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What Do You Want?

By Sandy Penny

I've asked myself that question, "What do you want?" as often as I've asked it to others, and with much the same challenge. It's easy to make a list of what you don't want, but much more difficult to know what you do want. The process of uncovering one's heart and soul's desires is more difficult than it sounds. It's not a list of things we could buy if we had the money, and it's not a list of good works we could do if we had the time, energy and resources. It is, however, a process of self-discovery. What is your passion? What brings you joy? What lights up your face with inner delight? What do you want?

Before you can even begin to know what you want, you may have to divest

yourself of the expectations of others. Parents sometimes place high expectations on their children, and the children may not want to meet any of those expectations. However, it can be easy to follow a track that is laid down for us, and more difficult to recognize our own lack of interest in that track. And, even the opposite can be true. Parents may recognize before we do what our gifts and talents are, but we may automatically dismiss them out of rebellion against our parents or an effort to claim our individuality. Unless we make a commitment to knowing ourselves intimately, we may reach a place in our lives where we feel vaguely unfulfilled or grossly unhappy. Take a look at the expectations in your life,

and decide if they're worthy of investing your limited time on this planet.

I challenge you to step back from all that you have known and done and ask, "What do I really want?"

Once you ask that question with a true intent to find the answer, your life, as it is, may come unraveled. Things you've done daily for years may suddenly be inappropriate or uncomfortable. You may find yourself behaving in unexpected ways. Family and friends may look at you as if you've gone crazy. You may even feel that you've lost your mind. In fact, you may have to lose your mind in order to find your heart.

Our minds want to make everything logical and linear, with predictable causes and effects. Life is not science, and science is not the whole of life. If life were logical, would we let any child starve? Is there anything logical about racism or religious intolerance or family abuse? Equally, there is nothing logical about what we want from life. And, no one can tell us what we want. Only we can decide that and, if along the way we find that what we're doing or who we are is no longer what we want, we can change it.

We can always reinvent our lives, in small ways, in big ways, in meaningful ways. Interestingly, what we want from life is often determined by what we choose to give to life. We are an amazingly giving species. Even what we complain about comes from a desire for something better.

Most people want to be of service in some way, to the planet, people, animals, art, or the environment. And, acts of service return a kind of satisfaction that seldom comes from material acquisition or pursuit of fame and fortune. Finding something greater than yourself to be part of can be hugely rewarding and life expanding.

On the other hand, after a close examination of your life, you may find more that brings you joy than you previously thought, and you may return to your old ways with new eyes and greater appreciation. The point is: you'll never know if you don't take a conscious look.

One of my mottos is, "Do what you love and the rest will follow." I was not the first, nor the last, to say it and try to live it. It's not always easy to do what you love, but I believe it's worth it. Doing what you love creates an authentic, congruent life. When you live in this manner, you emanate an energy that attracts people and opportunities. You become a point of light within a greater light, a pure expression of who you came here to be. Regardless of your outer circumstances, once you begin to express your true nature, you will be happier, more content and more fulfilled. Life will be worth living.

One last word of advice. If you truly don't know what you love to do, begin with an affirmation: "I always know what I love and want to do." Repeat it until it becomes true for you.

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