



## Episode 974: Libertarian Turns Passion into Online Business

Guest: Antony Sammeroff

**WOODS:** I'm really glad to hear about what you're up to and I hope people listening will be interested as well. So you and I are trying to make our way with this Internet thing and there are many, many ways to do that, and you're doing it by means of a course with affiliate program and more development of this idea to come. So set the stage for us. What exactly have you created and what are you doing to promote it?

**SAMMEROFF:** Well, I've created a personal development course which is designed to help people identify their own blocks to their personal development process and give them tools to move through those blocks to reach their potential in all sorts of ways. Obviously we're libertarians, everyone listening more or less. But I think that in Western countries where we're relatively free, among the most pronounced limitations on our liberty are somewhat self-imposed, whether it's overzealous self-criticism, bad habits, procrastination, anxiety. And a lot of very intelligent people, as I'm sure you'll agree, feel that they could be making a lot more of their abilities and talents if they were able to get out of their own way. So I really want to help people reach more of their own potential whatever way that means to them. And I've been doing that online through counseling and coaching and through Skype, but now I've got a course as well and I'm really excited to share that with people because I think it will help a lot.

**WOODS:** So you therefore right now, in addition to doing your libertarian work and your libertarian podcast, you are entering more or less the personal development niche.

**SAMMEROFF:** Yeah, and that's what I've been doing for a living for – well, since I was finishing up at college. I was a piano tutor before that while I was studying, and how I fell into that was really quite unexpected to me as well. I was trying to work on my own personal development process – and looking in a lot of the wrong places, I may add, sometimes. And I got interested in communication skills and I started learning about that and teaching seminars in person, and friends would come up to me and say, Oh, I've got a friend that would really be interested in speaking to you. I think she'd benefit from speaking to you and they might want to talk to me about what was on their minds or their childhood and things like that. And that friend might introduce me to someone else. So this is while I was still studying. I thought I should do some post-grad qualification in counseling skills, and I got into some online qualifications in coaching and all sorts of things, going to seminars in England. It found me rather than me finding it, which I felt was a sign that it was a true calling.

**WOODS:** Well, tell me now about – let's get into what some people think is the boring aspect of it, but for me being a nerd, it's the interesting aspect of it. You are – I don't see it on the site right now – First of all, tell people what the site is.

**SAMMEROFF:** It's BeYourselfAndLoveIt.com, and that is the transformation I'd like to bring to the world, because sometimes when people hear, "Be yourself," it's like, *What? Myself? The one that didn't get dates in high school? Are you kidding me? Anyone but that person.* So the key thing is not just to be yourself; to be yourself and love it. Oh, and I have a *Be Yourself and Love It* podcast now, as well, for anyone who can't get enough Antony Sammeroff in their ears.

**WOODS:** And that's, what? Half the human race? So that's also good to know.

**SAMMEROFF:** [laughing] Lucky me.

**WOODS:** Indeed. Now, I don't see it listed on the site just yet, but –

**SAMMEROFF:** It's not.

**WOODS:** What I mean is a link to the affiliate idea, if you're going to promote this through affiliates. The beauty of working with affiliates is if you have created something, but yet you just don't know how to get the word out about it. You can try paid Facebook ads and sometimes those are hit or miss, and you can try to pitch it to your existing audience but maybe you don't have a big existing audience. How do you get the word out? A great way to do that is through affiliates, because you leave it to them. They'll figure out ways to get the word out. They have their own risk. They have their own audience. You leverage other people's audiences. So talk about that for a minute.

**SAMMEROFF:** Right, precisely. Thank you for bringing me round to that. So I've been speaking to people privately about just that, and one in particular has a background in sales, and he's thinking of taking it to some of the people that he knows so that he can take a cut and they can do the selling, basically creating an organization of people – not an organization proper – to go out and promote the course on our behalf. Another way is appearing on shows, of course, and I'm always looking – If someone has a background in sales and thinks that making a living on the Internet in the personal development niche might be something that's interesting to them, they can certainly get in touch with me and we can talk about the opportunity for marketing this course on my behalf, which is so as to get it out to more people so that it can help people. And what I love about the model is that everyone wins, the old libertarian win-win or no deal. I win, the affiliate wins, and certainly the people who wouldn't otherwise know about the product will benefit from it.

