

## On finding your passion

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Throughout their lives, all men find an intrinsic driving force that makes them step out of bed every morning. Its provenance has not fully been discovered yet – some might say that it comes from God Himself, others that it is a by-product of the evolution of man, and still others who sustain that it is a genetic property we acquired from the Big Bang. One thing is certain, and it is that every human being, “from every race, tribe and nation”, was brought to this world with a deep feeling of enthusiasm combined with ambition, that is defined as passion. For some people passion is, in a providential manner of speaking, the evidence of their purpose in life, the reason why they believe they were placed on Earth. Other people associate passion with their “dream job”–which sometimes results in disappointment when they do not attain it immediately. However, passion involves a low-burning process of self-knowledge and the capacity of identifying the things we are good at. In some gifted, advanced youngsters, their inclination towards medicine becomes evident from the first moment they put a bandage on their mother’s hand, or give the flu shot to their sibling with a toy syringe. But for the vast majority, the answer remains hidden until they enter college, or even two years after beginning their course of studies; even so, I think the true awakening of passion in a child’s life starts the very moment they are asked the question “What would you like to be when you grow up?”.

Among the raised hands of loud, half-toothed children, a five-year-old starts to wonder about the many possibilities to this answer based on his present preferences. Even though not everyone recognizes their passion so early in life, my passion did manifest itself at a relatively young age. I recall being seven years old and having a restless curiosity about languages, particularly English; music and films being the primary stimulants. In fact, I would listen non-stop to the latest teen hits from pop or country American artists, even Disney soundtracks, until I wore them out. Little did I know that every time I replayed those tracks I would be unconsciously, and almost unwillingly, learning a new language. Song after song I would acquire more vocabulary and expressions, arousing an ever growing curiosity and longing for more. Thus, at thirteen I was enrolled in an English institute for three years and, towards the end of high school, I could not imagine myself bestowing my time on anything else. For passion is more than mere excitement. It is nothing but an ambition that is materialized into action, putting as much heart, mind, body, and soul into something as possible. Furthermore, people who are passionate find a profound sense of fulfillment, which is why I decided to satisfy this heartfelt desire and enter college to study translation, because I could not picture myself doing any other bland course of administration, or just working at a mundane office for the rest of my life.

However, it is not always easy to follow our passion, since society's ordinary standards voice out a completely different speech: money is what counts, even if its pursuit means giving up on what you love. There is a strong, mistaken belief

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that if the thing you are passionate about is not profitable enough to pay the bills, it is not worth trying. For years, the general mindset of civilization has been "get a fine job, have a decent salary to survive, and live a quiet, unstressed life". A great proportion of teens –and adults as well– from previous generations have unfortunately settled on that belief, and today are just going back to their original dreams. Others, despite the critical eyes of the world and unfavorable life conditions, have thrived in following their passion. The now famous writer, J.K. Rowling, is an example of this. As it happened to me, Rowling identified her passion at a very young age. She wrote her first story at the age of six and, from that moment onwards, writing became her true passion. However, before becoming the successful, billionaire writer she is today she struggled with depression, went through a divorce, and even job loss. In spite of that, she did not give up and kept on devoting her spare time to writing the saga that would launch her career: *Harry Potter*. Of course, there are individuals who discover their passion later in life, like in the case of Oprah Winfrey. As a little girl she already had a rich personality, which made it easy for her to perform in front of people. But life was not exactly on her side, since she lived in poverty for many years. It was not until she turned thirty two that her talk show went live on national television, and eventually became a success. These women are proof that no matter how early or late, this passion is discovered and pursued, there is an incredible sense of self-fulfillment when we choose to go after it.

Today, although there are still people who dedicate their time and effort to jobs or activities that are not exactly their dream come true, the outlook has changed considerably. At present, young students and grownups are not under the same pressure as in past years. They can choose to sign up for the first course of studies they find after graduating, and then quit if they have found that their interest is elsewhere. They can work as employees at a supermarket for years and suddenly find that their passion has always been music. Because, no matter how long it takes to figure out one's passion, what we decide to do about it is what matters the most.

Passion has consistently driven people to make unexpected, sometimes ridiculous decisions, conducting them through the right –or wrong– path but, quite often, it tends to lead us to a positive outcome, to the place where we belong. Some metaphysical minds would even add that it can guide us to our fate. Wherever it takes us, it is known to be stronger than ourselves. It has such a strong influence in our lives that it may determine those defining moments, in which we choose either to jump off the train, or stay and enjoy the journey. It can determine whether a young, bookish man decides on studying law and running the rat race until he reaches a position in the judicial system, or if an amateur footballer becomes the next Messi or not. Then, can we assert that our success depends on the good luck we have been endowed with, or on the amount of passion we grow inside? Most probably, the latter is the case. As Denis Waitley once said wisely: "Chase your passion, not your pension".