

# Saucy by Nature

by ReadWorks



Monika Luczak was exhausted. She had just finished a long day at work—one of those days where she was the first person in the office and didn't leave until long after dinner. Working long hours wasn't unusual for someone in Monika's field. The year was 2011, and she had been working as a lawyer for several years. After the recession hit in 2008, many people began working more hours. Even if they weren't passionate about the job, they were grateful to have work that paid well. But Monika didn't quite understand how she had ended up working over 60 hours every week at a job she found boring.

"Being lawyer has never been a passion of mine," she explained. "Like many people I just picked a career I thought was going to be successful. Years later you're like, 'Wait a minute, why am I doing this? I'm not even happy.'"

Monika knew what her two real passions were: food and traveling. She was happiest when she could combine them, tasting new flavors in exotic locations. At a party in 2001, she had met Przemek Adolf, a kindred spirit who also loved food and travel. Both Monika and Przemek are Polish-American and had just finished college. A friendship blossomed, and they began to travel together. Monika's schedule allowed her to work intensely for weeks and then take weeks of vacation. They travelled to South America, the Caribbean and Asia. In every new place, Przemek and Monika were excited about the new flavors they tasted.

"It became about the food for me, really," explained Monika. "That's what made the experience, trying all the different foods, and then Przemek had a similar passion. We went to Southeast Asia with one-way tickets—it was about the food and the cultures and how local the ingredients are." The two began trying to recreate the flavors they had tasted abroad once they returned home to New York.

In 2011, Przemek was living in London but moved back to New York City to start a business with Monika. The business they started, Saucy by Nature, made organic and tasty sauces to go on meats, vegetables and sandwiches. They started out small, and Monika found herself working even longer hours than she had as a lawyer. But she considered herself lucky to have a business partner.

"At a lot of companies, there's just one person," Monika explained. "Thankfully we have two people. It's a lot of work, especially if you want to run it as an actual business and not just a hobby."

There were so many things to consider: recipe development of the sauces, legal requirements for selling food, marketing, a website. It was overwhelming and exciting, all at the same time.

No one was available to guide the pair, so they had to figure it out for themselves. They made some mistakes at the beginning, such as creating too many sauces. "At one point we were making nine different sauces," said Monika. It was too difficult to create so many different flavors, and they had to cut back to only producing four. But they had successes as well. A new farmers' market opened in the Bronx, and instantly, buying from farmers became easier. Now they could purchase ingredients from farmers based in Hudson Valley, Long Island and New Jersey all in the same place. The prices were cheaper at the new farmers' market because it was a wholesale market. At wholesale markets, farmers sell their goods for less money but in larger quantities. "There wasn't anything like that in 2011," said Monika. "Now you can go and get 10 cases of cilantro at wholesale prices. It makes all the difference."

Both Monika and Przemek wanted to be sure they were sourcing their ingredients from local farmers. In their travels abroad, they had noticed that many cuisines were based off the produce and spices that were locally available.

"The local food movement here has become so intense and so exciting. There's really become a pathway to work with farmers directly and impact the farm economics in this state," said Monika. They try to work with organic farmers because they feel that organic foods are healthier for their customers and for the environment.

By 2013, Saucy by Nature had become a growing business. Monika and Przemek still sold their sauces at Smorgasburg, an outdoor food market in New York on the weekends. But they also had contracts to sell their sauces at West Elm and small grocery stores throughout New York City and Pennsylvania. Monika and Przemek wanted to help other food entrepreneurs and create a community. They founded Fare Trade NYC, an organization that connects small food businesses and helps them grow.

One of the main benefits of Fare Trade NYC was that it enabled new food business owners to speak with people who had faced the same problems. Monika explained: "Being able to speak with someone who's been there and done that, and gone through the same processes is really priceless. You can't get that anywhere else."

Monika explained further that the food business is especially difficult because it needs a lot of investment at the beginning. "If you get a huge order, you have to invest in the jars, the labels, the boxes, renting a kitchen for 8-20 hours. Then when you deliver your order to a big store, they can take up to 60 days to pay you back. You're constantly juggling finances."

