



Seek Out and Work with People Who Share Your Beliefs

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

A few years ago on a chilly December evening, my wife and I were having a late dinner one night at a restaurant in Malibu. The main restaurant had closed so we were seated near the bar. A man walked in through the front door, who looked like he was on a very serious mission, but at the same time seemed in good spirits. I would estimate he was in his early 40s. It was probably around 10:30 in the evening and it was Saturday night--the weekend before Christmas. There were various drunks sitting and chatting at the bar.

The man took a seat at a bar stool, ordered a drink and then, a few minutes later, began slowly scanning his surroundings. He had a very focused and intense look on his face. He looked like a character in an action movie, looking to see if his arch enemy was inside the restaurant. The vibe he was giving off was a bit exciting. When his eyes panned towards me I decided to smile at him. The second he saw me smile he walked right over and took a seat across from my wife and I. We were absolutely stunned about what would occur over the next few minutes.

The man informed us that we were living in the midst of an alien invasion of earth and that the aliens had already gotten to him and implanted something in the back of his head. He had been released from a psychiatric institution in Los Angeles earlier in the day, where he been held against his will--by aliens. He had purchased a bike at a flea market when he got out of the institution, and was now riding to Naval Air Station Point Mugu, about 20 miles up Pacific Coast Highway from where we were, to warn the military that a full scale invasion was already underway. He had been riding his bike all day to get there. He was a real revolutionary. The apocalypse was coming.

As he spoke, my wife was squeezing my leg under the table very hard. I could tell she wanted to get the hell out of the restaurant and get this guy away from us. It was not funny. In fact, it was a little frightening--and very sad. This guy was among the most delusional people I had ever encountered.

"This is extremely serious and everything is likely to come to a head in the next several days," he said.

He was a large man and he did not look crazy at a glance. He was dressed in clean clothes, was clean-shaven and looked quite ordinary. He was completely convinced about what he was saying and genuinely believed that there was some real danger in our midst. He then told us he was going to show us "first" something incredible and from another world. He grabbed his head, and using his pinkies, he pushed aside some of the hair on his head to reveal what appeared to be nothing:

"See that!" he said. "This is where the alien agents in the psychiatric hospital put the implant in me to silence me. I can feel their radio waves hitting it, but it is not working. I know they will eventually get through, though. This is why I have to get to the military base tonight."

"GODDAMN THEM!" I screamed. I banged my hand on the table so hard that the water glasses on our table shook. Pain started immediately shooting through my hand. "Why can't they just leave us alone!" A good portion of the people in the bar turned around and looked at me with alarm. "WHY CAN'T THEY JUST LEAVE US ALONE!!!"

"It's ok, it's ok!" the man said. "I am doing everything I can."

"I know, but what they have done to you and others is so unfair!"

With this the man stood up and patted my shoulder, telling me that he was going to fix the situation and I need not worry anymore. He then said that it might be wise for us to get our affairs in order before the alien invasion was finalized.

He seemed to think my reaction had been perfectly natural, and a moment later he went back to the bar and continued with his evening.

"What the heck was that all about?" my wife said.

"You seemed uncomfortable talking to the guy, and I knew the only way we would get rid of him was to convincingly get into his world and let him know that I believed him. He just wanted someone to get into his world and understand where he is coming from," I told her.

On the way out I said goodbye to the man. He was sitting at the bar and in a very civil manner said, "Have a nice evening, Harrison."

Although the man I met in the bar that evening was clearly *insane*, we all hold beliefs that are in many respects just as insane because they limit us, keep us in limbo and make our lives more difficult than they need to be.

If an extremely successful person, who is much more accomplished than you in some aspect of his or her life, were to sit down with you for a few hours to discuss your beliefs about that aspect of your life, the person would probably see multiple problems with your belief system with respect to that area of your life. In fact, they might think you were *insane* because you have beliefs that are so 'out of kilter' with the sorts of beliefs that you need to have in order to succeed in that particular area.

Have you ever known or encountered someone who was a complete failure in a part of his or her life, at which you were very good? You probably have met people like this, and if you were to study this person, your first inclination might be that the person's beliefs and ways of thinking about the world are all wrong. However, in most instances you can never change the person's beliefs about the world by simply pointing things out. If it were that easy, everyone would easily change and become better.

One of the most highly addictive things out there is not any particular substance--it is something much more insidious, and arguably more harmful. It is our beliefs.

- If you try and take someone's beliefs away from him or her, the person will get very emotional, selfish, defensive, and even a little bit paranoid.

- If you try and take someone's beliefs away from him or her, the odds are also very good that they will attempt to marginalize and discredit you. They may turn you into a *whacko* or a *bad guy*, and in extreme cases they may even kill you.

