

# Amazing Competence

I love being around people who radiate competence. It's part of the reason I love watching blacksmiths work—everything they do looks like massive levels of competence to me. People making something with their hands, while using good tools, are a pleasure to watch. And useful things are as beautiful to me as any work of art.

But blacksmiths, though among my favorites, aren't the only ones. I love watching skilled leatherworkers, and cabinetmakers, and glassblowers, and just anyone who makes something. I love watching an optician measuring for glasses, and then fitting them to the person. And cake decorators, jewelry makers, primitive survival practitioners, and—there are just so many examples; the longer I think, the more I can come up with.

Beyond the physical, people who can think clearly and explain their thinking, and even make me see it through their eyes, have the same effect on me. I am awed.

I am impressed by competence. I really *enjoy* exposure to people who are truly competent in something good and useful. I know I am in the presence of greatness, no matter what they may think of themselves.

“Basic” human competence. (Which may be less “basic” and more rare than it ought to be.)

You people amaze me when you are really good at something—and I love it. Keep it up.

I hope I am competent in something, or that I eventually get there. I'll keep working at it, and I hope I never stop, no matter what.