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**The Challenge of Sustaining Your Passion**

By Jacqueline Throop-Robinson, CEO, PassionWorks! Inc.

I am fortunate to work with many people who are in PassionFlow™ much of the time. However, they often tell me that this involves work, or at least focus.

One client recently said to me, "I have become very protective of my drivers of passion. When blockers come at me..." (She then gestured with her hands, moving in a way that reminded me of Tai-Chi.) "... I work with what's there but then gently move it away. I don't want to take on anything that will depress my passion!"

We then had a discussion about how important it is to manage your day-to-day interactions to make visible your core drivers of passion and minimize the blockers that enter your path.

**5 Tips for Sustaining Your PassionFlow™ :**

**Tip #1 : Take 1 Minute.**

Never underestimate the power of a minute to help stay clear and focused. Know your drivers of meaning. We are hardwired to care, to create, and to relate. Remind yourself, daily.

Take one minute right now and answer these questions:

- What is most meaningful to me in my work?
- What relationships matter the most?
- What about my company's mission or products gives me a sense of pride?
- How do I use my knowledge, skills, and talents for good?
- Which of my tasks or projects are necessary for the organization to function well? Or, help us move forward?
- How do I add value or contribute in ways that are unique to me?
- In what little (or big) ways do I make this a better place to work?
- How do I live my personal values at work? How do I express them?

*Just reminding yourself, will uplift you!* It grounds you and allows you to keep a healthy perspective. It allows you not to sweat the small stuff but to be poised to leverage opportunities to support what matters most to you.

**Tip #2: Notice What's Working.**

It's so easy to criticize others or the company. We can always find something that's wrong with someone or something. Nothing's perfect.

**Your Colleagues:**

Being irritated or annoyed by others isn't good for our own passion though so flip it! We all have our idiosyncrasies. We all have things to work on. So force yourself to notice what the other person also does well. Or, remind yourself of their strengths and positive traits. It helps you put what's irritating you into a more balanced view. It diminishes the irritation (Notice I didn't say takes it away!), sets a better foundation for future interactions; and, most importantly, keeps you out of serious griping and so automatically supports your health.

**The Company:**

Focusing on how the company's screwed something up will also drag you down. The company, because it's people, will make mistakes: They won't handle an issue well. They will make bad decisions. They will have stupid policies. Also true is that many things are working well and noticing these is equally, if not more, important.

Appreciating what is working and what's "right" will go a long way to supporting your passion. Taking the good stuff for-granted is easy. Noticing what's wrong is easy. Passionate people also train themselves to appreciate what's working and what's right with the world. Don't misunderstand ... passionate people are usually very realistic. But, realistic means seeing all what's there, not just the stuff that frustrates you. Seeing *all of reality* not just the stuff that bugs you!

**Tip #3: Persist.**

Persistence doesn't get talked about very much. But, we have found it to be a core driver of action and progress, which we all need to feel passionate. Refusing to give up or let go is sometimes necessary to sustaining our passion at work. However, this doesn't have to mean we become a pain for others! Being persistent can take on many forms. For example:

- Find a new way, a different path, to the same end. Be creative. Seek alternatives.
- Discipline yourself to do the grunt work so you can see the great result.
- Advocate for what you think is important. Talk to lots of people at various times. Spread the word! Trust that the right person will come along to support you.

Persistence means that you're willing to invest time and effort into something you believe in or care about. It means accepting that sometimes things don't come easily and are not always fun but are, at the end of the day, worth it!

Persistence means you believe in your ability to succeed...ultimately. The more often you persist and demonstrate your capabilities, the more your confidence and self-esteem will grow. You will begin to create a virtuous cycle which will hold your passion fast, even in tough times.

**Tip #4: Take Initiative.**

Don't wait for the perfect opportunity to support what's meaningful. First of all, keep your drivers top of mind. They ground you in what matters most. With these drivers at the forefront, look to create new initiatives or take new actions to directly support them:

- Propose ideas for a new programme or product feature.
- Suggest a way to improve your service.
- Offer to improve a process that will help everyone work with greater impact.
- Pay attention to people: Take a colleague to lunch or share a coffee break. Take time to check-in. Share good news.
- Learn something new. Challenge yourself.
- Create community: start a running team or a photography club at work. (Or any other extracurricular activity.)

