



WHAT AM I MEANT TO DO WITH MY LIFE?

(Almost) everything we know about finding your passion and having a fulfilling career



AN ESSAY COLLECTION

BY RACHEL EAST & KRISTEN WALKER OF CLARITY ON FIRE

Hey there!

Prepare yourselves, because we're about to crack our knuckles and get down to business on the mother of all questions.

How do I find my passion?

This subject can be really, *really* ridiculously anxiety inducing.

We've seemingly all come to the same bewildering conclusion:

That if you can find that *one special thing* that overjoys you — the thing that makes you want to jump out of bed in the morning and greet life with zest and gusto (two words better reserved for culinary endeavors, in our opinion) — then all of your problems will be magically solved and you'll be energetic and fulfilled and inspired and passionate forever and ever, amen.

Talk about *pressure*. No wonder so many of us are spinning our wheels! Moving forward seems *really* high-stakes.

But none of that is how passion actually works.

This e-book is a collection of seven of Clarity on Fire's most popular blogs about finding your passion, and most importantly, living a *whole life* that feels fulfilling.

You're about to find out exactly what passion *is*...and what it *isn't*. You're also going to find out (deep breaths) why passion isn't as important as you might have assumed.

As always, we guide you through plenty of action steps you can take *right now* to move in the direction of your passion...because none of this means much if you can't apply it to your life.

Much Love,

Kristen & Rachel



ARE YOU THE PROBLEM? OR IS YOUR JOB THE PROBLEM? HOW TO TELL.

BY RACHEL

I'm 22 and sitting in one of many orientation sessions for my first full-time job out of college.

The training instructor, a really nice guy who I'll refer to as Marty, was having us watch a video about coming to work with a positive, can-do attitude.

The video was about people who tossed fish for a living. And weirdly, it wasn't the first time I'd seen it.

I remember watching it in my high school English class when I was a freshman, too. In short, it's about the hardworking people employed at the famous Pike Place Fish Market in Seattle.

Their job is cold, wet, long, and not to mention, *smelly*. It's also a job done in front of an audience, given the hundreds of tourists who pass through every day.

There's every reason that you'd have a less-than-stellar attitude about a fish-hauling job, but that's the point of this video: They don't. They're all happy and cheerful, and they've created a fun spectacle of tossing fish from place to place as they work. The way they do their job has become part of the attraction of the market.

Anyway, this training video is produced by some company that clearly wanted to create an *experience* for students, new hires, and anyone else who might need an inspiring lesson about their attitude.

So at the end, everyone gets a plush stuffed fish to remind them of the moral of the story.

As Marty handed us our fish (this would be my second stuffed fish, though who knows where

the high school fish ended up), he said:

"I keep my fish on my desk at all times to remind me that you can always choose to be positive and happy at work!"

Bless Marty's heart. He was (and I'm sure continues to be) such a sweet guy. But let's be honest...

That damned fish wasn't going to convince me to be happy in this new job.

What I'd started to fear during my orientation, and what became clear very quickly once I started my new job, was that I wasn't like everyone else.

I didn't like my job, and I never did. From day one I was unengaged and faking all of my energy and enthusiasm. And the thought I kept thinking was this:

"Is there something wrong with ME? Or is there something wrong with this job?"

It took me YEARS to figure out why I wasn't happy at that job (or any job that came after). And now, I want to share with you what I wish Marty would have known during my orientation all those years ago.

THE BOTTOM LINE UP FRONT

Usually I save the point until the end, but this time I'm skipping ahead to tell you the bottom line.

After years of job hopping — and never being satisfied by any job I had — and then becoming a coach, Kristen and I figured something out that SO few people are talking about:

Not everyone is meant to work the same way, and that's why I was so unhappy for years.

But let's back up and show you how I came to that conclusion.

At first, you'll assume that your unhappiness is caused by your job. You're just not excited about it or interested enough, and you're convinced you'll be satisfied when you find a better job. So you hop from job to job, hoping the next one will be the "the one."

You and your job might be chronically incompatible. And that's not your fault.

Eventually, after this doesn't work time and time again, you'll start making an even worse assumption:

"What if I'M the problem? What if I'll never like ANY job?"

But here's the truth. The majority of the time, the reason you're unhappy is NEITHER. Your job isn't necessarily to blame, and neither are you.

SO WHAT'S THE REAL PROBLEM?

Often the problem isn't *what* you're doing but *how* you're doing it.

Do you remember taking the [Passion Profile Quiz](#)? If you're reading this, there's a good chance you took it when you first discovered Clarity on Fire.

The reason so many people, you included, resonated with your result is because it gave you clarity about HOW you're meant to work, which is something very few people will talk to you about.

Not everyone is meant to work the same way. We all have different values around time, money, and passion. The way in which we want those 3 major values to combine is our Passion Profile. And if you're in a job that doesn't fit your Profile, you will feel *constantly* dissatisfied and have no idea why.

Here's the quick breakdown of the 4 Passion Profiles:

FIRESTARTERS

The people who value **freedom** above all else. They deeply desire to get paid to do something they're passionate about. They love autonomy, and they can have a hard time working on behalf of someone else's mission (because they want to work on their own mission). They can easily resent being told when they have to work, what they have to do, and how much money they can make. They're more comfortable with risk and pretty entrepreneurial.

