

The Importance of Sharing

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

The most happy and successful people in the world are masters of sharing. The most unhappy and consistently challenged people, both emotionally and financially, are poor at sharing. When you find people who are alone and miserable, in most cases they are also not the sharing kind. When you encounter people who persistently are unemployed, or have difficulties getting ahead in their jobs, most of these people too will have problems with sharing. In fact, wherever you go in the world and whomever you meet, as a general rule, the people who do the best in their careers and lives are good at sharing.

It is possible to have financial success without sharing, but this success is never long lived. People who achieve financial success generally are providing consistent value of some sort to people, or groups of people. The value they are providing has a financial merit. In some cases, certain people may achieve financial success by being at the right place at the right time; nevertheless, people typically never succeed in the long-term unless they know how to share. For example, this type of person may end up in a profession that does very well during an economic boom; however, when that boom goes away he or she is left without a job. And without possessing the quality of knowing how to share, he or she may be unemployed for a long time.

One of the most important things to realize is that our careers and lives will always be more rewarding when they have more to do with giving, *sharing and contributing* than *taking*. In fact, our entire lives and careers can be transformed when we start to realize and embrace this idea. The only way you can achieve true joy and fulfillment in your life is to concentrate on giving and providing value--not solely on what you will get in return.

Most of us are taught in so many ways that becoming happy and fulfilled has more to do with taking than it does with giving. When we search and interview for jobs, most of us are more concerned with what the job will give us than in what we have to give. When you concentrate on what you can give and not just on what you can take, everything changes. When your actions in your job and life are to impart and help others, you will do far better than if your actions are always about helping you alone. The more you concentrate on yourself and your own needs, in most circumstances, the worse you will end up doing.

You need to be concerned with giving and sharing. You need to make the value you provide to the world and those around you of utmost importance. When you are focused on the value you are providing the world, and you make this your greatest objective, you will begin to experience the greatest levels of success.

When you are doing business with any establishment, you reward the good work of the establishment by buying more from the business, or by telling others positive things about the company you are doing business with. The purchases you make from the business are used to pay the workers. The business and all of its workers will experience financial success in relation to how well they are doing their jobs, and how they are providing value to you, the customer.

If you do not feel you are getting enough economic value from the business at which you are shopping, you will shop elsewhere. If you shop elsewhere, the first business you tried will have less money to pay its employees and to show potential profit. A company that is constantly losing revenue will be forced to cut costs in order to stay in business. When a company analyzes its costs, it will look to see if its employees are generating an economic return greater than their expense to the company, and if this is not the case, the company will start to eliminate employees.

I am sure you have fired many companies and businesses in the past. You may have had a bad experience ordering something from a certain store and decided to never order from there again. You may have been ignored or treated rudely at a business and decided to never shop there again. You may have bought something and it did not perform as promised. In each case, you took your business elsewhere, due to a lack of care and a lack of perceived value.

One of the saddest things that I see all around me is a continual stream of businesses that are closing down. People start one business or another in pursuit of a dream. A business represents a lot of things to people, and people who start businesses all have dreams. But most businesses are started by people who have dreams only for themselves, not for their customers. They dream about how much money they can earn from the business. The independence they will get from the business. Most do not dream about how the business will provide a really good and high-value service in the neighborhood where they are opening it, nor do they dream about how the business will help people do or be something better than they have ever done or been before. The owners do not go all out in serving their customers, and it is for this reason that most businesses fail.

When I was growing up, there was a carry out pizza parlor/chicken place right down the street from me. The pizza parlor was operated by a single Chinese woman who opened the place every day around 11:00 a.m. and closed it around midnight every day. As far as I knew, the menu never changed. No one else but this woman worked in the pizza parlor, or helped run it. The woman would take an order and then go back in the kitchen and make it while the customer stood waiting at the counter.

The food in the pizza parlor was good, and despite being in an area that was not highly trafficked, it had been there for as long as anyone could remember. The portions were a decent size and the food was always made fairly quickly. Since it was open so late, the pizza parlor was also a great place to get good food when all the other restaurants and grocery stores were closed. In fact the place was always open, even on Christmas, I remember.

