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Eileen Smith

*University of Central Florida*

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## Find Your Passion – That’s What Makes Life Worth Living

**By Eileen Smith**  
UCF Forum columnist  
Wednesday, June 12, 2013

Passion is part of what makes us human, what separates us from those logical-thinking machines called computers. And if we are passionate about what we do, it will be obvious to all around us.

Passion is an inherently personal thing; we cannot be trained to be passionate about something. Being the best at something doesn’t necessarily make us passionate about it. It just means we do it better than anyone else.

The formal education system surrounds learners with the idea of competence in performance: Do the absolute best that you can, get good grades, be an A student! You have to get the best score to get the best job.

Knowing the most about something isn’t the same as being passionate about it. Passion compels us to search more, to investigate deeper, to think broadly and expansively about the topic — even to ponder contradictory points of view in order to explore the topic more intensely. We are drawn inexorably into never-ending exploration. And we love every moment of it!

Some people find their passion in their work. Someone told me once that you had to be in an exciting job in order to be passionate about your work. I haven’t found that to be true.

I’ve met people in very exciting jobs who are almost immune, it seems, to the excitement of their job and just go through the motions like a robot. You can see it in their eyes. It’s

very disconcerting to see high competence with low passion; the feeling of ennui is palpable.

On the other hand, I've met people in what some would describe as mundane jobs and who are extremely passionate about what they do.

Perhaps what makes servers passionate about their job is understanding exactly how to identify customers' needs before they ask — every time. Perhaps a bus driver knows that she is the person who can tell if something is out-of-place on her route better than anyone else, so it makes her feel like a watchful eye over her neighborhood.

Some people find their passion in their hobby: "I work so I can fish." Fill in your own verb at the end of that sentence.

I've become passionate about sustainable living and eating locally grown food. I meet some passionate people every week at the local community markets around the area. They are drawn to sustainable-living practices and come from every variety of age, background and profession. Talking to those folks and seeing how they work their passion into their very diverse lives is invigorating.

There are many meetup groups that can be found online, where folks can find others who share their passion and meet up at community venues to discuss, to enjoy, to progress in their joint passion. Our modern world allows us opportunities to use technology to connect with others around topics of interest, and create a community of practice that allows interaction over time.

We are born, we live, we die. It's what happens inside that subject/verb/process that makes life worth living — finding that thing, or those things, that make us happy to be alive, that make us eager to face every day, that make us able to overcome the hard times because we know that we will eventually get to our passion...that makes us alive.

What if we had nothing to look forward to? What does succeeding mean?

Please do this today: Write down the words “I’m passionate about…” and then finish the sentence. And mean it.

Start making your passion define who you are, what you bring to the world, what you will leave as your mark on the world.

Find your passion — that’s what makes life worth living.

*UCF Forum columnist Eileen Smith is director of the E2i Creative Studio in the University of Central Florida’s Institute for Simulation & Training and can be reached at [esmith@ist.ucf.edu](mailto:esmith@ist.ucf.edu).*