TRIBE MEMBERS

The people who value **connection** above all else. Like Firestarters, they really want to get paid to do something they're passionate about. But unlike Firestarters, they don't necessarily want to be a lone wolf leading the charge. Instead, their idea of a fulfilling career is one where they can support a mission they believe in while being part of a healthy, supportive, and collaborative team. They value stability and security, so they tend to be a bit more risk-averse. They're happy to work for other people, and they'll give you their all...so long as they feel valued and purposeful.

THRIVERS

The people who value **enjoyment** above all else. Thrivers are the only people who would prefer NOT to combine their work with their passion because it can put pressure on the thing they enjoy and drain it of its intrinsic value. Instead, they prefer to have a day job — something that they're naturally good at, working with a team they like being around — that allows them to pursue their passion in their free time. They're OK working for someone else because they value stability and security, so long as they can "clock out" at a decent hour and have plenty of time to pursue fun and enjoyment outside of work. They'll often (wrongly) judge themselves for not "caring enough" about their job.

SIDE HUSTLERS

The people who value **variety** above all else. Side Hustlers are often energizer bunnies who crave a lot of stimulation at work. They like to combine work with passion in some way, whether it's in their "day job" or on the side. They're the most multi-passionate of the four profiles and will get bored if they're not constantly growing, learning, and evolving. They really value flexibility and can be more accepting of risk. They might be happy with a traditional job that provides them a lot of stimulation, or they might cobble together a career from multiple sources. Either way can work for them.

I hated every job I had because I'm a Firestarter.

It wouldn't have mattered if I'd been in the perfect job. I could have worked for Google or some other rad place with slides and nap pods and free food all day...and I still wouldn't have enjoyed it.

As a Firestarter, I was always going to resent being told what to do with my time, how much money I could make, and what I "should" be excited about.

I wanted to be in control of my own time and creativity. And no job could give me that...so I made my own. And that's where I finally found happiness.

So, if something feels “off” with your job — or if you've job-hopped and could never find anything that deeply satisfied you — consider that you might be in a job that doesn't suit your Passion Profile.


It's not necessarily what you're doing, it's how you're doing it.

A Tribe Member will have a hard time being happy in a cube farm where everyone is supposed to keep their head down and plug away on their own.

A Side Hustler will be completely unsatisfied in jobs that don't invest in their professional growth.

A Thriver will probably want to pull their hair out if they work 60-hour weeks.

You and your job might be chronically incompatible. And that's not your fault.



WHAT IF I JUST DON'T HAVE A PASSION?

BY KRISTEN

I had my first call with a new client (we'll call her Casey) a while back, and something she said during that initial conversation stuck with me.

She asked me, in a slightly embarrassed tone, *"What if I'm really not great at anything in particular? What if I just don't have a passion or talent?"*

Hearing that comment felt like a massive weight in my chest, partially because I could so *clearly* see how insanely untrue it was for her. (Seriously, every single client I've ever worked with has been hugely talented and amazing, even if they couldn't see it at first. I guarantee the same is true for you.)

But it also struck me so intensely because I can remember feeling the *exact* same way several years ago.

*If you're wondering if you even have a passion...
you're not alone.*

As Casey continued opening up about her deepest concerns, it reminded me of all my own old fears.

She told me that, while she knew she was decent at several things (writing, planning, giving presentations, etc.), she didn't feel great at anything. And because she didn't think she had an innate calling, she'd come to believe that she would simply never enjoy working.

She'd given up on ever feeling passionate about her work.

In fact, her goal when she started coaching was simply to feel “not miserable” about her job. She'd come to the conclusion that she'd probably never really enjoy her career, so she came to me hoping I could help her feel better about settling.

Yeah...that didn't fly with me.

Week after week, I helped Casey reconnect with the amazing aspects of herself that she'd been taking for granted, burying under limiting beliefs, and simply ignoring for years.

I've heard hundreds of people voice the same fear that maybe they just don't have a passion...maybe they're not *meant* to do anything in particular.

For any of you who, like Casey, are wondering, “*Should I just settle for a 'not miserable' job and try to make the best of it?*”...please at least stick with me through the end of this blog before you give up!

DID THE UNIVERSE FORGET ABOUT ME?

You know how some people have always *known*, since they were 5 years old, what they wanted to “be” when they grew up?

My mom, for example, knew she would become a nurse when she was in elementary school, and she never wavered in that knowing. And she's happily been a nurse for her entire career. I think that's amazing!

But I've never been one of those people.

If you'd asked me as a kid what I wanted to do as a “grown up,” I would've given you a different answer depending on what day you asked.

There were a few things I always enjoyed — reading, writing, spending lazy afternoons outside, having long conversations with my best friends, etc. — but they were mostly things I did just for fun. They weren't anything you could make a “real” career out of.

When it came time for me to get my first “real job,” I couldn't help but feel like, if the Universe was responsible for doling out passions, talents, and strengths, maybe it had somehow forgotten about me. Maybe I'd been left out.

I was pretty sure I just didn't have a “calling.”

As soon as you take the limitations off
of yourself, you allow yourself to feel
passionate again.

