

Is It All Just Business?

It's worth taking a moment to consider what "business" actually is. At its core, business is an exchange. The ancient Romans had a saying for it: *do ut des*. "I give [to you] so that you may give [to me]." You have got some potatoes, I have some meat. Let's swap some of it, and we'll both have something good on our plates.

If you think about it further, you'll be amazed to discover how the spirit of *do ut des* permeates almost every human activity that brings people together. You hold the door for me so that I'll give you a smile. You pass me the salt so that I'll notice how attentive you are. Some even define marriage as a premature union of assets, prospects, and good intentions, accompanied by the public swearing of unsustainable promises—a reckless "trade", they might say.

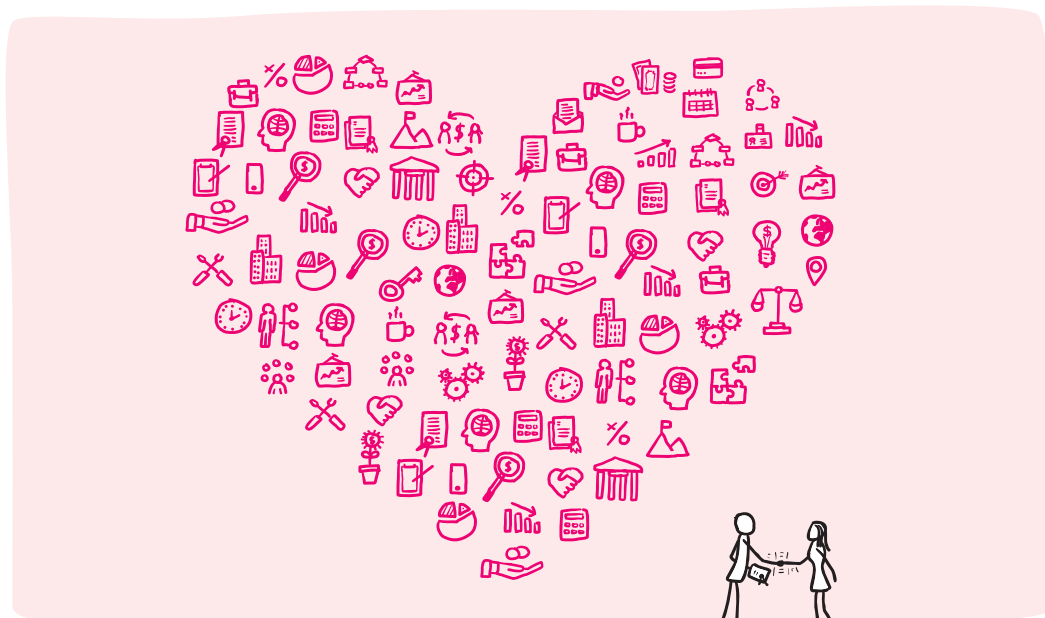
If it weren't for love, our social lives from morning till night would be nothing but business and a carefully balanced exchange of interests.

If there were no love, we would only wipe the oatmeal from a toddler's mouth because we

expect a "good return" on the business of having children, and we would only visit the dying because we were paid to or because we fear that they might change their will at the last moment and leave us empty-handed. But even when it comes to business, you won't find happiness if everything is "just business."

One of the best things about my job is the knowledge that I'm part of an open network built on trust. What I mean is that there's a number of people that I've worked with so closely for so long that we know exactly what to expect from one other. I'm sure there are potential partners outside our network who could offer even greater long-term benefits and whose business would be even more profitable. They're not excluded from working and doing business with me; this is an open network for a reason. But new partners first have to earn the trust that has grown between me and my existing business associates.

Bernhard Langenstein, *Desiderata* (Tredition, 2017), 85ff.



REFLECT

Read these thoughts. Why is love more than "just business"?