

So Many Activities

Below are a list of activities individuals can do on their own or with others to explore their calling(s). Finding new ways of uncovering individual passions, skills, interests, and values can help one understand themselves better and find signs that point to meaning and purpose in their lives. Feel free to modify and/or change the activities to fit your needs, or come up with your own new activities. Remember, these are just a few ideas and by no means is this list exhaustive.

1. “Build Your Portfolio” – Randy Komisar, technology legend, thinks looking for your one-and-only passion will paralyze you. Instead, think of a portfolio of passions and use those passions to guide you. Come up with a list of passions (5-10) you could easily display within a portfolio and consider artifacts (events, awards, projects, things you’ve done, etc.) that would display those passions well. What does your portfolio look like?
2. “Three Lists” – Sit down and write three lists: 1). everything you are good at, 2). everything you enjoy doing, and 3). everything that gives you a sense of purpose. Look for common themes throughout these three lists.
3. “Flow States” – Experiencing flow is a powerful thing. Flow refers to the state in which a person is performing an activity and is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, complete involvement, and ultimate enjoyment. In other words, one is taking part in an activity that is so exciting and fulfilling to the individual that they lose track of time and cannot be distracted. Sit down and think back from childhood to today and put together a catalog of activities that put you in a state of flow. How might you engage in these flow states again?
4. “Four Aims of Life” – A Buddhist framework suggest there are four aims to life: 1). physical health and pleasure, 2). wealth, things, and family, 3). becoming a perfect person, and 4). finding your greater purpose. Regardless of your religious beliefs, consider passions of yours that fit into this framework. Try to come up with three potential items for each aim.
5. “Ask Yourself through Meditation” – Take a few minutes and completely relax your mind. Meditate to a point of deep relaxation and then ask what your heart deeply desires and yearns to express. Listen quietly for an honest response. If you have multiple responses, that’s ok. When finished, write down your thoughts.
6. “Think Time” – A majority of us have some major think time. It can be when we’re commuting to and from work, right before bed-time, or maybe riding on a plane. Whenever it is, identify it and make space for it on a daily or weekly basis.
7. “Write Until You Cry” – Write a response or two to the following question: “What is my true purpose in life?” Keep writing until you cry. If your response makes you cry, you most likely found a connection to your purpose.
8. “Envision Your Funeral” – Imagine your funeral and what you want your eulogy to consist of (your lifetime achievements, the people you’ve influenced/loved, the difference you made, etc.). Are you striving towards those elements? If not, how might you make room and work towards those goals?
9. “Your Ideal Self” – We all have a picture of our “ideal self”. What does yours look like? Consider yourself writing a novel or play with your “ideal self” as the lead character. Who is he/she?
10. “Find and Seek Out Your Fears” – Steven Pressfield, an expert on discovering passion and purpose once wrote, “If you find yourself asking yourself (and your friends) ‘Am I really a writer? Am I really an artist?’ chances are you are. The counterfeit innovator is wildly self-confident. The real one is scared to death.” Reflect on the following questions: What is it I’m scared to death of? Where am I today? Is my comfort zone getting the best of me? What can I do about it?
11. “Pivotal Moments” – Find a personal story that impacted you and share it. Epiphanies can come from a series of small moments. What moments do you most remember from your past? Reflecting on these can sometimes formulate your values and passions.
12. “Watch TED Talks” – YouTube is filled with TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) Talks. Watch one or two to get a glimpse of what purpose and passion looks like to an individual who is deeply connected to a topic. Then ask yourself, “What would my TED Talk be about?”
13. “Remove the Cause” – Jiddu Krishnamurti distinguishes passion from passion without a cause. “Our passion is for something: for music, for painting, for literature, for a country, for a woman or a man; it is always the effect of a cause [but] when passion has a cause, there is attachment, and attachment is the beginning of sorrow.” Ask yourself, if I had nothing to prove, nothing to achieve, and all that I needed, what would I love doing?”

14. "Personal Mission" To get clear on your personal mission, find a place where you won't be interrupted and write answers to the following questions. Be honest and enjoy the moments while you write (questions are from the www.thinksimplenow.com website).

1. What makes you smile? (activities, people, events, hobbies, projects, etc.)
2. What were your favorite things to do in the past? What are your favorite things to do now?
3. What activities make you lose track of time?
4. What makes you feel great about yourself?
5. Who inspires you the most? (Anyone you know or do not know. Family, friends, authors, artists, leaders, etc.) Which qualities inspire you in each person?
6. What are you naturally good at? (skills, abilities, gifts, etc.)
7. What do people typically seek your advice on or ask for your assistance?
8. If you had to teach something, what would you teach?
9. What would you regret not fully doing, being or having in your life?
10. You are now 90 years old, sitting on a rocking chair outside your porch. You are happy, and are pleased with the wonderful life you've been blessed with. Looking back at your life and all that you've achieved and acquired, all the relationships you've developed; what matters to you most? List them out.
11. What are your deepest values? (Select 3 to 6 and prioritize the words in order of importance to you – view examples below).

Achievement	Freedom	Opportunity
Adventure	Friendship	Passion
Beauty	Giving/Service	Performance
Being the Best	Health	Personal Growth
Challenge	Honesty	Play
Comfort	Independence	Productivity
Courage	Inner Peace	Relationship
Creativity	Integrity	Reliability
Curiosity	Intelligence	Respect
Education	Intimacy	Security
Empowerment	Joy	Spirituality
Environment	Leadership	Success
Family	Learning	Time
Financial Freedom	Love	Variety
Fitness	Motivation	

12. What were some challenges, difficulties and hardships you've overcome or are in the process of overcoming? How did you/are you go/going about it?
13. What causes do you strongly believe in? Connect with?
14. If you could get a message across to a large group of people, who would those people be? What would your message be?
15. Given your talents, passions, and values, how could you use these resources to serve, help, and/or contribute? (people, creatures, causes, organizations, environments, the planet, etc.)

Now, formulate your thoughts into a mission statement. A mission statement consists of 3 parts:

- 1). What do I want to do? 2). Who do I want to help? 3). What is the result? What value will I create?

Steps to creating your personal mission statement:

1. List out action words you connect with from the 15 questions activity.
 - a. Example: educate, accomplish, empower, encourage, improve, help, give, guide, inspire, integrate, master, motivate, nurture, organize, produce, promote, travel, spread, share, satisfy, understand, teach, write, etc.
2. List everything and everyone that you believe you can help from the 15 questions activity.
 - a. Example: people, creatures, organizations, causes, groups, environment, etc.
3. Identify your end goal. How will the 'who' benefit from what you do?
4. Combine steps 1-3 into a sentence or two.