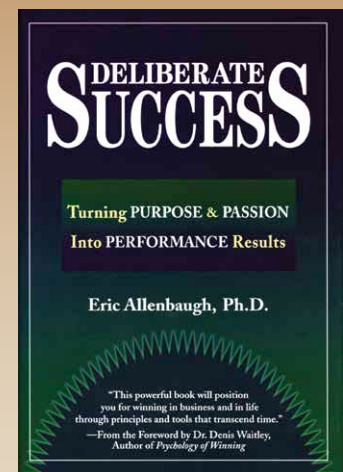

DISCOVERING YOUR LIFE'S PASSION[®]

Written by G. Eric Allenbaugh, Ph.D.

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ADAPTED FROM

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DISCOVERING YOUR LIFE’S PASSION®

*“Twenty years from now,
you will be more disappointed by the things
you didn’t do than by the ones you did.
So throw off the bowlines.
Sail away from the safe harbor.
Catch the tradewinds in your sails.
Explore. Dream. Discover.”*

Mark Twain

What is your life’s passion, and are you “on purpose?” Have you clearly identified your talents and interests, and are you applying those to their fullest potential? When you align your gifts and interests with what you do in life, you move from surviving to thriving.

By discovering, developing, and directing your gifted areas, you experience making a positive – even joyful – difference in both your inner and outer world. Inside, you experience enhanced self worth and greater life fulfillment. What you attract from the outside reflects what is going on inside. When you are “on purpose,” appropriate resources and resource people are frequently drawn into your expanding sphere of influence. You can achieve more with a greater sense of ease. Resources,

interestingly enough, tend to follow a dream. But the dream has got to come first.

“I am my message.”
Gandhi

When you do what you love, you never have to “work” again. Some wonder: “*How can I earn a living doing what I love to do?*” Making your avocation your vocation is a key to experiencing passion and fulfillment. One man, for example, loves to back pack. How can one earn a living backpacking? Through exploring his passion and letting his limited thinking go, he ultimately became a field researcher for a major manufacturer of outdoor products – testing new products while backpacking. A woman in my own city who loves to shop formed a personal shopping business for busy executives – and is making a comfortable living. A man who loved music created a band that performed on weekends while he continued to work his regular job. Remember, it is the experience you are seeking, and that experience of following your passion can take many forms. The options are limited only by your mind.

*“Life doesn’t happen to you.
It happens from you.”*

Mike Wickett

Research supports that the two primary motivators are 1) doing something that makes you feel good about yourself, and 2) doing something that makes a difference. Discovering your passion energizes, enlightens, and enlivens your life experience. What better time than now to clarify and live your life’s purpose?

*“The more you seek security,
the less of it you have.*

*But the more you seek opportunity,
the more likely it is that you will achieve
the security that you desire.”*

Brian Tracy

HOW CAN I DISCOVER MY LIFE’S PURPOSE?

Most of the time, the answers are within. In one sense, you already know what you need to know. But your own limited thinking, self doubts, or constraints placed on you by others often speak louder than that small, inner voice that says: “*I can create more of what I want in life!*” Now is the time to take charge of your life at a higher level and to create your own “magic.”

*“If not now, then when?
If not me, then who?”*

Hillel

The following exercise will make a significant difference in your life, so give your very best to discovering and developing your life’s passion. What better time than now to clarify and live your life’s purpose?

Identify the most creative part of your day to work through this self-discovery process. I encourage you to write out your responses to the following questions, for writing engages both the logical and creative parts of your brain. Be willing to let your creative energy flow, and consciously resist that part of you that may want to put limits on your own development. In this important exercise, you want to be fully present and in a positive resource state.

Let the following questions guide your inner wisdom – the part of you that already “knows.” Let your pen explore ideas you have only dreamed about in the past as you create new insights, new clarity, and new direction. Be willing to experiment, venture into new territory, and discover the learning. The 15 **Discovering Your Passion** questions will give you new insights, provide greater clarity of purpose and vision, and open up new adventures in your life. Enjoy the discovery.

1. **TALENTS:** What are your most significant talents and gifts that you bring to both your career and to life? This is not a time to be humble, so list no less than seven major gifts you possess. (The emphasis here is not “How smart am I?” Instead, ask “How am I smart?”)
2. **INTERESTS:** What do you like to do most? What gets your creative juices flowing and feeds your soul?