**WOODS:** On my site, LibertyClassroom.com, I have an affiliate program, and you can scroll to the bottom and click on "Affiliates" and find out about it. And I pay out a 50% commission. And it's a digital product, so a 50% commission is easy because it's infinitely reproduceable. There's no physical thing I have to create. I don't have to ship anything. The marginal cost of adding one extra person to that site is basically zero, so sharing that 50-50 is no real problem. But I think initially when you start an affiliate

program, there's a part of you that thinks, *Geez, I'm losing 50% on this transaction*. So I'm going to ask you: why is it wrong to think that way?

**SAMMEROFF:** Well, I don't feel that way at all. I think if someone can make opportunities happen for me, I'm more than happy to pay them. We would all like to see more money coming our way, and if you want to take into the world a philosophy of life that's going to support you, you have to not be limited and narrow in your thinking, thinking, *I'm losing something*, but thinking, *Actually, this is a massive opportunity for me to gain something because I'm going to gain all sorts of sales that I wouldn't get otherwise*. Plus, I'm facilitating everyone along the chain and enriching their lives so that the affiliates, I hope to have a good relationship with; my webmaster, a close friend of mine, he designed the backend for the course, I have a close relationship with. I'm more than happy to share the income.

As you say, for the bottom, my course comes in three tiers depending on what level of involvement people would like, and the information product itself, as you say, does not require much more work from my end. So now that it's there, I want as many people to benefit from it as possible, and one way to do that is through affiliate marketing.

**WOODS:** So that then is an important lesson for people to remember, is that the 50% that you are keeping is 99% of the time a sale you would have earned zero on because the sale wouldn't have occurred otherwise. You wouldn't have earned these, you wouldn't have been able to reach these people. That's the point of your affiliates. They're finding people, and so you're getting – instead of zero, you're getting half of the normal price. So in my mind, I just kind of budget it as maybe 30% of my sales are going to be just 50% off, but that's okay, because otherwise I wouldn't have reached these people. And affiliates, if you can reach good ones, they have ways of reaching people. Particularly in the personal development area, there are a lot of good affiliates out there.

And in fact, after we're done, I can refer you to at least one who maybe – who knows? – might even promote your product and has a huge list, by the way, in this area. In fact, I can think of two people with huge lists doing extremely well as affiliates and who are in personal development and who release good products. So make sure and remind me. I have an addled brain. I just turned 45 this week, and, you know, the old noodle ain't working the way she used to sometimes.

But anyway, so where do you plan to go with this in the future? Right now, you've got a course at three different levels. Where do you want to see it go eventually?

**SAMMEROFF:** Well, I'm glad you asked. I would like to turn BeYourselfAndLoveIt.com into an online school like LibertyClassroom.com that teaches you things that you didn't learn in school, but instead in soft skills in the personal development sphere. I got into being a personal development professional through communication skills, and communication is something we all do all day, every day, really, but you don't really learn anything about resolving conflicts, fostering good interpersonal relationships, and things like that in school, so that would possibly be the next course, something that I've learned a lot about. And you can only ride one horse at once, so I really want to take this course to its maximum potential and see people coming in.

Later on, we're going to gameify things. So if you're on the forum, you have a little avatar and if you write useful posts that other people find useful, they can maybe give you an in-built cryptocurrency. I'm thinking of making them strawberries and blueberries that people can give one another and support each other and create a community, as well, because that is so important. Whether you're a libertarian or someone that's interested in personal development [inaudible] sometimes you feel a bit of a fish out of water because you're into something not everyone is into, and really having it backed by a community of people who are active in the process I think could help take it to the next level.

So I do have a vision for the trajectory of the website, and it all really starts with this one course, which really does combine the best of what I learned through maybe 15 years of trying to work on myself and to distill – to take the trial and error out of it. I think a lot of personal development material comes from the angle of people have something broken and need fixed, and another problem is a lot of it just gives you just one-size-fits-all that's all information and instructions, a lot of which people don't necessarily feel like they can or they have to force themselves to do it. So far as I know – so far, my course is the only course with the ethos – Well, I designed it to avoid these two problems, because I see it as addressing the human being as an organism that has certain needs. Physiological, we know about, and then we have emotional and psychological needs. And it's my understanding and my experience working with people that if you cater to these needs, growth happens. It's just like watering a plant and giving it the right soil and sheltering it from the wind.

