



From academia to corporate

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What wisdom has the guy on the right for the guy on the left?



I tried to make this objective and universal.

I gave up.

This is a personal account but I am not here to tell you my life story.

I am here to tell you what you want to know. Or need to know.

So please interrupt me at any point in time with questions.

What is my personal bias?

- I am introvert by nature.
- I come from a bourgeois "goody" background and from a city of little local professional opportunity (lest you are blessed to be talented in football).
- In combination, that rendered education, and later research, a gateway to the world.
- I was a decent academic foot soldier:
Hopefully no less, but certainly no more.
- I deem the peak intelligence higher in academia. But the bulk median of intelligence higher in (sophisticated) corporate work.
- None of this has to apply to you. I am certainly not trying to lure you away from the prospect of an attractive academic career.

Brainstorm:

- Learn serious coding!
- Always contextualize what you do:
Find interesting what is important. Not the other way round.
- "The world as will and imagination":
In complex work environments, reasons become reverse engineered expressions of will. This is not bad. Do not get hung up with right and wrong so much.
- Do not try to do it alone. Find a mentor and colleagues who you trust. Talk to them a lot. About work.
- There is no such thing as to overcommunicate.
- Thinking and interacting on your feet matters. A lot. Corporate jobs happen in real time and in coram publicam. Do not breed too long on your perfect solution, you may wake up surrounded by scorched earth.

Brainstorm (continued):

- Intelligent people handle themselves consciously. Be clear what you are good at "by nature" and what does not come to you naturally. Don't wing the latter. Prepare, act consciously and willfully.
- Soft skills are hard skills. They can be learnt. Yes, you can fake extrovert.
- Pleasing on short terms and satisfying in the long run rarely go together. The latter is more important. By far.
- Conflicts are OK. Taken constructively they turn up disagreement. Disagreement is what you need to make compromises and / or eliminate errors. (Passive aggressive helps nothing and noone.)
- Peer competitors are not evil.

Brainstorm (continued):

- You entered the door of a corporation and (probably) joined a team. Understand why they pay you. Job performance is subjective. Accept their rationale or change it. The latter is the bigger and riskier task (and probably not for day one).
- If you work hard and people around you are not happy with your work, resist the knee jerk reflex to work even harder. Remember they see you subjectively. There is something else you have to change. Including, possibly, your job.
- Success is lasting, failure is only temporary. Lest you let it get to your confidence.
- When it finally clicks: Green grass is good. Greener grass is risky. The greenest grass is a mirage.

Summary

- Starting out in a corporate job confronts you with experiences that, sooner or later, you also make in the academic world . Or just generally in life.
- The common denominator of those experiences is the reality of simultaneously collaborating and competing with colleagues in a workplace that has subjective expectations outside your comfort zone.
- Denouncing this as "office politics" may help your feelings. But not your career.
- In the end, there is only so much that you can take away from these words without making your own experiences.
- But you can prepare your mind toward making them.