

Finding Purpose and Passion for a Fulfilling Journey

By Dr Granville D'Souza

In life, as in all journeys we undertake, it's important to have our goals in sight: noble goals that give meaning and purpose to our existence.

COMBINING purpose and passion together helps us to create a life that is exciting, fulfilling, and joyful. Yet there is no certain order that purpose and passion appear in our lives. Sometimes, we discover our passion, and from there we understand our purpose. At other times, we begin with a purpose, which opens up the door to discovering our passion. No matter which order they appear in our lives, connecting our purpose and passion can be life changing.

Passion is food for the soul, a spark that ignites and reinforces our reason for being alive. Passion's energy and fire can help us step out of the ordinary confines of life to face our fears and to take risks. In

contrast, purpose is what we work towards and what pushes us to excel. Together, passion and purpose help us achieve our noble goals. Nurturing our passions helps us excel in creative tasks and in work that demands right-brain thinking: problem-solving, inventiveness, and conceptual understanding.

The reason that passion is so powerful is that it comes from the soul. And because of that, our passion is ultimately tied to our core values and beliefs—the things in life that are most important to us. The values or beliefs that each of us subscribe to are as individual and unique as we are and the list of values can be long. But the ones that surface most often for people who are following their passions are: integrity, service above self, communication, cooperation, courage, persistence, strength, personal growth, trust, faith, fairness, freedom, forgiveness, knowledge, compassion, and friendship. Ask yourself: “Do any of these core values or beliefs govern my life?”

Everyone is taught some value system as a child and has most likely lived according to the value system of others such as our parents, teachers, bosses, friends, or religion. However, connecting with our own passion and purpose will help us figure out what is truly important. Once we identify the values that are at the core of whom we truly are, we take the first step toward leading happy, fulfilling lives.

Values, passion, and purpose are all tied together in a beautiful circle that keeps our lives in an exciting, motivating, and satisfying orbit. Connecting with our purpose, passion, and core values is like turning on the navigation system in a car. It will help lead us to our destination and help us avoid too many wrong turns and detours that make us lose our way.

Noble Goal

A noble goal can be something that gives us a sense of gratification beyond mere material gains. Our attitude towards any form of work, whatever it is, is what makes it worthy of our interest or devotion.

Noble goals activate all the other elements of emotional intelligence because they shape our long-term choices and keep us centred on our decisions and commitments. Just as companies have mission statements, a noble goal is a brief, inspiring statement of enduring purpose for individuals. The Six Seconds interpretation of noble goal is defined as something that provides us direction. It is our north star to calibrate our inner compass, and it helps us align our thoughts, feelings, and actions with integrity. Although one may not realise it, pursuing a noble goal is not just about setting a long-term goal, wish, or hope. It is a statement of intent that marshals the wisdom and passion within oneself to put our emotional intelligence into action.

It can be challenging to find our noble goals. We are frequently faced with decisions that test our intrinsic motivations and seem to contradict our noble goals. For example, we may be passionate about a hobby or vocation that gives us personal fulfilment but would not allow us to survive financially. Similarly, we struggle with career decisions that make sense from a purely practical point of view but not from a personal perspective. For example, we may feel compelled to stay at a job that gives us no joy because we are good at it and have built up a reputation and would feel ashamed to risk our position to

try something completely different.

A noble goal can be something that gives us a sense of gratification beyond mere material gains. Our attitude towards any form of work, whatever it is, makes it worthy or unworthy of our interest or devotion. Someone who works as a construction worker on tough assignments may be expected to be disgruntled and unsatisfied by his job. But if he sees his work as something that helps him support a higher, noble goal, say, to support his young wife and child, the difficult job assumes a mantle of nobility. He finds his intrinsic motivation to work because it helps him achieve something beyond himself.

Finding your Purpose

To find our purpose, we need to first measure what we find important based on our values. This will help us achieve our noble goals that drive our “internal compass” and points us in the right direction. Josh Freedman of Six Seconds says that an empowering and enduring sense of purpose is based on not what we desire in life but what values we hold most dear.

This means that social status, financial security, while being sound values, are not valid noble goals because they are extrinsic motivations to achieve something. Noble goals are based on values associated with intrinsic motivation. Josh loves to think if you are committed to making money, that's fine, but not sufficient: Why do you want that? And why does that matter?

