

The
Fulfilling Career
Podcast *with* DR. TEGA EDWIN

Episode #018: Trying to Find Your Passion is Derailing Your Career

Show Notes: <https://hercareerdoctor.com/trying-to-find-your-passion-is-derailing-your-career/>

(00:00):

A common phrase people either tell themselves or hear often from others when they're trying to transition careers is find your passion. But this phrase is very problematic because it's not actually possible to find your passion. So in today's episode, I share with you how trying to find your passion is holding you back a bit of my own journey to passion and what to do instead of trying to find your passion. Welcome to the fulfilling career podcast, a show for the professional woman, who's ready to work in an aligned career that allows her to thrive in her zone of genius, live on purpose and get paid a value aligned salary. I share quick insights and strategies to help you reach your career goals. Whether you're trying to find your fulfilling career, grow your current career or successfully job search. I'm your host, Dr. Tega Edwin, a career counselor and coach who was able to turn my own frustration from being in an unfulfilling career into the framework. I now used to help other women find their fulfilling career and job search with confidence. Let's dive in.

(01:08):

So, like I said today, we're going to be talking about how trying to find your passion is likely derailing your career. And <laugh> ironically, this is a topic that I am passionate about because I just think that people have at least in the workspace, people have bastardized that word passion. And so I want us to take a moment and just break it down and think through what it means to have a passion where it comes from and how it impacts your career. So people love to say, find your passion. Okay? People love to tell you to find your passion when you're looking for work that is fulfilling. Just, just do work that you love and you'll never work a day in your life. These are common saying that. I'm pretty sure cause define your passion one. I don't think I've ever said it, but like the do work you love, and you'll never work a day in your life.

(02:03):

I might have said that at some point in my lifetime. But I've learned better. We learn and we grow. But I think that oftentimes when people, hi Lisa, hi, Rhonda. I think that oftentimes when people say, find your passion they don't really know what that means. We, we say those words without actually knowing what it means to have a passion or even worse. I'll have women come

to work with me and they'll say, I'm just trying to find my purpose. I don't know what my passion is. And in that statement, I can hear that they are conflating passion and purpose. So I'm curious for those of you who are here live, have you ever said I need, I don't know what my purpose is. I'm just trying to find my passion as it relates to your career. If you have just put a one in the chat or you can just say yes or no.

(02:53):

Have you ever found yourself thinking I'm trying to figure out, I just wanna figure out what my passion is and I don't know what my purpose is and if I can find my passion, then I'll know what kind of work I enjoy. If I could just figure out what my purpose is, then I'll know what kind of careers I will find fulfilling. Have you ever found yourself sane? Let that okay. I see. Lisa says yes. Okay. See. Yes. In the chat. I see a one. So, some of you are resonating with that statement. Okay. So, here's the, here's the thing, here's my gripe with that. Passion and purpose are two different things. And more often than not, when, when you say I trying to find my purpose, I need to figure out what my passion is. You're conflating passion and purpose. So let's start by taking a step back and really looking at those words and what they mean.

(03:40):

So, what I want us to do today is we'll talk through passion and purpose, how they're different. Then I'll talk a bit more about passion specifically what it is, where it comes from and how you can't just find it. Air quotes, FIND. You don't just find your passion. And then we'll wrap up by talking about how to know when you do have a passion and what's next for you in your career. Okay. So, purpose is, and I'm looking at my notes here. Purpose is the reason something was created. If you go in the dictionary and you look up the word purpose, you'll see something along the lines of the reason for which something was created, why something was made. Now, for me as someone who's Christian, I believe that I was created for one purpose and one purpose only to glorify God, that's my, that's my purpose.

(04:26):

Right? So again, if purpose is the reason something was created, I was created to glorify God. And I believe that for most of us or for all of us, depending on your faith. Now, your career is a way through which you can live out your purpose. So, if I was created, if my purpose on this earth is to glorify God, glorifying him can look different for different people. For some, we glorify him in the way that we serve other people for some it's in the way that we create things for some it's in the way that we show up in the world. Right? So, your career is an avenue for you to live out your purpose. The reason for which you were created now, that is different from your passion, because passion is defined as having an intense desire or enthusiasm for something. Passion is having an intense desire or enthusiasm for something.

