



Never Worry about What Others Think

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Being concerned with what others think is one of the biggest mistakes people make. Rather than focusing on who they want to be and what they want to do, many people live their lives more concerned about how they look to others. Deep down inside you is someone who is capable of achieving great things and becoming a great person. This is the person you should be.

Several years ago, I remember turning in a paper to Saul Levmore, who is now the dean of the [University of Chicago Law School](#). I was taking a class with him while I was at the [University of Virginia Law School](#) and had not spent a lot of time with him or gotten to know him very well. I had written a paper for him and was very enthusiastic about it. I called him on the telephone to discuss the paper and we spoke for perhaps 15 minutes about it. Saul knew I was enthusiastic about the paper. It was a good paper, too--in my opinion. Even before it had been graded I'd sent it to various publications, and it was accepted prior to the end of the class.

At the end of the discussion, I asked him:

"What sort of grade do you think my paper is going to get?"

"I knew you were going to ask that," he said.

"How did you know I was going to ask that?" I asked.

"Because you are more concerned about what others think of your work than what you think of it. You care too much about what others think. The grade is unimportant."

I thought about this statement a great deal at the time and was not sure I understood it, but I knew he was on to something. I have thought about this statement again and again over the years. After more than a decade of puzzling over it, I think I finally realize the depth of what he was saying.

Saul was saying that you need to be focused on your work, and not consumed by what others think about it. You can only do great things and achieve great success when you do not care what others think. You need to follow your heart and do what you think is right. You need to be loyal to exactly what you want to do.

Other people don't know what makes you tick and makes you happy. Other people are more likely to criticize you than praise you. Other people often have their own agendas that involve you not following your dreams. It is extremely important to follow your dreams and pursue what you want to do.

I would like to tell you a quick story about how I got into the business I am in today.

Several years ago, I was a [practicing attorney](#) and I did not like the work at all. When I gave notice and quit the law firm, I did so knowing that law was simply not what I wanted to pursue any longer. My family was very proud of me for being an attorney, and all of my friends and the people I knew were also attorneys. I knew very well if I left the practice of law, I would lose a great deal. In addition to losing a way of life, I would be losing a great deal of income as well as the admiration of certain people. I had contemplated not practicing law for months and months, and everyone around me was very quick to offer the opinion that leaving would be a huge mistake. I struggled internally for quite a long time with this decision.

When I discovered the practice of recruiting, I knew deep down this was something I wanted to pursue. It clicked with me and it was something I absolutely loved. I knew I would be good at it. My family, significant other, and everyone around me told me making this career change would be insane. When I went out to buy a computer to start the business, a family member was with me who told me such a purchase was reckless and irresponsible. I started my business with no plan and no idea what would happen. I did it only when I realized I had to listen to myself in order to be happy. I had to do what was most important to me.

Inside of you, and inside of each of us, is the person we want to be. This person is not controlled by what others think and, instead, is allowed to come out and be extremely happy. It is my life and career advice to let that person "come out." However, we are so programmed by what others think we are often afraid to be who we really want to be.

While I am not [gay](#), I am moved by gay people who are able to come out and be themselves, despite the prejudices of society. I think it is extremely important for people to be exactly who they want to be without caving in to the influence of others. There are probably millions of people in the United States who are gay but who are afraid to come out and be themselves. These people may even marry members of the opposite sex and try to build lives as straight people, all the while not being who they really are. Imagine the pain such people must feel.

Do not let this happen to you. You need to be the person you want to be in your life and in your [career](#). So many people go through life never being who they want to be or doing what they want to do.

[Job searching](#) is among the most important activities in your life because it is when you get the chance to discover exactly who you want to be. I encourage you to do this now!

Come out and be the person you want to be--and are capable of being. You do not need to blame people, circumstances, or your environment for liking, or disliking, your job and your life. Instead, take charge of being exactly who you want to be and be that person. Do this without worrying about what other people think.

THE LESSON

Pursue your own dreams and become the person that you want to be, rather than what others might want. Living life according to the wishes of others is meaningless, and will bring you neither happiness nor success. Others do not understand your capabilities, goals, and interests as well as you do, hence their opinions should be your least concern. Have

faith in your own potential greatness, and you will develop the confidence to act upon it and be the person that you really want to be, achieving true fulfillment.

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