love it. My first sauna I put in my garage and over the years I have become an incredible connoisseur of saunas. For example, I have a special heater that heats the sauna instantly. I also have a Jacuzzi and despite the fact that my pool has one built in, I have a separate portable one that sits outside by my pool because it has more jets and is more enjoyable. I have a trampoline in my yards. A machine that inverts me so I can hang upside down. Another machine that claims I only need to work out 4 minutes a day if I use it. Another machine called a Power Plate which vibrates with a lot of intensity to tone my muscles while I stand on it.

I have been working from approximately 6:00 am to 7:00 pm or so for years and when I am not working I want to chill out in a fast way and there is no better way to do this than by hanging out in the sauna. I cannot recommend this enough. It's great. I have had parties that revolved around people coming over and sitting in the sauna and jumping in the pool. This is the sort of thing I enjoy and it is highly recommended. Steam rooms are great as well. That is why I was so enthusiastic about having my shower also turned into a steam room.

Without going into a lot of detail, the project has been a complete disaster. He has cracked the tile in the bathroom, broken through walls and there is plaster tracked all over the house. The steam unit is not hanging from the wall in the garage.

The job was supposed to take a few hours and he is already on day 4 and still does not have it hooked up properly. My wife is pissed. My daughter has a huge hole in her bedroom wall they used to access some water pipes and the whole thing is a mess.

This could have been handled simply through planning.

And this brings me to you and your career. Nothing is more important than planning what you are going to do before you act. The more you plan, the smoother your life and career will be.

THE LESSON

You must prepare in order to succeed in anything you undertake. The more time you plan before acting, the less time you will later have to devote to repairs and adjustments. Proper planning means that you only have to undertake a task once, rather than having to go back and repeatedly fix them. The more you plan, the smoother you will make your life and career.

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