

Are You Here? The Importance of Being Present in Your Job and Job Search

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

What makes someone successful in his or her career? When it comes down to it, I believe one of the greatest determinants of success is whether or not you are "here."

"Being here" takes two forms. The most obvious is to *be here* physically. Coming into the office each day and going through the motions is the most basic way to *be here* and the minimum requirement for success. An example of *being here* for a salesperson would be coming into the office and making a certain number of cold calls each day. If this is done, and nothing more, the salesperson will experience some degree of success. However, in all likelihood the success will be mediocre.

A more significant way of *being here* is to have a connection to your work. I am sure each of us knows many people who are, for one reason or another, never really present. Being absent mentally, even when you are physically present, shows in (1) not listening to those around you or not otherwise paying attention to your environment, (2) not taking the time to understand where your work fits into the larger picture, and (3) not taking any interest in the people and activities going on around you. Such a person is unable to extrapolate various important signals from the environment. One of the most important things people can do in their careers is *be here*, completely present and focused. In my [job as a recruiter](#), I saw firsthand that every major success was a result of my ability to *be here*, focused on my job and attuned to my clients' needs:

- I understood my candidates and thought a great deal about their situations.
- I wrote a letter for my clients that showed passion and had a clear and compelling message.
- I spoke in depth with the candidate and developed a greater bond.
- The bond I had with my candidates drove me to deepen my relationships with law firm clients so they would want to hire from me.
- I sought even more opportunities and got creative with the employers who would consider my candidates.
- The more my candidates and I bonded the more we continued our search together, even after an initial round of submissions may not have produced any results.

I found that I was more likely to place the candidates I took the time to get to know and understand. Conversely, for virtually every candidate I did not place, I was typically guilty of not being fully present with him or her. I simply went through the motions with my submissions and hoped something good would come from that alone. Sure, that approach worked a few times, but rarely was success that simple. When absently going through the motions, one can hardly expect to produce meaningful results.

The career advice I will give is that you need to be present in your life and in your career and to feel a connection to your work. You need to be engrossed in what you are doing and feel the passion and energy that comes from that. This breeds career longevity and success. The more you are *here*, the more you are also likely to keep your job when companies go through transitions or downsizing. If you are *here*, you may even find yourself getting a promotion, even in the most unlikely of times.

Several years ago, I gave a lengthy speech about the importance of [legal recruiting](#). At the time, I was very concerned about instilling passion in the recruiters who worked for me and showing them the value of this at all costs. Passion changes everything. I wanted my workforce of recruiters to believe in what they were doing and in the people they were doing it for. I wanted them to help their candidates to the greatest extent possible. After the speech, I overheard one lady speaking to another, and she said something I will never forget: "I would rather work for a place that cares about what it is doing and takes it seriously than work at a place that does not."

This stuck with me. I think we all want to be surrounded by passion in what we do. Time and again you hear about how important it is to love what you do. Passion and commitment are attributes people notice. These qualities help build careers. Your boss or future employer wants to see that you love what you are doing. If an employer is deciding to hire one person over another, they are likely to hire the person who connects to his or her work, instead of the person who does not. If an employer is deciding to lay off one person over another, they are likely to keep the person who is passionate over the person who is not.

My favorite example of this is in hiring an attorney. If you had been falsely accused of committing a crime, which attorney would you hire?

Attorney A

- Does not belong to any special groups involving what you do or your situation
- Is difficult to reach on the phone
- Does not seem that passionate about what he does and does not seem to take a sincere interest in you
- Has held multiple jobs at different firms
- Is very interested in golf and wants to talk about it a lot
- Likes to collect cars

Attorney B

- Is a frequent speaker on matters involving the wrongly accused
- Is the president of the local bar association
- Recently wrote a book about the wrongly accused and how travesties of justice occur every day in America

- Admits to having few hobbies because she spends her free time reading about the rules of evidence and how they can be used to free the wrongly accused
- Calls you early in the morning and late at night to discuss your case
- Is always reachable

A person who has been falsely accused will almost invariably choose Attorney B. The person who is *here* will always win over the person who is not. We want enthusiasm and commitment. We want presence. Make that a habit and you will find success throughout your life and career.

THE LESSON

Being present is crucial to your career's success and longevity. The more that you are present in your career, the more valuable you will be to your employer, and thus the more likely you will be to keep your job. Employers want commitment and presence in their employees, and those possessing such attributes will always prevail over those who do not.

Read More About Face Time is Very Important:

- [Be Committed to What Your Do](#)
- [Show Up on Time](#)

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