

WordWise™

Defining Principles that Offer Meaning for Our Personal and Professional Lives!

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Passion

“Nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion”

~ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

In the 2001 movie, *Serendipity*, Dean Kasky, played by actor Jeremy Piven, said: “You know, the Greeks didn’t write obituaries. They only asked one question after a man died: ‘Did he have passion?’” For the Greeks, that’s what mattered most. Apparently, it’s important to most Americans too. But sadly, according to a newly released Harris Poll survey of 7,718 American workers, only 20 percent feel very passionate about their jobs.

So, what is passion? The etymological (history of a word) origins of the meaning of the word lie in the 2nd century Latin *passio*, which means “to suffer”. Hardly our understanding today.

Another sense of the word arose in the 14th century meaning “powerful affection of the mind”. The sense with which we are most familiar with today is that of “strong predilection” or “strong preference”.

We can be passionate about many things and passion can be found in all areas of our lives. The challenge for many people is determining what their passion is. This revelation is foundational to finding a life of fulfillment. So, how do we recognize it?

There is a Passion Secret, comprised of four, simple principles.

- Principle One - Desire points to talent.
- Principle Two - Dreams point to unique gifts.
- Principle Three - No dream is impossible when it’s rooted in the realm of reality.
- Principle Four - There is a heart to every dream and you can have the heart of the dream because the heart of the dream IS ALWAYS rooted in the realm of reality.

You see, what we desire, what we really want more than any other thing, is what we are talented for. What we dream about is what we are uniquely gifted for. Therefore, because our talent and our gifts are connected with our desires,

striving for the dream is a realistic and viable pursuit. What's most important to understand is this concept of the "heart" of the dream.

The heart of the dream is more than mere fantasy. The heart of the dream is that which beats deep inside and gives us life. We must cut away all the fantasy of our dreams, the things that are not real, to find the heart of the dream - what we can have. And because we cut away the fantasy, we now find ourselves in the realm of reality. Therefore, no dream is necessarily impossible.

This Passion Secret is a universal law. It's as real as the law of gravity or the laws of thermodynamics. We don't question those laws. We don't wake in the morning and wonder "am I going to float today"? No, we don't question the law of gravity. Nor should we question the law of the Passion Secret. None of us are exempt from its power. The law is for us. The truth of it is for us. Therefore, embracing the principles of the Passion Secret should give us the self-assurance, the confidence that we can do that which we desire and dream to do.

This concept is best illustrated in a story told by Barbara. Barbara is a career consultant in NYC. Once she was speaking to an audience where she projected on the screen the principles of the Passion Secret. Suddenly, a participant in the crowd named Susan, stood up, pointed to the screen and shouted, "That's nonsense!" Barbara was taken aback and said, "Why? Why are the principles of the Passion Secret nonsense?" Susan replied, "Because what I desire doesn't point to any talent. And what I dream about I am not uniquely gifted for. Therefore, the premise of the Passion Secret is nonsense!" "Why don't you believe that your desire points to your talent?", asked Barbara. Susan replied, "Because my desire is to be a soprano singer in the New York City Opera Theatre. But I can't sing at all. Therefore, the principle is nonsense." Barbara continued, "Why do you want to be a soprano singer in the New York City Opera Theatre?" At that, Susan's countenance changed. With a twinkle in her eyes the inflection of her voice passionately expressed, "Because I love opera! I love the beauty of opera, the imagery of opera, the passion, the drama and the music of opera and all I want to do is to share my love of opera with everyone I come in contact with, especially my friends and my family."

Now let's pause here in our story. Let's focus on Susan's words. For her words reveal the heart of her dream. The single most powerful phrase in the English language that speaks of desire, are the words, "I love". "I love" is all about desire. Susan did not say she loves singing. Susan said she loves opera.

The second most powerful phrase in the English language that speaks of desire are the words, "All I want to do". "All I want to do" is ALL about desire. Susan didn't say that 'all she wanted to do' was sing. She said 'all she wanted to do' is share her love for opera.

Continuing the story...

“And all I want to do is to share my love of opera with everyone I come in contact with, especially my friends and my family. But I can’t get them to attend an opera. But I know that if I was standing on that stage singing, they would come. Therefore, I want to be a soprano singer!”

At this point, Barbara turned to the audience and said, “Everyone please look at Susan. What is her desire and what is her dream? Is it really to sing?” Then, while pointing to Susan she asked, “What is Susan’s desire?” Unanimously, without hesitation, the majority of the audience exclaimed, “Her desire is to share her love of opera!”

That’s the heart of her dream. That’s what she really wants. And, that’s what she can have. It is the real piece of it all. The sad reality is, this type of epiphany is rare. Typically, because our attention usually focuses on the fantasy aspects of the dream, we throw the whole thing away. We look at it and rationalize that we’re just not good enough. We think we’re not blessed with the right looks, or the lucky opportunity, or the right family, or the fortunate inheritance. We wonder why life dealt us such a lousy hand. We wish it were different. Consequently, we tuck the dream away and figure we’re going to go through life just trudging along.

The good news is, it doesn’t have to be that way. Let’s see the possibilities.

Now, the conclusion of the story...

Susan had an epiphany. She was liberated on the spot. She eventually declared, through her tears, “You’re right, I would never want to sing. That’s really not my desire at all. I thought it was. But, all I really want is to inspire people to appreciate opera.”

And the dream came true for her. Susan went on to become the tour director for the New York City Opera Theatre. The Chinese proverb came true for her: “If you find something you love to do, you will never work another day in your life.” Now, when Susan wakes up in the morning, she can’t wait to get to work, because it’s not like work for her. This is passion. This is passion at work.

If you have a passion for something and are denied an outlet for it, or if some endeavor of yours fails while pursuing that passion, it is indeed painful. Perhaps now we can relate to the ancient meaning of the word, “to suffer”, and our contemporary understanding. We all know the feeling of wanting something so badly that it hurts.

Are you living your life passionately? Let the principles of the Passion Secret encourage you and help you discover passion in everything you do. May you fulfill your dreams and find personal happiness and contentment in that which you love!

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