

An excerpt from *Your Ultimate Life Plan: How to Deeply Transform Your Everyday Experience and Create Changes That Last*, by Dr. Jennifer Howard.

## Passion and Purpose

*Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you.*

—Oprah Winfrey

With authenticity and integrity, you sink more deeply into who you truly are, which naturally leads to living with greater passion. Yet the word *passion* has been bandied about so much it feels watered down and has lost its deeper meaning. Passion runs the gamut from a strong liking or deep interest to intense, boundless enthusiasm; or it could be a conviction that drives you to have, do, or be something, or contribute your gifts to the world. People talk about their passion for hobbies and entertainment, such as sports, collecting shoes, gaming, gardening, or a favorite TV program. Some of these supposed passions are external hungers and addictions used to avoid difficult or painful feelings, taking you away from your essence and deeper self.

Being conscious helps us discern the difference between addictive thinking and our deepest sense of passion. The voice of addictions, even the softer ones, tell us it's a good idea to do, think, imbibe, or say something that's ultimately destructive. That's not true passion.

Yes, passion comes from desires, but where are they coming from inside of you, and where are they leading you? Are they leading you to discerning awareness, openness, and fulfillment, or to more impossible-to-fill hungers?

True passion flows from our very deepest source, our highest level of existence, our essence. It's a calling, an ache inside that's summoning you to be the person you were meant to be, so you can make the contribution to this world only you can make. It's this passion that's moving you closer to your "purpose."

Your purpose is your *raison d'être*, your reason to be, to exist here and now. It's not just about action and what you create; it applies to who you are. Coming from your purpose helps create a life and lifework rooted in your passion, smoothing out the effort it takes to be successful. Purpose and passion generate the inspiration needed to pursue your personal and professional goals. When rooted in your purpose, you can more easily tap into your true passion.

Authors Chris Attwood and Janet Bray Attwood, of *The Passion Test*, have seen that "Passions change and morph over time as one comes to know and understand oneself more deeply." As we grow and change we become clearer about who we are, and what

we truly want and need, and find ways to make our lives, relationships, and careers better. We develop healthier and more conscious relationships based on mutual respect, sharing, and trust. We communicate openly and honestly, admitting our mistakes and accepting responsibility for ourselves. In our intimate relationships, both partners are equal, sharing power and control. We listen to each other with respect, valuing the other's opinions. We support each other's goals and life's purpose, and the right to have different points of view, activities, friends, and interests.

As you follow your inner longings, you might have the desire to find work you feel more passionate about, looking to be a more conscious businessperson. If you haven't found, or created, the job of your dreams yet, you can probably find an aspect of your current work that taps into your passion. Motivated by purpose and passion, you're led to approach all facets of business more consciously. Finding where your particular skills fit best allows you to contribute your unique gifts. This leads to inner fulfillment and a life that feels so rich you're naturally inspired to serve and make a positive difference in the world.

What is your vision for your greatest life?

Success is relative, and each person has his or her own vision of happiness, fulfillment, and realized goals. Yet we've integrated enough to confidently know that whatever happens, we'll figure it out, because our mature, adult self will take care of it. If something seems too big to handle, we trust our inner resources to embrace the uncertainty. We know we'll find the external resources needed to grow and change.

### **Meditation: The Gifts of Essence**

*Breathe deeply. Let go of all the internal chatter, even if only for a moment. Now feel the letting go in your belly. Bring yourself back to your breath. As best you can, allow yourself to sink into the silence and stillness that's always available. Allow your whole body to experience the silence as you breathe. Even if you hear noise, feel the presence of silence, of stillness. Go into the silence, the quiet, the stillness, breathing. Simply allow yourself to deeply rest for a moment. The ever-present stillness surrounds you and feeds you as you breathe. It's in perfect harmony with you. Stillness breathes you. Allow whatever's coming up to just be as it is. Imagine for a moment that you're offering the gifts of your essence to the world. Your gifts spring forth from the depths of your essence, from the depths of your heart and soul. Feel what that's like. You know your essence and you can share it with others. Now, see if you can allow the world to receive your gifts. Just breathe and notice what you're feeling in your body. What emotions might be coming up, what thoughts? Notice what you see. You're giving from your essence. Notice anything else about this experience. Sit with this for a while.*

Dr. Jennifer Howard is a licensed psychotherapist, energy healer, and spiritual teacher. She's the author of *Your Ultimate Life Plan: How to Deeply Transform Your Everyday Experience and Create Changes That Last*, Huffington Post blogger and the host of the weekly radio talk show, *A Conscious Life*. Visit her website, [www.DrJenniferHoward.com](http://www.DrJenniferHoward.com), for meditations, articles, and free gifts.

Reprinted, with permission of the publisher, from ***YOUR ULTIMATE LIFE PLAN: HOW TO DEEPLY TRANSFORM YOUR EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE AND CREATE CHANGES THAT LAST*** © 2013 Dr. Jennifer Howard. Published by New Page Books a division of Career Press, Pompton Plains, NJ. 800-227-3371. All rights reserved.

*Creating a Life (and World) That You Love*

*hear noise, feel the presence of silence, of stillness. Go into the silence, the quiet, the stillness, breathing. Simply allow yourself to deeply rest for a moment. The ever-present stillness surrounds you and feeds you as you breathe. It's in perfect harmony with you. Stillness breathes you. Allow whatever's coming up to just be as it is. Imagine for a moment that you're offering the gifts of your essence to the world. Your gifts spring forth from the depths of your essence, from the depths of your heart and soul. Feel what that's like. You know your essence and you can share it with others. Now, see if you can allow the world to receive your gifts. Just breathe and notice what you're feeling in your body. What emotions might be coming up, what thoughts? Notice what you see. You're giving from your essence. Notice anything else about this experience. Sit with this for a while.*