

## **The Power of Passion**

By Steven L. Anderson, Ph.D., MBA

In the song "Jack and Diane", John Cougar Mellencamp sings the following line, "Life goes on long after the thrill of living is gone." Boy does that hit the nail on the head! Thoreau said, "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." I have a constant stream of clients coming through my office telling me, "Doc, I'm not depressed, but I just don't feel good. I feel stale. What's wrong with me?" This discussion, generally, quickly proceeds to the person telling me, "I don't know why I am alive." In my opinion, how we answer that question determines whether or not we are happy. The key, I think, is to find something we are passionate about and build our lives around the dream which that passion engenders within us.

So, how does one do this? Essentially, I believe that our destinies are written on our souls. Our job is to discover it and turn it into reality. If we do that, we are happy. If we don't, we struggle. The best way, in my opinion, to discover your purpose, your passion, is to make time to listen to your soul. You must be quiet to hear this voice. It speaks very quiet and subtly. You must listen to the voices within you with all of the earnestness, humility, and innocence of a small child. Do you remember when you were young and innocent; when dreams came to you of what you could become came as naturally as breathing? Do you remember when you would lie in your back yard on the cool green grass of a summer afternoon, look up into the azure skies and imagine what you could become? Those dreams fired your imagination and set your soul on fire with a hunger to be your most sacred and immaculate self. That is where I am suggesting you must go on a regular basis. Find a special place for yourself, free from phones and faxes and interruptions and just LISTEN. For me this place is the Franklin Park Conservatory. I go there about once per week and sit by the waterfall and just listen. When I am done, I write. Every dream I have of who I want to become and am becoming has come from those sessions.

I must warn you; however, this is not an easy journey. Joseph Campbell calls this the "hero's journey". It is fraught with risk. I guarantee that along with your excitement will come fear. In fact, if you are not scared, then I don't really believe you are on your path. I will talk more about overcoming fear in next month's Ezine. Also, you must be patient. If you have not done this for a long time it will be very difficult to understand what you are hearing or how to make sense out of it. Be patient. Understanding your emotions, your soul, is difficult, but amazingly rewarding. You will never regret the efforts that you make. You will build a life that matters because it will be fired by a passion that is uniquely you. You and all who come in contact with you will benefit from the work that you have done. You will make a difference. In the end, nothing else matters.