**In the Realm of Passion**

****

Where does passion come from? True passion comes from love. There are two sides of love: receptive and generative. Most of us identify easily the receptive side, but the generative side isn’t something we often notice. And yet we create from this love.

“Follow your passion” has become a popular cliché. It’s a noble idea, but it’s overused and dangerous. Following your passion is not creating what matters to you. They should be one in the same, but people don’t hear the latter, they hear a rule or ideal. We look for passion in everything we’re doing like a forensic eyeball. Whatever doesn’t qualify for what evokes passion is weeded from the garden. Let’s explore the unintended consequences of this guiding idea: To follow one’s passion.

Strengths focusing came out of this. We use focusing our strengths as a way to compensate for what is more difficult. Following what has passion creates a temporary fix on what feels good, energizes, fulfills, satisfies, etc. Creating is not about satisfaction. There are many bad days as well as good days. There are stages in the creative process when skill isn’t high. In fact the initial phases in the creative process involve looking like a fool.

We despise of discomfort, low status, embarrassment, humiliation, isolation, and the unknown, because we seek homeostasis and safety. Passion becomes a pill to fixate on what’s positive only, like a good coping mechanism to regulate stress, even to the point where we lie to ourselves about our current reality. We lose our creative process to the demise of our desire to look good. We stay within strengths to make the work easier rather than learn what our desired creations require.

We misuse passion like a bouncer who shoves out the reality of our hardships, and the unfavorable qualities that represent our true starting points. Instead of generating resourcefulness, we move to our passion to quarantine the pain and risks. Then our passion decays and consumes us. We fail to sure failures as assets and constraints as sources of innovation and learning.

Then passion must be must be monetized. The real love of creating something that matters is squashed by this monetary push. Instead of creating something for its own sake, we have to make it a career. We compare how it goes to the bliss it’s supposed to be. Suddenly it goes off course, swings into despite, and the assumption is it must not be true passion, a better passion must be discovered. Getting better at something is less important than feeling good. We don’t like the idea of deeper practice.

Beethoven found his best capacity after 10,000 hours or 10 years of engagement. Look at any hero you respect or successful person you’ll see more failures at first that where bridges to where they are today. These constraints and downturns shaped their learning process. Very little inspiration, positive thinking, and inner cheer-leading was used, instead they make a deep commitment to learning. The process always takes a different course than what is expected.

Determination substitutes the formative process of becoming masterful at something. People who need a lot of determination aren't very good at what they do. Quitting early sets in when determination becomes the fix. Passion is then obscured by discomfort. The tolerance for this period of skill assimilation falls apart, causing a backslide and passage to finding a better passion, one that’s easier and more fun than something hard to create. Mystical answers about universal messages, soul journeys, and awakenings are attempted to explain the walls being met, instead of using them to generate work-arounds.

Another consequence of the follow your passion parade is self-interest. Follow your passion assumes that you follow what is your own. Yet there are deeper implications as to the side effects this has on the whole. If I’m a fisherman in Nova Scotia fishing the banks following my passion, so are all my competitors wanting a common resource: fish. Over time this individual passion following leads to a tragedy. No more fish are available to everyone.

Relationship

Could our passion be collective as well as personal? Is there a part of us, a deeper source from which caring for the whole is greater than the puny passion of our self-interests? Is there a grander will pregnant within us that connects us to something far bigger and greater in our life building process? The answer is absolutely yes. Relationship is the organizing force of the universe. The inner work and contemplation has to do with listening from farther lands, from somewhere other than myself. Puny self-interested whims, impulses and gratifications lose their charm to longings that orient your greater life.

Contribution becomes an inherent driver in what one wants to bring into the world. If pursuing one’s passion is to create an alternative world that matters to someone, then this world imagined stems from the nature of which we are---compassionate, empathetic, generous, and kind. These qualities exist within the ground of our being, and embody the generative love and creative fire than one can occupy.

And this source of passion is one of coherence, connectedness, and symmetry with a higher universal plan. Joseph Campbell referred to this as “matching one’s heartbeat with the heartbeat of the universe.” He described what being heralded to one’s calling involves. Perhaps we all have a gift, blessing, or sacred project that belongs to the whole, our life journey is coming back home to this place of a true self and great work.

Perhaps the connection to this mature love and reverence for the whole involves an inner transformation, from letting go of something old, and setting foot into something new, not yet embodied in knowledge or reality quite yet. Maybe it’s the signpost of a second half of life beginning anew after the first. It’s a summoning and yielding to our future self.

Context

The context in which we live today contains data that shapes our chosen path in how we choose to use this precious gift of life we have. Suicides are three times as high as murders. And a list of stats and disturbing figures about the spiritual, ecological, economic divide is almost too hard to acknowledge today in modern life. We’re on a race to the bottom, collectively creating results in the world that nobody wants.

It makes me wonder where creations come from? They’re not locatable by scientific explanation in the brain. Perhaps creations come from space itself. Structures emerge from silence. Much like a galaxy amasses from participles coagulating into one mass, the universe in which we live participates with our intention in organizing upon itself the very thing we call “life.” Life is in the business of organizing life.

