JOURNAL 27

From an article by Phil Cooke

Pursuing a dream is fine.  But unless you have the talent, skill, ability, a commitment to achieve that dream, you’re simply wasting your life.   But how do you figure it out?  How can you avoid spending years pursuing a delusion?

In my book, I suggest you start with a few key questions:

**1)  What comes easy for you?**  Think about your life. How many times were you asked to do something because you were the organized one, the athletic one, the best writer, or good with numbers? Perhaps you’re the responsible one who’s always expected to keep your group together at the shopping mall. Maybe you’re the person everyone turns to in a crisis.   Looking back, think about the moments when you naturally gravitated toward a particular task on the homecoming committee, at church, a school project, or at the office. Some people even build a reputation as the person who finds this or that task, project, or challenge easier than anyone else.

The confirmation of other people matters, so take a minute and think about talents you possess that other people notice.  Whatever it is, that ability could be a key indicator of the dream you should be following – or what I call in my book, your “one big thing.”

**2)  What do you love?**   There are plenty of people volunteering at jobs they love and working on the side to make a living. But what if you could combine the two? What if you could actually make a living working at a job you love? If you consider the whole working world, only a tiny minority of people are actually pursuing a dream they’re passionate about.

What are you fanatical about? I’m not talking obsession in the same sense as a psychological disorder. (Well, maybe.) In other words, what are you constantly thinking about? What type of books do you buy or television programs do you watch? What’s the first thing you think about when you wake up in the morning and the last thing you think about when you go to bed at night?

**3)  What drives you nuts?**  It may sound strange, but I’ve discovered that in many cases, the thing you hate the most could be the problem you were born to fix. In other words, what do you hate? I believe the key to your destiny could be found in the answer to that question.  
   
The answer to what frustrates you could express itself in a new product, an original method, a movie, a book, a march, a campaign, a cause, or a religious awakening. It doesn’t have to be big, it just needs to start.  Try it yourself. What drives you nuts in life? The answer may change the course of your future.

**4)  Finally - have you done the time?**   I’m not talking about prison, but a question of commitment.  Professional writers write.  Musicians practice.  Designers design.  You may not have a job, a business card, or a buyer, but if you have a dream, what foundation are you laying today for success tomorrow?  What classes are you taking?  Have you found a mentor or coach?

I wrote and threw away thousands of pages before I published my first book.  A college friend of mine who’s a concert pianist practices 5-6 hours per day.  One successful producer in Hollywood won’t even consider reading your script until you can prove you’ve already written at least ten screenplays.  (No wonder he’s successful.)

It’s time to stop being average at so many things and start being extraordinary at one big thing.  The key is figuring out what that one big thing is.  Remember the immortal scene in the movie “City Slickers?”

Curly: Do you know what the secret of life is?  
[holds up one finger]  
This.  
Mitch: Your finger?  
Curly: One thing. Just one thing. You stick to that and the rest don’t mean s\*\*\*.  
Mitch: But what is the “one thing”?  
Curly: That's what you have to find out.

It begins with brutal honesty, and thrives on hard work.  Without that combination, no amount of dreaming in the world will take you very far.

He was cranky, rude, and insensitive, but American Idol’s Simon Cowell never hesitated to call it like it was when it came to talent (or lack thereof.)  While it was painful at the time, how many people have avoided years of disappointment because Simon wasn’t afraid to tell them the truth?

This is your moment.   Maybe it’s time to stop just following a dream and spend more time discovering what dream you should follow.

Read more: <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2012/11/04/please-stop-following-your-dreams/#ixzz2CAcCNpuZ>

Read the article for the right perspective before answering the following questions.

1. What comes easy for you? What talents do you have that other people tend to notice?
2. What do you love? List it all.
3. What drives you nuts? What do you hate?
4. Have you done the time? (Are you putting in the time?) How?