So my course is really designed to engage people and identifying their needs so that they can better meet them, so that growth happens naturally and relatively effortlessly compared to forcing yourself to do things that you don't want to do because the end goal appeals to you.

**WOODS:** I again want to ask a kind of boring question, but I'm interested in some nuts-and-bolts aspect of this too. How do you go about creating an online course? Did you have to get some kind of software? Are you basically creating a membership site that gives people usernames and passwords? This is going to seem to a lot of people to be something they could never do. This just seems too complicated.

**SAMMEROFF:** Well, all of the above I get. It's not very complicated. If you've got expertise on some issue, then you can probably make a course. Mine involves audio and exercises, and as the site evolves, you'll be able to input things for your own organization and your own benefit. But if you've got some knowledge, putting together an information product is relatively simple. You can do it with a microphone and a laptop. You could add video, of course, if you wanted to. There is information on doing it, and certainly, if there is something that you think you know something about, because with automation and so forth – I know we always here the doomsayers say everyone's going to be without a job; the robots took our jobs. But really, I think we're entering the point where expertise, where being able to save people time is going to be the product.

And I think that's my product, saving people 10 or 15 years of watching YouTubes and reading self-help books. And the same for anyone who's got a skill. You can put the knowledge that you have on paper, put it in order, start numbering things, and then

organize it. Because the idea is not just the right information, but the right information in the right order. Because when you learned it, you had to go through the trial and error of picking up a lot of the information here, there, everywhere, and somehow putting that into the semblance of an order in your brain. Now what you want to do is basically like Ikea furniture, create your vision, put your vision of how you do whatever you know how to do into a foldable format, put it in the right order with instructions so that when someone pulls it out of their computer, they can reconstruct your knowledge, your model of the world in their own head and apply it to their actions in the world so that they can get the results that you get in a way that they desire in a predictable way. And yeah, I do think that more and more people are going to do it. It's not just for folks like you and I, Tom, but many people listening might end up creating courses.

**WOODS:** You know, this week I've been writing about an easy product that people can create. Maybe people are not ready for a full-blown course, but if you want to get started and you want to build up an online income stream, you can get started as an affiliate selling other people's things, but you can also get started promoting your own thing, because there you get to keep 100% of the money. You don't just earn a commission; you keep 100%. So a lot of people think maybe I guess I have to write an eBook. But that is even more terrifying than public speaking to some people. The idea of sitting down and writing a book from scratch? Who wants to do that? Whereas for much less time, much less aggravation, definitely much lower cost for yourself, you can easily create an audio course, a series of audio files. You can do that in a few hours if it's something you know about. And the perceived value of an audio course is much greater than the perceived value of an eBook, even though it took you less time to create. And so you can get \$97 for an audio course that the eBook version you could maybe get \$17. So think in terms of that. There are so many possibilities that don't necessarily involve killing yourself and spending three years devising something.

**SAMMEROFF:** That's right. That's right. Get a close friend and sit down and record you explaining it to them or get them to interview you.

**WOODS:** Right.

**SAMMEROFF:** And then that could even just be the draft copy. If it comes out perfectly first time, no problem. But any way you can get your knowledge out of your brain onto some recorded format is something that is going to be useful to someone who doesn't have the same expertise and experience as you. You could save people years.

**WOODS:** Absolutely. That's absolutely right. And interview-style is actually a way of creating that kind of product very quickly, because you don't have to sit down and kind of write it out or make an outline. You just sit down with somebody who's knowledgeable like you, or you can interview an expert. There are all kinds of ways that this can be done. And you just ask if it's okay if I make this part of my bundle, my audio product bundle, and I'll include a link to your website and whatever. And before you know it, you have a product without that much effort. So anyway, lots of ways to skin this particular cat. So eventually, there's going to be an Antony Sammeroff empire out there. You've got libertarianism; you've got personal development. Now, on the other hand, the reason I've generally — I haven't entirely shied away from personal

development. I did get a personal productivity program from Eben Pagan called Wake Up Productive, because I need that.

**SAMMEROFF:** Right.

**WOODS:** People think I must have some amazing routine and that makes me productive. I'm always running around like a chicken with his head cut off, and I'm just tired of that. So that program actually has helped me, I'll grant you. But I think in general, a lot of personal development programs are a lot of fluff.

