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Essay Title: Do what you love... and love what you do

Content:

“Chase your dreams!”, “Follow your passion!”, “Listen to your heart!”

At this age when I am at a new crossroad in life, offered many choices and having many decisions to make, a conventional piece of advice would be to do what I love. This advice has been offered to me countless times, by teachers, peers, parents and even strangers on TedTalks. Of course, this saying is backed by a multitude of success stories, of people who have worked hard for their seemingly impossible dreams, disregarding the superficial pragmatism which governs a large part of society. In the end, the ideology behind this advice encapsulates the perennial idea that “happiness is priceless, and this priceless feeling will be worth the chase.”

But to me, doing what we love is an idyllic situation. It is where we are able to spend the limited time we have living, to bring us the maximum happiness possible. Yet, considering how many people are born into their destinies and confined by low social mobility, I questioned if we really have the choice to do what we love. This thought was also complemented by lingering practical concerns, about how what we love may not be what helps us live. Did this suggest that those who could not do what they loved were unhappy?

I thought about small towns of the past where the whole village would specialise in, master, and take pride in their craft. In those circumstances, their craft (such as iron welding, mining or farming) was likely the only activity they knew of or the only activity they had access to which could offer them a livelihood. This led me to believe that what we love is determined by what we have been doing all along.

Many people in the world have insatiable desires, perpetual dreams to chase for something far and unreachable. However, being a believer in contentment, I see more value in appreciating our circumstances and making the most out of them. In situations we cannot control, the optimistic response would be to face life with a positive attitude and an open mind.

Personally, as a child, I was not exposed to many fields within the study of the humanities, having a limited reading appetite. However, through school lessons and external activities, the world of Geography was revealed to me. Gradually, I understood what gave others the passion in Geography, and developed my own passion for the subject in school. This trend could be extrapolated to other areas, and I found myself in a situation where I craved to learn anything under the sun. In essence, we all start with zero exposure and interest in things we do not know of. An initial exposure to something generates a slight interest in us, to want to find out what it is about. This interest prompts us to gain more exposure, and by further exploring the depths of something, we find out more about things we did not know we did not even know. This process heightens our interest and aptitude in that area, two complementing parameters in learning. Eventually, we are drawn into that something, and we develop what I would call “love” for it.

These analyses, coupled with my own experiences, have convinced me that it is essential to approach life with an open heart and mind, and be willing to learn new things. It is with such an attitude that we are able to understand and appreciate how our life is worth our love. We may not be doing what we love, but we have the choice to love what we do!