

# THE NUMBER ONE JOB SKILL IN 2020

June 11, 2013

Posted by: [George Anders Contributing Writer at Forbes magazine](#)

What's the crucial career strength that employers everywhere are seeking -- even though hardly anyone is talking about it? A great way to find out is by studying this list of fast-growing occupations, as compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics.

Sports coaches and fitness trainers. Massage therapists, registered nurses and physical therapists. School psychologists, music tutors, preschool teachers and speech-language pathologists. Personal financial planners, chauffeurs and private detectives. These are among the fields expected to employ at least 20% more people in the U.S. by 2020. Did you notice the common thread? [Every one of these jobs is all about empathy.](#)

In our fast-paced digital world, there's lots of hand-wringing about the ways that automation and computer technology are taking away the kinds of jobs that kept our parents and grandparents employed. Walk through a modern factory, and you'll be stunned by how few humans are needed to tend the machines. Similarly, travel agents, video editors and many other white-collar employees have been pushed to the side-lines by the digital revolution's faster and cheaper methods.

But there's no substitute for the [magic of a face-to-face interaction with someone else who cares](#). Even the most ingenious machine-based attempts to mimic human conversation (hello, Siri) can't match the emotional richness of a real conversation with a real person. Visit a health club, and you'll see the best personal trainers don't just march their clients through a pre-set run of exercises. They chat about the stresses and rewards of getting back in shape. They tease, they flatter -- maybe they even flirt a little. They connect with their clients in a way that builds people's motivation. Before long, clients keep coming back to the gym because they want to spend time with a friend, and to do something extra to win his or her respect.

It's the same story in health care or education. Technology can monitor an adult's glucose levels or a young child's counting skills quite precisely. Data by itself, though, is just a tool. The real magic happens when a borderline diabetic or a shy pre-schooler develops enough faith and trust in another person to embark on a new path. [What the BLS data tells us is that even in a rapidly automating world, we can't automate empathy.](#)

**KEYSTONE**  
**interaction**  
**SKILLS**

GLYN CONLON COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST- WORKPLACE AND PERSONAL  
[WWW.KEYSTONESKILLS.COM.AU](http://WWW.KEYSTONESKILLS.COM.AU) M: 0406 930 699

Last week, when the BLS reported that the U.S. economy added 175,000 jobs in May, analysts noted that one of the labour market's bright spots involved restaurants and bars. Waiters, cooks and bartenders accounted for a full 16% of the month's job growth. As the Washington Post's Neil Irwin put it, "A robot may be able to assemble a car, but a cook still grills burgers."

Actually, it's the people in the front of the restaurant -- and behind the bar -- that should command our attention. The more time we spend in the efficient but somewhat soulless world of digital connectivity, the more we will cherish a little banter with wait-staff and bar-tenders who know us by name. We will pay extra to mingle with other people who can keep the timeless art of conversation alive.

This vital skill can be learned call me for details P: 0406 930 699

Warm wishes

*Glyn*



Communication Specialist

[www.keystoneskills.com.au](http://www.keystoneskills.com.au)

M: 0406 930 699 *Communication that simply works!*

[What 'goes down', always comes up-get the key here](#)

Conflict Resolution   Mediation   Relationship support

Empathy Coaching   Bully Proof Fencing

Certified Trainer since 2011 with the [Centre for Nonviolent Communication](#)

Call or email Glyn

All conversations are confidential **Ph: 0406 930 699** [glyn@keystoneskills.com.au](mailto:glyn@keystoneskills.com.au)

**KEYSTONE**  
**interaction**  
**SKILLS**

GLYN CONLON COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST- WORKPLACE AND PERSONAL  
[WWW.KEYSTONESKILLS.COM.AU](http://WWW.KEYSTONESKILLS.COM.AU)   **M: 0406 930 699**