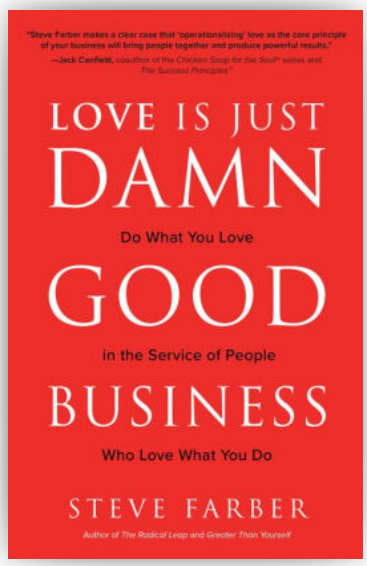
Love Is Just Damn Good Business

Do What You Love in the Service of People Who Love What You Do

Steve Farber



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Key Concepts

Love can have a transformative effect on your business. Operationalize it as a core business strategy by:

1. *Doing what you love.* Discover your passions and talents. Connect with the ideas and activities that make you feel alive and excited and invest your energy into developing them.
2. *Doing what you love in the service of others.* Use your ideas to help others succeed in ways that matter to them. Commit to helping people to fulfill their potential, overcome their challenges, improve their quality of life, and find joy or meaning.
3. *Doing what you love in the service of others who love what you do.* Focus your efforts on building connections with people who will reciprocate the love that you show them and provide the kind of loyalty you need to build a successful, sustainable business.

Introduction

Love is more than a nice notion. It's the foundation that your business needs to be successful, and it should be at the core of your approach to leadership. In **Love Is Just Damn Good Business**, Steve Farber explains why leaders should be motivated by love and how to use love to produce powerful business outcomes, like loyal, engaged customers; valued products, services, and experiences; and a base of customers who love what you do—and show it through repeat business and referrals.

Love Is a Hard-Core Business Principle

Too often, leaders think of love as an overhead expense that inhibits their growth, productivity, and profits. But when it's built into the foundation of their businesses, love can drive revenue and help them develop strong, competitive enterprises. Love is the flywheel that helps fledgling ideas grow, strategies advance, and work have meaning. It's good business, and it's the element that makes every other part of good business possible.

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The Competitive Advantage

When love is ingrained into your business, your employees will feel it. They'll know that they're valued, and in turn they'll be more loyal, innovative, and inspired by their work. They'll feel driven to provide products, services, and experiences that bring joy to customers. Your customers will feel that love and will love you back. They'll reciprocate and show loyalty through repeat business and referrals. Their love will strengthen your business and help it to grow and endure.

Love is a critical competency, a motivator, and a sustainable competitive advantage that can help your business attain tremendous outcomes. Bring it to life in your business by doing what you love in the service of people who love what you do.

Through all of your work, planning, and strategy, your end goal should be to attain a competitive advantage by offering products and services that your audience will love, by putting people who feel the love on the front lines with your customers, and by creating experiences that have an immensely positive impact on your customers' lives. When these necessities are in place, you, your employees, and your customers will connect, engage, and transact more frequently and build a lasting, loving bond.

Part I: Do What You Love

Love starts with you. You need to have an authentic, inspiring, motivating passion for your work, your team, your plans, your operations, and the values your business stands for to truly love your work, enjoy your life, make a positive difference for others, and build a successful and sustainable business.

I Never Have to Work, You Say?

A frequently cited quote tells people that choosing a job they love means that they'll never work a day in their lives. You might interpret this quote to mean that doing what you love for a living will be a magical experience where all your tasks are easy, fruitful, and fun. But that's not the truth of work.

The best kinds of jobs—the ones that make you feel alive and excited about what you're doing—are hard, even when they're fun. Love of your work doesn't remove the difficulties. Your passion pursuits might continue to be rife with hard work, frustrations, challenges, and boredom. There'll be moments where you're not having fun. But those difficult moments will stretch you, teach you, and mold you into a wiser person. They'll help you to love your work more than you already do.

Find your calling for work and experience the joy that it brings. Do what you love, and work hard to make meaningful, important contributions to the world.

How to Fall in Love

You might already know your passions deeply and have a clear vision of the type of work you want to pursue, or you might need some direction for uncovering your passions and finding the life that you're meant to live. You

can do this by looking into your soul and determining how the core of who you are relates to the work that you can share with the world. Invest your time and energy into discovering your passions and talents and developing them so they can be used to bring others joy.

