

Explore Your Passions

Often, we are told that in order to have a successful career, we must find a career we are passionate about. This point is very difficult to argue against, but connecting our passions with a specific career is easier said than done. This is harder still if you have trouble clarifying those passions that inhabit you. Therefore, it is crucial to concretely identify your passions. Here are a few suggested methods you can use to brainstorm your passions and put them down on paper.

Method A: The Calling

Picture yourself without any work-related limitations. What mission would you give yourself? What would be the central purpose of your job? Try to summarize this in a one sentence statement. For example: “help those who suffer”, “make the world a cleaner place”, “live a healthy and active life”, “seek novelty and excitement”, “care for animals”, “educate others”, “promote political change”, “protect the vulnerable”. Once you have found your statement and feel strongly about it, you have found your Calling.

Method B: The Sudden and Unexpected Fortune

Imagine that you have suddenly acquired a ridiculous sum of money. Add as many “zeroes” to the amount as you want. Now that you have nearly unlimited financial resources, what will you do next? Will you pursue your studies regardless of your prize? Will you drop everything and travel the world? With more time on your hands than ever before, you will have to find ways to occupy that time. Try to describe three projects that are important to you. Be as precise as possible. Define as best you can what tasks these projects would imply, and how you would go about doing them. These projects illustrate what is most important for you beyond the need to acquire currency.

Method C: The Perfect Work Day Scenario

You have all the academic credentials you needed, and have found the job you always hoped for. Describe that a typical work day would look like. What makes your work day rewarding and satisfying? What tasks fill that work day? Where do you work? Who do you work with? If you aren't sure what that perfect job implies, do some research and learn more. This method sees its potential maximized if you can describe a full week's schedule.

Method D: The Reunion

Let's pretend that today, you will walk into your favorite high school teacher. You have not seen this teacher in 10 years, and they invite you to lunch in order to catch up. Now your old teacher asks you the big question: “So, what have you become?” What will you tell him/her? What have you accomplished in your career? What is your personal and social life like? What is it that you plan to do next? This method can help you imagine what you want to see yourself accomplish in the future. The next step is finding the means to make those accomplishments a reality!