

# *The Syllabus*



*Making a Difference through Commerce  
in the You Economy*

*Tara Gentile*

All around us, people are quitting the job market and are recreating our economic landscape from the ground up.

**Each product, each promotion, each sale is an effort to make a difference in the world through commerce.** This is the dawn of the entrepreneurial era.

The desire for purpose & meaning in work isn't the burden of a naive generation; it's the foundation for a new age of commerce. The truth is that you & I have more control over our shared economic future than any politician, industrialist, venture capitalist, or banker. But you won't hear that on the evening news, you won't read it in the newspaper, and you certainly won't catch a policy maker stumping on that truth.

Commerce is more accessible than ever before. You can start selling products or services using a website in minutes. You can conduct business globally - for free - over Skype. You can create a virtual office and attend virtual networking events. You can earn a living without leaving the house.

Consumption is also more accessible than ever before. You can buy whatever you want over the 'net. You can talk with decision makers at large corporations. You can gripe & complain and actually get heard. You can partner with friends & communities to get companies to change products & practices.

This is business in the You Economy.

*This is new.*

You are not used to being at the center of the economy. You have not been the linchpin of economic growth. You have been a mere cog in the machine. You were a commodity to be traded. You have been a “human resource.”

**You are becoming the heart & soul of a new engine of economic growth.** You are influencing giant corporations through your words & actions. You are forming microbusinesses and **taking earning into your own hands**. You are less dependent on “the system” and more dependent on your community.

But “you” doesn’t just mean you. You is also “the other.”

When you make business decisions, you not only think of “me,” **you consider the “we.”** It’s not enough to make a business decision for your own singular benefit, you make business decisions that serve others as well.

**You understand that a business is nothing if it doesn’t serve a greater good.**

All business is social entrepreneurship to you. All business has an obligation to create a legacy of sustainability, creativity, innovation, and service.

**Businesses serve people. People do not serve businesses.**

*This is you.*

Does this sound familiar?

*In this generation as in generations past, people deprived of the possibility to realize their productive potential become frustrated in a hurry.*

-- Philip Auerwald, *The Coming Prosperity*

You have been serving businesses -- as a consumer, as an employee, as a "human resource" -- for too long. You have not been used to your full potential. You haven't been able to stretch or challenge yourself within the system.

You're an ideas person. And your ideas just aren't as valuable in your current situation.

Even if you've already made the leap to entrepreneurship, it's likely that your full potential is not being reached. You fear diving into the parts of you that are truly unique, that are infinitely strong, because they may be a bit controversial. Even as an entrepreneur, you might be disconnected from the truth of your capability.

**You are frustrated.**

*Will you agree?*

By continuing to read, you are agreeing to the following principles:

**You will be more interested in what you don't know than what you do know.**

Business is a learning opportunity. Customer service is an education. Sales is scholarship.

**You will always look for the triple bottom line: profit, people, planet.** You believe individualism can coexist with collectivism. That sustainability can coexist with growth.

**You will value yourself and the work that you do.** You are over the romantic notion of the starving artist. You set prices and work in business models that reflect a desire for quality over quantity. You understand just how special your product or service is in the lives of those you serve.

**You will seek purpose & meaning in everything you do.** Instead of asking yourself "What?" you ask "Why?" Instead of seeking to fill a need, you seek to create an experience, connect to a greater purpose.

**You will pursue mistakes.** Why play it safe when you can challenge yourself? Why default to status quo when you can invent a new standard?

**You will court controversy.** You're not in the people-pleasing business. You're in the right-people-pleasing business. You don't walk on the eggshells of the mass market. You look for ways to crack all the right eggs. You invite others to crack eggs with you.



**You will understand that there are infinite choices.** There is no such thing as competition in the New Economy, only opportunities for differentiation.

*Required Reading  
&  
Required Thinking*

Below are ideas from some of the books & thought leaders I use to construct my philosophy. Use the questions below to reflect on these ideas in terms of your own business & experience. Journal, sketch, or mindmap your way to a few a-ha! moments.

And then check out the books when you are looking for the next thing to add to your reading list.

*What if the great challenge for enterprise in the twenty-first century is no longer merely manufacturing the alluring, spotlit glamour of mass-produced opulence, but cultivating a more authentic plenitude that matters in human terms?*

-- Umair Haque, *Betterness*

1. In what ways have your products or services contributed to “the alluring, spotlit glamour of mass-produced opulence?”
2. In what ways have your products or services contributed to a more fully realized humanity?
3. What is the benefit of what you create in terms of human connection, deeper meaning, or more authentic experience?

