What your career path eventually comes down to

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I've spent most of the last 6 years trying to find the answer. Along the way, I've seen a pretty clear difference between the low and the top performers.

Low performers

- bootlick their way into most things
- optimize for money, interviews, and gamifying career ladders
- have no love for their craft
- and the worst, have no curiosity

Top performers

- curiosity above and beyond what they're doing
- craft before paychecks
- some of the hardest people to hire
- some of the hardest people to command respect from
- lone wolves
- say no to opportunities if it doesn't serve them, even if it comes from top management

6 levels of career independence

If you want an infinite shelf life at work, or want to master pivots, or in general want to command premium pay, here's what the career ladder to becoming a top performer comes down to:

1. you get told what to do and how to do it
2. you get told what to do
3. you get asked how to do it
4. you get asked what to do and how to do it
5. no one tells you anything
6. no one asks you anything

The sooner you can get to number 6, not for a paycheck or anything else, but to be worth your salt, the sooner you'll start scratching the surface in any field. So, there's a direct correlation between curiosity, hustle, and career success.

How to compound career durability

- Don't job hop for money. Gauge and bet on opportunities. Know when to exit.
- Don't job hop for title and salary. Arrogance has never gotten anyone far. Pick a job that has the best manager you can learn from.

- Don’t job hop because of what your peers are doing.
- Think 3 to 5 years ahead, minimum.
- And last of all, really put in the work. You can almost always out-work anyone.