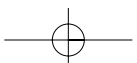
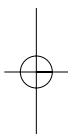
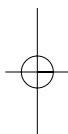

SECTION ONE

Find Your Passion

Wherever you are right now in your life, there lives within you an urge to go deeper. To be useful. To be alive. When you resist that urge, you kill any chance of living a life of purpose.



LIVING ON PURPOSE

I love asking people big life questions. It's a hobby of mine. It doesn't always advance my friendships or win me new ones, but it can be wonderfully challenging nonetheless . . . for both the asker and the askee.

Here's my favorite question: "Tell me the deepest desire of your heart." You want to see someone frozen in his or her tracks? Just ask that question. And while you're at it, ask yourself. It is my opinion that very few of us find that deep desire within us. So each day we pursue *happiness* instead of desire—what our HEART desires. If someone

asks you to state the deepest desire of your heart and you don't have an answer, there's a good chance you're living your life merely as a *reaction* to what happens to you. You know, stimulus-response. Rats do that. Ring bell. Get cheese.

The successful people I have interviewed and met in my travels all share one important distinction: They *know* what they

FIND YOUR PASSION

desire. They are sure of it. They live it intentionally. They know what makes them come alive, and therefore they know where their compass points. Sadly, it took me years to accept my heart's deepest desire. Notice I said *accept*. We are all born with our own personal desire but a great many of us spend our lives denying that desire and instead go with what the world would have us do. Or maybe we just eventually give up and distract (or drown)

DID YOU KNOW *that the number of cars on the planet is increasing three times faster than the population growth?*

ourselves in video games, text messaging, shopping, food, alcohol, or some other self-medicating habit.

So, what is your deepest desire? It's a question first posed to me by John Eldredge in his book, *Wild at Heart*. What is that one thing, when you are doing it, that causes you to lose track of time? What do you do that gives you great pleasure and a sense of purpose without regard to monetary reward? If you won the lottery—or if you only had one year to live, what would you do?

Before you answer, let me hit you with a quote from author Harold Thurman that I often have playing in my head: "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what it is that makes you come alive, and then go do that. Because what the world needs are men and women who have come alive."

That's deep. It begs the question, why don't we do what makes us come alive? How have we missed the deepest desire of our hearts?

LIVING ON PURPOSE

First, let me say it's not entirely our fault. It's a big world out there, and that world is always trying to conform us to it. We've heard it a thousand times, "Be in the world, but not of it." But it's hard to live in it without becoming part of it. Reality shows, magazines, and Internet sites bombard us with the idea that celebrity is the highest good. Kids get the message that a Mercedes-Benz is the symbol of a life well lived, that earthly pleasure is the best happiness we can hope for in life. The world—money, parents, friends, fame—can easily cloud the vision of what God originally planted in our hearts.

When we're young it's especially hard because our parents and relatives couldn't help but get involved in helping us select a career. We ask ourselves what the world needs. Or maybe we don't even ask anything that deep. Maybe we ask, "What will make my parents proud and happy?" or "What will get me lots of money and fame and a Mercedes?" In any case, some were talked out of choosing what makes us come alive. But here's the truth: Our deepest desire will eventually seek its rightful place in our life. Like a bottle of cola forgotten in the freezer, like a ticking time bomb, there will be an explosion. It's only a matter of time.

If you had seen me as a grade school child you would have

RANDOM INTELLIGENCE:

If you want to reduce the amount of time you spend watching TV, switch it off during meal times.

Watching the tube while eating can add an extra 70 minutes to your viewing time.

FIND YOUR PASSION

seen a boy keen on defining his life with music and live performance. I played in the high school band and orchestra. I stayed up late nights charting chords off of Jimi Hendrix records. I was in two garage bands. I snuck into clubs to see live bands. I built Heathkit amateur electronic kits and used them to broadcast into my parents' car radios.

"There couldn't be a society of people who didn't dream. They'd be dead in two weeks."

—WILLIAM BURROUGHS, AUTHOR

But my mom and dad were convinced, like many baby boomer parents, that music was not a respectable, viable vocation. So they *strongly encouraged* me to apply to college to study textile chemistry, my father's occupation. My dad had carved out a wonderful living working for Hanes, and I had worked during the summer months in the Hanes dye mill. So joining Hanes seemed like the logical, sensible choice. Sound familiar?

I enrolled in North Carolina State and attended classes on surface-active agents, statistics, and weave factors. I was a C-minus student. At night I would sneak into the music building's piano practice rooms, and for hours I played songs by *Yes* and *Emerson Lake and Palmer*. Eyes closed, I lost myself in what had always been my deepest desire.

In January of my sophomore year, my friend and soccer

LIVING ON PURPOSE

teammate, Steve Thomas, suggested that I might enjoy a brand-new elective course at the university, Radio-Television 101. From the first day in class, I was a whirling dervish of creativity . . . writing copy, shooting camera, editing videotape, and then scoring it all with a beat-up Moog synthesizer. On weekends I took a hosting shift at the campus radio station, WKNC-FM. I was hooked. I didn't even tell my parents I had signed up for that first class, by the way. When they finally found out that I had switched my major, it got pretty ugly.

The short version of the rest of this story? I embarked on a professional career in music and television that led me through local TV news, network

sports, and a music recording and scoring career. I ended up hosting *Entertainment Tonight*, and

today I'm a syndicated radio host and touring musician. That's a pretty varied resume. As you may have noticed, it doesn't include any mention of textiles.

I was fortunate. I don't know what would have happened, if Steve hadn't suggested the TV and radio course. I'm grateful he did.

So, what is the deepest desire of your heart? What is it that makes YOU come fully alive? Ask yourself that question—and when you have the answer . . . go do that . . . because what the world needs is YOU, FULLY ALIVE.

. . . WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS
IS YOU, FULLY ALIVE.

FIND YOUR PASSION

Big Life Question: Do my parents still know best?

You need to figure out what's right for you despite what your parents think. Maybe they don't think you should take a career break or move to another state to be with your girlfriend, but if you feel strongly about what you're doing—and you've looked at the consequences—make your own decisions. My parents insisted I would starve to death as a musician. I took their advice and took chemistry courses in college. I wasted valuable time because my parents (and they were great parents) didn't really understand how serious I was about a career in music, radio, and television.

LIVING ON PURPOSE

Big Life Question: Do I know what my passions are?

If your answer to this Big Life Question is “No,” or “I’m not sure,” then ask yourself four more questions:

1. What makes me feel most energized and excited?
2. What do I want to be known as?
3. What could I talk about nonstop?
4. Which activities do I get so caught up in that time just flies?

PASSION AND ACTION

In order to become consistently passionate about your life you must do more than merely “dream” your passion. This world is full of people who have dreams of playing Carnegie Hall, of running the marathon, of owning their own business. The difference between the people who make it across the finish line and everyone else is one simple thing: An action plan.

“Courage is being scared to death—but saddling up anyway.”

—JOHN WAYNE

You can pray all you want. You can dream day and night. But if you don’t come up with a plan, you’re dead in the water. I remember how excited I was when I decided to record my first album. I worked for hours on all the songs and hired musicians to fill out the tracks. I even found a graphic artist to create a compelling piece of cover art. The work. *Music from the Tour de*

PASSION AND ACTION

France, was a soundtrack I composed for CBS-TV.

I STILL HAVE THE REJECTION
LETTERS ON MY WALL.

And I had what I thought was a brilliant plan. I would finish the project, then take it to a record company to get signed as a recording artist. Then the records would go into stores and I would sell thousands. Since 20 million people saw me every night co-hosting *Entertainment Tonight*, the record companies would see a wonderful opportunity for free promotion and staggering record sales.

I still have the rejection letters on my wall. Warner Brothers. Arista (Clive Davis himself). Columbia. They all said it different ways, but they all said the same thing: "Sorry, not interested." What went wrong? Getting excited about an idea is not much of a plan. I was a victim of my own feelings of entitlement. Plus my plan was based on a flawed formula: CD recording + John Tesh = cover of *Rolling Stone*. Not much "action" in the plan.

I hope this list of my mistakes might save you some time and pain. But the story doesn't end there. I went to David Michaels, the producer of the Tour de France and a believer in the music, and asked for his advice. Instead of advice he began to ask me some tough questions.

David: Why did you create this album?

Me: Because I am passionate about this race and the music.

David: Who could you see wanting to own this soundtrack?

FIND YOUR PASSION

Me: Viewers of the Tour de France coverage, people who ride bikes, and people who like intense workout music in their Walkman.

David: Where are these people?

Me: At home watching the tour, in bike stores, reading cycling magazines, and perhaps in health clubs.

Within an hour we had come up with a plan that included everything except being signed to a record company or having my soundtrack in record stores.

This action plan included direct response (infomercial) TV advertising on the CBS race coverage (I put it on my credit card); placement in bike stores (on consignment), videotapes of bike racing footage set to my music sent to key stores, revenue-sharing deals with two bike

magazines in return for interviewing me, and hundreds of personal visits by yours truly to local bike races with just a card table, albums, and flyers.

There was no MTV video, no radio play, and no Grammy nomination. This was a true action plan: it included that hand-to-hand combat. There

was nothing very glamorous here.

For the next three months I fulfilled requests for ten thou-

DID YOU KNOW *that if you yelled for eight years, seven months and six days, you would have produced enough sound energy to heat one cup of coffee? You would probably be hoarse too.*

PASSION AND ACTION

sand CDs and cassettes out of my Los Angeles apartment and collected \$122,000 in net profits. Through the process, I harvested the names and addresses of about six thousand fans who were ready for album number two when it came out. It took hard work, risk, and action.

In my office is a framed poster of that first Tour de France cover.

DREAM + PASSION + ACTION

PLAN = SUCCESS.

Next to it are posters of CDs and DVDs that became Public Television specials and gold albums that were all created and marketed with that same basic plan: Dream + Passion + Action Plan = SUCCESS.

Now it's up to you. I have no business degree. I have no marketing background . . . just the belief that out there somewhere are people who will catch the joy that I have for my music or our radio show or this book. And I have finally come to the end of ego and realized: I have to actually put my own shoe leather to the ground and do the work.

"I dream, therefore I exist."

—J. AUGUST STRINDBERG, DRAMATIST

I've met enough people at my concerts and read enough letters and e-mails to know that there are millions of you out there right now who are sitting on a dream. Perhaps you've *already* created something incredible. I know . . . it's a unique

FIND YOUR PASSION

idea for a restaurant chain, a new way to bring music into nursing homes, a hip-hop dance troupe that will tour the world, a new small group at your church that will feed the homeless, an extra four hours in your day to homeschool your children, a qualifying time for the Boston Marathon or a record night of fund-raising at your kid's school.

Stop sitting on it. It ain't gonna hatch on its own.

And let me leave you with a secret. Whatever you are about to do, whatever action you will next take to realize your dream, it's been done before. Maybe not exactly what *you're* about to do, but close. Do your research. Ask experienced people what they would do. Get passionate . . . and then TAKE ACTION.

PASSION AND ACTION

Big Life Question: Do I really need to be richer?

According to the Consumer Credit Counseling Service, you don't need to win the lottery to change your financial situation. They recommend putting away \$80 bucks a week for five years. You'll have a nest egg of \$20,000 when you're done. And to motivate you to save, have a goal such as buying a new car, or putting a down payment on a home.