

The Passion of the Work in Six Words: Fueling the Fire for What We Desire

Presented by Mark Warren, Training Consultant
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Without these six words, our lives and work are just occupying space...



Passion and Intensity

- **Passion is**
 - Conviction, desire, devotion.
- **Intensity is**
 - Strength, force, feeling.
- “Your profession is not what brings home your paycheck. Your profession is what you were put on this earth to do with such *passion* and *intensity* that it becomes your calling”.
 - Vincent Van Gogh

In hard times or prosperity, isn't this the ONLY way to look at our jobs? Consider these two questions:

1. What makes one feel that their jobs fuel their personal passion and intensity? And,
2. What's missing: why *doesn't* one feel that their jobs fuel their personal passion and intensity?

1. Meaningful Work

- What is meaningful work?

- “Adding significance, meaning, or purpose to somebody’s life.”

- Do you have it?
- Do you facilitate it?

- It’s an idea that says that when you put forth effort, you get reward. “When you throw your heart and mind and soul into something, you get something back.” — author Malcolm Gladwell, from **Outliers: The Story of Success**

At the *Dreamforce* conference in San Francisco, Malcolm Gladwell, author of **Blink**, gives two examples of hard work that later looked like genius in his November, 2008 release, **Outliers: The Story of Success**:

Bill Gates got up at 2am to program as a teenager, while the Beatles played together 1200 times, far more than most bands, before they ever got famous. Success, he believes, is the result of putting your heart and mind into something to create successful, meaningful work.

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Incidentally, Gladwell specified the four things people must have in order to develop the skills en route to mastery:

- Autonomy
- Complexity
- Meaningfulness, and
- 10,000 hours of perfect practice

2. Autonomy

- Autonomy defined is: “Personal *independence* and the capacity to make moral decisions and act on them.”
- A *sense of control* is crucial to happiness and satisfaction.
Remember:
- “*Don’t tech your people.*”

In a classic study, scientists put two rats in a cage, each of them locked in a running wheel. The first rat could exercise whenever he liked. The second was yoked to the first, forced to run when his counterpart did. Exercise, like meditation, usually tamps down stress and encourages [brain] neuron growth. Indeed, the first rat’s brain bloomed with new cells. The second rat, however, *lost* brain cells. He was doing something that should have been good for his brain, but he lacked one crucial factor: control. Because he couldn’t determine his own “workout” schedule, he didn’t perceive exercise as something good. Instead, he experienced it literally as a “rat race.” (From “Who Says Stress is Bad for You?” by Mary Carmichael, Newsweek Magazine, February 23, 2009)

3. Collaboration

- Working together, in a diverse environment, to achieve something in common.
- Enhance the power of positive relationships, and people **want** to come back on Monday morning.
 - Build trust
 - Accentuate the positive
 - Redirect behavior, don’t punish

“Teams that have been less successful in their collaborative efforts identify several factors that interfered with their team's ability to successfully complete a project. Number one: team leadership did not deal effectively with conflict. In general the importance of positive working relationships cannot be overemphasized. People look to their project team and their workgroup leaders to take responsibility for making a positive atmosphere. They can do it in several ways--you have to create a positive tone for collaboration; you have to build consensus around project goals and objectives; you have to articulate those goals and objectives; you've got to step up to make decisions and effectively resolve conflict. You could say that a successful collaborative team is a result of a convergence of several elements. Project goals and objectives have to be well-defined and achievable; team leadership needs to set a positive collaborative tone for the team and the project; leadership has to be successful at building consensus and making decisions; and information that the team needs must be well-organized and well-maintained.” (From “Collaboration: Characteristics of Successful Teams,” a speech by Stephen Howard-Sarin, Vice President, CNET’s business sites)

4. Fairness



- Is fairness even possible?
 - Are pay, benefits, and workloads fair and balanced?
- Fairness or Equity – how do *you* want to be treated?
 - Exactly like everyone else, or just like everyone else *in exactly the same circumstance*?
 - Examples – bathrooms and jail.
- If you found yourself there, would you prefer to be treated fairly or equitably?

“People expect to work for an employer where pay, benefits, and workloads are fair and balanced, and in which people treat each other with respect. Employees need to perceive that leadership and the organization as a whole are treating both them and the customer fairly and justly. In fact, the research showed that the number one reason that employees leave an organization is when they perceive that justness and fairness are not present. “

- Dr. Drea Zigarmi, The Ken Blanchard Companies and Professor at the University of San Diego

5. Recognition



- People need to be praised and appreciated or otherwise recognized for their achievements.
 - "The deepest craving in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."
- Dr. William James
- The art of affirmation - conveying to another that their existence matters.
 - Recognize the unique contributions of people, uniquely.

Find a way to recognize the unique contributions of people, and the way they are recognized must be as unique and personal as their contributions.

6. Career Growth

- Continual reinvention:
 - Having opportunities to learn, grow, and develop skills that lead to advancement in one's career is also a core need.
- In addition, individuals need to feel that they are a part of the career planning process.
- Finding their "paint" - from Oklahoma to UCLA...

7. Connectedness to Colleagues

- Harmony and human contact:
 - A strong relationship with colleagues and coworkers impacts an employee's willingness to apply discretionary effort.
- Translation? A sense of belongingness and affiliation (overcoming loneliness and alienation) is a deep craving.
- Freud and Groucho Marx...