3. **ENERGY DRAINS:** What do you like to do least? What turns you off and drains energy from you?
4. **DREAMS:** If you had no limits, what would you be, do, and have? Let your imagination flow and resist the self-imposed limitations that could stifle creativity.
5. **"GOING TO" VALUES:** If you were going to join a particular company, group, or association, what would you look for within that entity that would light your fire? What about their values or culture attracts you?
6. **"MOVING AWAY FROM" VALUES:** What would cause you to leave a particular company or group? What about their values, culture, or behaviors repels you?
7. **WAKE-UP CALLS:** If you were told by a physician that you were likely to die suddenly within one year, what would you do differently with your life in the remaining time? Who would you contact? And, why are you waiting?
8. **FINANCIAL FREEDOM:** If you were to win a multi-million dollar lottery, what would you do differently in your career and in your lifestyle? What does that say about how you are living your life now?
9. **ALIGNMENT:** Think about times in your life when you were working hard, yet experiencing great fulfillment. What were you doing? Describe your actions and feelings.
10. **BALANCE:** Think about times in your life that you were playing and thoroughly enjoying yourself. What were you doing? How much of that kind of experience are you currently building into your priorities?
11. **AVOCATION:** Bring to mind your most pleasurable hobbies or interests. What are they and how might you incorporate these into a new career, your existing career, or to simply create more of this experience in your life?
12. **CHILDLIKE PERSPECTIVE:** Imagine that you are now eight years old and looking ahead at your life with all the imagination and confidence of a child. What dreams do you want to fulfill?
13. **SAGE WISDOM:** Imagine that you are now eighty years old and looking back over your life with the wisdom and insight of a sage elder. What pleases you most about your accomplishments? What do you regret not having done?
14. **CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE:** Imagine that the most highly respected people you know are having a conversation about you. What positive things would you want them to be saying about your principles, your values, and your contributions?
15. **PASSAGES:** Imagine that your life came to a close, and people gathered to celebrate your life. What would you like them to be saying in your obituary about you as a person and about the difference you made in this world?

“Don’t die with your music still in you.”

Wayne Dyer

After several days of reflection time, return to your written responses and refine them where appropriate. Then read each response individually in an effort to learn what messages are coming through. Next, do a “vertical cut” through all fifteen questions to identify what themes might be emerging. You are now operating in a diamond field of priceless ideas that will make a long-term difference.

*“If you think you can,
or if you think you can’t, you’re right!”*

Henry Ford

CHOICE POINT: Making a Difference In Your Life

Manifestation of your dreams requires a decision to take that first step, then another, then another. After you have refined your responses to this “Discovering Your Life’s Passion” exercise, explore the following action steps:

1. What major challenges must I overcome to manifest this dream?
2. What old ways, behaviors, and non-productive attitudes do I need to release to make room for this dream?
3. What major costs would I experience if I elected not to pursue this dream?

4. What major benefits will I experience as a result of manifesting this dream?
5. What action steps do I intend to take now that will bring me closer to realizing my dream?

*“You can show up in life any way you want to.
You just have to decide how you want to show up.”*

Karen Sheridan

BE WHAT YOU SEEK!

Being “on purpose” requires a conscious commitment to living your dream, your principles, and your values on a daily basis. You have three ways of converting your dream into reality: 1) making a series of small, incremental changes that inch you toward your dream; 2) practicing “quantum leaps”—engaging in a process of making major life changes; or 3) coming from what you are seeking. While each strategy works, coming from what you want engages your spirit while producing highly desirable results. You get to experience both the passion and the tangible outcomes!

Because the answers are within (most of the time), coming from what you seek to create in your life is faster and more fulfilling. In other words, be what you seek! At the choice points in your life, pause and ask yourself these questions:

1. Are my thoughts and actions in alignment with my purpose, passion, and principles?
2. Is what I am doing right now bringing me closer to or further from realization of my dream?

3. Am I coming from that place of being
“on purpose?”

*“Ask yourself this daily question:
How would the person I want to be
do the thing I’m about to do?”*

Jim Cathcart

Everything is created twice: first in your mind and, second, in reality. You cannot have the second without the first. This process of discovering your passion starts first with creating a compelling vision, and second, converting that vision into reality. Having explored this “Discovering Your Passion” exercise, you are now positioned to have greater clarity about your passion and direction. Decide now to do something about positively shaping your future — and have the courage to take bold action to manifest your dream.

*“If you want to know your future,
look at what you are doing in this moment.”*
Ancient Tibetan Teaching

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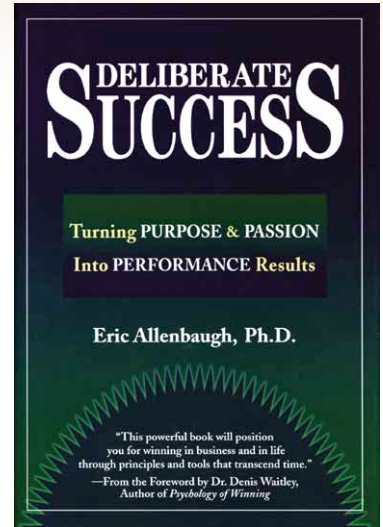
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