One day the woman sold the pizza parlor to a man who had just retired as an engineer from General Motors. The man planned on running the pizza parlor with his wife. I was around 15 years old and one day I rode my moped up the pizza parlor and went inside. I started talking with the man and his wife. I do not know exactly what happened, but within a few minutes of my starting the discussion, the man and his wife offered me a job. They had printed a bunch of paper menus, and they

wanted me to hang them on the doors of all of the houses and apartments in the area.

I got in the car with the couple. They drove me around and I would run from house to house hanging the fliers on doors. I loved the work and it was a lot of fun. As I did this with them one Sunday afternoon, they told me about how "stupid" the Chinese woman had been. They told me that she used cheese that was too expensive, and that customers were also stupid and could not tell the difference between decent and cheap cheese. They were planning to stop serving chicken in the restaurant because chicken was expensive and pizza was really cheap to make. They told me all sorts of other things they were going to do in order to cut costs and make the restaurant more profitable. They also mentioned that the restaurant was open too much and from now on it would be closed on Sundays and holidays, and it would be closing by 8:30 or 9:00. They were sure the business was going to be a cash cow for them; they were going to buy a boat and maybe a summer cabin on a Lake in Northern Michigan, where they could go when they shut down the business in the summer.

As I listened to all this, I decided that these people must be very smart. They had great plans for themselves and for their restaurant. I thought that they must really know a lot about business.

Within a couple of months, they were out of business completely, and the pizza place sat there vacant for over a year. Eventually it was turned into flooring store. I thought about this episode a lot growing up because here was a business that had been successful for my entire lifetime and then had gotten new owners and within a short time, closed down. The more I thought about this, the more I realized that it was the Chinese woman who really must have been doing something correct all those years. She had been able to run the business for as long as anyone could remember in a profitable manner.

The new owners who took over the business thought only about how the business could benefit them, and how they could trim costs to fatten their own wallets. Consequently, they ended up failing. Most of us are taught and come to believe that joy comes more from receiving than from giving. However, genuine joy actually comes more from giving than it does from receiving. Businesses succeed when they concentrate on giving, not taking. People who succeed, concentrate on giving, not taking. Real sharing involves going against our normal every day, sharing patterns and sharing *even more* than we are used to.

Most peoples' positive actions are motivated by a desire for praise or recognition. This is not necessarily something that will benefit them, though. You need to be motivated more by how you can serve others than by how you can be served by others. When you are motivated by serving others, people pick up on this and will want to do business with you. They want to employ you and they want you to work for them. We love people and businesses who are more concerned with serving others than themselves.

- You should never expect a reward for sharing.
- An act of sharing should never contain a hidden agenda.
- You should not share because you are afraid you will be punished if you do not.
- You should not share just when it is easy for you.
- You should never share just to make others like you.
- You should never share just because you think it is the moral thing to do.

Sharing should be a real part of your deepest identity. When sharing and giving come from your heart, your entire outlook on your career is different, and people recognize it. They know that you are dedicated to what you are doing and that you stand behind it. You need to make a transformation in your nature from wanting and getting--to fulfilling and giving unto others.

In our jobs, lives and careers, every single day we have numerous opportunities for giving and for sharing. We can help a client or customer with one more thing. If we are a tailor, we can put an extra stitch in the clothing. If we are a lawyer, we can look over a brief one more time to make sure that it is perfect and does not contain any typos or other errors. If we clean houses for a living, we can make sure that we checked every nook and cranny of the house for dirt. There is always more we can do to share. The more we share our labor and the better it is, the **better careers** we have and the better lives we have.

Everyone knows people whom they love to be around with. There are certain people who have an energy that makes us feel good. When we are around these sorts of people, we feel changed and better for it. Try to remember the moments of your life when you felt the best around other people. When you are around people who make you feel good about yourself, they are giving and providing something to you.

Our lives are meant to be full of joy and fulfillment, not pain and suffering. The more we share and give of ourselves, the more fulfilled our lives will become.

THE LESSON

The most successful people in the world share the common characteristic of sharing, or concentrating on the value that they give back to others rather than on their own growth and profit. Focusing on yourself never leads to long-term success, but leads instead to unhappiness as well as emotional and financial challenges. Your greatest consideration, therefore, should be how you can contribute to others, and how your actions can impact their lives.