Many of the most persecuted people throughout history were killed, attacked, and discredited due to their attempts to change others' beliefs. Many religions have been started by people whose goal was to change the beliefs of others, and in the beginning they were persecuted for this. In fact, Christianity is based largely on the execution of Jesus, which came about as the result of Jesus attempting to change others' beliefs. Many religions so strongly cherish their beliefs that many of their members think they are "at war" with those people in the world who do not share the same beliefs. They may even think that people who do not share their beliefs deserve to die.

When a new religion starts out with its own new beliefs, the people promoting the religion are typically attacked as well. Early Mormons, for example, were attacked for their beliefs and settled in Utah because they were being persecuted in other areas of the United States at the time. The followers of more modern religions like Scientology, which was founded in the 1950s, are typically portrayed as *whackos*, in the same manner that Mormons and others were when they emerged. This is what happens with every new religion that has a different set of beliefs from the more popular mainstream beliefs. They are perceived as a threat to the currently held beliefs, and are therefore discredited in every conceivable manner by those who feel threatened.

At the same time, many of the most celebrated people in history were just that because they were able to change people's beliefs for the better, and help them. The rise of psychiatry, psychology and so forth is, in large part, about helping people change their beliefs. Changing people's beliefs about the world and the way life works is so complex that it often requires years of therapy before people's beliefs change. Most people's beliefs are very deeply rooted.

When you are out in the world, one of the most important things to understand is that each and every person's perception of the world and of reality is much different from the next person's perception. The reason for this is that we all have different experiences that have gone into making us who we are. In order to succeed at both changing yourself and changing others, it is immensely important that you figure out how to understand other people's view of reality and the world.

It is extremely important to never tell people that they are wrong. You cannot tell people they are wrong, because their beliefs are different from your beliefs most of the time. In order to show people they are wrong, one of the best things you can generally do is enter the other person's reality and show them that you truly understand their point of view. Once you let people show you their reality, you will be in a much better state to help them change their reality in a gradual manner. In the restaurant, for example, by showing the man obsessed with aliens that I understood him, I was able to get him to go away. Had I reacted differently, there is a good chance he would have continued monopolizing our dinner conversation with his bizarre story. Eventually he might have even thought that I was an alien.

Believe it or not, this has everything to do with your life and career because you are always going to be working and interacting with people who have all sorts of beliefs about the world, which you are never going to be able to change. Although you might be able to alter the beliefs of people around you slightly, the odds are very good that you are never going to make much progress on this unless you are able to first enter the other person's world.

When you show people that you understand and share their beliefs and points of view, they are more likely to trust you and less likely to view you as a threat, or an *alien*, for example. In the work world, it is very important that the people you work with share your beliefs and think that you are just like them.

For years I have operated various call centers in my business. I have had call centers in California, India, Utah, and other places. Most people who operate call centers know that you are always better off putting a [call center](#) in an area where the people sound like the customers. The reason for this is that the customers are more likely to have an instant rapport with someone from a similar cultural background; the customer makes an assumption that the person they are speaking with shares similar beliefs and values with them. If you have people on the phones that sound different from the clients, the clients will not trust the people as much; therefore they will not open up as much, and they will not feel as comfortable.

I have seen numerous people fired and let go from organizations because they were told there was a "bad cultural fit". You need to fit in with the people you are working for.

- I had a friend once who worked for a medical supply sales company. Practically the entire office went out for happy hour and drank every weekday night, and then on the weekends they all got together and played sports and drank some more. These people had some very specific beliefs about what life was about and my friend was not part of this group. The company told him he was not a good fit, and he lost his job.
- I know people who once worked inside of extremely conservative religious organizations, just filling clerical roles, who did not share the conservative views of their employer, despite being the same religion. They were let go from their jobs.

I have seen this happen many times when people of different beliefs work together. I have seen people lose their jobs because someone found out they were promiscuous outside of work. I have seen people [get jobs](#) because they were part of the same organization as the boss. And I have often seen people get ahead at work, when someone has perceived them as having the same beliefs as a superior.

It is incredibly important for you to seek out and work with people who share your beliefs. The odds are almost certain that you will never change the beliefs of the people that you work with. Therefore, the best course to take is to work with people who share your beliefs. The more people perceive you as having similar beliefs to their own, the more likely you are to be accepted, and the better you will ultimately do in whatever organization you are with.

THE LESSON

You must seek to understand the different beliefs of the people around you. Everyone holds their own unique set of beliefs, and attempts to question or change them will only work to your peril. Therefore, you must seek out and work with people who share your beliefs. When people perceive you as having beliefs similar to their own, they will be much more likely to accept you and you will ultimately achieve more career success and happiness.

