

What Are You Passionate About?

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1 Problem Statement

I was asked what I'm passionate about, but I found it difficult to answer. I was trying to understand the *ansatz* of the question. Most of the typical answers seem to be about a vocation, if not a career. Something done, something external. Does this have to be true?

2 Ideas

I'd thought of or proposed independence, understanding, solitude, and learning. Are these just values? Or even just personality traits? What is required to be passionate about? If passion must be about an active behavior, I could phrase them as "becoming", "growing in", or "achieving" these traits. But these 'passions' have nothing to do with other people. Do they have to? What's the difference between an interest and a passion?

3 My Passions

I identified: 1) independence, 2) understanding, 3) solitude, and 4) learning. Independence indicates a minimum of reliance on others. I don't necessarily mean detachment but not relying on anyone, materially or mentally / emotionally. I think this speaks to an internal strength that I admire (or am passionate about). Understanding means not doing anything carelessly, but to understand what you do and why. This is something like purposefulness. It means not falling victim to illusion or naivete. It means thinking clearly and having a clear perception of the world. Solitude means not being caught up or consumed by people or things about you; avoiding overstimulation, being self-aware and centered (not self-centered, but having your self centered). I do really enjoy learning and having a posture of curiosity in life. This may be something more of a passion in what I think of as a traditional sense. It's also stated as a value: not just "I really enjoy this and purposefully and actively do it", but also some sort of compulsion: "I ought to". I dunno. Personal responsibility is also a strong value of mine, which I think is reflected in the previous ones.

4 Definition

I think a passion ought to be something externally visible or applicable with a clear objective, though not a finite one. Something that you are excited to do and achieve.

The question, though, is what are you passionate about, which is a label some people would apply to a sports team, to bring up an example I came across since thinking about this. In a way, that seems so much more shallow that the line of thought I was taking (ah, yes, the unfathomable: me overthinking something.). So maybe it's just something you're excited about, but even that I have a bit of a hard time defining. Seeing the rugged beauty and graceful, ruthless power of nature? Programming languages? Understanding philosophy and human thought?

I guess maybe I just need to ask for clarification.