

TOP STORIES IN Small Business My Space Is Our Space Tuesday Must-Reads Big Food Franchises Get Bigger

Do What You Love? Maybe Not. Would-be entrepreneurs are often told to follow their passion. That may be a good way to kill your passion.

Article Comments (1) MORE IN SMALL BUSINESS

Recommend Confirm +1 3 Tweet 64 A A

By TOM MCNICHOL

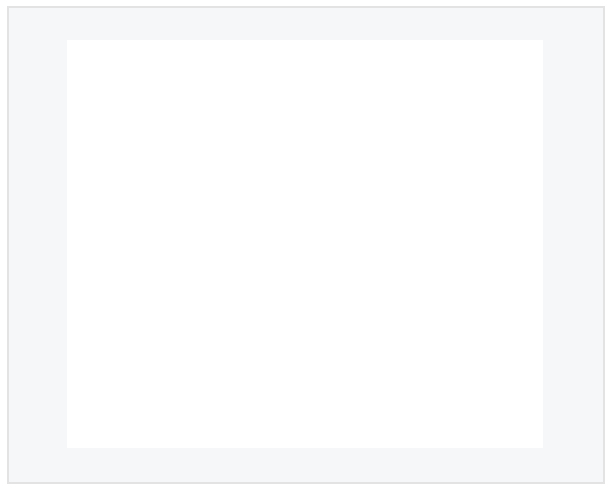
"Do what you love" is one of the most frequently heard pieces of career advice. But the risk is that when a passion becomes a job, the passion can quickly fade.

That happened to Josh Frey. While attending the University of Wisconsin in the early 1990s, Mr. Frey worked at a bakery across the street from his dorm. He came to love preparing muffins, cookies, breads and other baked goods—so much so that he launched a mail-order food company after graduating.

Then the grind set in. He soon found himself bogged down with inventory management, order fulfillment and hiring laborers. "The business was nothing like I had originally thought it would be," says Mr. Frey. "I'm actually pretty good at things like sales and customer service. But you know what? I hate it. I absolutely hate it."

The problem is that "do what you love" is incomplete advice, and sometimes misleading. Marty Nemko, a career coach and author in Oakland, Calif., says he often deals with clients who pursued a passion, only to find disappointment or financial disaster—because they went into it blinded by that love.

Mr. Nemko advises clients to think critically about whether to do what they love as a career. They should understand the reality, such as the hassles and headaches that weighed on Mr. Frey. They should also consider pursuing their passion part-time, Mr. Nemko says. That way, they don't have to depend on it to pay the bills and don't risk losing their love to the daily grind.



Don't Miss... Powered by Taboola Facebook 'Likes' Nasdaq for IPO Is Facebook's Stock Finally Turning Around? Papademos Says Greek Exit Plan Likely to Be Drawn

More in Small Business My Space Is Our Space Big Food Franchises Get Bigger Doing Equity Crowd Funding Right LLCs Are an Inspired Financing Choice for Artists Recommended Reading for Young Entrepreneurs

Most Popular > Read Emailed Video Commented



Nate Pesce

Cal Newport, an assistant professor of computer science at Georgetown University and author, thinks entrepreneurs should think about passion in an entirely different way.

Mr. Newport has spent the past several years studying the career paths of scores of workers to test whether "follow your passion" makes sense as career advice. The short answer: no. Many people believe that the best strategy is to pursue

Josh Frey felt the grind set in

a pre-existing passion, and that will lead to career satisfaction, he explains. More often than not, he says, they find they're not actually good at it, don't like the work or can't make a go of it.

Rather than focusing on *pre-existing* passions, he says, people are better served thinking about how to acquire skills they can turn into careers. If you master something valuable instead of focusing on a dream that may not be marketable, he argues, love and passion will follow. And you'll have a better shot at making a successful business out of it.

What if you're already in a business, and the passion starts to wane? Mr. Newport says transforming the job is sometimes the answer. People thrive when they find the work challenging, feel recognized for their abilities and have control over how they fill their time, he says. Adjusting the work to maximize those factors will rekindle passion better than matching your job to a pre-existing inclination.

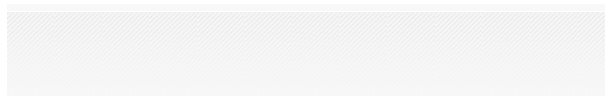
Sometimes you can also discover new aspects of the job that you're passionate about. Mr. Frey realized a lot of what he had enjoyed about working in a bakery had nothing to do with baking, such as connecting with people. So he saw that he could refocus the business and still be passionate about it.

He moved into an area that promised better and more reliable profits: promotional items and corporate gifts. He also began cherry-picking the parts of the job he liked and discarding the ones he didn't. What's more, he tapped into his love of mentoring with a side business that teaches entrepreneurs how to launch a career in the promotional-products industry. "I've never felt so aligned with what I'm doing," Mr. Frey says.

