

The Power of Passion

Why are some people successful while others struggle their whole life to get recognition? Is there anything special that they have been gifted with? Is it because they work harder than the rest of us? Maybe, but one thing is certain: successful people love what they do, have passion for their field of work, and possess a very strong desire to succeed. It's a matter of attitude and commitment that creates a powerful combination. Passionate people stand out in the crowd. They are inherently optimistic and use their positive energy to get things done; they know what they want to be and where they want to go and are not easily deterred by the obstacles that life throws at them.

What do Michael Jordan, Luciano Pavarotti, Tiger Woods, and many other successful people have in common? Have you ever wondered how they got to be best in what they do or did? Their superior skills alone would not have taken them to the top; it's the days, months, and years they spent training hard, combined with their innate skills, that propelled them to the top. *There is no payoff without hard work* and being able to sustain the demands of this regime is a trait demonstrated by passionate people. Research has shown (Vallerand et al. 2003) that passion represents the energy underlying such persistent involvement and that high performance is achieved through several years in highly structured practice aimed at improving skill and skill refinement.

But what about the rest of us? The millions of office workers, managers, teachers, and other professionals who do not work in such glorified fields? In a world where simply meeting expectations is considered good performance then being passionate provides everyone the opportunity to stand out. It is what makes people transition from ordinary to *extraordinary*. I propose a simple equation: **CQ + PQ > IQ**. The *Curiosity Quotient* plus the *Passion Quotient* is greater than the *Intelligence Quotient* by itself. Reality is you don't have to be the brightest employee in the company for the boss to notice you. Your work will eventually stand out if you are committed to your job and you are not afraid of taking action. Your passion for what you do will help you fight not only the boredom of doing repetitive tasks but will keep the mediocrity of "*we are here to meet expectations*" at bay.

Michelangelo and Picasso did not create their masterpieces by mechanically adding layers and layers of paint on canvas, simply following the rules of proportion and colors. If they had done that they would have been considered good painters, or in other words, they would have met expectations. Every piece of their paintings is an expression of their feelings, of their love for art and beauty, and of the years they spent perfecting their skills. Their passion comes to life whenever we look at their work; that's why we admire them years and years after their creation.

Most people assume that high achievements are almost exclusively the result of remarkable natural talent. *It is not.* Passion does not influence performance directly but it sets things in motion by providing people with the energy and goals to keep on going when the going gets tough, to practice, to learn new things, to fall and get up again. If your job does not make you feel passionate about it don't go looking for someone to blame. *It's you* who make your experience of the job come alive by infusing it with your passion. *It is your own passion for your work (and for life!) that enables you to succeed.*