Thankfully, some small, persistent voice inside of me didn't allow me to give into that fear. I had a tiny spark of hope that I really could feel passionate about my work in the world.

THE ONE SHIFT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

Everything shifted for me when I finally gave myself **permission...**

Permission to explore what truly energized me, no matter how "frivolous" or "impractical."

Permission to pursue an unconventional path, even if it made me (and my family and friends) scared.

Permission to explore my interests and natural talents as "legitimate" career options and get creative with how I could express them.

Permission changes everything.

When you give yourself permission to explore your interests, desires, and talents, with no judgment and no limiting beliefs clouding things up, you open the door for reconnecting with your passions.

For years, I'd been limiting myself based on self-judgment and tons of fear. I judged myself for being "good, but not great" at several things. And I didn't believe I could have a "real career" based on my natural talents, which were mostly soft skills like communicating and relating to people. Both of those things proved utterly untrue.

My client Casey was limiting herself based on beliefs she picked up from her family. She loved yoga and told me she secretly dreamed of becoming an instructor and eventually opening her own studio, but her family (who were mostly doctors, lawyers, or accountants) didn't view that as a "legitimate" career. So she shut the idea down before it had even fully formed in her mind.

Permission changed everything for Casey, too. She's now in yoga teacher training and exploring studio spaces near her home. She recently wrote to me to say that she's feeling more alive than she's felt in *years*.

As soon as you take the limitations off of yourself (because no one else will remove them for you), you allow yourself to feel passionate again. You allow opportunities and doors to open for you, often to things you never thought possible.

HERE'S WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE

It's taken me a few years to really, truly believe this (and to see enough "proof" in the lives of countless clients), but I can now tell you with complete certainty:

*Everyone has the capacity to experience
deep passion.*

The question is, are you giving your passions permission to show up and express themselves through you? Or have you shut them down before they had a chance to grow?

No matter how long it's been since you felt passionate about your life or career, that passion isn't lost. Give yourself time and space to explore your passions in a judgment-free zone.



THE ONE THING I'VE BEEN DYING TO TELL YOU ABOUT YOUR PASSION & YOUR CAREER

BY RACHEL

Lately, I've been telling any new client I meet:

"I wish I could tell everyone how I REALLY feel about this whole 'finding my passion' and 'career coaching' thing."

And then I realized...I have a blog. Maybe I could, you know, share my thoughts with people? Like I've been doing twice a month for *years* now?

But in all seriousness, I know why it didn't immediately occur to me to share how I felt.

It had everything to do with perception.

When you have a blog and a business, you're taught how important it is to keep working your proverbial corner so that people have a clear idea of who you are and what you can do for *them*.

And while that's wise advice for anyone trying to make a name for themselves as an expert, it also means that you've got to amputate big pieces of what you do, think, and feel (at least publicly), for the sake of not confusing people.

For me and Kristen, that's often meant not talking about the depth and breadth of what we do.

Sure, we could say on our site, *"We help people figure out every single thing about their lives."* But true as it may be, it's not very compelling. As far as business goes, it's worked way better to keep our footing solidly on the corner of 'career' and 'passion.'

But sometimes, I itch to go a little deeper. I've got complicated feelings about this whole *passion* and *career* and *life* thing that we're all trying to do...and while I may not be able to talk about those feelings on a sales page, I'm pretty sure that's *exactly* what blogging is for.

I'M NOT SURE IF ANYONE ACTUALLY CARES ABOUT *PASSION*

That sub-heading alone is a pretty wild thing to say, given we have two courses and a quiz with "passion" in the title. [Insert wide-eyed, red-faced, panicked-looking emoji here.]

But the longer I coach, the more I'm realizing the truth:

When people say they want to 'find their passion,' I think they really mean, 'I suspect there's something bigger, deeper, and more fulfilling to life than what I've got, and I want to know what that is and how to get it.'

Do most people like the idea of waking up in the morning excited, energized, and looking forward to the work ahead of them? Yes.

Do most people want to spend their lives doing something meaningful that they care deeply about? Yes.

So, naturally, they believe that 'finding their passion' is the way to have both of those things: the constant energy *and* the deeper meaning.

But here's the problem with that:

'Passion' is not synonymous with 'career,' and yet most people treat it as if it is.

Because the vast majority of us *have* to earn a living some way, and given that working takes up almost all of our daily time, it's normal that most of us get triggered into existential angst by our jobs.

We're spending most of our *lives* doing something we *have* to keep doing in order to survive, and usually that job is (at best) mediocre, and just as often it's actively *bad*.

The outcome is that we start feeling stuck and overwhelmed and confused.

And then we start asking the bigger, deeper questions about life, like:

"What is the point of this?" and "Is this all there is?" and "If this feels so wrong, then what could possibly feel right?"

AND HERE'S THE KICKER

Because most of us get triggered into asking those big, existential, point-of-life type questions because of our career situation...

...we think the answer happens the same way — through our career.

We start thinking, "If I could just figure out my passion, then I wouldn't feel like this anymore. Everything would make sense. There would be a point to my life, and all of this angst would go away."

This isn't wrong...but it's also not totally right, either.

Your career is *one way* that you might get triggered into asking the deeper questions about life and what you're doing here, but it's not the *only way*.

