

Finding Fulfilment In Your Life And Work

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Not happy in your work, but not quite sure what would make you more content? Lisa Mitchell explores the meaning of fulfilment and examines the questions you need to ask to find it.

"Too often, we decide to follow a path that is not really our own, one that others have set for us. We forget that whichever way we go, the price is the same: in both cases, we will pass through both difficult and happy moments. But when we are living our dream, the difficulties we encounter make sense."

- Paulo Coelho

In my experience as a coach, finding fulfilment comes from four main areas: discovering your values, finding your purpose, connecting to your passions and playing to your natural strengths.

What is fulfilment?

Fulfilment is probably what we're all striving for in life. Still, it feels intangible. Ultimately, fulfilment is about living according to what's fundamentally important to you and listening to what your heart tells you really, really want to do.

It's doing something that makes you excited when you wake up in the morning, something that makes you feel like you've made a difference somehow. It's doing something that just feels right for you at a level deep inside your heart and soul.

Find your real way of life

You could be fulfilled right now, regardless of your circumstances. You can still be heading towards something that will bring you greater fulfilment. As with all the most fundamental truths in life, it's a paradox!

Fulfilment isn't a destination; it's a way of being in your life. Perhaps you're living your life waiting for something to happen in the future that will make everything right for you. Once you have it, you just know everything will slot into place. A boyfriend or girlfriend, that new car, your dream job or perfect flat? When you

finally get it, you're somehow disappointed; it hasn't filled the gap you thought it would.

Happiness and fulfilment come from *within* you, not from something external. Accept this and you are well on your way to fulfilment.

Live in tune with your true self

Fulfilment doesn't mean you are happy every minute. It is about feeling like you are on the right path for you. Just the act of discovering and knowing what you want and going for it can be very fulfilling in itself, even when the going gets tough.

So, ask yourself: Do you know what you want in your life and career? What makes you tick? What is fundamentally important to you that can guide you through the decisions on your life and career that you need to make?

What do you need to find out to get clearer about who you are and what you want? You need to understand your values, know your real purpose in your life, connect to your passions and really be playing to your strengths.

Live according to your values

When I work with clients on career change, I ask them to work on their values. Understanding values helps people re-orient themselves around what they really want not what others *think* they should.

Often, clients don't really know what is important to them, what they must have in their life at a fundamental level. They can often say very clearly what their parents, teachers and friends think they should do (sound familiar?!) but have lost sight of what it is that they actually want.

Think of values as sign posts on the way to fulfilment. How do you spot them? They're intangible themes that run through the core of who you are. Values are innate and constant within us whether or not we are choosing to live by them. They are the benchmarks by which we make good decisions and choices. Examples might be integrity, connection, making a difference, fun.

Live "on purpose"

Understanding your life purpose is another signpost on the way to finding a career you love. Ask yourself what you were put on this earth to do. If there was one overall impact that you are destined to have, what would it be? If I looked back on my life, what difference would I have wanted to have made?

Your purpose will be unique and personal and may feel a little uncomfortable at first. Initially some people are reluctant to accept what they really know is true for them because it doesn't fit with where they are now or how they see themselves. Your purpose can also feel too big or grandiose; we are not generally encouraged to believe that we can do big things in our lives. The good news is that you *can*!

Reconnect with your passions

What do you love doing in your life? What do you do where you just lose yourself in it and time flies by? What really makes your heart sing?

In my experience, people often lose sight of their passions in the day to day living of life. When I first coach a client, they can find it hard to think of anything they are passionate about and haven't even thought about this question in a long time. What about if your work could be connected to a passion? My guess is that you're reading this article because you aren't feeling fulfilled and want to be feeling passionate about your life. So, if you have a passion that you've neglected for a while, why not take a small step today to really enjoy it again?

Play to your talents

We all have natural innate talents; things we do that seem easy and obvious to us. Sometimes we find these hard to spot in ourselves simply because they come so naturally to us. I often hear people say, 'Doesn't everyone do that?' and the answer is often no.

Unfortunately, in our working lives, managers and employers often have us focus on what we need to develop in ourselves rather than on our strengths. I believe it's important to balance out those areas that don't come so naturally to us. When we're truly playing to our strengths, we start to shine and life starts to take on a flow of its own.