

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/make-the-work-your-reward>

In conversation with Stanford Engineering Professor Tom Byers, Lew Cirne talks about founding New Relic out of pure passion for building software, not for the sake of financial gain. Cirne also underscores how work should be truly meaningful and not a means to a profitable end.



Transcript

He is also audacious.. He is really audacious.. He want - you want to make New Relic a huge company.. Yeah, I mean there's.... I mean you're not just hoping somebody buys you some day.. You're doing this for a whole different thing.. Then, what would I do? My wife would just kick me out again to start another company because it'd drive her crazy.. So, no, I - I built one company and sold it and I have no regrets how that went but because I talked about my role and how I spend my time, I have thoughtfully tried to design my role and my company so that I love my Mondays so much and my employees love their Mondays so much, there is nothing we'd rather be doing.. I think this is one of the problems with a lot of the companies in Silicon Valley.. They think, look, you can put up with a job you don't like for a few years because it'll all work out in the end when these options might be worth something and then we can start living the life we want to live..

I think that's just the wrong way to look at it.. I think we should - basically if you structure you work life so you're doing what you love and you're doing it with people you admire, respect and love, then why would you want to do anything else? And so this is the last job I ever want to have and I want to be doing it for a lot longer.. I love to build software, I still get to do that.. I still - I am doing with - but I love building.. Where did this philosophy come from? What - where did that motivate - was that something from your parents or was it something you just have developed over your professional life? I mean it seems so simple on one level but you know.. I don't know, it's just - I guess it's common sense that in life so many times if all you're doing is chasing the outcome rather than really focusing on why what you do matters.. So the outcome might be some financial reward is the only reason that matters.. I mean like who really gets excited about that? And by the way, those companies where the only reason why people come into work on a Monday is because there is some pot of gold at the other end and that's the only thing keeping them in the company.. Those companies don't weather storms very well, right? And startups will have to weather storms...