We can't sustain our passion at work by doing the same-old, same-old! We need to keep exploring ways to keep our drivers engaged and present. Passion doesn't thrive where there is complacency and passivity. To sustain passion means to stay curious, to play, to involve our hearts and minds and to challenge ourselves.

**Tip #5: Pull back.**

This may sound like a contradiction of Tip #4. Well, there is a fine balance. It's also easy to overdo it! We can start to care too much and do too much. A key to sustaining passion at work is to ensure we have enough time to engage in the work and activities that matter most to us. Yes, we need a challenge, but too much challenge creates anxiety and can throw off our work-life balance.

It's key to know where to invest time and effort and when to say no or when "enough is good enough." We can't keep adding to our "to do" list. We can't keep adding on more and more projects. Our energy has its limits. What we can do, is recognize what work or activities truly add value and ensure we protect them. It's easy to say yes to everything; it's much harder to know when and how to say no. In other words, it's as important to know what to stop doing as it is to know what to start doing. We need to consciously choose both.

**How to Turn Obsession into Passion and Perform Better!**

By Dave Jones  
Author and PassionWorks! co-founder  
Ottawa, Canada

Steve is the Sales Manager for a mid-sized North American computer reseller. Every year, his targets increase. He must generate more revenue, more profit. At the same time, the market gets more challenging: computer prices fall and profit margins per sale shrink.

Life in the industry used to be good – high revenue per sales, loads of margin and enough profit for everyone. As good as those five years were, the last five have been the opposite.

Despite the doom and gloom, Steve has always been an award winning sales professional. He's made good money, built solid industry relationships and always found a way to help clients be more successful. Over the last five years, this success has come at a cost. His personal relationships have suffered because he worked longer hours than he should have and didn't have energy when he wasn't working. His physical health suffered because he just didn't have the time to work out and cook.

But that wasn't what brought Steve to us. He called us because his team started to suffer. Targets were being missed. Morale was low and hope was scarce. People were starting to wonder about their future with the company, the company's future and the outlook for the whole industry. People seemed cranky, scared and desperate. Steve knew that working harder wasn't the answer to the problem they faced. He had an idea that passion just might be.

We started out by helping Steve to assess his own passion level at work. He completed the PassionWorks Individual Diagnostic Tool and had two coaching conversations with us. He realized that he had been dealing with challenges at work by becoming obsessive in the way he pursued client opportunities. He would chase every sale regardless of the pain involved to himself or his team. Over time this had caused him to take more and more responsibility away from his direct reports.

Steve made a commitment to replace Obsessive behaviours with Passionate ones. Instead of requiring perfect performance from followers, he sought inspired performance instead. Instead of chasing every lead, the team decided which ones were worth chasing given the progress potential of the opportunity and said no to the ones that frustrated everyone and added little profit. Instead of creating the team sales strategy himself, Steve asked team members to create the strategy together and take responsibility for putting it into practice. Finally Steve created a Progress Wall. Every Friday the team celebrates everything that feels like progress - not just the sales numbers. The following Monday they plan what progress they are going to make that week on anything that really matters.

With these actions Steve injected Passion back into his work and the work of his team. His followers feel more in control of their work and more hopeful that the strategy they created will solve the challenges they face together. His followers are more nimble in the way they work because they've been released from the fear of failure. By celebrating together, they've put the fun and energy back in their work. People go home on time more often than not, having accomplished the things that really matter. The economy is still bad, the industry is still in trouble, but people don't let it get to them anymore. Hope is up and sales are too. Steve's team might just make their target after all. Steve's personal life is on the mend as well, his health is better and his relationships are more positive than they have been in years!

**Passion Quotes :**

" Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least".  
– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Philosopher

"As long as we are persistence in our pursuit of our deepest destiny, we will continue to grow. We cannot choose the day or time when we will fully bloom. It happens in its own time."

– Denis Waitley, Speaker

"Nothing in this world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful people with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated failures. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

– Calvin Coolidge, 30th President of the United States

"Success seems to be connected with action. Successful people keep moving. They make mistakes, but they don't quit."

– Conrad Hilton, Hilton Hotels

**Leader Reflections :**

"Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action."

– Peter F. Drucker, Management Consultant

"Most of us spend too much time on what is urgent and not enough time on what is important."

– Stephen R. Covey, 7 Habits Author

" Reflect upon your present blessings -- of which every man has many -- not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some."

– Charles Dickens, Writer