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**M1 Lesson 1: Is Following Your Passion a Good Idea?**

Core Competencies:

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| * Communication | * Thinking | * Personal & Social |

Big Ideas:

* Reflecting on our preferences and skills helps us identify the steps we need to take to achieve our career goals.

Curricular Competencies:

* Use self-assessment and reflection to develop awareness of their strengths, preferences and skills.
* Question self and others about the role of family expectations and traditions, and of community needs in career choices.
* Recognize and explore diverse perspectives on how work contributes to our community and society.

In this lesson and activities, students will start to think about the concept of passion, and whether or not it is a good idea to follow their passion in career-life decisions with the help of looking at some different perspectives.

Lesson:

In CLE 9, students will be given a lot of opportunities to determine and reflect upon their perspectives on career and life, and how their perspectives influence their career-life decisions. This topic is best followed up by a classroom discussion or debate, as students will likely consider and bring up a lot of factors not discussed in the lesson.

For students:

Have you ever heard the advice of "follow your passion" or "do what you love and you will never work a day in your life"? When learning about the balance between career and life, you will hear a lot about passions, but not everyone has a passion for the work they do.

*Discuss as a class:* Should you be passionate about your work, and do you think that is necessary for work to be satisfying? Do you know of anyone who is passionate about their work? Who are they and what makes them love their work? Do you know anyone who is really not passionate about their work? Why? How would you like to feel about your future work? Have students discuss positive and negative examples of people in their own lives.

Have students consider this perspective: **Passion is important, just not in the way you think.**

Don't worry if at this point in your life, you don't have one particular passion! There’s a lot that matters when it comes to finding a life path you love. Fortunately, there's also a lot of research which can give us direction. Research suggests that passion is by no means one of the most important factors for job and life satisfaction in general. Surprisingly, money is not the most important thing by some distance, but there is a relationship between using skills in high level jobs and satisfaction in your job.

Being able to help others also contributes to your job satisfaction. Workers in non-profit organisations tend to be more generally happy with their lives, despite lower average incomes and regardless of whether you were already happy.

It's also important to do something you are good at. Matching your skills to your job will increase job satisfaction. As is engaging work where you are challenged, have some level of control over your work, and have a low level of stress.

**So what does this all mean?**

What it all comes down to is that it is not always the responsibility of a job or career that matters, in the sense one might say 'I'm passionate about education', or 'I'm passionate about art'. It's the context of the role and your personal match to it.

It's all very well loving music, but that doesn't mean working as an assistant in a record company will be more fulfilling than another role which would better match your skillset. And passions don't always help us to think objectively about our path in life. If your passion is making tons of money, chatting with friends online, or watching TV – chances are this won’t translate into a career that is fulfilling long-term.

**Passions can change.**

There’s a deeper problem with the idea of following your passions: *they change.*

Ask a group of 11 year old boys what they want to do when they grow up, and at least one of them is likely to want to be a professional soccer player. Statistically, this is challenging, but it also doesn’t take account of the fact that passions vary.

We people look at people like Steve Jobs for career inspiration, but we ignore the fact that he stumbled into what he did. We’re not always very good at predicting what we will be interested in or what sort of person we will be. So we should probably keep our options more open than we first think.

**Activity**

1. Watch Mike Rowe's video take on passion versus opportunity:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KF0AN4H3U8](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3D-KF0AN4H3U8&data=05%7C01%7CDawn.Anderson%40sd71.bc.ca%7C3a31e8a2b65c4b4f01a108dbbfafb290%7C8a33c0abdc5a486195746c1f01277d1c%7C0%7C0%7C638314533702147345%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=8HuK79bpK8DTx6YK05rl7u6YGpg9oPU1phh8n8yZvqM%3D&reserved=0)

1. Either discuss through Canvas, as a class, or in a debate format:
   * In your opinion, how important is following your passion when it comes to choosing a career? You can take the opinion that following passions is important in job satisfaction, passion is not important in job satisfaction, or some combination of a viewpoint. Use examples to strengthen your view.

**After the assignment, review the following advice for moving forward in career-life:**

***1. Focus on skill***

A large part of what we become interested in is what we get good at. It has been suggested that passion does not come naturally, it is influenced by our effort. The better we get at something, the more it becomes a passion.

Get good at something first, persevere at it, and you may end up enjoying it (or get a better idea of what you do enjoy).

***2. Cast your net wide***

Don’t limit yourself unnecessarily by just following your passion. If jobs that are rewarding allow you to engage and become interested, to help others and fit your skills and needs, that still leaves a lot of options.

Build skills first, follow things that seem to map onto those skills, and keep your mind open to careers which might not initially be that appealing. This will help you to develop interests in areas that are likely to be fulfilling, and to be able to respond to changing desires and priorities throughout life.

***3. Work hard***

If practice, skill and mastery are a big part of having a fulfilling career, then you need to work hard. The better your knowledge of an area, the more informed you will be to make decisions about what will prove the best fit for you. Identify your strengths and interests. See where they overlap, and where they don’t. Then work hard at developing those strengths.

That work comes *ahead*of passion, not after. See what passions develop as a result. You can make your passions: they’re not just born in you.  
  
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