



Words of Inspiration

Follow Your Heart to Find Your Life's Purpose

-By Dorothy Ratusky

So, you've found your life's purpose that job that encompasses what you naturally do well, and what you most enjoy. You go to sleep each night feeling content and fulfilled because you know that you are making a difference in the world.

Not exactly? Well, you're not alone. In fact, most of us choose careers with our heads and not our hearts (or our instincts for that matter). Instead of pursuing the things we are good at and love to do, we choose occupations to provide the security, money and status that we think will make us happy. And, by the time we realize our mistake, we feel stuck.

The single biggest indicator that you are not living your life's purpose is if you feel unsatisfied and unhappy in your profession. Now think for a moment about any person - famous or not - who followed their hearts and pursued what they were most passionate about. These are the people who contribute to the world we live in. They inspire and motivate us because of the visible joy and excitement they exhibit not only for what they are doing with their lives but for life itself.

"Sure," you may say, "it sounds great but..." But it's not always easy to make such an important life change, even if it ultimately means achieving a significantly better quality of life. What holds us back is fear - of failure, of success, of the unknown, of change.

Greg (not his real name) was a sales manager for a company that exported retail goods. While he was quite capable and even successful, he was hopelessly miserable. He felt his job was unimportant and meaningless.

Greg had finally made the connection between the nature of his work and the continuing gloom that he woke up feeling every day. Like most people, he had done a good job of blocking these negative emotions by rationalizing his situation with comments like, "I'll never be able to earn as good a living elsewhere," or "I'm too old to go back to school."

Indeed, we can remain in careers we dislike - even loathe - for years, simply by ignoring the physical and emotional symptoms (moodiness, irritability, frequent illnesses, lethargy, anxiety, and depression) of genuine unhappiness.

How many times have you heard someone tell you about what they just can't wait to do when they retire? Yet the real question is: Why must we wait to be happy?

Uncovering your life's purpose is not meant to be rocket science. It's also not about trying to solve all of the world's problems.

What it is about is not too different from when your third grade teacher asked the class what they want to be when they grow up. The difference is that somewhere along the way, many of us have forgotten our childhood dreams and instead settled for what we think we should be doing.

To help you get started, ask yourself the following questions - and write down the answers to see what common themes emerge:

- What are the things that you seem to be naturally good at?
- What do others come to you for help with?
- In those moments where you feel a deep sense of inner happiness and fulfillment, what is it that you are doing?
- What did you dream about being when you were a kid?
- What do you most enjoy doing?
- If money was not an issue, what would you be doing with your life?

As I asked Greg these questions, his whole being changed. Reflecting upon his childhood loves, his interest in law and politics and the type of career he really wanted, Greg became animated as he spoke with excitement about long-forgotten passions.

Unfortunately, many people take a closer look at their jobs only after a major life-changing event - the loss of their job, divorce, death of a loved one or a serious accident or illness. What they choose between is what makes them happiest and what they think should make them happy.

I'm not suggesting that you give up your job simply because you are not happy. But ask yourself about where your unhappiness comes from.

If you can take the first step toward figuring out what you were destined to do with your life, then doing it simply becomes a matter of finding ways of sharing the source of your passion with those around you.

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