

WARREN BUFFETT SAYS YOUR GREATEST MEASURE OF SUCCESS AT THE END OF YOUR LIFE COMES DOWN TO 1 WORD: "LOVE"

More profound wisdom from the Oracle of Omaha.
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Berkshire Hathaway CEO, Warren Buffett, is rarely wrong, especially when it comes to investment and innovation. As most of us know, the Oracle of Omaha is also a sage imparting wisdom that transcends industries and generations and cultures.

And *that* wisdom, however common-sensical (ever thought to yourself, "Wait, I could've said that myself!"), is usually spot-on. Like this hard-hitting bit of truth telling:

"If you get to my age in life and nobody thinks well of you, I don't care how big your bank account is, your life is a disaster".

That's what Buffett once told a group of students at Georgia Tech when they asked him about his definition of success. Let me expand on why success doesn't come from wealth, power, fame, or how many expensive toys you own before you die.

Buffett's measure for success in one word: love

As part of that same quote above, which was captured in the Buffett biography *The Snowball: Warren Buffett and the Business of Life* by Alice Schroeder, Buffett also dropped this slice of profundity on the students (prepare to drop your jaw)

"Basically, when you get to my age, you'll really measure your success in life by how many of the people you want to have love you actually do love you".

I know many people who have a lot of money, and they get testimonial dinners and they get hospital wings named after them. But the truth is that nobody in the world loves them".

"That's the ultimate test of how you have lived your life. The trouble with love is that you can't buy it. You can buy sex. You can buy testimonial dinners. But the only way to get love is to be lovable. It's very irritating if you have a lot of money. You'd like to think you could write a check: I'll buy a million dollars' worth of love. But it doesn't work that way. The more you give love away, the more you get".

So let me get this straight: The most important lesson and "the ultimate test" of a life well-lived has nothing to do with money and everything to do with the most powerful emotion a human being can feel: *love*.

As the third richest person in the world and nearing 90 years of age, Buffett has lived and continues to live what he preaches with his commitment to philanthropy, like the Giving Pledge, which invites the richest people on the planet to pledge a big chunk of their wealth to charitable causes.

Closer to home, you have to wonder: How can regular working people, leaders, managers, and entrepreneurs with big ideas live out this principle of "the more love you give away, the more you get back"? To put it another way, what should you do to become so beloved by others that, when you're ready to hang it up, they'll lavish you with praise, accolades, admiration, and tell the world, "He loved well"?

I posit that there are a few ways--albeit totally counterintuitive ways--that you can put this practical kind of love into motion, if you are daring and courageous:

1. Think and act selflessly without expecting anything in return.

The laws of love are reciprocal, but someone must make the first move -- why not let it be you? When we choose to love someone first--whether it be lifting up a colleague with encouragement, helping develop an employee under your leadership care, or infusing deep meaning and purpose into someone's work role, love comes back in full force through respect, admiration, trust, loyalty, commitment, and discretionary effort.

2. Choose a culture of love.

Buffett said, **"I love every day. I mean, I tap dance in here and work with nothing but people I like. There is no job in the world that is more fun than running Berkshire, and I count myself lucky to be where I am."**

Work can be a grind, political, and filled with toxic personalities, but the best brands on the planet (and maybe your own company) are places where people *love* coming to work because leaders display *practical love* (with results) and the culture is positive and uplifting. **Whatever cliché you prefer -- "culture is king" or "culture eats strategy for breakfast" - - the evidence is clear: When you share the same values, ethical behaviours, beliefs, and norms in a psychologically safe environment, every individual contributor is uniquely positioned to give and receive love without fear of retribution. This leads to a high-performing company that will attract other, like-minded people.**

3. Work the "Platinum Rule."

We're all familiar with the universal Golden Rule: "Treat others as you would like to be treated." But the Platinum Rule takes it up to a whole new level of loving well: "Treat others the way *they want* to be treated."

Dave Kerpen, author of *The Art of People*, says this about the Platinum Rule:

The Golden Rule, as great as it is, has limitations, since all people and all situations are different. When you follow the Platinum Rule, however, you can be sure you're actually doing what the other person wants done and assure yourself of a better outcome.

It goes without saying; this has everything to do with your ability to demonstrate your emotional intelligence and, more specifically, empathy -- that underrated leadership strength of love where you imagine the world, or a situation, from someone else's point of view rather than your own.

4. Do what you love.

In closing, I bring back Buffett for one final quote:

"In the world of business, the people who are most successful are those who are doing what they love."

Think about it. Does that thought ever run through your mind in your daily work? For most of us, we take for granted our cushy pay check, health benefits, and job security, even though we may dislike our jobs and wish we were doing something else -- something we actually *loved*.

Doing what we love is a major contributor to our happiness as humans. And, more important, *knowing* what you love should be a top priority. If you don't know what it is you love, then finding out what it is should be your first step.