



LOVE AND BUSINESS MANIFESTO

Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage (or so goes the old Frank Sinatra song). But love and business? No word even rhymes with business!

When we talk about love, we think first of families, friends, and romantic relationships. We may even think of the people we serve through our work. But loving our co-workers? That's pushing it a little too far isn't it?

Actually, no. In fact, loving the people you work with every day is essential to your job satisfaction, your productivity, and your level of fulfillment. And if you truly care about our mission to make a difference in the world, then loving your fellow missionaries is essential.

But how can we love people who are often wrong, sometimes annoying, occasionally maddening, and always imperfect? Well, the same way we put up with those same human frailties in our other relationships. We don't love them in spite of their imperfections, but *because* of them. We recognize their flaws in the same way that we recognize our own, and we love them still.

You see, contrary to popular perception, love is not an emotion as much as it is an action. You can't possibly feel absolutely enamored of a person all the time. Sometimes you're neutral toward them as you tackle your own daily challenges. Sometimes you're frustrated with them as their behaviors conflict with your desires. And sometimes you just want to strangle them.

Not only is there nothing wrong with feeling these things, it's part of what makes you human. You can only hope that the people in your life will give you the same leeway that you give

them on a regular basis. In fact, you can rest assured that they do—at one point or another, someone who loves you has wanted to strangle you.

So if love is not some constant and unwavering feeling, then what is it? It's your acceptance of another person's humanity, your recognition of their positive attributes, and your willingness to support them and treat them with respect and kindness. These are not feelings, these are actions. In other words, love is always how you *act* toward others, not how you always *feel*.

So how does this relate to work? You may love your job, love the people you serve, and maybe even love the vision behind what you do, but if you don't act with love to the people you work with—your cranky boss, your annoying co-worker, your whining subordinate—then you are missing out on the opportunity to experience true fulfillment through your work and really make a difference in the world.

There's a lot of talk in the business world about being a team player. It starts as a cliché in help-wanted postings; it's paid lip service in job interviews; it's perpetuated in office meetings and memos. But being a team player doesn't just mean showing up on time and doing your job. It means fully embracing the big-picture vision of your company and making a commitment to love and support the people around you who are essential parts of making that vision a reality.

But what about when your co-worker is undeniably wrong, emphatically thoughtless, out of integrity, or otherwise behaving badly? Are you to simply turn a blind eye (or the other cheek)? Not necessarily. Some behavior needs to be addressed directly with the person in question (communication is an act of love) and some behavior may need to be brought to the attention of a supervisor, but part of acting with love toward our fellow humans beings is learning how to be magnanimous. That means generously giving people the latitude to be wrong, to be insecure, *to be human*, without your judgment or the need to prove your rightness to that person or to the world.

There's a great line in an old surfing movie called *Big Wednesday*. One of a group of friends started getting drunk all the time and acting inappropriately. Another friend tells the older "surfer guru" character about how wrong his friend's behavior is. The guru replies "That's when you need a friend—when you're wrong. When you're right, you don't need nobody."

Embracing that perspective is the epitome of acting with love. It's not always easy, but it always feels good. You'll know that you're on the right path when you realize that love, like happiness, is what you bring to what you're doing, not something you get out of it.

We're all a mess of imperfections, weaknesses, issues, baggage, and shortcomings. It really comes down to the golden rule, which is that we should treat others with the same level of respect, kindness, support, and forgiveness that we would like to receive from them. If you see it through that filter, this process is really not complicated at all—it's natural, beautiful, and perfect.

The seminal 80's rock band The Smiths had a song called "How Soon Is Now?" with these apropos lyrics:

*How can you say I go about things the wrong way?
I am human and I need to be loved...just like everybody else does.*

Do you want to just put up with the people you work with or do you want to accept them for who they are, encourage their greatness, and love them in the same way that you want to be loved?

Your answer will indicate not only whether you're a team player in support of our passionate mission, but whether you're willing to step into your full potential as a high-level, fully actualized human being.

