

# TOM

## Do What *They* Love

# ASACKER

“I’d asked around 10 or 15 people for suggestions. Finally one lady friend asked the right question, ‘Well, what do you love most?’ That’s how I started painting money.” — *Andy Warhol*

I read it again last week, “Do what you love and the money will follow.” And the author wasn’t implying that just some money would be forthcoming. She was insistent that if you do what you love, *a lot* of money will eventually come your way. There is a ring of truth to her advice, and it goes something like this: *If you love it, you’ll be open-eyed and curious about it. You’ll study it, learn about it, and spend more time doing it. And all of this passion and attention (love) for what ever it is that you do will make you successful in the marketplace.* Don’t believe it.

### **A Tale of Two Artists**

Vincent van Gogh and Pablo Picasso were two of the most influential artists of modern times; their paintings are now among the world’s most popular and expensive works of art. Yet van Gogh died penniless, while Picasso’s estate was valued at more than \$750 million at the time of his death. According to Professor Gregory Berns in his book “Iconoclast,” this disparity was due to Picasso’s superior networking skills. He knew how to connect with—and add social value to the lives of—influential people, who in turn helped enhance his name, reputation and bank account.

Both Picasso and van Gogh were extremely passionate about their work; they loved what they did. But Picasso was a marketer and van Gogh was not. Picasso knew how to make others happy; van Gogh was inwardly focused and struggled with relationships. If you want people to seek you out and boost your brand, like Picasso in his time, remember that success in the marketplace for products, services, entertainment, ideas and art is about adding value to *other* people’s lives. Value which appeals to two primary emotions; people’s desire for happiness and their desire to avoid *unhappiness*.

Given that today’s customers are scared and distrustful, and that they have an overwhelming amount of choice in a cluttered and extremely confusing marketplace, the desire to avoid unhappiness is the predominant emotion. Or more precisely, it’s their desire to eliminate the *fear* of being unhappy that is driving most marketplace decisions. The fear of wasting time. The fear of wasting money. The fear of

falling behind. The fear of being manipulated. The fear of being wrong. The fear of looking foolish. The fear of standing out. The fear of *not* standing out. Fear. Fear. Fear.

## **Love Your Customers**

To prosper—to grow a business and make money—you must eliminate your customers’ fears. You should love your customer, like parents sending their children off to their first day of school. You have to do everything you can to make them feel accepted, special, safe and secure. You are very fortunate indeed if, like most parents, you love loving them. There’s no better life to live. But don’t expect to enjoy every minute of it (Parents, you know what I’m talking about).

Your inconvenience and consideration—like Mom rushing around to get her child’s lunch ready, while making breakfast, reviewing spelling homework, and never forgetting to proffer a big, warm hug—will provide your customers with convenience and self-esteem. Your fear and pain—like parents working two or more jobs to pay a second mortgage, which will inevitably be used to finance their child’s education—will provide your customers with a sense of comfort. Delaying your gratification will provide customers with theirs. Your risk-taking today will be your customers’ reward tomorrow.

Marketing isn’t a complex process with complex solutions; it’s simple. Not easy mind you, but simple nonetheless: Help your customers “feel” better than your competitors do, and do it at a profit. The challenge is to continuously innovate and change, and achieve this simple concept over time. Execution is tough, expensive, risky and, at times, painful. It requires the emotional, intellectual, and moral disposition to anticipate, explore and to quickly seize the opportunities that the changing marketplace presents.

Yes, passion is extremely important in business today, as well as in just about every other aspect of life. And certainly those who truly care and are genuinely excited about their professions will have an edge over others. But success in the marketplace has little to do with what you want or what you love. Instead, it’s about being tuned-in and *other*-focused. Or to put it another way, “Do what they love, *with* what you love, and the money is sure to follow.”

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Tom Asacker writes, teaches, and speaks about radically new practices and ideas for success in chaotic times. He is an independent brand adviser and author of critically acclaimed books including *A Clear Eye for Branding* and *Sandbox Wisdom*, and his latest, *A Little Less Conversation*. Visit [www.acleareye.com](http://www.acleareye.com) to learn more.