

The Blog

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TIPS FOR TRANSFORMATION

How to Navigate Passion Into Your Work

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At 5 years old, I told my parents I wanted to be a passenger when I grew up. I'd like to think I was being metaphorical, like I was calling shotgun for the best seat in life's adventure.

As an empowered woman, I'm more creative with my career choices. I prefer to be the driver of my own destiny. Yet, I accept, there are certain things in life I cannot change or control -- like lay-offs, Gary Busey's antics or colorful bosses.

I preface by stating that based on the theory of psychologist Carl Jung and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, I am an INFJ personality type. INFJ's are guided by their internal compass and committed to their firm values. Therefore, having deep convictions equates to a great desire to earn a paycheck with passion.

Paycheck vs. passion, does it have to be one or the other?

Regardless of your personality type, the reality is that most people don't have the luxury of pursuing their passions. These are tumultuous times and understandably so, some people solely work to make ends meet. Whether you have a job or career, allow yourself to grow from each experience.

You will continue to face crossroads and occasional bumps on the road, so you might as well make the most of your journey. Inevitably, you'll end up taking unexpected turns and detours en route to reach your work goals; but overall, it's actually part of your life's roadmap.

Moreover, desires for higher compensation, better benefits and a manageable workload take practical precedence. For instance, if you are commendably providing for yourself or your family, passion can sometimes take a back seat. Yet, there is nothing wrong with pursuing a healthy passion for your work, while still appreciating what you have.

For those of you that have your physiological and safety needs met, if you choose to, you can find deeper purpose with your current or future work, irrespective of your title or industry you work in.

Harnessing your passion can energize you and enrich your life. Below are tips for navigating passion into your work:

1. Work for Respectable People. Go beyond interviewing the interviewer. Use LinkedIn or your contacts as resources. Look up previous and current employees and ask for their feedback about the work environment, leadership style and turnover rate. You can even do a keyword search of "rate your boss" online and you'll have a few websites to peruse. Who knew, right? Ask yourself, is your potential boss the kind of person that leads by example and embraces James D. Miles' words of wisdom, "You can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him." The leaders that support their employees, create an engaging work environment, treat them like family and value them as key contributors to the success of their business. They are authentic mentors. You naturally feel good about your work, because you can stand behind your employer.

2. Engage Your Mind. Once you've landed your job, make sure you hone your skills and stimulate your mind. Each job is an opportunity to learn and accomplish doing good work. If your job duties don't challenge you, take the initiative to take on more responsibilities. If you have too much on your plate, then view it as a building block to enhance your offerings for your next job or have more leverage for your current job. Overworked? Think of it like pursuing a higher education and you are getting paid for an intensive training program. If you are able to overcome challenges, this can speak volumes about your work ethics and qualifications. Try and find opportunities to enhance transferable skills to pursue your interests and passion. Lastly, if you can't seem to get out of a dead end job, have gratitude that it is temporarily serving your basic needs as you prepare for your next career move.

3. Nurture Your Relationships. You probably spend most of your waking hours at work, so why not build a co-operative support system by forming positive and mutually beneficial relationships. People tend to be happier having social connections. You don't have to be best friends with your co-workers or boss, but at least have a relationship that fosters open communication. Plus, you can even connect with your co-workers via team-work and work toward a common goal. A great team-building and morale booster activity is to volunteer as a group. Try HandsOn or VolunteerMatch to find volunteer opportunities based on your interest or location. Most importantly, if you are able to find a mentor (or be a mentor!) this can help you develop, advance and enhance in your career. Mentors can contribute to your professional development, sharing their knowledge and expertise. Ultimately, it's a reciprocal relationship and you two can learn from each other. There are also websites that offer mentor matching, like Mentium, MicroMentor and WOMEN Unlimited.

"If you have to support yourself, you had bloody well better find some way that is going to be interesting." ~ Katherine Hepburn

Take risks and live a passionate life. While there is no guarantee your career path will be paved with gold, at least you'll have a myriad of tantalizing stories to share via an insightful blog post, a comedy-drama script or witty comic strips.