There are plenty of other avenues that get people to the same place. Maybe it's a romantic relationship, or a health crisis, or a near-death experience, or moving across the country.

Honestly, just about *anything* can shake you, wake you up, and make you start questioning your path and your purpose.

What all of these catalysts have in common is that they make you think about how you've been spending your time, the kind of person you want to be, and what your deeper values really are.

And *that* is what people are really getting at when they say, *"I want to find my passion."*

What they're actually saying, but have a hard time finding the words for, is:

"I want to get clear on how I'm spending my time here on Earth, what kind of human being I really want to be, and what values I'm meant to live out while I'm here."

They sense, without knowing how to say it, that that's where deeper fulfillment and purpose actually come from.

WHICH MEANS...IT'S NOT REALLY ABOUT WHAT YOU DO

It would be convenient if the way to find deeper meaning, purpose, and lifelong fulfillment was as simple as, "My passion is being a doctor!"

Then all of us could go shopping for passion. We could pluck our pre-packaged "doctor," "lawyer," "teacher," or "astronaut" boxes off the shelf and live happily ever after, without having to think about any of the deep, existentially scary things ever again.

But by now, you know that's not how it works.

Your 'passion' isn't just about what you do — the title you give at a networking event, or the label they'd slap on you if you ever appeared on *The Bachelor* — it's about *how you live your life*. ALL of it, *including your career*.

The path to deeper meaning and fulfillment is about living a life that's a full expression of who you are and what you value. Your job is one important piece of that.

The thing I value the most is freedom. Everything I do, and everything I am, revolves around that:

- I couldn't work for anyone else because I wanted to have the agency to set my own schedule and be the controller of my own time.
- I have a business where I get to constantly speak the truth. To me, that's freedom of expression.
- I can spend my days reading, writing, and sharing my thoughts with anyone who cares to hear them. That's creative freedom.
- I can hop in my car and go to yoga whenever I feel like it. No one's guilt-tripping me about that choice.
- I feel free and at ease when I'm walking in nature, cooking a healthy meal, and having meaningful conversations with friends.
- I spend a huge chunk of my time helping people get un-stuck and figure out what *they* deeply value. Enabling people to free themselves makes me feel free, too.
- Most of us never get asked what we deeply value, so we never get the chance to live a life that's a reflection of our innermost values.

Plus, it's likely that you, like nearly all of us, have buried any chance of personal fulfillment under layers of crap that you've taken on over the years — fear about what people will think of you, guilt about breaking with your parents' beliefs, shame about not wanting what you 'should' want, and on and on.

And now, you'll get what I mean what I say *that* is what passion is actually about.

Yes, it's partially about getting clear on your career direction.

But *really*, it's about figuring out who you are, what you value on the deepest level, and how you *really* want to live your life ... and then removing all of the junk that keeps you from making that possible.

*Because from that place...
feeling passionate is a given.*



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A CAREER SOUL MATE

BY KRISTEN

I've never been 100% sure how I feel about the concept of soul mates.

Although the *Pride-and-Prejudice*-loving romantic side of me wants to believe that we each have one specific soul mate who's our perfect match, I can't fully buy into the idea.

Now, don't get me wrong...I wholeheartedly believe in soul *connections*.

We've all experienced that phenomenon when you meet someone for the first time, and you just instantly click. It feels like you've known them forever, there's no awkward small talk (shudder), and you find yourself revealing your deepest beliefs in the first 15 minutes.

Sometimes, you just intuitively know that someone is right for you, whether it's as a friend, romantic partner, business connection, etc.

And the great part about soul *connections* is that there's no limit on how many you can have! Hopefully you have many people in your life who you feel deeply, soulfully connected to.

The part about soul mates that I can't fully get behind is the belief that there's only *one* person in the *entire world* who is your "other half," and you'll never be completely happy if you don't find that person.

That's a lot of pressure!

And it's the same level of pressure that we put on ourselves to pick the *exact* right career. It's setting you up for failure.

The truth is, there's really no "failing" when you're figuring out your passion.

Here's what I've come to believe:

There's no such thing as a "career soul mate."

Thinking that there's one, perfect soul-mate career for you (if only you could just figure it out!) is *extremely* limiting. It's a recipe for disappointment, over-analysis, extreme doubt, and "grass is greener" syndrome.

What I *do* believe, however, is that...just like in relationships, you may feel a soul connection with several different career paths.

The point here is *not* to find the "perfect" profession for you.

The point is to understand your core values, drivers, motivators, and passions. And once you know, with complete conviction, how you want your career to make you *feel* day-in and day-out, you'll discover that your values, skills, and passions can manifest themselves in several different career options.

Think about it: If you decide, "*My passion is photography,*" then you never get to express your passion unless you're taking pictures.

However, if you determine that you're passionate about creativity, independence, beauty, and capturing emotion through art, then you open up all sorts of options and possibilities to express your passion. Maybe right now you're most attracted to photography, but that may evolve into graphic design, oil painting, or teaching art.

The beauty of releasing your belief in a "career soul mate" is that you give yourself permission to change your mind. In the same way that some relationships flow in and out of your life, the way your career shows up will very likely change over time, too.

It's simply evolution, and it's healthy and very normal.