(05:24):

So, for you to have an intense desire for something, you have to know what the thing is. Does that make sense? Put a one in the chat. If you agree, if that makes sense, like you can't have an intense desire for something that you don't know. Okay. Or drop some hearts. If that's, if, if, if

you're tracking with me drop some hearts, I wanna know that, make sure that this is making sense. So if passion is having an intense desire for something, what is that thing that you have an intense desire for? Where does that come from? How do we figure out this thing that you have an intense desire for? Okay. And ultimately, and I'll talk about this some more, the thing that you have an intense desire for it's your interests. Okay. That's what that is. And so if that being said, if it's your interest, here's what passion is not, passion is not your skills.

(06:20):

It's not your talents. It's not your natural strengths. Those are entirely different things. And sometimes in the past, I've heard people say, figure out your passion by just looking at your strengths and looking at what you're good at. The things that you're good at will help you figure out what your passion is. Okay. breaking news, just because you're good at something doesn't mean you enjoy it. And by its very definition, if you have an intense interest in something, your passion, it's things that you enjoy. So, if you don't always enjoy what you're good at, you can't then say that what you're good at is always going to be your passion. Let me break that down and break that down a little bit. A lot of times we assume that because we're good at something because it comes naturally to us. Then that means we enjoy it.

(07:02):

But I know multiple people who have become good at something just by nature of time. If you do anything long enough, eventually you will be good at it. Even if you don't enjoy it. I remember once working with a client and she had come to me because she was trying to figure out her next role, which we're working together to help her job search. And as we were evaluating her work history, we just were noticing she had always been doing finance. She in like her past three companies, she had done finance type roles. And really it was because she fell into a finance role initially because she was good at math, but she hadn't enjoyed any of those roles. And at one, during one of our sessions, she paused me and she said, you know, take a, as I'm looking at this, I realized that I've always done math and I'm good at it, but I don't enjoy it.

(07:50):

And I was like, yeah, I kind of picked that up from all the work we've been doing. Right. It's easy for people to put you in a box and say, oh, because you're good at something, you should take the lead in that you should train other people in that you should go ahead and do this thing just because you're good at it. But being good at something doesn't mean we enjoy it. And so you can't look at the things you're good at to find your passion. Actually let me scratch that because I hate the term. Find your passion. You can't look at what you're good at to unlock or discover your passion. Okay. So my problem with that term, cuz I just said, I hate the term, find your passion. And I'm doing find in air quotes as y'all can see. My problem with that is finding something means that it was lost.

(08:33):

Okay. We lose our keys and we look for them and we find them. If you're like me, you lose the remote in the couch. You were literally just sitting next to that remote. And all of a sudden it has disappeared and it's like, hold up. I just had that remote control in my hand. Where did it go? And now you're frantically. You're pulling again. If you're at me, you're pulling the pillows apart. You're pulling the blanket apart trying to find that remote, cuz you need to change the channel, reduce the volume, whatever it may be, finding things. Doesn't have strategy involved looking for something is not an intentional process. Finding things. Is this haphazard? Where is it? Where is it? Where is it? And if you're anything like me, the longer you're looking for something and you don't find it, the more frazzled and frustrated you get, cuz it's like, where the heck is it?

(09:15):

I just had it. I know it's here somewhere. Ugh. Like that's that's you, if you are anything like me, I hate looking for stuff. Y'all but finding something by it's very definitional or nature is not intentional. It's not strategic. It's not a process that has intention behind it. Okay. So, finding your passion implies that you lost your passion to begin with. But what I'd like to say is your passion is not a set of keys that you lost. Passion is discovered in action. You have to be in action. You have to be in movement. You have to be doing things for your passion to be revealed to you. Your passion gets unlocked. Your passion gets discovered. It's not found because it was never lost drop some hearts. If you're tracking with me, drop some hats. If, if that's making sense. Okay, thank you.