**SAMMEROFF:** I feel that way –

**WOODS:** It's a lot of maxims. Tell me what to do, is what I want.

**SAMMEROFF:** Yeah.

**WOODS:** So how are you different from that?

**SAMMEROFF:** Well, I'm glad that you asked that as well. That's exactly what I don't want to be. I really, really hate fluff. So I basically took the – it's takeaway after takeaway, but then there's application, and the main thing that's going to make this course work is that it's integrated with applications so that you can apply what you're learning as you go through, because I really – A lot of personal development is just intellectual entertainment, and that's again the theme with my podcast, the *Be Yourself and Love It* podcast, which you can find on iTunes, which is all dedicated to giving you practical tools.

This distills the best of what I learned over the last 15 years, and there are six lessons. The first will help you orient yourself towards achieving your happiness, whatever that means to you, rather than just trying to avoid short-term suffering. The second will help you meet and identify your emotional and psychological needs. The third is about authenticity, because I think a lot of suffering comes from people not having been true to themselves. And it gives you some communication skills also to apply that in your day-to-day life. The fourth one is one of the most important, because it's on dealing with your emotions, how to handle your emotions without repressing them or without being just a loose cannon that acts on them as soon as they arise. Then one of my favorite modules, taking responsibility, which in a systematic way allows you to address the different aspects of your life that may be somehow neglected or not yet have reached their full potential. And the final one is called "Making Life Awesome," and with a name like that, who can not like it? But as you can hear, the course goes through a progression that's very logical with each lesson building on the last. To be honest, any one of these lessons could be a whole course.

So I guess the way that it avoids falling into the trap of being naval gazing or intellectual entertainment – and by the way, I also have that perception of you, that you're a very conscientious individual. The way it gets around that is it gives you the right information in the right order with application going all through. And it's not just about information; it's giving you tools – You can go back and do the course again in three months or six months or whenever. Once you've bought it, you've bought it. You

pay for the course once and it's going to pay you for the rest of your life. So you can always go back to the relevant sections of the course and do the exercises again, adapt them, change them slightly, and you will benefit from them. So I hope that answers the question.

**WOODS:** It does, and I'm going to take that as also your pitch for the course, because that is pretty darn effective, I think. So tell people again where they find what you're up to.

**SAMMEROFF:** You can find my course at [BeYourselfAndLoveIt.com](http://BeYourselfAndLoveIt.com) under the "Course" tab. And I would encourage you, if it sounds interesting to you and you're excited about it, then go and check out right away. First of all, the course is guaranteed, so if you have buyer's remorse after trying it, you don't have to worry about that. But the reason why I say this is because when you're feeling inspired, your perception of what's possible for you in your life expands and you really believe that you can make a change. But then if you wait till tomorrow, let's say, you already begin to sink back into your normal routines, and then your mind will start saying all sorts of reasons why you can't do it, why it won't work for you, or why you don't have the time. And so by the time you get around to it, you probably won't want to do it anymore. So if you were excited by the pitch, I just really recommend that you do check out after you listen to the show. Go to [BeYourselfAndLoveIt.com](http://BeYourselfAndLoveIt.com).

**WOODS:** Excellent. I will link to that of course at [TomWoods.com/974](http://TomWoods.com/974). And I was interested both in the content of what you're doing, but also how you're doing it. The fact that you're doing it I hope will inspire other people not just to take your course, but maybe to make taking your course part of a whole reboot, in some cases, of some people who, they're not happy where they're working, they're not happy with their hours, they're not happy with the time they can spend with family. And here you are creating something from home that adds values to people's lives. Well, maybe they could do that. So you're giving them a good example on both fronts, which is why I wanted to bring you back on to talk about — it's not a topic that's a million miles removed from libertarianism, but something different from our normal topics. So anyway, [TomWoods.com/974](http://TomWoods.com/974) will have that link. And best of luck. We'll talk again soon.

**SAMMEROFF:** Yeah, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak about it. It's something that I'm extraordinarily excited about. And like you, the prospect of people taking their life into their own hands and creating value for other people as a way of making a living, I think that's fantastic. So thanks for promoting these ideas and teaching people how to do it using your show.

**WOODS:** Thanks again.

**SAMMEROFF:** Thank you.