

Look for the Cause

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Everything that occurs in our world and to us has a cause. The cause may not be immediately obvious, but it is always there waiting to be found. The result of anything you see always contains its cause, and everything that happens is the result of either *good* or *bad* seeds that have been planted at some point in time:

- If some people are living in poverty and alone, spend some time with them and you will understand why they are in their situation. They are most likely in the position they are in not just (1) due to bad things that have happened to them, which were caused by other people (i.e., *bad seeds*), but (2) due to bad things that they themselves have done (i.e., *planting of bad seeds*), which have come back to haunt them. The condition they are living in is the growth that has occurred due to the bad seeds they have planted.
- If some people are living in opulence and are surrounded by people who love them, spend time with them and you will understand why. They are most likely in the position they are in not just (1) due to good things that have happened to them, which were caused by other people (i.e., *good seeds*), but (2) due to good things they themselves have done (i.e., *planting of good seeds*), which have grown the people's rich and full life. The condition they are living in is the growth that has occurred due to the good seeds they have planted.
- If some people have [good careers](#) and are happy in what they do, spend some time with them and you will understand why. They are most likely in the position they are in (1) due to good things that have happened to them caused by other people (such as getting accepted into good schools, gaining immense favor and support of friends and family) and (2) due to good things they have done (such as working hard and making valuable contributions to their work and to others). These people's lives are a reflection of the good seeds they have planted.
- If some people are unhappy and having bad careers, spend time with them and you will understand why. They are most likely in the position they are in (1) due to bad things that have happened to them caused by other people (such as not getting accepted into good schools, not gaining the favor of friends and family) and (2) due to the bad things they have done (such as slacking off and making poor, halfhearted contributions to their work and to others), that is not part of their lives. These people's lives are a reflection of the seeds they have planted.

Each outcome has its own unique cause. A person becomes president of the United States because of something he did or caused. Likewise someone becomes incarcerated because of something he or she did or caused. Just as every creation that ever comes to fruition was once merely an idea, each type of person that you see in the world--a happy person, an angry person, a powerful person, or a weak person--has a unique cause, a seed that has brought the person into his or her state of being.

It follows that if everything we see has a cause, it might be more valuable to study and understand the cause more than the effect. Once you understand the cause, you have the ammunition to make better decisions in your career and your life. There are far fewer things more important than being able to understand why something is the way it is. If someone you work with is very successful, you should seek to understand the cause. If someone you work with is unsuccessful, you should also seek to understand the cause. The more you understand the causes of things, the more you can make causes work for you and avoid causes that will work against you.

Everyone knows that if you walk into a bank and rob it, the effect of this may be escaping with some money; however, the effect is more likely to be getting hauled off to jail. This is one obvious reason why robbing banks is not that popular. More popular ways of getting ahead involve things such as going to college and working hard at our jobs. Most of society seeks out causes that are positive and more likely to give us better long-term results. By and large we avoid things that are likely to cause negative results, and we gravitate toward what is likely to cause positive results--both for us and for those around us.

If you look at a chair, the cause of its existence is generally the person who built it. If you wanted more chairs like this chair, the best thing to do would be to find the person who made the chair. If you find the person who made this chair, or the factory that made the chair, you will have discovered the cause.

If you look at a young child of age two or three, who appears incredibly happy and is always laughing and playing, you could study this child as well and find a cause. The cause of the child's happiness might be a parent; it might be both parents; it might be the way the child naturally sees the world; it might be that the child has never been seriously disciplined. The child's disposition might very well be genetic, and the result of his or her parents' having similar genetics. There are countless potential explanations for why the child might be happy, but there is likely also a cause that can be traced and quantified.

Similarly, if you look at a child who is incredibly unhappy all the time, there is generally a cause for this as well. It may be how the child naturally sees the world, the discipline the child has received, the lack of care it has received from parents and relatives. It might very well be genetic. The more you study this child, the more you will realize what specifically has made him or her unhappy. There is always a cause.

I have always enjoyed watching shows like *Forensic Files*, *Intervention*, *Power Privilege and Justice* and other similar programming that provides in-depth psychological profiles of people who commit various despicable acts. One of the reasons I enjoy these shows so much is that there are often interviews with the families of the person who has committed the crime, which usually has involved murder, prostitution, and/or drugs. The more serious the offense, the more interesting to me these interviews seem to be. In watching these shows, in most cases I am always more interested in watching and learning about the parents than the person who committed the crime.

One of the consistent themes I have noticed in these shows is that the mothers of the murderers, drug addicts, and so forth are typically very cold. The mothers have typically had a lot of issues themselves, and the thing I notice is that they are

almost always very detached and unemotional in their speech. The fathers also seem sort of weak in many respects. You do not get a sense that they are all that loving or willing to take the time to understand their kids.

