

HELP! WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL? HOW DO I KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO?

Passion: Why it's important:

Career coach, Ken Coleman, stated “We were all created to fill a unique role. You are needed. And you must do it. There is someone out there who needs *you* to be *you*. So, how do you make the kind of contribution to this world that you were created to make? By doing work you’re passionate about.”

What passion is:

Passions are often the things you do where you lose track of time. When you get lost in the thing, the activity, whatever it is, that’s likely your passion. You may even struggle to do that work, but to you it’s worth the struggle. Passions are the ideas and things that are on your mind regularly or even constantly.

What passion is not:

A passion isn’t generally a hobby, at least not when we’re talking career planning. You may be passionate about hockey, but you may realize that you aren’t good enough to earn a living at it. You’ll spend ONE THIRD of your life at work, so it should be something you enjoy. Passion is not your skills or talents. You don’t have to be passionate about something you’re good at doing, nor do you need to be good at something about which you are passionate. Finding the right work is connecting what you are good at doing (talent) with what you love (passion).

How do I find my passion and connect that to what I want to do for a living?

Ken Coleman says there are four basic questions you want to consider. Write down your answers. Hang on to this information and revisit it regularly.

1. **What are my talents?** Make a list of the things you’re good at doing. What do you do easily that others struggle to do? What are your best subjects in school? What have people complimented you about? What are your strongest personality traits? What skill set do you gravitate towards? Are you best with people, data, or manual labour? Skill sets usually fall into these three. When you’re part of a group project, what role do you take? What kind of experience do you already have—part time job, machinery operation on the farm, livestock work, customer service, etc.? How do you spend your free time? What do people need your help to do? Whose work motivates or inspires you? Are there people who you look up to for what they do or can do? Then take this list to honest people who won’t just agree with everything you say and say you’re good at everything. You need to see yourself as the world sees you. Many times, those around us will see passions in us that we are not aware of.
2. **Who do I most want to help? Or what problem do I most want to solve?** Be as specific as you can: underprivileged youth? students? the elderly?

3. **What problem do I most want to solve?** What problems do the people in question 2 above have? Be specific again. Maybe you want to help underprivileged youth apply for scholarships so they can go to post-secondary without a lot of debt. Maybe you want to help students learn math or how to play volleyball. Maybe you want to help the elderly gain or maintain mobility.
4. **What solution do I most want to provide?** Sometimes your passion doesn't come from a specific problem you want to solve, but from a specific solution you want to provide. In other words, you may not care what problem you're solving as long as you get to speak to an audience, publish an article, or increase sales for an organization.

The solution or end result you dream about producing is a great indicator of what you're passionate about. Here are some questions you can ask yourself to do some digging:

- What do you love to create?
- What results move you?
- What products or services excite you?

Get very specific here and note that the answers to questions 3 and 4 can sometimes feel similar and interconnected. That's okay. Look at what you've written for answers. Start looking for patterns and themes you can tie together. For example, if you want to help underprivileged youth find scholarships for college, and you've always loved public speaking, then your solution might look like hosting seminars at local high schools. If you want to help students learn math, maybe you become a teacher and coach, or maybe you write textbooks or instruction manuals. If you want to improve mobility in the elderly, maybe you want to be a physical therapist, or use science to create a specific piece of technology to help the elderly maintain mobility. Ex. I am jazzed up when I can help underprivileged high school students get scholarships. I get really excited about helping teach volleyball to young kids. It is thrilling for me to work with an elderly person to maintain mobility and their independence.

Finding your passion is not as difficult as it sounds. It all comes down to asking yourself some questions to help you notice patterns and themes in your life. These patterns and themes will usually point to people groups about whom you care deeply, problems about which you're passionate, and solutions you're capable of providing.

What is your sweet spot? This is where your greatest talent (the skills that you do best) intersects with your greatest passion, which is what you love to do the most.

Another way to look at things is to consider questions like these:

- *If all jobs paid the same amount of money and took the same amount of time and cost to get trained, what might you like to do?*
- *If you had \$10 million, and you didn't have to work at a job for the money, what would you wake up and do every day?*
- *What do your parents say you might do for an occupation?*
- *What job would you do for free, because you like it that much?*

If you need more help in figuring out or nailing down your passion, look up Ken Coleman's free **Career Clarity Guide**. It's a worksheet designed to help you define your top talents, passion, and mission so you can take bold steps towards your next big opportunity. There are many other free resources and others that have a cost on his website. Free resources and articles include a **Career Aptitude Test** resume and interview guide, how to find a mentor, helping you find your purpose at work, how to start a new job, and much more.

-Adapted from Ken Coleman "How to Find Your Passion"