

The World Needs Your Passion

We hear a lot of wake-up calls about our planet and its future. Climate change, peak oil. We know there is an urgency about the situation and that we are being called upon to act now.

And yet when we look at HOW we're being called upon to act, we can see that the messages so often relate to us as consumers. Individuals who have a duty to make a difference in the privacy of our own individual lives. Turn our lights off, stop flying, don't use plastic bags. These activities are, of course, useful. And yet, all the while that 'consumer' is our primary identity, we are trying to solve our world's crisis with the same level of thinking that created the problems in the first place.

Maybe there is somewhere else to look, and another way to look, and maybe it has something to do with what our true 'duty' is.

We have long associated doing our duty with sacrifice. We have contorted ourselves into jobs which don't suit us and which don't suit humanity or our planet. Meanwhile, our passions have become hobbies – something we do in our spare time, just for us. Following our hearts, responding to our passion's call, have been sneered at as luxuries that only some of us can afford.

So here's another perspective... Our duty is to leave the job we don't enjoy, the lifestyle that doesn't fulfil us, and follow our passion. When we look at how interdependent we humans truly are, we can suddenly see that staying in that unfulfilling job is a selfish act. We can see how not following our passion, not doing what we feel called to do, is selfish. Our duty, in actual fact, is to sacrifice the drudgery, the complaining, the settling and the plodding, and devote ourselves to discovering and acting upon our deepest desire to contribute.

Yes, there have been compelling wake-up calls. Yet as far as I know, no-one has come knocking on your door as you watch TV, thankful for having survived another monotonous day, and looked at you in amazement, shouting: "Excuse me!? What are you doing?? We need you!" They haven't engaged the most magnificent version of you, they haven't called you to step up and be all that you can be and offer that to the world.

Consider these words that knock. That wake-up call you have secretly yearned for – that one which says – you are needed. You are so, so needed. Yes, you are being asked to reduce your carbon footprint. This is vitally important. But you are also being asked to increase your contribution footprint. The kind of footprint your heart is calling for you to leave.

The big lie has been that you don't really matter. We have created a society which has made it so easy to forget that we are needed. Cheap oil has created the foundation for an industrialised nation which has positioned us as consumers instead of contributors. Cheap oil as our primary resource has distracted us from the realisation that we are all precious resources. We have deemed it acceptable to waste our potential, just as we have decided it was okay to squander the planet's natural resources. The truth is: you are one of our planet's natural resources. You are a vital source of energy. You are also a finite resource. One day, you too will run out. We only have a brief moment in history in which to fully experience your unique gifts. Let us use you efficiently while you're still here.

As our society transitions from high-carbon to low-carbon, as humans transition from seeing ourselves as separate to recognising that we are interdependent, I invite you to find your



place within that transition. Hear this as a call of gentle urgency. Not a panic that will blind you and trip you up. Not gentle that lets you disappear quietly back to 'business as usual'. Gently urgent in an "I'm holding you, let's do this, there is no time to lose" way.

"Let's do this" means asking yourself these questions: What are you truly passionate about? When do you feel most alive? What is your unique contribution to our society – that thing that only you can do in exactly the way you do it?

Among us, there are people who can turn old plastics into jewellery, teach children to cook, inspire an MP, design sustainable homes, chair community meetings, give healing massages, forage for wild food, create powerful film documentaries, write songs and make clothes. When we hold back our contribution, our community suffers. We deprive our community, just as we deprive ourselves of the pleasure of offering our gift.

Let's not make up that one gift is more needed than another, someone's talent more 'eco' than someone else's. If we do that, we fall into the same trap of creating hierarchies between species and between people that, again, has caused our problems in the first place. It is not just the obvious environmentally useful skills, such as permaculture, that are

needed in the transition years. We need people who can tell jokes, organise offices, care for children, counsel relationships. People who know how to clean buildings, paint, spread the word, design websites, campaign for justice. There is such truth in that beautiful quote by Howard Thurman: "Do not ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive. The world needs more people who have come alive."

Start right now. Do not wait to find your life's purpose or 'get it right'. Start right now to see yourself as a contributor, not a consumer. If you love writing, put fingers to keyboard or pen to paper. If you love gardening, ask your neighbour if they'd like to learn some new skills. If you work with kids, read them a story about how interconnected all of nature is.

Whether your passion is x or y, j or g, just do it. Do it, do it, and commit to doing it forever. Know that your passion is not just about you, it's about all of us. There really is no more time to waste you.

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