Certain energies and patterns of order are enacting along with us in dynamic ways that are invisible and visible, through the relationships that take place. The properties in something are definable via the patterns of interaction at play. We have reality to see with. Can we meet in conversation with the future waving at us in our current reality? Can we make room for a future that hasn’t come into being yet, and operate from it today, like seeing the cracks shining in from it? Is there a conversation needed at the edge of this future that is to untold as we walk toward it? Can we see a path for ourselves by walking into this future? How does this unfamiliar future come into existence by our meeting it?

Alertness

Alertness brings us back into nowhere. This is the place from which creations begin. We start with nothing; the past has no hand on the creative process. Specs become seeds, which if followed and trusted, become the pillars of a future standing in need of what is trying to happen. Something is on its way out of us, as something new and still indistinct is on its way in.

We see the future through the tiny cracks and openings that shine in the present moment. We pay attention with our quality of awareness open, not closed. Thought is held off from editing what is there. Then we bring our deepest aspirations into each step into the mystery that we live forward into, and fall toward it as if it were the center of something whispering a sacred project into our hearts. We put faith into our goals.

Motivation starts in the middle. You can see that passion is a building process over time, as faith and goals co-produce. Power comes from the goal, the guiding idea, not you. You become interested in something other than yourself, to see who you really are. You internalize what you love most as you start toward something new that isn’t entirely loved yet.

Indeed falling in love is fun and easy, but the constraints are inevitable later on. Despite this, people stall, wait, prepare, qualify, and organize, etc. instead of starting now. The only way to become great at building a business is to create one. The only way to build an alternative world is to create one. We create the future, we don’t predict a future. You don’t need blistering, mind-numbing, world-crushing passion to do this. Will-power is not passion. You just need an idea that matters to you and the decision to act in an instant. Lead out with the ‘what’, and ‘how’ follows, ready, fire, aim.

You don’t need to be worthy of any passion. Passion doesn’t ascend from worth. Deserving and desiring aren’t linked, and don’t need to be in the creative process. When you’re creating you’re not focused on who you are or what’s wrong with you. You’re focused on your creations, not you. This angers human potential zealots who preach getting in touch with your personal power, self-improvement, removing your issues, as if all this work is relevant to being better at creating what you want.

My response: make all that a hobby. Make creating what matters to you the centerpiece of what organizes action in your life, and leave your self alone. You don’t need a shrink to learn to play the piano. You mental health isn’t as powerful as your heart intelligence. Living a life you care a lot about is far different than improving yourself. They are not linked.

Self-love is not loving something you want to bring into the world. You cannot love you and yet generate what matters to you. This isn’t positive thinking or mental toughness training or brainwashing. Artists don’t meddle with themselves when they’re creating. Music isn’t created from self-improvement. It comes into the world out of love.

It’s so simple, we make it hard. We meddle and bend our minds around ultra-clear visions instead of internalizing them as we go along. So stop finding your passion and start creating something that matters. Take your monitoring of yourself indulging in how passionate you are. Focus more on the actions in support of creating what matters to you. Quit focusing on how these actions make you feel or whether they’re hard. Instead learn from them. Be aware of the process of creating. You’ll have more passion once you’ve created something that matters to you. And remember, *you don’t predict a future, you creation one.*

After all these years I’ve come to realize that passion is never lost or found anywhere. There is no IT in shining armor discovery. Passion is considered, not discovered. It’s conceived and germinated from what you want for its own sake. What matters to you now may not matter every again. What mattered to you ten years ago may not matter to you now. You can change your mind at any time.

What people really want isn’t to find their passion; they want to be involved in what they’re doing. They want to build things that matter to them, and enter the present moment organizing actions from what really does. They want to enter the next moment with the remembrance of what does matter most. This may not qualify for the BIG league game or being a billionaire, it begins right now with simple things. What matters to you? The point of entry starts with a choice.

You are not as alienated from your nature, your true self, your work, and others. All the problems you have are insoluble anyway; you can only outgrow them by following wiser and better urges. So be still. You don’t need to know how, just choose to be still. End your love affair with life’s break-neck speed. If passion were a destiny standing in need of you, it’ll find you there and pick you up like a hitchhiker. Your backpack is light. You don’t bring much to the road. You headed out, dared yourself into the mystery, and emptied yourself into creating out of the inkling that quells in your being, like smelling your own perfume.

Alertness and presence are the disciplines of familiarity. You prey from your heart and hear the voices call you forward. It is your sacred project heralding from the distance, asking you to get out of your mind. Every thought no longer seduces you. Let go of the need to understand anything. Open your heart like the aperture to the sacred; to the love that created you, to clue into what is needed in your life. This is the part of you that you haven’t claimed yet. Wholeness is the pointer to what you’re meant to do.

It’s not about what anyone else will teach you. There are no solutions from the outside; you have the truth within yourself. You will find out and learn when your desires lead your very step outward. That which will be brought out of you will save you. Standing for something spikes anxiety; you know you’re on the path.

You’re not predicting a future, you create a future. Passion is out, involvement is in. Know what matters to you and act upon it. Bring something to the world that no one else can, only you because it matters. Give us the gift in you that belongs to us; your community. Your true passion is what we’re standing in wait for you and dare you to move on.