Even though his business has strayed from his original love, "baked goods are definitely still a strong interest of mine," he says. He bakes with his kids, and "I'm the guy who walks by the bake sale and comments on the ratio of chocolate chips in a specific baked good."

Mr. McNichol is a writer in San Francisco. He can be reached at reports@wsj.com.

SmartMoney Glossary: [matching](#), [writer](#),



1. [Inside Fumbled Facebook Offering](#)
2. [When Toddlers Zone Out With an iPad](#)
3. [Nasdaq: Hindsight Says to Delay IPO](#)
4. [Facebook Slides Amid Roadshow Questions](#)
5. [For Advisers, Facebook IPO Proves a Cautionary Fail](#)

[Most Read Articles Feed](#)

Latest Headlines

[Obama, Romney Are Toe to Toe in Race](#)

[CBO Sees 2013 Recession Risk](#)

[Secret Service Head to Testify](#)

[Hawaii Verifies Obama Birth Records](#)

[Sisters' Legal Tangles Jolt Pennsylvania](#)

[Kansas Governor Signs Tax-Cut Bill](#)

[Anti-Supremacists Tied to Beatings](#)

[Rise in Home Sales Points to Rebound](#)

[Tehran Offers Access to Nuclear Sites](#)

[Fort Hood Bomb-Plot Trial Begins For Soldier](#)

[More Headlines](#)

SPONSORED LINKS

Business Insurance

Quickly Find Business Insurance Providers for Your Business Needs.
www.Business.com

All-New 2012 Honda CR-V

The upcoming 2012 CR-V is ready no matter what's on your Leap List.
www.Honda.com

DEB Printing & Graphics

Brochures, Business Cards, Stationary, Post Cards, Adv. Specialties
www.debprinting.com

JOIN THE DISCUSSION
1 Comment, add yours »

MORE IN
Small Business »

Email Print Order Reprints

SPONSORED LINKS

Business Insurance

Looking For Business Insurance? Find It Nearby With Local.com! Local.com

Business Insurance

Find Business & Commercial Insurance Companies in Your Area. yellowpages.com

Client Support Staff need

Fixed Salary + commission Permanent Part Time Position. Apply! www.normanandjohnson.com

President Lowers Mortgage

If you owe under \$729k you probably qualify for the Govt Refi Program. www.MortgageRatesExperts.com

Add a Comment

JOURNAL COMMUNITY

View All Comments (1)

Community rules

Want to join in the discussion?

We just need some additional information before we can set up your Journal Community profile. Please send your username and full name to: journalcommunity@wsj.com and a customer service representative will complete the process for you.

Track replies to my comment

CLEAR

POST

Login with Facebook

Editors' Picks



Sony, Samsung Rein In TV Discounters



You Call That Innovation?



Will the Golden Gate Show for Its Birthday?



How Parents Enable Kids' Creativity



'Dancing With the Stars' Finale Live Blog: Who Won?

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

BACK TO TOP ^

Customer Center:

- My Account
My Subscriptions

Create an Account:

- Register for Limited Access
Subscribe to WSJ.com
Sign up for WSJ Professional
Subscribe to WSJ Weekend - Print Edition

Help & Information Center:

- Help
Customer Service

About:

- Content Partnerships
Reprints
Advertising
Place a Classified Ad
Classifieds
Advertise Locally
Conferences
About Dow Jones
Privacy Policy - UPDATED 10/18/2011
Your Ad Choices
Subscriber Agreement & Terms of Use - Updated

WSJ.com:

- Site Map
Home
World
U.S.
New York
Business
Markets
Market Data
Tech
Personal Finance
Life & Culture
Opinion

Tools & Formats:

- Today's Paper
Video Center
Graphics
Columns
Blogs
Topics
Guides
Alerts
Newsletters
Mobile
WSJ Social
Tablet Edition

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Digital Network

- WSJ.com
Marketwatch.com
Barrons.com
SmartMoney.com
AllThingsD.com
FINS: Finance, IT jobs, Sales jobs
BigCharts.com
Virtual Stock Exchange
WSJ Radio
Professor Journal

- [Contact Us](#)
- [Global Support](#)
- [Print Subscriber Services](#)

- [Copyright Policy](#)
- [Jobs at WSJ.com](#)

- [Autos](#)
- [Careers](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Small Business](#)
- [Student Journal](#)
- [Corrections](#)
- [SafeHouse - Send Us Information](#)

- [Podcasts](#)
- [RSS Feeds](#)
- [Journal Community](#)
- [WSJ on Twitter](#)
- [WSJ on Facebook](#)
- [WSJ on Foursquare](#)
- [My Journal](#)
- [Portfolio](#)
- [WSJ Digital Downloads](#)

- [WSJ U.S. Edition](#)
- [WSJ Asia Edition](#)
- [WSJ Europe Edition](#)
- [WSJ India Page](#)

Foreign Language Editions:

- [WSJ Chinese](#)
- [WSJ Japanese](#)
- [WSJ Portuguese](#)
- [WSJ Spanish](#)
- [WSJ Deutschland](#)



Copyright ©2012 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All Rights Reserved