

Reignite your passion

THREE STEPS TO AWAKEN ENERGY AND EXCITEMENT IN YOUR CAREER

“I can’t even remember the last time I was excited about my job,” said Keith, a coaching client with whom I was working. “I’m really just going through the motions and hoping I don’t get fired.”

Keith was well-educated, bright and articulate. He had a midlevel management position with a solid company, a beautiful family and seemingly good health — in short, he had everything. Everything, that is, except passion for what he was doing.

Somewhere along the way, Keith’s inner flame had gone out, and hiring me was his last attempt to rescue what had once been a promising career. I hoped that, together, Keith and I could find the spark that would rekindle what he had lost.

Reignite your passion by rediscovering your best moments.

I began by asking Keith to remember the five best moments in his professional life — moments where he felt successful, valued and fulfilled. Once he recalled them, we went vividly into each of these memories by describing the exact nature of the work he was doing, specific details about the environment and the people around him, and the personal satisfaction that made each memory so important.

In the process, Keith made two remarkable discoveries. First, he discovered that he actually could remember being excited about his work, despite his opening statements to me. And as he recalled each pinnacle experience, I could see a little of his old passion beginning to awaken.

Second, and even more

importantly, he discovered that these memories contained a pattern — common characteristics that he could use as a template for finding and sustaining the passion he had once known.

Reignite your passion by finding your own patterns of success.

Keith was amazed to see that in three of the five best moments of his professional life, he was speaking to an important audience on a topic where he was engaged and very knowledgeable. He also realized that the weeks of preparation prior to delivering these messages had allowed him time to work alone, rather than solely as a leader with his team — a change of pace that had invigorated him — and had provided the flexibility to work from home at least half of the time, a benefit that also had high value.

Using examples like these seen through the lens of his pinnacle moments, Keith realized that his true passion was in communicating, teaching and mentoring. Since these skills were rarely utilized in his current role, he began to understand why his passion had slowly disappeared.

While he enjoyed managing a team and was valued as a strong leader, he needed to be in a role where he was able to use his presentation skills often. He also was most engaged when he could balance the time with his team with work he could do alone as well as having some flexibility in his work schedule.

Reignite your passion by choosing the life you want.

Keith then began an extremely targeted job search. He pursued only those opportunities that met his criteria and reported that his confidence in interviewing had skyrocketed because of his ability to speak with clarity about the passion and ability he would offer. He even called once to tell me that the person with whom he was interviewing wanted to use the same process to rekindle his own passion.

In the end, Keith accepted a position as the head of a nonprofit organization focused on mentoring and developing inner-city youth. While the compensation was less than it was at his old job, he was now able to use his passion for speaking to inspire others to join this important cause. What he gave up in income, he regained many times over in the satisfaction and fulfillment of his new role.

In difficult times, it’s tempting to play it safe by going through the motions even though your passion is lost. But this is no way to build a career or a life. Excellence always brings the greatest security and the greatest reward.

Use the clarity of your best moments to help you rediscover your energy and excitement, either within or outside of your current role, and then refuse to settle for anything less. <<



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