


Work with Purpose, Passion and Profit

worthwhile

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Charles Garcia has a Secret:

GANAS

BY NANCY HENDERSON WURST

WENCESLAO CASARES WAS ONLY 16 WHEN HE MADE UP HIS MIND THAT ONE DAY HE'D SAIL AROUND THE WORLD. But how would he ever make that kind of money? Undeterred, the young Argentinean read everything he could find on the subject, took sailing lessons and wrote down his goals. A few years later, while working his way through college as a hotel bellboy, Casares came up with the idea for an Internet stock-trading service and recruited two friends to help him launch the business. In 2000, a decade after Casares first vowed to traverse the globe, he and his partners

sold a 75 percent stake in Patagon.com for \$525 million.

After reading *A Message from Garcia: Yes, You Can Succeed* (John Wiley & Sons, 2003) by military analyst, motivational speaker and investment entrepreneur Charles Garcia, Casares contacted the author with his story. The two men hit it off. Last May, says Garcia, "I went with my family to get on his 44-foot catamaran the day before he left Miami to sail around the world. He just turned 30."

Casares' passion is a perfect example of *ganas* in action, says

Garcia, 44, whose own Miami firm, Sterling Financial Group, ranked No. 26 on *Inc.* magazine's 2003 list of the fastest-growing private companies in the U.S. *Ganas* is not the same as the singular *gana*, he points out. "*Gana* is more like 'I want to go to the movies,' but *ganas* has a little bit different implication. It's more of a burning desire. ... We all have a purpose. There's something that brings us alive. And that thing is *ganas*."

Born in Panama to a schoolteacher mom who urged her children to follow their dreams and a physician dad who often bucked the system to help his patients, Garcia grew up in a household where passion was paramount. In 1997, despite the fact that he'd outperformed everyone else in law school, Garcia ditched a potentially lucrative legal career because "it wasn't something I was passionate about. I believe that success is finding your calling and passion in life and pursuing it regardless of what other people think or what kind of money you might make." Realizing his strengths lay not in the courtroom but in research and analysis, he launched Sterling Financial in a tiny office that had once been a broom closet. Today the \$32 million-revenue investment firm, which focuses primarily on the Hispanic market, employs more than 400 people in seven countries. In December, *Hispanic* magazine named the charismatic Garcia Entrepreneur of the Year.

None of this could have happened without *ganas*, he insists. It isn't enough to simply set timelines, goals and objectives, and methodically work toward them. "A burning desire is the starting point," Garcia says. "It provides the focus. If you're not focused, if you don't know where you're going, you're never going to get there. You're going to be scattered. You're going to be overwhelmed. You're going to be all over the place. It's the burning desire that really powers you."

Yes, of course you can climb the ladder, make lots of money and excel in your job without *ganas*, Garcia admits. You might even outperform everyone else. So how do you know the difference between merely capitalizing on your work strengths and following your life's calling? Simple, Garcia says: Pay attention to what brings you *joy*.

He gives the example of a Washington, D.C., businessman who, despite his financial wealth and high-ranking status in the company, was extremely unhappy. What he really wanted to do, what he'd *always* wanted to do, was become governor of Arizona. "You know, the only time I see you come alive and your eyes sparkle is when you start talking about all the good things you want to do for your state," Garcia recently told his friend.

"You walk differently. You even carry yourself differently."

The man took Garcia's observations to heart, asked for a transfer to Tucson, and is now taking steps to fulfill his political ambitions. "He called me this morning and he was so excited," Garcia says. "Now he can create his goals and organize his life around fulfilling that burning desire."

For that reason, Garcia feels certain the man will succeed. "The *ganas*, that burning desire, is the fuel that goes into the engine. If you don't have that high-octane fuel — if you put water or kerosene into your engine — it's not going to work." **W**

Nancy Henderson Wurst's new book is *Able: How One Company's Disabled Workforce Became the Key to Their Extraordinary Success* (Benbella Books).

Fan the Flame

That "fire in the belly" feeling — the gusto that fuels success — must be stoked, says Charles Garcia, CEO of Sterling Financial Group and author of *A Message from Garcia: Yes, You Can Succeed* (www.amesagefromgarcia.com). Here's how to make your passion pay off:

Do your homework. Study up on your area of interest. Find a mentor or read a book. Fill your head with things that inspire you.

Write it down. Set clear goals and objectives with time frames for completion, and review them on a regular basis.

Respect your time. "People who get results respect their own time as well as the time of other people," Garcia says. Monitor how long it takes to complete a task and stop bouncing from one request to another.

Focus. Keep your goals in sight and don't clutter your mind by reacting to every little interruption. Garcia meditates for 15 minutes each morning, a routine that helps him recharge. "It's like having a bow and arrow, and pulling the bow back. It creates the potential energy."

Be open to change. Garcia tells the story of the young soccer player whose dream of becoming a professional was derailed when a tragic accident landed him in the hospital for almost three years. One day a nurse's assistant placed a guitar in his hands. With not much else to do while he recovered, he taught himself how to play and later took voice lessons. Julio Iglesias went on to become one of the most popular Latino entertainers of all time. "Change is the scariest thing in the world," says Garcia. "But it means understanding that sometimes you have to be flexible."