

BOOKS



Passion and Purpose
How to identify and leverage
the powerful patterns that impact
your work/life

By Marlys Hanson With Merle Hanson
Reviewed by W. Mat Juechter

How many people do you know spend a significant amount of time wishing they were somewhere else instead of work? Despite their talent or intelligence, they're rarely successful because they're not tapping into their creative energies. Successful people, asserts Marlys Hanson in *Passion and Purpose*, have one characteristic in common: They follow their passions.

Hanson's work is meant to provide a self-guided process for discovering the work parameters a person is meant to perform, in turn allowing informed decisions about work and life. The process can identify consistent patterns of pas-

sions, or natural strengths. The goal is to recognize and leverage vocationally significant passions.

The assessment that serves as the book's foundation is behavior-based, as opposed to preference-based. Hanson suggests that preference-based assessments founded on responses to multiple-choice questions can be biased. A respondent's perceptions are based on what he or she would prefer as an occupation rather than actual behavior, making the results less accurate.

In contrast, Hanson asserts that behavior-based assessments are founded on recurring behaviors that reflect in-

ON THE NIGHT STAND

By Darryl S. Doane and Rose D. Sloat



Decisions, decisions! Between us, we have two nightstands, making the process of highlighting

our favorite books all the more difficult. However, after much debate, we eventually picked our three all-time preferred tomes.

Our first choice is a shoo-in—*The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It*, by Michael E. Gerber. Having survived the five-year milestone as a company ourselves, we are delighted to discover that the small-business guru may think we've done many things right! Using easy-to-understand terms, Gerber inspires readers to focus on the long-term business development process. Next choice: Our interest in history places Donald T. Phillips's *Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies for Tough Times* as our favorite among the 35-odd leadership reads resting on our nightstands. CEOs, supervisors, and all who aspire to leadership positions would be hard-pressed to find a more ethical, moral, and caring role model than Abraham Lincoln.

Completing the list: In a forward-looking investigation, Richard Florida's *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* examines the creative process and its role in economic survival. We're in complete agreement with Florida on the driving force of creativity in distinguishing a company from its competitors and in shaping society.

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nate motivation—the natural desires that motivate someone to a particular action. This assessment, System for Identifying Motivated Abilities (SIMA), addresses vocationally significant motivations, or natural strengths. Hanson contends that when people accomplish something personally significant, they inevitably repeat some or all of the aspects of that innate motivation. Over time, a consistent pattern emerges that, if recognized, reveals the basis for an individual's personal fulfillment and productivity.

The concept of innate motivation isn't new. Socrates said to know thyself and be who you are. Carl Jung differentiated between inherited versus personal biography. Management experts Peter Drucker, Marcus Buckingham, and Steve Pinker advise that success comes to those who have self-knowledge of their strengths and how to use them.

But most of us would agree that our passions frequently reveal themselves early in life. World-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma learned to play an improvised viola while sitting on a stack of phone books at age four. Bill Gates teamed up with friends to create a programming company when he was only 13 years old. For most of us, our actual calling requires more time to manifest. The potential may be present, but how it should be nurtured isn't always clear. Oprah Winfrey was reciting Bible verses in church when she was four, but her real gift, tapping into human emotion, blossomed when she began her radio career many years later.

Hanson asks readers to reflect on their life and work achievements to find evidence of such passions. You might remember certain life events in great detail and hardly recall others. One of the first steps in recognizing powerful themes of passion is to reflect. Hanson also coaches readers on ways to compile evidence, with tools to recognize and interpret the data in personal achievement stories. Using analysis from diverse case studies,

Hanson illustrates a range of motivated abilities and their effect on career fit—from the outstanding teacher who tirelessly played school with his siblings and tutored classmates, to the accountant who kept financial records for her father when she was only 10.

The best strategy for finding a meaningful life, Hanson maintains, is by performing work that engages one's passions. Organizations can benefit from fostering an atmosphere that supports employees who are gifted at their tasks and passionate about results.

The book points out that one of the largest obstacles is that our passions can become fuzzy in early life when we decide to pursue goals that are expected of us rather than personally meaningful. When we depend on external standards and such rewards as compensation and security, we can lose sight of who we are. The consequence is a cycle in which we get promoted to positions that aren't good matches.

Despite passion derailment, Hanson suggests that we always have the opportunity to uncover and retrieve meaning in our work and lives. We can savor the notion that we each have special gifts, and we don't have to be a genius or a celebrity to inspire management and find work-related roles that use our talents in mutually beneficial ways.

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By Kevin D. Mitnick
(John Wiley & Sons, US\$27.50)
The world's most famous computer hacker expounds on how not to impress a date.

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By Robert B. Tucker
(Berrett-Koehler, \$27.95)
Practical yet creative how-to advice, such as encouraging nerf battles, from the innovation consultant.

Follow This Path: How the World's Greatest Organizations Drive Growth by Unleashing Human Potential

By Curt Coffman and Gabriel Gonzalez-Molina
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E-Learning and the Science of Instruction: Proven Guidelines for Consumers and Designers of Multimedia Learning

By Ruth Colvin Clark and Richard E. Mayer
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Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? Inside IBM's Historic Turnaround

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Walk in Big Blue ex-CEO shoes as you wheel and deal at the plugged multinational.