(10:09):

Okay. I see some hards coming through. So if passion is revealed in action, what do you have to be engaging in? Or what do you have to be doing for your passion to be revealed? Well, passion comes from your interests. The things you're interested in is where your passion comes from. Okay? And so, because a lot of times, again, like I said, people come into their career. Maybe they don't like the job they're doing. They're feeling undervalued. They're feeling unfulfilled. They're not enjoying it. And they're thinking, oh my gosh, I don't know what's next. And I just need to find my passion. I need to figure out what is this thing that I just have an intense love for when I find it I'll know what job I want to do. Like I said, the problem with finding it is that's not strategic. The thing that you can identify though, are your interests.

(10:59):

Your interests are the things that you have a natural curiosity for interest are things that you and I say things, but it could be things, activities, knowledge, topics, that you have a genuine curiosity for that you want to learn more about that. You, when you're doing it, it truly engages you because it fascinates your mind. And you just wanna go deeper and deeper in that topic, your interests, we can unlock. I can ask you what are the things that when you're doing them, you just get, you lose track of time. What are the things that when you start reading about it, you just wanna keep going and you don't wanna do anything else. Topics that fascinate you, that you just wanna learn all about it. Task that when you're doing it at work, you enter a state of flow. That's your interest. We can find your, we can unlock your interest.

(11:44):

We can identify your interest from history, from experience, from things you've done in the past and from the things you're doing now. And so the way passion comes about is passion is interest on steroids. So here here's how I like to think of it. Think of your interest as a seed, okay? Your interest is a seed. I can come to you now and I can give you a bunch of seeds. And so if we come back to your interest, maybe your interest is you have an interest in, let me use myself. For example, I enjoy fashion. I enjoy design. I enjoy career and helping, advocating for women. I also enjoy TV shows. Y'all I love to like right now I'm binging blue blood. I love to watch a good TV show. I have multiple interests. Okay. I love reading books. Okay. I love doing design in some spaces, multiple interests.

(12:35):

Those are all seeds. Okay. So, when you identify your interests, these multiple things that you have a fascination with, you want to learn more about. You want to know more about what happens is one or more of those interests will capture your attention more than the other. And so, let's go back to my seed analogy. So, I give you a bunch of seeds, your interests, and then there's this one seed. This one interest that you are just like, this is my jam. Like this thing, I love it. I wanna do more of it. I wanna learn more about it. Like I am here for it. That is the seed that you focus your attention on. That is the seed that you water, the seed that you weed. When the weeds grow, the seed that you come back and check to see if it's growing into a plant, that's the seed that you keep coming back to.

(13:24):

And what that means, if you' come back to the interest is that's the thing that you do research on. You get your certificates in, you learn more about it. You watch videos about it. You experiment with it. You try to do it at work. You try to implement it. You try to get better. You try to develop skills to help you do that interest more because you truly enjoy it. And so over time, the more you water that seed, the more you water, that interest you pour into it, it starts to grow and bloom into a plant. And that plant, that finished product. That's your passion. The passion is not the seed. The passion is the fruit. The passion is the tree. The passion comes out of the interest that are your seeds. And so the thing you need to be figuring out is what are my interests?

(14:13):

What are the things that inform me? What are the things that I enjoy doing? What are the things that fascinate me? What are the topics? What are the knowledge that I really just love to spend my time learning more about one of the things that when I do them, I think to myself, oh man, I wish I could do this better. I'm going to go upskill myself because I wanna do this thing. Cuz when I do it, I genuinely enjoy it. As you go deeper into your interest, the roots as you go deeper. So, you plant that seed. If you think about the seed, the roots grow first, okay? As you go deeper into your interest over time out of the soil, your passion blooms, your passion comes through as a plant, as a fruit. And so do you see why I say you can't find your

passion because if passion is a tree, if you come back to this, okay, am I just gonna look for a tree?

(15:02):

Look for a plant. When I find the plant, I'm like, oh yeah, that's my career. No, I can find seeds. I can buy seeds. I can harvest. I can look for seeds. I can plant the seeds. I can water the seed. That's all. That's the action that I'm doing. And as I'm doing that action, as I'm going deep, deeper as I'm acting, as I'm pouring, as I'm investing into this interest, my passion comes forth. Passion is born out of your interest, but you're not gonna figure out that passion. If you're standing still, you can't reflect your way into passion. You can't sit and journal and read books and take free career tests. And then, Ooh, this is what I'm passionate about. No. Now you can do some reflecting to find your interests. You can journal, you can reflect to think back to your history, to your experience and say, here's what I'm interested in.

