

# Did You Know?

## Finding Your Passion

Both men and women are searching. It hits particularly strong at mid-life...those years in the later 30's and into the 40's. We feel dissatisfactions, stirrings, yearnings...inner movements pushing up inside us. We want something else, something more. We don't necessarily want to keep doing what we've been doing. Nor do we want to go back to what we did before.

I talk with so many parents, mothers in particular, who have taken a time-out from their careers to raise young children (or who are working part-time) but find themselves wrestling with not wanting to go back to "the way it was before." They want something different. They're just not sure what that is! Often, they feel alone and confused by these inner stirrings. They tell themselves they should know what it is they want, but they aren't quite sure. They are standing on the edge of self-discovery...but they don't know how to dive in.

As a therapist, I have had the unique opportunity of accompanying many women and men as they take the journey to "find their passion." I have watched so many personal stories unfold, watched so many lives take shape in untold ways. I have learned that the more we follow what excites and moves us, the more we are led to what our gifts are. This leads us to doing what is most deeply satisfying. Sometimes this leads to new employment, sometimes to an avocation (hobby) or service that evolves into more.

It doesn't happen all at once. It happens slowly, one step at a time. But it starts with each person following their own personal "thread" towards what they truly feel passionate about. I have seen this happen so often that I have come to trust this process completely. I have been witness to life-changing stories, from new careers being started, to small businesses being created from a dormant passion, to leaving one profession and going back to school, to piggy-backing two career interests into one. What is the common refrain, at the end of it all? "I'm finally doing what I love."

How do you find your passion when you don't have the slightest clue about where to start? How do you discover what excites you, what stimulates you, what drives you nuts? Cheryl Richardson is a life coach and author of *Take Time for Yourself* and *Life Makeovers*. She has given a live lecture (on audiotape) called "*Finding Your Passion*." She offers many inspirational ideas and some great questions to help you get started. Intrigued? You may want to pick up one of her books, tapes, or visit her website. It's well worth it!

### Pay Attention to These Moments

Don't Let Them Pass You By!

#### STOP & NOTICE:

- What gives you chills...
- When you feel moved by something...
- When you experience something that ignites your imagination...
- When something suddenly makes your furious or arouses your sense of injustice...

#### These are "graced" moments.

Ask yourself, "What was it that just happened?" "What made me feel this way?" "Why am I moved or excited?" "What can I take from this experience?"

## QUESTIONS to ask yourself...

- 1.) If you could only have one section in a bookstore that you could visit, and you could never visit it again, which section would it be?

- 2.) When you pick up a newspaper or magazine, what kind of stories are you drawn to first? Not the section, but the stories. What headlines do you go to? What draws your attention?
- 3.) What catalogs do you have a really hard time letting go of? What do you hold on to? How come? What is it in the catalogs that you feel the most attracted to? What do you see in there that moves you?
- 4.) Name the first 3 books that come to mind that strike you as your favorite books. Don't think too hard. Name the first ones that come to you.
- 5.) Name your 3 favorite movies. Again, the first that come to mind—old, new, it doesn't matter.
- 6.) Who do you envy? Who in your life do you feel jealous of? And why? (Don't use this to beat yourself up. Use this information to discover answers for yourself. Ask yourself, "What is it that they have that I really want and what do I need to do to start pursuing it?" This then becomes a gift.)
- 7.) Whose life would you love to have--just for 30 days? This can be anybody—famous or not, someone you know or don't know.
- 8.) If you were allowed to make one powerful, positive change in the world, large or small, what would it be?
- 9.) What interests, hobbies, or careers would you like to see your kids go into?
- 10.) Recall the last time that you felt strongly something about something. What was it?
- 11.) What kinds of personal challenges have you come up against? (Sometimes, transformative experiences later become pursuits of passion.)
- 12.) Who are the people in your life that are passionate? Who are the people you are drawn to? Who are people that are engaged in their passion? (Seek them out. Do an informational interview and ask: What was your path of development? What is it that drove you to do what you are doing? What doors opened for you?)

Here are some more questions to guide you...

- What are the things that you are visually drawn to? What do you stop to look at? What visual images move you? (Ex: people, houses, mountains, architecture, water, flowers, animals, light, etc.?)
- What about food? What do you love? Is it the taste? Texture? Presentation?
- Which newspapers do you read?
- What about magazines? Cut out the pictures of things that draw your attention and move you. Put them up and live with them. What do they tell you?
- What music do you love? What music in movies stirs you? What music did you love as a child? Is it the lyrics? The mood? The sound? What themes do you notice?
- What about theater? What do you enjoy? Look for clues. The set? Mood? Theme?

#### Mid-Life Resources

*Take Time for Yourself*  
by Cheryl Richardson

*Life Makeovers*  
by Cheryl Richardson

*Finding Your Passion* (audiotape)  
by Cheryl Richardson

*Midlife Crisis at 30*  
by Lia Macko

*The 10 Smartest Decisions A Woman Can Make Before 40*  
by Tina Tessina

#### 🌀 NOW FIND THE COMMON CLUES! 🌀

Go back and notice the themes, patterns, and common interests in your answers. Circle them. Pay attention to your interests that go back many years and keep reappearing. These patterns point you toward your passion, towards the person you were meant to be.

Passion is not an external event, but an internal experience. When you discover what stirs you, you can start taking steps...facing fears, brainstorming obstacles...and discovering paths to new endeavors. Amazingly, when we take steps to follow our passion, the universe opens doors of opportunity!

I hope this gives you the courage to take the first step.

**HAPPY SUMMER!!**

