

# PERFORMANCE ARCHITECT



**DOING WHAT  
YOU LOVE OR  
LOVE WHAT  
YOU DO.**

# DOING WHAT YOU LOVE OR LOVE WHAT YOU DO.

*It's not enough to be industrious, so are the ants!  
What are you industrious about?  
- Henry D. Thoreau*

By Andrew Simon

*We may remember Steve Jobs for many things and for many achievements, least of all for helping to revolutionise the way we work, the way we communicate, the way we engage with music and the way we entertain ourselves.*

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*The opportunity to do what one loves as a career is a less common reality for many people than we might suppose.*

But we may also remember him for his famous exhortation to 'find what you love' in the context of one's chosen field or career. He made this call at a commencement speech he delivered to graduating students at Stanford University in 2005. Check the video out at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLc&feature=kp>

On the face of it, this looks like a fairly innocuous thing to encourage. Who amongst us would turn down the opportunity to do what one really loves for a job we may not like? But therein lies the paradox; a lot of people actually do! The opportunity to do what one loves as a career is a less common reality for many people than we might suppose. A far more common experience perhaps, is that we find ourselves doing the boring tasks that need doing, in jobs only because they pay the bills or in roles just to mark time, while we wait for something better to come along.

For people in such roles and jobs, the exhortation to find what you love can feel hollow and unrealistic. Worse, it may make people in roles and jobs that they may not love feel like failures. Yet, there is an instinctive attraction to the idea of being able to do what you love and I suppose that Steve Jobs was trying to encourage and to challenge the young audience he was speaking to.

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But Steve Jobs also proposed another concept: 'the only way to do great work is to love what you do', which he twined with his earlier exhortation to 'find what you love'. Again on the face of it, this second idea also seems fairly innocuous. Who among us would not want to be able to love what we do? Yet this call is perhaps the more important one and certainly the more liberating one. It declares as well as asks us to realise that we can exercise some choice in the matter. Fulfilment and satisfaction at work depends less on the nature of the work than on the frame of mind while doing it. It's a powerful idea and one that often gets lost in the day to day tedium, anxiety, boredom or pressures of our work.

I had the opportunity recently, to take some relatives visiting from overseas, on one of Canberra's wine and craft trails. As we wound our way through picturesque vineyards and cosy shops in the several small villages scattered around the Canberra region, this idea of loving what you do was visibly expressed and demonstrated in the wine makers, artisans and craftspeople that we met and talked to.

Their love of their work, seemed to allow them all to be masters of their produce and of their professions in spite of the hardships of their chosen fields, which in almost all cases, included hard work, weekend work, long days, time away from families and loved ones, anxiety, pressure, uncertainty and even tedium. Their love (rather than passion perhaps?) seemed to release a kind of freedom of choice that enabled focus, constant learning, mastery and a deep satisfaction. They seemed to have exercised the choice to love what they did. This was not just the love of their products or services. Perhaps more importantly, it was a love for the actual processes of their work. They seemed to love the process of making memorable wine or taking spectacular photographs or creating beautiful handmade garments which were captured in the vivid stories they told us. The process of work seemed as important as the quality of their results. Indeed, it seemed that love of the former led to the quality of the latter.

Of course, some lucky people did what they loved, but most appeared to love what they did and this showed their produce, in their demeanour, in the way they described their work and in the way they engaged with visitors and tourists.

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We may not all be able to find and do what we love in the first instance, but the choice of loving what we do is something we can all exercise. When we chose to do this, we then actually find ourselves finding and doing what we love! This is the real magic of the Steve Jobs' exhortation: that we can create the reality we desire for ourselves if we approach what we do with deep conviction, with care, with mastery and with focus. If we find a way to love what we do, we will end up doing what we love.

*'I don't love work-no one does, but I like what is in the work- the chance to find yourself' - Joseph Conrad*

Cultivating a love for what you do:

- Look at your role and job with fresh eyes. Imagine if someone new steps into your role or job for the first time. What would they find interesting or exciting or challenging?
- Name what you actually like about your role and job. What do you like in your work? Be specific about this and why. How often do you perform the tasks or functions you like? How can you do more of this?
- How can you develop deep expertise in and master the things that you actually like doing?

*No work is insignificant. All labour that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence*  
- Martin Luther King Jr.

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