(15:58):

And then when you, when you figure, okay, of all these interests, which one do I wanna get paid for? Which one is aligned with my non-negotiable values, which one aligns with the impact purpose, which one aligns with the impact that I want to make. That's the one I'm gonna pour my energy into. That's the one I'm gonna go deeper and plant roots in. And then over time as I do that, I start to develop a passion for it. Is this making sense? Y'all drop some hearts for me. If, if, if this is making sense, if this is resonating with you, just tap some hearts. I saw some hearts come up earlier. I wanna make sure that y'all are tracking though. Let me know. This is making sense. Okay, awesome. Awesome. I see the hearts. And so, if we use myself right, as an example, I remember once I was doing a, I was doing a free training and we're doing the Q and a at the end.

(16:51):

Mind you actually, this is a good time for me to pause and say, as I'm talking, if questions come up for you, feel free to drop a question. So in the bottom right of your screen, you'll see a little chat bubble with a question bar. Just drop a question there. When I'm done going through this, I will come back and I will ask, I will answer the question. So feel free to drop questions or even drop comments as I'm going through. I'll come back and answer the questions. Okay. So now let me come back to thank you for the badge. Love it. Levy. Thank you for the support. Now let me come back to myself. So I remember I was doing a free training once and somebody at the end were doing a Q and a and someone asked me, they said how did you figure out that you were passionate about career?

(17:30):

How did you figure out you were passionate about career coaching and career counseling? And it made me chuckle, cuz I was like, I didn't figure out that I was passionate about career counseling back to what I just said earlier. I didn't find career counseling. I figured out my interests. Okay. When, if, if you've heard, depending on how long you've been in this community, you might have heard my story where I was once doing just healthcare research

and absolutely did not align with who I was at all hated. It will not go back. Do not recommend zero over 10 for me specifically. And I was miserable in that line of work and when I finally figured out, okay, do you know what I wasn't created to be miserable? I don't want to be miserable. I took a step back and thought, what are the things that I'm interested in?

(18:16):

What am I non-negotiable values? What am I good at? Let me kind of match up all those things. And I realized that I had an interest in so multiple interests here in talking to people in serving people, in helping people. I like talking, I like listening. I like helping. And once I clarified those interests again and other things that are beyond the scope of this topic, I came to realize that counseling was the pathway for me. Counseling was my aligned career path. And from there I went and got trained as a counselor, starting my seed. Okay. Talk counseling is a mix of things. It's listening to people. It's talking to people, it's processing what people are saying. Helping people reflect multiple interests there. I went to get trained in it. That was pouring water in my seed. And then as I was doing, as I got through my training, I came out and realized you, you know what?

(19:06):

I wanna do school counseling. I really like kids. I wanna work with kids. And so I went and I worked as a school counselor. Again, we're still, we're still planting. The tree is still blooming. Okay. The seed is still in the ground. And then during my time as a school counselor, I realized that I wanted to shift to start training counselors. I wanted to pretty much, I wanted to come back and advocate for school counselors. And so, I went to get my PhD and while I was doing my PhD, I still needed to work in other spaces. So, I did mental health counseling for a bit. And then a career counseling job opened up and the way we're trained as counselors as a counselor, you're trained to pretty much work in any setting. So, a career counseling role opened up. So, I went to work as a career counselor.

(19:49):

Okay. In doing that work let's come back to my, my plant, my seed, my interest when I stepped into the career counseling space. I like to think if I come back to this analogy, that was when the first bud came out of the soil. If I think specifically of my passion of career counseling, it was that first job. And it was like, whoa, I love this work. I love helping people figure out their careers, navigate their careers, get clarity around their careers because of many reasons, again, that I've talked about in previous episodes of, of my life sessions. And so it was in, I was in action. I was actively pursuing counseling. I was actively growing my skills in counseling. When career specifically came through as a tree, as a fruit, that was a passion. So, I didn't figure out, I didn't just stumble into career counseling.

