

# It Takes Creativity To Love What You Do

*“How nice to not expect your job to fulfill all your emotional needs.” -Derek Sivers*

It's good to find pleasure in your work, but don't expect your job to do all the work for you. Your professional occupation can't force you to be happy in spite of yourself. If you want to love your work, you have to work at love. And yes, love takes work.

In the film “Way of the Peaceful Warrior”, the lead character was a handsome, talented, and popular athlete who was on his way to fulfilling his Olympic dreams. But one day, he shattered his leg in a motorcycle ride and everything he called “life” faded before his very eyes. He eventually met a wise old man named Socrates who helped him to re-define his life. In one scene, the young athlete gets really flustered and says, “I can't do this anymore. What's the point when I can't do what I love?” His mentor said to him, **“A peaceful warrior can't always do what he loves, but he can always find a way to discover the love in what he does.”**

90% of love is finding a way to appreciate and amplify the opportunities that are already there.

Let's use romantic relationships as an example.

You want to date/marry someone who's attracted to you. That's fair. Your partner doesn't need to be attractive to everyone else, but it's certainly reasonable to prefer someone that's attractive to you. Now here's the problem with attraction: the novelty eventually wears off and your brain will normalize it. You'll still appreciate the qualities that make your partner attractive to you, but it won't be like the initial spark you felt on day one.

The fact that your brain normalizes its experience of positive qualities is the easy part. The hard part is that your lover is imperfect. That doesn't mean you picked the wrong person. It just means you picked a human being. Also, you're imperfect. That means the two of you are going to have moments when you inconvenience each other, impose on each other, and irritate each other.

So even if you find someone that's perfect for you, you'll normalize their positive qualities and you'll gradually begin to notice some less than positive qualities as your everyday lives become more intertwined. If you want to keep the love alive, you have to at least do the following three things:

1. **Develop a maturer and more robust concept of what it means to love**

**someone:** You have to release yourself from the shame that comes from feeling like you're not measuring up to the people in action films or romantic comedies. It's not

about looking like the people in the movies. It's about living in a way that makes you and your partner better. An example of this would be moving from things like "I totally 'get' you" to "I'm capable of supporting you even though I don't 'get' you at all." Here's an even better one: "Even though you seem absolutely insane to me, I'm capable of allowing you to be whoever and however you need to be without feeling threatened by that. And I can do that while having the grace to keep this thought to myself."

2. **Start investing creative energy into developing and deepening the relationship:** Don't get too comfortable with yourself, refuse to get sloppy, keep making yourself better as an individual, find some new stuff to do together, take some chances as a team, ask your partner some interesting/different questions, do something other than watch TV all the time, and avoid the trap of treating your partner like the "big catch" that's already in the bag. Respect your partner enough to keep being the kind of person that someone would actually want to be with.
3. **Work hard to balance your desire for passion with your need for principle:** Instead of thinking about love in terms of "Do I want to do what I'm doing?" think about it in terms of "Do I believe in what I'm doing?" An example of this would be "I don't feel passionate about discussing the family budget, or picking up the kids from soccer practice, or listening to you vent about a problem, but I believe in the value of these activities."

These three things apply to your professional life as much as they apply to your love life.

If you expect your lover to meet all your needs, you're going to be really difficult to be with. Ditto for your job. If you expect your career to meet all your emotional needs, you're going to be really difficult to work with. The solution in both cases is to get a life.

You want to make your relationship better? Stop making your relationship the end-all-be-all of your existence. Have something interesting going on in your life outside of the relationship. Then bring that energy into the presence of your lover and watch the magic that happens. You want to get more fulfillment out of your work? Stop making your job the end-all-be-all of your existence. Have something interesting going on in your life outside of your job. Then bring that energy to your work and watch the magic that happens.

Love is always a two-way street. Nothing is capable of fulfilling you in any kind of substantial or sustainable sense without your active cooperation. Without a commitment to routines and rituals that improve your ability to create your own happiness, you wouldn't be able to recognize happiness even if it were staring you in the face and calling you by name.