

DREAM



There is
nothing like a
dream to create
the future.

~ Victor Hugo



DISCOVER YOUR PASSION . . .

When people with a passion for making a difference in the world succeed in finding an organization that can help them do it, there is no limit to what can be accomplished. Our dreams become reality.

I love passionate people.

I get excited when I am around folks who are in touch with the things that matter to them the most in life. I want to spend time with people who are on a journey toward self-awareness; people who want to uncover and discover their own talents, gifts, creativity, and wisdom.

I look for passion in every aspect of my life. It inspires me. It gives me hope. Take a moment right now and ask yourself: "What drives me to push myself, to exceed expectations, to dream big dreams?"

This may be one of the most important questions you can ever ask yourself, so really think about it. If you reflected for a few minutes, I'll bet you're sitting there right now with a big smile on your face. If you were feeling tired, I'll wager you have more energy all of a sudden.

You're probably feeling warm, maybe a little anxious, perhaps even restless. You want to get up and get moving! That's what passion does. It wakes us up. It drives us. It changes us and it changes the world.

I believe the measure of a truly spectacular person—a leader in their field, a devoted parent, a gifted child, a teacher, an activist—is always reflected best by their connection to their own passion. Our work in the social-profit sector is about making the world a better place for the people who are struggling and suffering now and those who will inhabit the world when we are gone.

Passion fuels this work. It sparks our dreams. It gives us hope. Passion fires our imaginations and gives us the courage to do, to give, and to share. I believe, and the research

confirms, that passion can make the difference between success and failure; and nowhere is that more true than in our sector. With passion, the money will come; the volunteers and their time and their wisdom will come; the resources you need will come when you are in the business of raising the passions of the people connected to your work.

Martin Luther King, Jr. said "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." When we stop speaking our truths and standing up for what we believe is right, we are actively resigning ourselves to things never getting any better. If we strip away our personal truths, our visions and our desire for positive change, what is left? We owe it to ourselves and the next generation to uncover and discover our own passions, hopes, and dreams.

THE ART OF THE STORY

Stories have tremendous power in affecting change. Make time to craft a 2-minute speech.

I want you to come up with a new story. A story from where you sit within your program. It doesn't have to be something you necessarily experienced firsthand, but you need to have been close to it and it needs to have touched you, personally. What have you experienced in your program that chokes you up, that makes you mad or hopeful, what is it that brings you to work every day with an unstoppable desire to do more for the clients you serve? This is the story you should tell. This is the one that will cause your program's stakeholders to stand with you, investing and involving themselves in the amazing, life-changing work of your organization.

There is no real formula for the activity of developing the story—your two-minute speech. I suggest you find an hour or two where you can sit alone without interruption. Get yourself into a space where you can be reflective. Play some music. Light a candle. Think about why you do what you do. Try to remember why you got involved in the first place. Think about those moments when the work is unbearably difficult—when you might be thinking about changing jobs—what keeps you there? What motivates you to tough it out?

Is there a person that comes to mind? A young person who surprised you with a heartfelt "Thanks"? A kid whose life was a mess when they first came to your program and now is succeeding in ways unimaginable? Is it a mentor who pops into your head? Is there a volunteer whose life has been changed? Make a few


notes. Draw a picture. Let yourself feel the emotion you want to cultivate in the person you'll be telling the story.

When it becomes clear (and it will), write it down and practice telling it. Practice in front of the mirror. Then in front of a colleague or two, maybe a young person, practice in front of your significant other. Ask them for their feedback.

You want this story to be quick and powerful. And you want to tell the story in a way that will move *even you* every time you tell it. It can't be phony. I don't want you to pretend to cry. This isn't about making people feel guilty or sorry for the people you're working to help. This is the real deal; heartfelt emotion turned into passionate commitment. You don't need to fake it. When it's real, you'll know it, and the people listening to you will know it, too.

The "Elevator Speech"

Although your two-minute speech will be all you need most of the time, an elevator speech is a very brief (about 20 seconds) description of your program. It is carefully crafted, well-practiced, and designed to convey the essence of your work to someone in the time it takes to ride an elevator.



Dream is the spark of passion; talent is the firework of its expression; perseverance, the sacred fire of its accomplishment.

~ Daniel Chabot

QUICK TIP SERIES

Published monthly by Common Ground Consulting LLC, this brief is part of a series designed to support and enhance the critical work of social profit organizations.

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QUICK TIP

Many years ago, I participated in an outstanding leadership program. It was one of those opportunities that was useful in the moment, but whose powerful impact really only became clear years later. One of the key activities of the program was the development of a personal mission statement. In the social profit sector we are all familiar with organizational mission statements. The personal version

has the same intent: to define your core values and help you achieve your dreams. At the beginning of every new year, I review my statement, evaluating my actions against what I know to be important to me. It gets me back on track, if I've drifted. A couple of times I've made changes to my mission, but they have always been minor and usually reflected newly discovered passions and powerful new dreams. Take the time.

Write down your mission. Tell your life story. Act boldly to achieve your dreams. Read Craig's Personal Mission after logging into the Common Ground website.

The key to the ability to change is a changeless sense of who you are, what you are about, and what you value.

~ Stephen R. Covey

Click below for help writing your personal mission statement:
<http://www.franklincovey.com/>