I am making some gross generalizations; however, I have watched hundreds of these shows over the years and this same pattern just seems to repeat itself over and over again. In my opinion, for many of the people out there who are creating mayhem in the world and who are having severe problems, there is always a cause, and the cause is, in most cases, the people's parents.

A few years ago, I was complaining to one of my parents about something or other that happened when I was growing up, and my parent said something that was quite memorable: "Grow up and forget about it!"

I thought about this statement a lot at the time because it did seem to resonate with some truth. I had no business being upset about something that happened or did not happen some twenty years ago. Incidentally, I cannot even to this day remember what I was complaining about at the time; nevertheless, whatever had occurred in the past had apparently planted a seed within me that was still festering in the present.

Another more extreme example: If a man is beaten up by thugs, he is going to be a different person in the future in some ways than if he had never been attacked. The attack puts a seed in him. Going to war and being in combat plants seeds in men too. If a woman wins a beauty contest at a young age, this plants another type of seed. If a person goes to college and does horribly, this is yet another seed. If a person gets fired from a job, if a person is raised a devout follower of organized religion, these too are seeds, life-shaping causes that help form a person and his or her future.

Once you understand these seeds, you will generally understand their various outcomes and will quickly come to understand the person.

The problem with understanding the cause for people's situations is often that the causes are hidden. For example, when looking at a giant acorn tree, most people see only the tree. They do not think of the fact that the acorn tree came from the acorn nuts like the ones that are now growing out of it. The cause of the acorn tree is the seeds. But what most people see is the tree--not the cause of the tree.

The message I am getting at is very significant and it could change your life. You have many seeds that have been planted within you throughout the years. These seeds have been planted by your parents, your friends, your schools, and chance events that have occurred. Some of these seeds are good seeds, which can result in positive outcomes, and other seeds are bad seeds, which can result in negative outcomes. The issue is that you may not be aware of which seeds are which. You are living your life under the constant influence of seeds that were planted long ago within you--and you do not understand or know what they are.

In order for you to make the most of your life and career, it is crucial that you do your best to be influenced by the good seeds and learn to avoid the bad seeds. When people spend time on a therapist's couch, what they are essentially doing is learning about the bad seeds that have been planted in them, and coming to terms with them, in order to move on in their life. Most of us suppress and do not come to terms with the bad seeds that are influencing our lives; however, by learning to understand them, we are in a much better position to deal with them.

Conversely, there are an incredible number of good seeds out there that have a profound influence on us. These good seeds are the things that make us happy, the people who support us and help us grow, the circumstances that enable us to be better people, the positive things that have helped us get to where we are today and to be the people we are today. Good seeds are something incredibly valuable and we need to make a conscious habit of moving toward good seeds and reinforcing the good seeds in our lives.

I urge you to look at other people who have achieved the levels of success you too desire, and look for the good seeds that have brought them to where they are today. The more you look for the good seeds within people, the more you can use these same tools to move toward where you want to be. You need to adopt good seeds in your own life and bring good seeds into your life to the maximum extent possible.

Seeds do not grow instantly. Seeds take time to grow and they grow based on how they are nourished and the environment they are in. Every single day of your life you are planting seeds. You may be planting seeds that cause good things to happen in the future, or you may be planting seeds that cause bad things to happen in the future, or perhaps nothing at all. This is how it works: the more positive seeds you plant, the better your life will become. It may not all happen instantly, but it will happen.

Advertising is an example of planting seeds. An advertiser goes out and *plants* ideas in the public's mind about buying its product or service, with the objective of creating instantly and over time, a *harvest* of revenue. Businesses plant seeds just as individuals do.

We are addicted to selfish behavior. It is easier to hate than it is to love. We are quick to argue and slow to apologize. Many people drive hard bargains. It is easier for some people to lie than to tell the truth. It is easier for some people to break promises than to do what they say they will do. Selfish behavior is an example of planting a bad seed. It may not happen instantly, but every bad seed you plant will come back to you in some way, making your life more difficult.

If you are not climbing, you are falling back. The lower you descend, the more you suffer from depression and turmoil. The further you are from doing good, the unhappier you are likely to be. This can express itself in various forms of illness, financial hardship, social problems, marital problems, fear, anxiety, and more. All of these are the result of planting bad seeds.

Reject the selfish impulses that pop into your mind--do not plant bad seeds.

Choose to interact with people who truly enhance your life--plant good seeds.

Choose to interact with people in ways that truly enhance their lives--plant good seeds.

THE LESSON

Everything happens for a reason, and that reason might lie hidden underneath the surface. Understand the root cause of everything that is happening to you and around you. When you see the seed from which the tree has grown, you will discover exactly what you should do to improve your life and career.
