

Success Built to Last Insights

I have had six careers during my 30+ year professional life and I probably have one or two more in me. The circles in the Right Opportunity Venn diagram provide the structure for my answer:

Be My Best: In the past I have only been successful when I was doing my best. I have learned that only happens when I leverage my natural personality (INTJ), my natural strengths and my natural skills. When I try to swim upstream, e.g. be a salesman with an Introvert as a personality I am not being wise in my choice of jobs. I also know that leveraging those things that are natural to me provides me with real passion; I enjoy doing things at which I excel. I am most happy and passionate when I am being my best.

Meaning & Passion: The author's research lead to two main conclusions: 1) what you do must have Meaning, i.e., what you do must matter deeply to you. It's something you're so passionate about that you lose all track of time when you do it. In fact it may not feel like work at all. It seduces you to the point where you lose interest in everything else. 2) The bad news is that it's really dangerous not to do what you love. The harsh truth is that if you don't love what you're doing, you'll lose to someone who does. Your co-workers or competitors who love their work will gladly work longer hours, think about work 24/7, try more things, come up with more great ideas and get better opportunities than people who only do things for a living.

In my life I have experienced exactly that. It started with running the school newspaper. I had such a passion for the newspaper and felt it fulfilled a real need for the school. I was constantly thinking about the newspaper and how it could be improved. In fact I became so obsessed with it my grades started to suffer. I also realize I don't have the same passion for being an engineer as most of my peers. I can easily translate that into lower performance in the workplace. I don't think of engineering like I do of the newspaper. I later discovered I had a real passion for financial analysis and business, as well as very excellent skills. Most recently I discovered I have a passion for smaller companies and entrepreneurial environments.

Fuel your Economic Engine: You can be doing something that leverages your strengths/personality and something that has meaning to you, but if society won't pay you to do it then that is not your Right Career. In fact maybe it should be your hobby. While I have moderate financial needs, I still want to provide my family with the basics in life, including a college education for my children, so I have to have careers that will provide a reasonable income. But I do agree with what is written in the Meaning section above.

Whole Person: There are other elements, besides the three above, that are important to a successful and happy life. I would like to live in interesting places, have children and travel – to mention a few.