WHAT FINDING YOUR PASSION IS REALLY ABOUT

Figuring out your passion is *not* some lightbulb moment when all of a sudden, "ah-ha!" you realize what your ideal profession is. It's not about finding your career soul mate.

It's a process of self-discovery where you get beyond-a-doubt clarity about who you are at your core and what matters most to you.

Then, finding a great job that you feel soulfully connected to *right now* becomes a natural byproduct.

What most of us need is to give ourselves permission to explore and try things without the pressure of "getting it right." Instead, act like an observational scientist about your life. Objectively explore what naturally energizes you...

- What books or websites do you find yourself drawn to?
- What could you talk about endlessly with your friends?
- What people, places, or causes light you up?
- When do you feel the most "you"?
- What sparks your curiosity?

IT'S TIME TO TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF OF YOURSELF

Not only are most of us putting immense pressure on ourselves to find our career soul mate, but then we expect to figure it out *on the first try*. And when it doesn't work out the first time, then we heap on *even more* pressure to get it right next time...or else we consider ourselves to be repeat-failures.

That's exhausting!

The truth is, there's really no "failing" when you're figuring out your passion.

The closest you can get to "failing" is by continuing to live according to other people's standards without exploring your own desires. If you simply focus on what energizes you and gives you a sense of curiosity, motivation, and purpose, then you can't mess it up.

I think it's time that we all let go of our belief in career soul mates, give ourselves permission to explore our options and desires, and be open to *soul connections* in all forms.



HOW TO TRANSFORM KNOWING WHAT YOU *DON'T* WANT INTO KNOWING WHAT YOU *DO* WANT

BY KRISTEN

I hardly ever share this story because, well honestly, it's not my proudest moment. But here goes...

I quit my first full-time “adult” job after only five weeks.

I'm not a *total* jerk, so I did give two weeks notice, but that only put me there for a whopping seven weeks total. That was *not* a fun conversation with my boss, let me tell you.

I'm sure I confirmed all of my boss' worst fears about Millennials. He already suspected that we were all disloyal, selfish, and lazy employees, and unfortunately I didn't exactly prove him wrong.

But almost immediately after starting that job, **I realized I'd made a *big* mistake.**

In my impatience to get a “real” job after graduating, I said yes to the first offer I got. And on Day 1 — walking around that tiny government office, surrounded exclusively by men three times my age, sitting in subcommittee meetings about topics I can't even care enough to try to remember now — I already had an unsettled feeling in my gut that was warning me, “*Uh oh, this isn't right. You don't belong here.*”

A few weeks in, I'd just sat through my third hour-long meeting where we discussed — inconclusively, once again — whether or not to create a company LinkedIn page (seriously?? This is *LinkedIn*, you guys, not a strategy for world peace), when I checked my email to see that I had another job offer.

The company offering me this new job was about as opposite as you could possibly get from

the one I was already at. Where my current office was small, old, stuffy, and maddeningly slow-paced, this new company was large, young, casual, and fast-paced.

A total 180-degree contrast.

I figured that if I *hated* this place, then I'd probably *love* something that was the complete opposite. So I jumped at it.

YEAHHH, IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT...

I made that decision the way so many of us make decisions in our lives — **completely reactively.**

I was miserable where I was, so when something came along that was totally different, I assumed I'd be happier there.

Wrong.

Sure, I started out liking my new job significantly more than my old one, mostly because I was just so grateful to be in a different environment. But it only took a few months for me to realize that this new place still wasn't right for me. I was all-too-quickly back to that "*Uh oh*" sensation in my gut.

At that point, I honestly didn't know what to do. I'd gotten as far away as I thought I could from my miserable first job, and I was still unhappy. So what was I supposed to do now??

*The opposite of what you don't want
isn't the answer.*

While it's totally normal to want to leap out of a situation that's flat-out *not working* and into the waiting arms of its complete and utter opposite (*ahem, rebound relationships anyone?*), that's not a long-term solution.

Just because something's the opposite of what you don't like, doesn't mean it's right for you.

It's like treating the symptoms of an illness without addressing the root cause. You feel better for a little while...but ultimately, the sickness comes back again, worse than ever.

Just because something's the opposite of what you don't like, doesn't mean it's right for you.

So how do you break this cycle? How can you stop bouncing around like you're in an old-fashioned pinball game, ricocheting from one thing to its apparent opposite, over and over again?

THE FIRST STEP FOR USING WHAT YOU *DON'T* WANT TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU *DO* WANT:

When you're in a situation that's miserable, unhealthy, boring, unfulfilling, or just generally not working — before you go careening off to pursue its total opposite (like I did by immediately accepting that new job offer) — I want you to pause and ask yourself this one big question:

“What do I value that this situation is at odds with?”

For me, my first job was completely at odds with my values of *freedom, autonomy, self-expression, personal growth, 1-on-1 connection, open-mindedness, and creativity.*

I wasn't unhappy because I was working in a small office — I was unhappy because *I had to work in an office at all.*

I wasn't frustrated just by the slow-paced office — I was annoyed by the closed-mindedness and lack of creativity that caused things to move at a mind-numbing pace.

I wasn't annoyed by the lame meeting topics — I was agitated because I wasn't experiencing any personal growth or building deep connections.