(20:45):

I was making intentional moves in my career that aligned with what I already knew. I was interested in that aligned with who I was that then bloomed into the now passion that is career counseling. Did that story help? Y'all cause I'm trying to make it real for you. I'm trying to help

you understand why you can't just find your passion. It's something that is unlocked. That is discovered when you're in action. So let me know if that story sort of helped make it real for you. Okay. So, I see some parts. Awesome, great, great. So that's when we think about back to the topic, that's why I want you to stop saying I, I need to find my passion. I need to figure out what my passion is because you're not going to find it. It was never lost. You didn't lose your passion. You need to figure out your interest.

(21:35):

You need to get super clear about the different interests that you have. Then figure out which interests intersect with your values and your skills because your passion and not your skills. When you find that intersection, you figure out, okay, this is the career I want to pursue. And as you are in action, as you are pursuing it, what you'll see is that your passion will become unlocked. Your passion will become revealed. You will discover your passion. Okay? You're not gonna stumble into it. You have to be actively purposefully going through your interests for you to figure out what your passion is. Hey, welcome. Welcome. Okay. So that being said, let's talk then about interest. So, what do you do instead? You're like, okay. Tega you said don't find my passion, but I still don't know what, what I wanna do. I still don't know. You know, what path to pursue?

(22:23):

What is the right step for me? Like I said earlier, what I want you to do is figure out your interests. Okay? So, your interests are those. Like I said earlier, things, topics that you have a genuine desire to learn more about. They engage you topics that you wanna grow. You're curious about. So, what you wanna figure out are your, what I call your zone of genius interest areas. And these are the interests that when you're doing them, when you're either reading about it, when you're working on it, when you're actively involved in it, you lose track of time. Sometimes like you enter what we call a state of flow because you are just so enthralled with the work that you're doing. So, when you clarify your zone of genius interest area, now, you know, okay, this is an interest that I have again, what does it intersect with values and skills, but that will help lead you.

(23:08):

What interests do for use interests, help you identify which industries make the most sense for your career and which roles also make the most sense for your career. So, when you figure out through your interest, okay, what industries should I focus my energy on? What roles align? Because roles like what topics align with what I'm interested in. Because if you are doing work that you're not interested in, you're gonna get bored very fast. You're gonna be bored. You're not going to be engaged and it's going to lead to you being dissatisfied. Okay? So, your interest helped you figure out, okay, what avenue should I pursue in terms of, in terms of work that truly fascinates me. And then when you start pursuing that over time, as you go deeper into that work into that interest, you might either discover A) no, I don't wanna do this for work.

(23:56):

I need to go do something else. And that's very valid or B) I really truly love this. This is where my energy needs to be spent. And so now as I go deeper into it, as I grow in this role, grow in this industry, because this is what I love. My passion is revealing itself. My passion is unlocking itself and we, I should pause here and give a caveat and say, we all have multiple passions. This is why also trying to find your passion is problematic because you don't have just one thing, you're passionate about, but how do you figure out which of those aligns, which of those make sense for your career? Which of those make sense for work? That's where pursuing your interest, clarifying your interest. And it unlocks the passion that makes sense for work comes in. Okay. So hopefully I'm gonna go to Q and a here and see what questions have been asked again, if you have questions, drop them in the, in the question box, but hopefully that makes sense for you all.

(24:54):

Hopefully you will stop saying that. You're trying to find your passion, please, please, please eradicate that from your vocabulary instead. I want you to find your interest. Okay. So let me answer. I see one question here. And I think this is one of the questions that I also saw earlier. So should I leave a job? I don't think I like for a job. I may not like, so the question is, should I leave a job? I don't think I like for a job. I may not like, so let me, so the first thing I'm gonna say here <laugh> if you don't think you like the job, you probably don't like it. You either do or you don't. There's no thinking. Okay. So that's my, my first question for you is what do you mean by you don't think you like it. If you are already at that point where you're saying, I don't think I like this job, then you don't.

