



Do What You Love: And Other Lies About Success & Happiness

Miya Tokumitsu

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The American claim that we should love and be passionate about our job may sound uplifting, or at least, harmless, but *Do What You Love* exposes the tangible damages such rhetoric has leveled upon contemporary society.

Virtue and capital have always been twins in the capitalist, industrialized West. Our ideas of what the “virtues” of pursuing success in capitalism have changed dramatically over time. In the past, we believed that work undertaken with an ethos of industriousness promised financial stability and basic comfort and security for our families. Now, our working life is conflated with the pursuit of pleasure. Fantastically successful—and popular—entrepreneurs such as Steve Jobs and Oprah Winfrey command us. “You’ve got to love what you do,” Jobs tells an audience of college grads about to enter the workforce, while Winfrey exhorts her audience to “live your best life.” The promises made to today’s workers seem so much larger and nobler than those of previous generations. Why settle for a 30-year fixed rate mortgage and a perfectly functional eight-year-old car when you can get rich becoming your “best” self and have a blast along the way?

But workers today are doing more and more for less and less. This reality is frighteningly palpable in eroding paychecks and benefits, the rapid concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny few, and workers’ loss of control over their labor conditions. But where is the protest and anger from workers against a system that tells them to love their work and asks them to do it for less? While winner-take-all capitalism grows ever more ruthless, the rhetoric of passion for labor proliferates.

In *Do What You Love*, Tokumitsu articulates and examines the sacrifices people make for a chance at loveable, self-actualizing, and, of course, wealth-generating work and the conditions facilitated by this pursuit. This book continues the conversation sparked by the author’s earlier *Slate* article and provides a devastating look at the state of modern America’s labor and workforce.

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