The reason I felt like I didn't belong in my first job wasn't because of the more surface-level reasons that I'd thought at the time, but because of a serious values clash.

If I'd realized that at the time, it would've been obvious that my next job — no matter how different it seemed on the outside — still couldn't give me those things I craved so much. Once I got clear on those values, it was clear to me that I, personally, wouldn't be able to find them (in the quantity I wanted, at least) in most traditional jobs. So I opted out of the 9-to-5 workplace altogether and created my own thing that is *totally* aligned with my values.

HOW TO FIGURE OUT SOME OF YOUR VALUES, BASED ON WHAT YOU DON'T WANT

When something feels really awful, it's usually because it's conflicting with something you value and care about. So use that thing you dislike so much to unearth what you REALLY want.

If you hate working in isolation, then perhaps you value *connection* and *collaboration*.

If you can't stand having a rigid working schedule, you probably value *freedom* and *flexibility*.

If you're miserable because you're not being challenged enough, you likely value *creativity*, *innovation*, and *growth*.

If you're resentful that there's a cap on how much you can earn, you may value *autonomy* and *limitlessness*.

Once you're clear on these values, then you've gotten to the heart of what you *actually* want, instead of focusing on the easier-to-define, surface-level stuff. Then you can use those values as a filter for any opportunities that come your way to make sure it's really aligned with what you want.

And if you can name even a few of your core values, you're *well* on your way to making quality, intentional decisions for yourself...which means you're WAY farther ahead of the general population who's still reactively bouncing around, treating symptoms instead of finding a lasting cure for their dissatisfaction.

A close-up photograph of a hummingbird with iridescent green and blue feathers hovering over a cluster of small pink flowers. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the same flowers and green foliage. The entire image is framed by a thin, gold-colored border.

ARE YOU A HUMMINGBIRD OR A JACKHAMMER?

BY RACHEL

Have you ever met someone who's always known what they wanted to do?

They were 5 years old and *sure* they'd be a writer or a nurse or an engineer, went and did exactly that, and are *still doing it* to this day?

Probably.

And while those people didn't set out to make the rest of us feel bad...it sort of happens inadvertently, doesn't it?

Elizabeth Gilbert (the author of *Eat, Pray, Love* and *Big Magic*) calls these people "jackhammers." As in, they drill down with mega-focus on *one thing* that they're *really* passionate about and they hammer away at it forever. She's a self-admitted jackhammer herself when it comes to being a writer.

She gave a talk recently (search "Elizabeth Gilbert flight of the hummingbird") about how she mistakenly assumed that everyone was like this. Not only did she realize that she was dead wrong, but she had no idea how badly non-jackhammers often feel about themselves.

There are a *whole lot of us* who think there must be something wrong if we don't have an all-consuming passion that we're mega-focused on for our entire lives.

We feel like there's something they (the jackhammers) understand that we haven't figured out yet. And we can spend years (if not decades) feeling frustrated and hopeless about our search for an all-consuming passion...but never finding it.

There are a whole lot of us who think there must be something wrong if we don't have an all-consuming passion that we're mega-focused on for our entire lives.

But as it turns out, jackhammers are actually *really* rare. Liz concluded, and I totally agree, that *maybe* 5% of the population fits the jackhammer bill. The rest of us? We're something else entirely...and it's nothing to feel dejected about. In fact, it's arguably even *more* fascinating.

WE'RE ALL A BUNCH OF HUMMINGBIRDS

Before you get annoyed at the frilliness and girlyness of being called a "hummingbird," just chill out for a second and let me explain.

Hummingbirds move around *a lot*. They flit from place to place. They don't settle into anything for too long. Wherever they find themselves at the time, they're absorbed in that *fully*...until they move to the next thing.

But it's hard to accept a life like this, at first.

Most of us are attracted to the idea of being a jackhammer because it feels refreshingly *simple*.

Take my client Sophie, for example.

All she's wanted is to just figure out the one thing she's passionate about, so she can focus on that forever and stop having to think and worry about what she's going to do next.

And I'll admit...doing one thing, with mega-intensity forever, *would* remove most of the thought and angst we feel about figuring out "what's next."

But Sophie isn't a jackhammer. She's a hummingbird. She feels the inclination to evolve often, and she doesn't actually *want* to commit to one thing forever.

So I asked her:

*"What if it was OK to just do something you're interested in **for now** instead of **forever**?"*

That made her pause. Because she'd felt, up until now, that unless she committed to something *forever*, she was doing this whole "passion" thing *wrong*.

She admitted that she was definitely attracted to the idea of "for now" instead of "forever"... but it was scary. She had a lot of concerns:

- What if people think you're a jumbled hot mess with no sense of direction?
- What if a hummingbird's résumé doesn't look as logical as a jackhammer's and no one wants to hire you?
- What if you flit around so much that you can't even call what you're doing a *career* at all?!

Here's how I answered that.

Being a hummingbird makes you infinitely fascinating.

My grandma was a hummingbird.

This lady was *not* your typical grandma, either. She took belly-dancing classes in middle age. When she was in her 50s, she went back to school and got her Master's in Psychology. She could repair car engines. She traveled around the world solo...when she was in her 70s.

She was a badass woman. And *endlessly* interesting because of all the things she'd done and seen in her life.