The next step to finding purpose and defining those noble goals is to determine the “why” in our lives. This will require a cultivated sense of emotional self-awareness and a mindfulness of our own intrinsic motivations. If you have never really thought about your purpose or the “why” of your life, begin by asking yourself some key questions. The answers to these and other questions can bring about more self-awareness, which can ultimately lead you to understanding the purpose for your life.

1. Who inspires you? These can be famous people or friends, family or co-workers. What is it about them that motivates or encourages you?
2. What makes you feel great about yourself?
3. What is unique about you? What do you have to offer to those around you and your community?
4. What are your innate gifts and talents?

A life purpose is not static and can be changed and influenced by life experiences and the people you meet.

5. Is there something that people typically ask for your help with?
6. How do you help others?
7. Do you have a desire to do or accomplish something that you have never thought was possible?

Write down the answers to these questions and over time, keep updating your statements. A life purpose is not static and can be changed and influenced by life experiences and the people you meet. As your answers come together, you will have the building blocks of a unique and powerful mission statement that will guide you through life. Your noble goals will be forged out of this mission statement, which will help you live up to your personal mission in life.

Based on their actions, perhaps these famous people's noble goals would be something like these:

- Walt Disney: “To make people happy.”
- Mother Teresa: “To show mercy and compassion.”
- Nelson Mandela: “To nurture equality.”
- Oprah Winfrey: “To transform everyday people's lives.”

Finding Your Passion

A driving passion or belief often serves as a great motivator. Combining purpose with a passion harnesses the power of intrinsic motivations and can teach us to strive and pursue our noble goals with more energy and determination.

Not only should we cultivate a purpose in life, we should also stoke our passions. Once identified, our passions can burn within us and drive us to excel in surprising ways. When you are passion-

ate about something, it's very easy to step out of your comfort zone and go beyond what is expected into the realm of new possibilities.

Martin Luther King's passion for equality was so strong that he laboured tirelessly in the 1960s, leading the Civil Rights Movement that redefined American society. Nelson Mandela's passion for ending apartheid was so great that he was willing to spend decades of his life in prison for it. Thomas Jefferson's passion for liberty and autonomy made him one of the leading intellectuals on basic human rights and one of the founding fathers of the early republic of the United States.

Finding your passion can be as simple as asking yourself some questions and paying attention to your answers and the way you feel when you give those answers. If you have a passion about something, there will be a corresponding positive energy or emotion inside you when you think about it.

- What makes you smile? This could be an event, a person, an activity, or a place.
- What would you willingly do for free?
- When you lose all sense of time, what are you doing?
- What makes you feel good about yourself?
- What dreams or ideas did you have as a child?
- If money weren't an issue, what would you spend your life doing?
- What causes or principles do you strongly believe in?

To conclude, as in all journeys in life, it is important to have our goals in sight, noble goals that give meaning and purpose to our existence. When we lead a life in accordance with our passion, purpose, and values, each day becomes a fulfilling journey.

In following your purpose and passion, don't let the opinions of others get in your way. Your path to a fulfilling life is about building your self-awareness, not about doing what other people think you should be doing. If you pay attention to someone else's opinion more than your own interests and desires, you may just miss out on finding what it is you are on this planet to do and experience.

Be open to life's experiences. Often our passion for something will make itself known when we experience something



for the first time. Perhaps your passion is teaching, but you didn't know it until you accepted an opportunity to teach an accounting class at a community centre. Maybe your passion is cooking, but you didn't have a clue before your wife insisted that you help with the weekly meals. Maybe the laws and mathematics behind quantum physics really excite you, but you would never have known if you hadn't let your friend talk you into attending a seminar.

Try new things, meet new people, read books with ideas that are different from your own, listen to music that is quirky, and dabble in something new and challenging. In doing so, you give the embryonic passion that is deep inside a chance to come out and flourish. You will know when you've found your passion because you will want to learn more about it and cultivate it. Be open, be curious, and trust your intuition. Your purpose and passion are "built in" and will reveal themselves if you let them.

In the final analysis, can you imagine a ship without sails, a traveller without a roadmap? How can you set sail through life without a sense of the direction you want to take? In life, as in all journeys we undertake, it's important to have our goals in sight: noble goals that give meaning and purpose to our existence. When we lead a life in accordance with our passion, purpose, and values, each day becomes a fulfilling journey. ✍

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