

FINDING YOUR PASSION

By Bill Daniels

the Advocate Magazine, December 2008

I'm sitting at a Starbucks on a clear, fall morning, sipping a tall drip coffee and thinking about finding passion.



Finding passion is an art we've all heard something about, but most of us won't ever truly attempt. It's too risky, too uncertain, takes you to uncomfortable places, eats away at the established order and so threatens chaos, destruction and despair.

That's the fear, anyway. Yet, for some folks, and I confess to falling in this group, focusing on passion is what brings flavor to living.

Doubting this principle applies to you? Let's Google and see what the internet world believes.

"If you could do one thing to transform your life, I would highly recommend it be to find something you're passionate about, and do it for a living," writes blogger Leo Babauto, who describes himself as a "writer, a marathoner, an early riser, a vegan, and a father of six."

Babauto seems prominent in the passion department. Google "finding your passion" and his monograph pops up as number one, which is something, as Google reports the search term "finding your passion" generates 15,400,000 hits. That's a lot of passion. It says a great deal about how important finding passion is to a huge number of people and also speaks volumes about how we all struggle to achieve the ideal in our lives and our professions.

My sense is, finding and keeping passion in a law practice is a particularly difficult chore. I believe there are many reasons for this truth.

One is that the profession itself is so demanding, it often seems to drain passion rather than produce it. Client needs, court deadlines, keeping current, watching the finances, all seem push us into endless, grinding conflict and stilted, rigid process, and threaten to suck the life out of all us poor practitioners.

I know I'm not alone in feeling this way. Try typing "finding your passion in law" into Google and you'll find article after article, after blog, after e-zine talking about how law can't possibly lead to passion, or how avoiding law school was an fortunate escape to passion and all that other nonsense civilians tell themselves when they don't get how empowering and invigorating a law practice can truly be.

Yet, I know we can be passionate about law, because I've found my passion in what I do. Not every time and not every case. But by and large, all and all, given the choices to apply my time and talent to any livelihood on earth, I find myself called to vocation as counselor and advocate for the hurt, the helpless and the just plain confused in that secular cathedral we know as the courthouse.

I know I'm not alone in this, because I see passion in lawyers throughout the community and I've found that the most passionate attorneys are generally the best at what they do.

You may have heard of Srully Blotnick, the former Forbes columnist and author who reported studying 1,500 graduate students over 20 years, attempting to see if he could determine what made a person a success. He published his findings in his book, *Getting Rick Your Own Way* and though his research methods were controversial at the time, his results are widely quoted by those promoting a passion-driven professional lifestyle.

Blotnick grouped his subjects into two categories. Category A was made up of people who wanted money *now*. They made up 83% of the group, or 1,245 persons.

Category B were people who pursued their true interests first, sure that money would eventually follow. These Category B risk takers made up 17% of the sample, or 255.

After 20 years, there were 101 millionaires in the group. Just 1 came from Category A. The balance, 100, came from Category B.

So, how does this all apply on a practical level?

Back at the internet, my Googling led me to Matt Homann, who blogs at thenonbillablehour.typepad.com. He has an online power point presentation called *Ten Ways to Build a Better Firm* that in 73 slides has more to say about how to find passion in practice than 73 hours of MCLE.

"Get outside the box" he begins. "Think REAL Big!"

Being a lawyer is hard, Homann acknowledges. "You worry about things you can't control. Under great pressure to _____ results. Expected to know everything. . . . It is easy to slip up. Lawyers get sh*t upon by everyone."

Still, despite all the difficulties, pursuing passion is a path of one thousand steps. So, Homann offers:

"Be true to yourself . . . even if you are a little crazy. . . . Get your ducks in a row. Remember, your business comes first. You must fix what needs fixing. Clean up your waiting room. . . . Separate the wheat from the chaff. . . . And just one more thing . . . Remember why you do what you do."

Bill Daniels regularly publishes a variety of articles and videos to keep you abreast of legal developments and case law that affect our society.

For additional reading and learning:

[Checklists, Reading Lists and Connecting the Dots](#), Connect the dots from planning to success.

[Sun Tzu, Lao Tsu; Using Yin And Yang To Help Make Your Cases Stronger](#). Talking about practical principles here and what yin and yang teach us when working your cases.

These previous and other articles/videos can be found in the Learning Center section of www.BillDanielsLaw.com

William A. Daniels is a Trial Attorney with BILL DANIELS | LAW OFFICES, APC, in Encino, CA. His practice focuses on class actions, employment and serious personal injury cases. A graduate of Loyola Law School of Los Angeles, he is a member of the Consumer Attorney Association of Los Angeles Board of governors and a founding member of the Civil Justice Program and the 21st Century Trial School at Loyola. For several consecutive years he has been named a "Super Lawyer" Los Angeles Magazine in Southern California.

He can be reached at <mailto:William.Daniels@BillDanielsLaw.com>; www.BillDanielsLaw.com