I made a new hummingbird friend recently, too.

This woman is in her mid-30s, but looks a decade younger (hummingbirds age well, too, it would seem). She's one of those people you could hang out with every day and never stop learning something new about them. She's moved to a new city every other year since she graduated college. She has a degree in physics, but she's also studied philosophy at the PhD level.

She's taught college. She's worked in straight-laced corporate. She does competitive archery. And she also owns her own web development firm, with ten team members under her...and she doesn't even have a degree in web development.

Oh, and another of my favorite authors, Diana Gabaldon, is a total hummingbird.

Diana is the author of the hugely popular *Outlander* series. But she didn't even start writing those books until she was in her 40s. Before that, she got degrees in ecology and biology and zoology. She taught university, wrote computer programs for avian researchers, edited a software magazine, and wrote Disney comic strips. And then she wrote a #1 New York Times bestselling book series that then got turned into a Golden Globe nominated TV series...all because she was curious about whether she could write a novel (it turns out the answer was yes).

HAVE I CONVINCED YOU YET?

Hummingbirds are *really* cool people.

They don't just understand one thing...they understand *almost everything*. They dedicate their lives to just **following what they're curious about at the time**, and then trusting that it will take them somewhere interesting and worthwhile.

They may not have a "logical" résumé or career trajectory, but they don't really *care* because they're too busy doing what interests them. And honestly...no one else cares, either. Most people are too intrigued by hummingbirds to judge them for not being jackhammers.

Whether or not I've convinced you, I was able to convince Sophie.

Sophie is well on her way to becoming a very well-rounded hummingbird. Right now she's getting a higher degree in Philanthropy, but she's thinking about *simultaneously* becoming a financial advisor.

Why? Because she's really curious. She thinks it could be fascinating to help people through financial planning. She's done the research, and her interest is piqued.

She's made peace with the old idea that she has to do "one thing" forever. She's actually excited about just pursuing what intrigues her, for now.

And if she finds out she's wrong about her next step? I'll let her explain:

"If I'm wrong, then I'm okay with that. I'll search and find what is right. I'm strangely okay with that feeling. I was terrified of being wrong, but after our talks, I just don't see it as that big of a deal anymore. I want a LIVED life, not a planned life."

AND IF YOU ARE A JACKHAMMER...THAT'S OK, TOO

There's nothing wrong with being a jackhammer. If that's genuinely who you are (like Liz Gilbert, who's made a *great* life being a jackhammer), then keep doing *you*.

We can all be alluring and fascinating and inspiring, in our own way.

But don't fear being a hummingbird.

If you can follow your curiosity over and over again, you'll *always* feel passionate and inspired, regardless of what you're doing. And you'll probably be the most interesting person in the room, every time.



CONFESSION: I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE A #GIRLBOSS

BY RACHEL

Allow me to assure you: I love the world we live in.

As screwed up as it can be, and as much work as it clearly needs (I'm lookin' at you, American politics), I wouldn't trade being alive in the 21st century for any other time (you *could* tempt me with a time-traveling foray to ancient Rome, though #historydork).

The western world is decidedly imperfect, but it's hard to argue with equal rights and the opportunity to decide for myself what "freedom" means.

I also love how much I, and my fellow women, are benefitting from the *really loud* — and rightfully so — ongoing dialogue about equality, particularly when it comes to our pay. Feminism (which is really *not* a complicated concept) has been made normal, and at this point it's pretty damn sketchy if you aren't on board.

ARE YOU SENSING A "BUT" COMING?

I'm a coach who spends most of her time helping people — the majority of them women — figure out what their passion is and how to live it through their career.

And as a female entrepreneur, I'm in circles with a lot of other women in business. So it's safe to say that I've got a front-row seat when it comes to watching women "kill it" in their careers and actively pursue "having it all."

We're a pretty loud and proud bunch, too. And unsurprisingly, we've got a LOT of names for ourselves...in the form of hashtags, obviously. Say 'em as fast as you can:

#girlboss #ladyboss #bosslady #badassladyboss #bossbabe #businessbabe #bizbabe
#womeninbusiness #womeninbiz #womenentrepreneurs #femaleentrepreneur
#femalefounder...you get it.

It's quite rad that there are so many women making their mark on the world, and I love that we're celebrating each other's accomplishments.

BUT... (I feel like I'm telling a huge secret here)...I don't actually want to be a #girlboss, or even a #ladyboss, and certainly not a #bizbabe.

MAYBE IT'S JUST ME, BUT...

I interpret your standard #girlboss as working a *lot*. She's one of those who's killing it from 8am to 8pm. She's dedicated to her craft in an almost insatiable way. She's one of those who would Instagram something like, "Busy building my empire," (emblazoned in black calligraphy script on a white mug, filled with delicate latte art, with a perfect lipstick imprint on the ceramic) and actually *mean it*.

I get that a lot of this is my interpretation. I also get that everything — including what it means to be a "girl boss" — is what you make of it. There's no *right* way to be.

But whether or not I'm making a huge assumption...I've got to tell you, I have felt *guilty* about not being (or wanting to be) "that girl."

And if I'm capable of looking outward and comparing myself to what I see (or at least comparing myself to the *interpretation* of what I see), then I *know* other people are doing the same.