Wasn't it Groucho Marx that said "I wouldn't want to belong to any organization that would have someone like me as a member?"

"The – the other important joke for me is one that's, uh, usually attributed to Groucho Marx but I think it appears originally in Freud's *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*. And it goes like this – I'm paraphrasing: Uh... 'I would never wanna belong to any club that would have someone like me for a member.' That's the key joke of my adult life in terms of my relationships with women." (Woody Allen from "Annie Hall," 1977)

8. Connectedness to Leader

- We all want a leader who *shares information* and *makes an effort to build rapport* with us.
- Having a *solid relationship* that is based on *integrity and trust* is a key component in creating an environment where *people are willing to go the extra mile*
 - *The Second Mile* by Paula J. Fox
- Bosses – how do you facilitate connection with your people and vice versa?



In her book, *The Second Mile: The Key to a Life of Purpose and Joy*, Paula Fox describes going the "second mile" as living above the norm, treating people with kindness

and respect, regardless of what they deserve. It's not enough to simply do what is required; we must give generously of ourselves beyond what is expected of us.

Conclusion – “Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.”

- People work for more than salary and sick leave.
 - Find ways to attract and keep good people.
 - Value results – and relationships.
 - Share your vision.
 - Embody your values.
 - People need to feel that their contributions make a difference.
- “The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.” – Dr. Ken Blanchard.

Conclusion, part 2 – a New Reality?



- Transform your brand : (Attracting new and different employees)
 - Companies benefit from *creating an engaging work environment.*
 - *Pleasant work atmosphere, competitive salary and job security and a reputation as a good place to work.*
 - *Public recognition* allows employees to earn the respect of their colleagues, is another key factor when it comes to building a company brand.

Cracker Barrel is backtracking on its costly nearly \$700 million rebrand after widespread backlash from customers and investors. The overhaul centered on a controversial text-only logo and a minimalist modern design was criticized as sterile and out of step with the chain's nostalgic image. Following a steep drop in stock value and pressure from an activist investor, as well as from President Trump, who called for the company to go back to the old look, Cracker Barrel reinstated its classic Uncle Herschel logo. (Source: [What the Cracker Barrel backlash reveals about the power of branding | PBS News](#) (8-27-25))

The New Reality

With highly mobile, competent workers in demand, employers must find ways to attract and keep their best people. Good pay is no longer the only answer. Today's workers generally want more. They seek opportunities where they feel that their contributions are valued and rewarded—where they are involved and empowered, can develop skills, can see advancement opportunities, and believe they are making a difference.

That's why the concept of leadership needs to be redefined. Instead of a command-and-control style of leadership focused on short term results, a more participative style that focuses on long-term results and human satisfaction is more appropriate. Great leaders—those who lead at a higher level—value both results and relationships. Both are critical for long-term survival. Not either/or, but both/and. For too long, many leaders have felt that they needed to choose. Companies hoping to grow and thrive in the future need leaders who recognize that people are not a company's most important asset—they are the company, period! (*Ignite!* Zigarmi, December, 2007)

American author and poet Henry David Thoreau once said about work: "Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it." As for passion and intensity, Thoreau wrote about the dangerous result of losing one's dreams and aspirations: that if are lost, "you may still exist but you have ceased to live."

Presenter information - J. Mark Warren

Is a (mostly) retired Training Consultant and former employee with the Texas Association of Counties in his hometown of Austin, Texas. His presentations convey a message of inspiration, motivation and new direction and revolve around leadership, interpersonal communication and relationship skills, workplace diversity and professionalism, bridging the generations and customer service excellence.

Mark worked with the TAC Leadership Program and served as the coordinator of its Leadership training from 2002 and County Best Practices from 2009 to 2015.

After graduating from St. Edward's University in 1977, Mark spent 23 years with the Texas Department of Public Safety, retiring in 2000 as the Assistant Commander of the Training Academy in Austin.

From December 2015 through August 2017, Mark presented a series of presentations on verbal de-escalation with the Texas Police Association for the Department of Public Safety and law enforcement and criminal justice professionals across Texas.

For more information on Mark's presentations, please contact Mark directly at mwarren24@msn.com.



Resources and inspirations for this program include:

1. An interview with author Malcolm Gladwell at the Dreamforce conference, see "meaningful work" 11/6/08 www.bnet.com
2. ***Outliers: The Story of Success***, by Malcolm Gladwell, Little, Brown and Company, New York, New York, 2008
3. "Who Says Stress is Bad for You?" by Mary Carmichael, Newsweek Magazine, February 23, 2009)
4. "Collaboration: Characteristics of Successful Teams", a speech by Stephen Howard-Sarin, Vice President, CNET's business sites, www.bnet.com
5. "From Engagement to Work Passion" – a research study, The Ken Blanchard Companies, 2009.
6. ***The Second Mile – The Key to a Life of Purpose and Joy***, by Paula J. Fox, Inspired Faith, Naperville, Ill. 2009.

Thanks to the rock music icon ***Metallica*** for my corruption of their song "Fuel" for the subtitle of this program.

A History of the World in 6 Glasses by Tom Standage explores how six beverages – beer, wine, spirits, coffee, tea, and soda – have profoundly shaped human history and influenced the rise and fall of civilizations. The book examines the cultural, economic, and political impact of each drink, demonstrating how they acted as catalysts for major historical events and societal transformations. ***6 Glasses*** was the original inspiration for this program. I hope you will enjoy. Safe travels.