*The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind -- creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. These people -- artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers -- will now reap society's richest rewards and share its greatest joys.*  
-- Daniel Pink, *A Whole New Mind*

1. You are not your job title. What role are you really fulfilling in your job, business, or passion pursuit?
2. When do people seek out someone fulfilling this role?
3. What fears or misgivings come up around the idea of identifying yourself in this role?

*People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it.*  
-- Simon Sinek, *Start With Why*

1. Beyond financial gain, why are you doing the work you do? What do you want to transform for people/the community/the world?
2. What do your customers thank you for?
3. How can you better communicate your "why" to potential customers? How can you make your "why" the keystone of your entire brand?

*We adopted the view that our job was to find a synthesis between our vision and what customers would accept; it wasn't to capitulate to what customers thought they wanted or to tell customers what they out to want.*

*This is true startup productivity: not just making more stuff, but systematically figuring out the right things to build.*

*-- Eric Ries, The Lean Startup*

1. When has your business' vision been at odds with perceived customer desires?
2. How have you worked to find the space between your vision & your customers' desires?
3. What methods do you use to communicate your vision in a way that also resonates with potential customers?

*The frailty of genius, John. It needs an audience.*

*-- Sherlock Holmes (BBC 2011)*

1. How are you using your audience or customer base to hone your genius?
2. What is your audience or customer base saying to you right now?
3. When are you in closest contact with your audience or customer base? How could you get to know them better?

*The future is about gigs and assets and art and an ever-shifting series of partnerships and projects. It will change the fabric of our society along the way. No one is demanding that we like the change, but the sooner we see it and set out to become an irreplaceable linchpin, the faster the pain will fade, as we get down to the work that needs to be (and now can be) done.*

*This revolution is at least as big as the last one, and the last one changed everything.*

*-- Seth Godin, **The Forever Recession***

1. How have you set up your business for flexibility? What are your current barriers to flexibility?
2. How are you irreplaceable to your customers? How are you irreplaceable to the market?
3. How is your business depending on everything changing? Would your business work in the “old economy” -- why or why not?

*Let's discuss.*

These are the topics I discuss most frequently on the blog, with clients, and with friends. This serves as a basic, get-you-up-to-speed introduction to empowering yourself to build a thriving business in an uncertain, ever-changing environment.

Below each topic are links to some of my most popular posts.

### **The You Economy**

What is the You Economy and what does it have to do with your business? How are things changing? How are things staying the same? What happens to the exchange & distribution of resources when YOU are at in the center of the transaction?

[Towards You-Centered Economics](#)

[Stop Trying to Make Money From Your Passion](#)

[The Anthropreneur Angle](#)

### **The Philosophy of Social Media**

Social media is nothing new. We have organized ourselves in social network since the dawn of mankind. How can you create a truly valuable social media experience? How can you create genuine relationships within digital social media? How can you use social media for business beyond broadcasting & promotion?

[Bake a Bigger Pie](#)

[The People Business -- or why Social Media starts OFFLINE](#)

[Anyone Can Write About Personal Development...](#)



## **The Art of Earning**

Learning to build a business isn't the same as learning how to earn a living. What is your internal monologue when it comes to money? How have you been conditioned to think about money & how its earned? Can money and "art" go together? Is it okay to make money doing what I love?

Hot Commodity

W is for Worth

In Search of Transcendent Commerce & Immanent Value

It's Time To Raise Your Rates... Now What?!

## **Big Thinking -- Thoughts on Business & You**

What happens at the intersection of self-doubt & success? Can you build a business you can't imagine? Are goals necessary?

Personal Power Fuels Creative Power

All Night. Every Night.

What's Your Hypothesis?

## *About Tara Gentile*



Tara Gentile is a thought leader & business coach redefining commerce as the creation & distribution of meaning, connection, and experience. She brings creative thinking to branding, product development, and marketing that incorporates both strategy and high touch design. Her approach to business in the You Economy resonates with MBAs, PhDs, and graduates of the school of life.

She writes frequently for the Daily Worth, Design\*Sponge, and Etsy. Bestselling author Jonathan Fields, named her blog a Top 22 Single-Voice Business Blog in 2012. She's the author of several popular digital guides including her latest on the relationship between personal art and money, [The Art of Earning](#).

## *Get in the Lab*

**Business shouldn't be rocket science.**

It's one thing to say "anyone can have a business today!" and another thing to actually do the work, grow your customer base, and deliver value.

Kick Start Labs offers practical resources for You Economy businesses.

**We help you conduct experiments in making a difference through commerce.**

Get started with our FREE 5-part course on creating products & services that never fail.  
[Click here to begin](#)