

How to Develop Your PASSION

Life Purpose Quest Worksheet

Video 4

6 Characteristics of Passion Development

1. **Passion often develops accidentally.** It begins as an interest or inclination. You have an unintended experience that triggers intrigue, whether it's a science fair experiment in elementary school, a guest speaker in high school, or an enthusiastic college professor who made an otherwise uninteresting topic suddenly appealing. Once this interest is triggered, you follow the impulse and look into it. Sometimes the interest quickly fades and other times you continue to seek to learn more or to experience it again.
2. **Passion takes encouragement and exposure.** In most cases, the initial encounter with the object of interest isn't enough to seal the deal of passion. It takes multiple events and experiences that retrigger the interest over time. Having a mentor or parent encourage further exploration or future exposure is often the catalyst needed to anchor a stronger interest in the topic.
3. **Passion isn't always enjoyable.** Passion begins by following interests that are intrinsically enjoyable. You continue to follow an interest because you enjoy what you're doing. However, as your interest begins to develop into a passion and you get more involved, it becomes more challenging. There may even be aspects of this activity that you don't like or that feel like a chore. But as the level of passion develops, the benefits outweigh the costs.
4. **Passion doesn't require talent or skill, at first.** By definition, when we are first beginning at anything, it starts out as something we're NOT good at. Passion has to start with play—a willingness to explore for curiosity's sake, not for the reward of being good at it. This is one of the things that holds people back from developing their passion—they're unwilling to do something they're bad at. Even in the situations where some level of natural ability may be required, true skill and talent are developed over time.
5. **Passion takes practice.** In order for proficiency to develop, which invites a deeper level of exploration and further develops passion, time and effort must be applied. For an interest to develop into a passion, the knowledge or activity have to become second nature. A skill or expertise must be developed. This ability allows the activity to reach a higher level of enjoyment, when it leads to a state of flow. And in order to reach this level of mastery, it takes deliberate practice. Not simply exposure or repetition, but commitment to improving through hours a day spent dedicated to the endeavor.
6. **Purpose amplifies passion.** When passion is directed toward a higher purpose, a higher level of meaning and fulfillment can be achieved. Purpose is the conviction that what you are doing matters

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because it's integrally connected to the wellbeing of others. When you can see the impact your passionate efforts make, you feel even more strongly about what you do.

So, what do you do if you don't have a fully developed passion?

1. **First, let yourself off the hook.** Recognize that a life spent moderately pursuing varied interests will not lead to a clearly identifiable passion, and that's okay. Stop trying to force it. It's never too late to pursue your interests. And, having a single, high-intensity passion is not a requirement for a fulfilling life.
2. **Second, being with what you DO know.** Even if your interests and inclinations are moderate, follow the trail. Deep down you know certain things you have NO interest in and others that you do. Allow yourself to explore and play.
3. **Third, be open to trial and error.** Don't be afraid to guess if you're not sure. There isn't just one thing you can become passionate about. And don't be afraid to stop pursuing any interests that lose their appeal. Trying many things, even more than once, is how interests are identified and developed.

And lastly, consider if any of the characteristics of passion development have been holding you back.

1. Have you allowed yourself to follow your impulses or interests? Or do you brush them off as unimportant?
2. Have you put yourself in situations where you could have more exposure to your interests or get more support? Or do you live within the bounds of your comfort zone?
3. Have you allowed yourself to move forward even in the face of the unpleasant aspects of your interest? Or have you expected perfection and rejected hard work or necessary effort?

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4. Have you allowed yourself to play and fail? Or have you avoided your interests because you aren't great at them?

5. Have you applied yourself to deeper exploration through deliberate practice? Or have you left the development of your passion up to chance or "when I feel like it?"

6. Have you considered the impact you would like to make in the lives of others and the meaning this would bring to your pursuit?

Finally, if there were a shortcut to passion that bypassed the long journey of interest development, it would be a calling to fulfill a higher purpose. A deep desire to contribute that stirs us at a personal level can be just the catalyst we need to dive full-bodied into an activity.

And once we're engaged at such a high level, we are compelled to continue our exposure to our cause, we're driven by a deep level of fulfillment, and we deliberately commit to continuous improvement. A passion is born.

Glitter & Grace,
Sasha

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