Another challenge of working in food is the change in what ingredients are available. "Working with

seasonal ingredients has been especially challenging," said Monika, "Especially during our first transition from summer to winter." At a Fare Trade NYC meeting, Monika helped explain to a young woman starting a soup business the difficulty of working with seasonal ingredients and worked with her to create a plan for finding the right ingredients for her soups.

Monika works even more hours now than she did as a lawyer. But she's still happy she made a change in her career path. She explained that her job satisfaction is much higher now that she is doing something she loves. "It's just instant gratification in the sense that we're there all the time, we're the face of the company. It's amazing to have people try your food and love it. Then when they come back for your food every weekend-that feels amazing. That feels so good. Also knowing that we are working directly with farmers, we're feeding people great food with no preservatives, things that we really feel proud of. It's affirming."

One day Monika hopes that Saucy by Nature will be available across the country. But until then, she'll be at the food markets in Brooklyn every weekend, helping New Yorkers discover new flavors.



*He's decided to go into business instead of becoming a teacher.*

*I'm looking for a book on becoming successful in business.*

4. the buying and selling activities of organizations, or the activities of customers in relation to these organizations.

*Our company does a great deal of business with companies in Asia.*

*If we are not satisfied with your company's services, we will take our business elsewhere.*

*These clients are unpleasant to deal with, but we need their business.*

5. the course of trade; commerce.

*Business was bad last quarter.*

*Hot weather is good for our ice cream business at the cafe.*

6. a duty, concern, or appropriate personal interest.

*How much money I make is none of your business.*

*It's my business to see that the work gets done.*

7. a particular matter, process, or event.

*The girl's disappearance was a strange business.*

### **adjective**

1. of or relating to commercial business.

*She's getting a degree in business administration.*

*He's not very skilled in business dealings.*

### **These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:**

1. Opening a route to the west would increase trade opportunities with China, particularly for the lucrative fur **business**.
2. Ted's father was a wealthy rancher, and in his letter, Charlie asked Ted if he wanted to go into **business** together.
3. I always sat with my back to the wall, so to speak. That is why the Maxwell **business** haunts

me still, because all my precautions came to naught.

4. Jewelers and goldsmiths are not the only people who make decisions about jewelry. The jewelry **business** employs many people who work with and assess precious metals and stones.
5. Brooklyn Grange grows tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, kale, chard, herbs, carrots, radishes, and beans. They sell their vegetables to local residents and restaurants, which means the farm operates as an actual **business**.
6. The upside, for farmers and supermarkets that sell their products, at least, is that the sow can become pregnant more quickly. Consequently, they can produce more bacon, ham, and other pork products more cheaply, keeping farmers in **business**.
7. Other cities across the world had been thrilled when New York bagels finally came to town, but the Montrealers were outraged. Bagelville, the new shop, went out of **business** and closed its doors in less than a year.
8. So, lawmakers began to create protective measures in favor of farmers. These are called "right to farm" laws, and they are now enacted in every state. Essentially, they are what they sound like: laws that protect a farmer's right to conduct his or her **business**.
9. Gus's morning duty is to "go shopping" and purchase any new stock the truck needs for the day. He buys these items from his old friend Dimitri Tsirkos, who got Gus into the **business** and now runs the Mister Softee station.
10. John Brown was an American abolitionist who had an extreme take on opposing slavery. He believed the only way to end slavery was through armed fighting. In 1846, Brown and his **business** partner Simon Perkins moved to the city of Springfield, Massachusetts.

# flavor

fla - vor

## Definition

### noun

1. the particular way something tastes.

*Salt brings out the flavor of some foods.*

### verb

1. to give a different or special taste to.

*The chef flavored the soup with pepper and onion.*

## Advanced Definition

### noun

1. the quality perceived by the sense of taste.

*Adding sausage and herbs to the sauce gives it more flavor.*

*These imported candies have interesting flavors.*

*The flavor of tofu by itself is quite bland, so it is rarely eaten plain.*

2. a substance, such as a spice or essence, that imparts a distinctive taste.

*Vanilla, peppermint, and cherry are popular flavors.*

3. a distinctive quality characteristic of or noticeable in a thing.

*The aristocratic flavor of his writing doesn't appeal to me.*

*The new fall designs have some of the flavor of India.*

### transitive verb

1. to impart a flavor to.

