

Twelve Observations about Work and Life

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04/21/2014



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It took me the longest time to realize that every person on the planet has some knowledge that could benefit others.

Never write off others because they are too old, too young, too rich, too poor, or any other superficial reason. You'll be surprised by the wisdom you can gain by simply listening with a non-judgmental ear.

I could be right or I could be wrong, but my life experiences have led me to the following observations. I hope some benefit you:

1. Stop lamenting the fact that you're not smarter than you are, or that you're not as good at something as you'd like to be. You can accomplish anything you want through hard work. Your skills develop over the course of your life, and you can always develop new ones. Learn to recognize the things you are good at and put these talents to use, rather than struggling to excel in a career for which you have no natural inclination.
2. It is of little use to dwell on the past and wish you could go back and change it. Making mistakes and feeling as if you've squandered some of your youth is a natural part of life that happens to everyone. Try to look at your youth with a healthy perspective; while you may have squandered some time, you probably also accomplished a lot and had some fun along the way.
3. Don't get so caught up in dwelling on your mistakes that you fail to seize present opportunities. You still have plenty of time left in your life if you can move on and use it productively.
4. Don't fear change. It's a part of life. You won't be the same person at 30 as you were at 20, or as you will be at 40 or 60. Growing in all different ways is a good thing. If you went through life with the mindset of a 20 year old, you would miss a lot of the joys of adulthood. While change can be disconcerting at first, each stage of life becomes more (or at least as) enjoyable and fulfilling than the previous one.
5. Make a constant effort to grow. Challenge yourself mentally. Explore different means of spirituality. Place yourself in new social situations. While unfamiliar scenarios are usually a little frightening at first, with time the unfamiliar becomes the familiar, and you are glad you took the chance. At this point, it is time to once again move out of your comfort zone and explore even more possibilities.
6. In our rapidly changing society, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by all the technological innovations and information you think you need to absorb in order to function productively at work and even at home. Rest assured – everyone feels the same way. Staying flexible is key to maintaining productivity. Find ways to make the changes in your work life advantageous.

7. Life is a continuing process, and there is no one point when you become magically grown up and have accomplished everything you want to. If there was such a point, what would you do when you got there?

8. The nature of life is to constantly grow and change, and there is always more to learn and experience. Be wary of feeling as if you have reached the pinnacle of all of your experiences and accomplishments. If you become complacent, that point really will be the pinnacle of your life, since you won't feel compelled to achieve even more.

9. You only have so much time and energy in your life. To feel fulfilled, you must choose what things you want to spend most of your time and energy doing. Choosing your priorities might take some soul-searching, or they might be obvious. Is family most important to you? Or, do you envision a time-consuming career? Whatever your interests, you must define your priorities in order to be productive. You can try to have 12 different priorities, but they will hardly be priorities, and you likely won't pay sufficient attention to each. Decide what few things are important to you, and spend most of your time and energy supporting those priorities.

10. Never underestimate the power of your attitude and the effect it has on your perception of the world. In general, people see what they want to see. For instance, if you have heard something negative about a person before you meet them, you are likely to dislike that person right off the bat, regardless of anything they do or say. The same holds true for almost every situation in life. There are both beautiful and horrible things in the world. If you think positively, you are more likely to notice the beautiful things in the world. If you think negatively, you will pick up on all the not-so-great things that go on.

11. Many people seem to blame the mistakes in their life on some unseen force that constantly brings them down. They think they are just unlucky or that others are out to get them. For the most part, this is not the case. Almost everything that happens to us results from the choices we make, consciously or unconsciously. Not choosing becomes a choice in itself, so it's no use trying to ignore the tough choices you will have to make.

Blaming fate for your misfortunes will get you nowhere; taking control of your life and the choices you face will. In order to empower yourself, you must recognize the decisions in your life for what they are and consciously make the best decision you can. Every now and then something completely random will happen to you, and you certainly have no control over that. But realize that most of the things that happen to you don't just "happen to you."

12. Making decisions is difficult, and the best decisions generally result from careful thought. However, don't feel as you have to ignore your gut feeling about something. We have instinct for a reason, and usually your instinct will not lead you astray.

Sometimes it is detrimental to think too much about something; instead of overanalyzing, go with what your little voice tells you. You'll be surprised how much you don't realize you already know. The subconscious is a powerful thing. When you can harness some of that power and put it to use in the conscious world, you will find that the things your little voice tells you are usually right on.