THE TRUTH IS...I DON'T WANT TO BUILD AN EMPIRE

Here's how I see it: A lot of the *rah-rah-cheerleady-uber-motivated-#girlboss* stuff has the unintended potential of making women feel like, unless you want to do something BIG and important and crucial and deeply meaningful — *and* serve others *and* be a great mom/wife/sister/daughter/friend — then you're not making the most of yourself.

And I can't get down with that. Because I don't believe that you have to do *anything* important — or build anything of significance, or be the boss of anything or anyone — to have purpose and fulfillment.

I've struggled to come to terms with this. For *years* I wondered (and still do, sometimes) what was wrong with me for not loving every minute (or more honestly, the majority of) having my own business.

Isn't this what I *wanted*? I get to work for myself, set my own schedule, make an impact on people's lives. Shouldn't I love this all the time? Eat it up? Want to do *more* and make it bigger and take over the world?

UGH, WORLD DOMINATION EXHAUSTS ME

I love the fact that I get to make an impact. But the truth is...I don't need to do it for millions of people to feel good. A few people a week is fine by me.

I'm exhausted by the prospect of building an empire where *Clarity on Fire* is a household name and I'm one of those mega-famous motivational speakers.

I don't want much of a team, because I don't want to manage a bunch of people. That's complicated, and I'm a lover of simplicity.

I don't *want* to care about really nitty-gritty technical stuff — like multi-layered marketing campaigns and a strategic calendar that you plan a year in advance — like I might have to if I was a "real" #girlboss.

*The plain truth is...I'm not in it to win it.
I'm in it to live.*

WORK HAS NEVER "DONE IT" FOR ME

I love my clients, and writing, and hosting courses...but my job is not my *only* passion or desire in life.

My real passion is life itself.

I love taking walks with my dog, reading books, and watching great shows. I like cooking and *love* eating. I relish great swaths of time spent meditating and sleeping and contemplating how I feel.

I'm probably not changing anyone's life in those moments. I could easily exchange that time for something more productive and #girlbossy, like building our email list or strategizing for a product launch...but those things don't fulfill me the way that just *living* does.

Most of the time when I'm working on the business side of Clarity on Fire, I'm "*Rachel wearing the business hat.*" But when I'm reading and cooking and contemplating life...I'm just *Rachel*. And being myself is what feels best.

IT'S OK TO RELEASE THE GUILT

It's taken me a long time to completely accept the fact that I'm not *less than* because I don't care as much as other women about crushing it, making a name for myself, and building my empire.

My definition of success has more to do with how much I'm not working than how much I am working.

And for those of you who've feared this, too — who have been afraid that, unless you're really motivated, or want to create something important, or make a huge impact, or have an unquenchable desire to work, then you're doing it wrong — I've got some permission to dole out to you.

It's OK if...

- Your passion in life is something weird and intangible and makes you no money whatsoever.
- You're not that motivated by money, in general.
- You want to be a stay-at-home-mom and stop working for now, or even altogether.
- You enjoy free time way more than working.
- You could take it or leave it when it comes to "making your mark."
- You're not that interested in creating a revolution.
- You're content to just *be*, and not *do*.
- You have no definable passion at all, besides just enjoying life.

Your worth is not measured by your career or how big of an impact you've made. You already are valuable — just because you exist — regardless of what you choose to do with your time.

Give yourself permission to do what feels good to you. Whatever lights you up, makes you sigh in relief, or makes you feel content.

DO WHAT YOU FEELS GOOD, AND EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE

Give yourself permission to do what feels good to you. Whatever lights you up, makes you sigh in relief, or makes you feel content.

If that means being the #girlbossiest lady on the block...go for it.

And if that means living a joyful life that isn't about your career...by all means, do it.

But please, don't feel guilty for wanting what you want. Any way of being that lights you up is valid and valuable.

EPILOGUE

BY RACHEL

Here's one last thought I want you to remember:

The reason you so badly want passion isn't about being happy all the time.

People want passion because it's compelling. It's enlivening and invigorating. It feels good to *care* about something.

And caring about something...well, that comes with the absolute *guarantee* of both high-highs *and* low-lows.

Caring means that you have skin in the game. It means you will be challenged, often. You'll feel attached to how things work out, and they won't always work out how you planned. You'll want it, badly, and you won't always get it. Which will, inevitably, lead to disappointment and frustration and maybe a bit of rage.

This is normal. This is what having a passion is all about.

To think that I, or Kristen, jump out of bed every day with an inner glow and a radiant smile would be hilariously inaccurate.

Some days it *sucks* to have skin in the game. Things aren't going my way. I want to lead someone to a breakthrough, and they're not seeing it. I have a million emails to respond to from people who want my insight and too little time to reply.

Passion means caring, and caring means being challenged. And being challenged means experiencing a LOT of contrast. It's a rollercoaster ride of emotion and twists and turns and the unexpected.

From here on out, it would be great if instead of saying, "*I want to find my passion,*" you said, "*I want to be invested in something. I want to care enough that I can appreciate, and maybe even love, all of it...and not just expect to be delivered happiness.*"

Learning to love and make peace with the whole process — the highs, the lows, the joy, the misery, the ease, the challenge — *that's* what it means to be fulfilled.



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