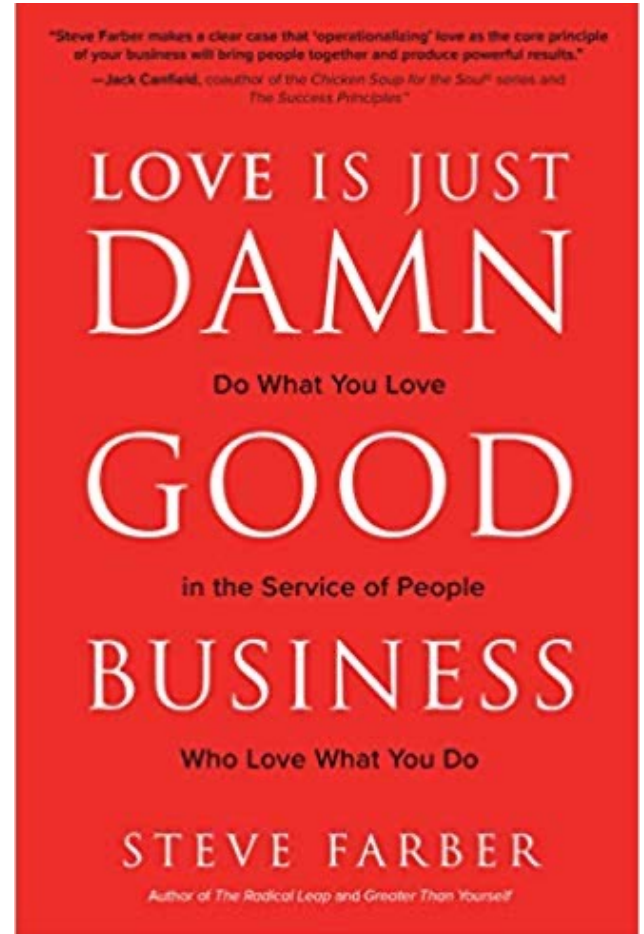


Love is just Damn Good Business

Steve Farber



Love is the foundation of great leadership

This book is about dispelling the myth that love and business are mutually exclusive.

Farber isn't talking about love as a sentiment, but as a discipline: love of the cause, values, people, customers, products and services.

At Leadership Edge, the bedrock of our coaching is that of servant leadership and valuing people.

What makes a leader great?

Most of us know we're not perfect. But too often as leaders we operate as if perfection is both our personal goal and the expectation of others. So, we end up with tall, thick walls that keep people from knowing who we really are—flaws and all. The best leaders, however, realize it's more important to be vulnerable than to appear invincible. That's the mark of a truly great leader. Vulnerable leaders aren't weak. They are human. And they use openness to turn perceived weaknesses into strengths that drive themselves, their teams and their business forward. Here are three proven ways for cultivating this indispensable quality of extreme leadership.

1. Developing Leadership skills in the people around you.

It's no longer enough for leaders to be helpful coaches and advisors. That's important, but it's more of a starting point than a destination. The most successful and well-respected leaders understand the true measure of their greatness is in their ability to develop leaders who will surpass them in skill, influence and ability—who rise to a level greater than themselves. The six steps in this blog will help you start down the path of developing your leadership skills with an intentional focus on developing the leaders around you. It's the nobler, new standard of leadership.

2. Change the culture

Organisations can become a lot like a big ship in a small harbour—hard to turn in a new direction. You can't morph an ocean liner into a speed boat, but you can change your organization's culture—regardless of how big and institutionalised it's become. You do it from the inside out by developing a culture founded in love.

3. Follow through on commitments

Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart, was famous for walking the floors of his stores and distribution centres and asking people what they needed to improve their service to the customer. But he never stopped with the question—or the answer. *He wrote down the suggestions and later followed up with the associates.* He didn't implement every idea, but he never left the associates hanging. That type of commitment is the mark of great leaders: *they do what they say they will do.* In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to over-promise and under-deliver.

A safe zone?



Is it possible to manage a career, team, or organisation in a safe zone where nothing bad is likely to happen?



You can get things done and perhaps even move forward a little. But that's not leadership, and it seldom takes you (or anyone else) anywhere great.

4. Taking Risks

Real leadership involves taking risks—getting comfortable with the idea of living in the world of the uncomfortable.

When you read biographies of great leaders, you often see some variation of the phrase, “Everyone thought he was crazy when he did ...”

They took risks!

5. Get over it!

If you feel uncomfortable with the word love in a business/school context, you're not alone.

But if that's the case and if you want to be a great leader who builds a great organisation, then take this simple advice:

Get over it.

6. Key drivers

Extreme leaders understand the power of love as a business principle.

Rejecting this principle is like sitting at your desk blindfolded—you could still do the job, but not as easily and not as well.

Love and fear drive the behaviours of all humans—including when we are at work. So, leaders need to embrace love as a core principle for building success.

Q: What
would you
do
differently?

- That starts the conversation and leads to questions about policies
- It all comes down to actions, not words.
- If you ask the right questions, you'll unleash the combined expertise of your people and help them be inspired to implement necessary changes.

The Groundwork

When love is part of your organisation's framework and operationalised in its culture, employees and families feel genuinely valued.

Employees who are passionate about the work that they do are more loyal, innovative, creative, and inspired—and that translates to great customer experience. They don't serve others out of obligation, but because of a genuine desire to improve.

Put love out there!

- Farber's challenge is for, "*everyone to bring the word love into the forefront.*" If we consciously put love out there as the objective, it changes everything we are trying to do.
- We use words like passion and engagement, but if you call it love, aspirations are raised to a new level and new ways of doing things are identified.

The risks of being a school leader

- *a Leadership Edge postscript*

Good intentions can fail when your world slides into overwhelm.

Other people's agendas can dominate good intentions.

Who keeps you on-track and doing what you know matters most?

How do you separate the urgent from the important?

Ken Blanchard often writes about the '*Heart of a Leader*': our role in serving our people's needs (be that staff or pupil.)

COACHING provides that space for you to think things through, confidentially, without judgement.