Introspection can help you connect with your passions. Take time to look inward so that you can determine what *doing what you love* means to you. You can achieve this by:

- Thinking about the elements, places, people, or ideas that make you feel alive.
- Defining the principles, values, and experiences that make you who you are.
- Studying the ways in which your strengths, values, passions, drive, and life goals intersect.
- Reflecting on the defining moments of your life so far and finding ways to build on them.
- Assessing the meaningful tasks you want to complete in your life and homing in on the legacy you aspire to leave.

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Part II: In the Service of People

When you do what you love, you create an energy that invigorates and nourishes you. That energy is abundant, and if you choose to let it, it can be used to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

Get Over Yourself

Profits, status, efficiency, and market share are all important to your business, and your goals, plans, and successes, are important to you. However, you can't love these things more than you love people. Your love needs to be *in the service of people*.

When you commit to serving the needs of people, you embrace a moral and ethical context that emphasizes the provision of real value to others. You access a higher purpose by helping people to succeed in ways that matter to them, perhaps by helping them fulfill their potential, overcome their challenges, improve their quality of life, or find joy. This type of work makes an impact.

To truly serve your customers, employees, peers, and other constituencies, you need to know them deeply. Pay close attention to their needs, goals, and hopes. Take extensive mental notes, gather data, and use what you learn to respond to their expressed desires and unarticulated needs. Show them that you love them, that you care about their experiences, and that you're committed to helping them attain optimal outcomes.

Upping Your Service Game

When you do what you love in the service of others, you put yourself in a vulnerable position. There will be fears to overcome, opportunities for failure, and necessary leaps of faith you must take to empower and serve others, but the work is critical to maximizing the value of love in your business.

Get started on this important work by:

- *Serving others with your presence.* Be with the people you want to serve. Talk with them, discover what matters to them, and appreciate them for who they are. The time that you spend with them is critical for building love, appreciation, and the desire to serve them.
- *Serving people with empathy.* Strive to understand the difficulties that others face. Listen to their perceptions, experiences, and attitudes about their problems, and see the world through their lens. Once you connect with the source of their pains and frustrations, you'll feel driven to help them.

- *Serving people with kind words.* Tell people what they mean to you. Share your appreciation of their work, contributions, sacrifices, and anything else that highlights your connection with them.
- *Serve people by showing them what it means to be scared, take risks, and make mistakes.* Let people see you as a person who makes mistakes and learns from them. Your missteps—and your openness about them—will help others to connect with you and recognize that it's okay for them to make mistakes, too.
- *Serve people by being a strong frame.* Lead your team members. Guide them, set the course, and encourage accountability. Tough love can be an act of service, especially when there's a need for guidance or correction.
- *Serve people by creating shared values.* Make your values clear to others, and learn about their values, too. Commit to honoring and defending one another's principles and to finding the ways in which your values align.
- *Serve people by offering value.* Use what you learn about others to develop offerings that meet their needs, provide them with value, and raise their quality of life. For your employees, these offerings may be better perks or benefits; for your customers, they may be products or services that make them feel valued.

Part III: Who Love What You Do

Lead with a passion for your work and your people. If you love your employees and serve them, they, in turn, will love what you do for them, and they'll love the work that they do for others. They'll be engaged and loyal to your firm. Your customers will feel this love, and they'll experience it through your company's products and services. Their own love will build, and they'll return to your business time and again. Your love will foster loyalty, engagement, and an ongoing relationship that means good business for your organization.

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The ROI of Love

Love will provide your business with a *return on investment* (ROI), and that return begins with another kind of ROI: *reciprocity on investment*. Do what you love in the service of people, and often you'll find that those people will love what you do and show love for your business.

When your employees and customers reciprocate the love that you show them, you'll gain validation and know that you're on the right track. You'll know that your passions are shining through your work and that your efforts in serving others matter to them.

Reaping What You've Sown

You can't *make* anyone love you or what you do for them. Reciprocal love is something that your employees, customers, and constituents have to *choose*—and that's what makes it meaningful. However, you can cultivate this reciprocal love by planting the seeds of love and creating the best possible environment for them to take root. You can achieve this by:

- Determining what it is about you, your efforts, and your organization that's different and better than what anyone else has to offer.
- Creating a grand vision for a future that your people will love and demonstrating your commitment to it.
- Removing all the parts of your business and culture that sap energy and get in the way of fulfilling your goals and dreams.

About the Author

Listed as one of *Inc.*'s global Top 50 Leadership and Management Experts, **Steve Farber** is a leadership pioneer, strategist, keynote speaker, and best-selling author on Extreme Leadership. His accessible, deeply inspirational, and eminently practical Radical LEAP framework is widely used across the business, nonprofit, and education spectrum. He's worked with hundreds of organizations, such as Johns Hopkins, Cisco, Intel, TriNet, and Hyatt, and with corporate clients in virtually every industry.

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