*He flavored the meat with garlic and thyme.*

---

## These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. We can detect a wide range of smells, but our taste buds pick out only a few **flavors**.
2. Studies have found that sweet **flavors**-even when there's no actual sugar in sight-can cause people to eat more and crave more sweet things.
3. If we are making a sandwich, we think about different combinations of **flavors** and how to make the sandwich taste as good as possible by combining those flavors.
4. In his letter he said, ``I love America because you can join Cub Scouts if you want to. You have a right to worship as you please. If you have the ability, you can try to be anything you want to be. And I also like America because we have about 200**flavors** of ice cream."''

# passion

pas · sion

## Advanced Definition

### noun

1. any strong or intense feeling or emotion, esp. love or hatred.
2. the object of such feeling.
3. strong enthusiasm or fondness for something, or the object of such enthusiasm.
4. an outburst of violent anger or other emotion.

## Spanish cognate

*pasión*: The Spanish word *pasión* means passion.

---

## These are some examples of how the word or forms of the word are used:

1. He rapidly sketches trains, cars and highways as he explains his ideas. Garry Golden has one **passion**: transportation. The science of how to move people from place to place fascinates him.
2. Do you LOVE cars? Do you have a **passion** for racing? Build your very own go-cart and enter the Go-Go Derby! All experience levels welcome! Racers ages 13 and up may enter with parental supervision.
3. Alli Rainey was recently named the number-one overall female climber nationwide by the Competitive Climbing Rank. Although rock climbing is her **passion**, she spends a lot of time cross-training. "All the other sports have a positive impact overall," she says.
4. The idea was to make some money to afford making a featurelength film. But as he got more involved in editing, he fell in love with it. At 37 years old, he still hopes to direct a film. But film editing has become both his **passion** and his fulltime job.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is Saucy by Nature?

- A. a party in 2001 where Monika Luczak met Przemek Adolf
- B. an organization that connects small food businesses and helps them grow
- C. a business that makes sauces for meat, vegetables, and sandwiches
- D. a farmers' market in New York City that sells cases of cilantro

2. What is the sequence of events in this passage?

- A. Monika Luczak cofounds Saucy by Nature, works as a lawyer, and cofounds Fare Trade NYC.
- B. Monika Luczak cofounds Fare Trade NYC, cofounds Saucy by Nature, and works as a lawyer.
- C. Monika Luczak works as a lawyer, cofounds Fare Trade NYC, and cofounds Saucy by Nature.
- D. Monika Luczak works as a lawyer, cofounds Saucy by Nature, and cofounds Fare Trade NYC.

3. Monika likes working with food more than she liked working as a lawyer.

What evidence from the passage supports this statement?

- A. "Monika works even more hours now than she did as a lawyer. But she's still happy she made a change in her career path."
- B. "In 2011, Przemek was living in London but moved back to New York City to start a business with Monika. The business they started, Saucy by Nature, made organic and tasty sauces to go on meats, vegetables and sandwiches."
- C. "At a party in 2001, she had met Przemek Adolf, a kindred spirit who also loved food and travel. Both Monika and Przemek are Polish-American and had just finished college."
- D. "At a Fare Trade NYC meeting, Monika helped explain to a young woman starting a soup business the difficulty of working with seasonal ingredients and worked with her to create a plan for finding the right ingredients for her soups."

4. How might Monika describe her work with food?

- A. stressful and unsafe
- B. impossible and discouraging
- C. challenging but enjoyable
- D. easy but boring

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A. Monika Luczak's passions and work
- B. Przemek Adolf's time in London
- C. what a day in the life of a lawyer is like
- D. the different sauces that Saucy by Nature sells

6. Read the following sentences: "Monika knew what her two real **passions** were: food and traveling. She was happiest when she could combine them, tasting new flavors in exotic locations."

What does the word **passions** mean?

- A. scary adventures
- B. strong interests
- C. big mistakes
- D. funny stories

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

Monika used to work as a lawyer; \_\_\_\_\_, she sells sauces.

- A. currently
- B. before
- C. as an illustration
- D. such as

**8.** What are Monika's passions?

---

---

---

**9.** Why was Monika bored with her job as a lawyer?

---

---

---

**10.** Should people combine their work with their passions? Explain why or why not, using evidence from the passage.

---

---

---