(25:42):

When we like things, we know when we're fulfilled, we know when we're enjoying something. We know if you don't think you like it, you probably don't like it. And you're trying to convince yourself that you do, cuz you're not ready to move yet and say you're like, I don't think maybe I don't like this [?]. You don't like it. If you did, you would know <laugh> let's start there. Okay. So, should I leave a job? I don't think I like for a job. I may not like, so I'm gonna rephrase that question to say, should I leave a job? I don't like, cuz you probably don't like it for a job. I may not. Like if we think about it that way, we know one thing for sure. You don't like what you're doing now. So, staying in that job makes absolutely no sense. None. Legit.

(26:27):

Like if I already know, I don't like it. And I'm intentionally choosing to stay here. Makes no sense. Now the other job, I may not like it. Guess what? You're never gonna figure out if you like it or not until you're in the job. Okay. You're not going to figure out if you like that job until you're actually doing that job. Just like passion. Clarity is also revealed in action. You can't think your way into getting clarity. You have to be taking action to get clarity so long and short. I mean, there are other factors here, right? So, I'm just doing a quick Q and A to answer this, but you have to think about your values, your skills, your qualifications, for the job, your responsibilities, the compensation, the geographic location. There are a lot of factors that we need to go in here, but just think about what I just said.

(27:16):

There's it sounds like there's an option where you think you may not like one thing, but you definitely don't like another thing. Do I need to spell it out? I'm hoping I don't. <Laugh> the only way to figure out if you will like the one you think you may not like is to do it. Okay. The other question here, how do I identify what industries or jobs align with my interests? So, Lisa, that question is bigger than this live and that's exactly what I help my clients do in find your fulfilling career. So, if you're not familiar with FYFC, Find Your Fulfilling Career, that's my small group coaching program where I help women who are unhappy at work, get super clear about their values, their interest and their skills, so they can find aligned work. And if you go to findyourfulfillingcareer.com, you'll learn more about it, but there's a whole system to figuring out what industries align.

(28:10):

And I teach my clients how to do that in FYFC my small group coaching program. So that would be, I would say, go, go to findyourfulfillingcareer.com to look at that program and just do some research. But if you are in the space where you're thinking, okay, I think I know what my interests are, but I don't know what industries make the most sense. That's where getting support comes in and that's support that I provide. Because it's a multi-layered process. It's not like, I can't just say, go do a Google search because do we even know that you have the right interests? There's a system to making sure the interests are right and aligned with their career. And then when you find those industries and those roles, you have to audit them based on different metrics to make sure that they'll be a fit.

(28:52):

Cause remember I said earlier, we're just looking at your interest. We're looking at where your interest intersects with your values and your skills. So that's a whole system that I walk my clients through in FYFC. So that would be what I would recommend for you to look at as an option. Okay. So, to summarize, especially for those of you who joined after stop trying to find your passion. You're not gonna find it. Your passion is discovered in action. Passion was not a lost set of keys that you need to find. What you need to do is get super clear about your interests and then figure out which of those interests you wanna pursue water pour into. And as you pursue those interests deeply, your passion will reveal itself to you. And you might have more than one passion. Okay? The more you take a step back and the more you keep trying to find your passion, what you'll find is that you're just wasting time and you're just getting frustrated because nothing is gonna get clear and you just trying to find it.

(29:52):

And so because you're now waiting to find it and you're wasting your time. You're not growing in your career; you're not taking the next step. You're not figuring out what your fulfilling career is. You're not pursuing your fulfilling career because you're still waiting for your passion to randomly drop in your lap. And that's not how it works. Okay. It's not gonna drop in your lap. And the more you wait, the more you'll keep yourself from finding work that truly, truly fills you up. So, I hope this is helpful for y'all today. We're gonna wrap up here. Thank you again

for joining live. And if you are, if maybe you came halfway through and you missed some of it, the replay will be on will be on my profile. And if you're listening to this on the podcast, thanks for joining. Have a good day. Y'all if you enjoy today's podcast, there are a couple of things that I would love for you to do first, make sure you subscribe, rate and review this podcast because I genuinely love hearing your thoughts. You can also help us reach others by sharing this episode with one person. Thanks again for joining us on the Fulfilling Career Podcast.