



Seattle Professional Newsletter

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Chapter Supporter Spotlight

Curt Rosengren, Seattle's Passion Catalyst



For years Curt Rosengren languished as a "professional malcontent." Unhappy and bored with his chosen career in marketing, he assumed a new role every couple years - a sure sign he was on the wrong path. While treading water as a marketing consultant, his frustration got so bad that he contemplated going to art school in an attempt to figure out just what to do next.

Then inspiration struck during a coffee meet-up. A colleague shared his dream to leave his IT professional role to open a flying school. Curt was intrigued by the proposition and asked plenty of questions - What are the next steps? What's getting in the way? What if you did this? What if you tried that? They turned

out to be the right questions. As Curt describes it, "by the end of our conversation, he was vibrating with excitement," ignited by Curt's inquiries and ideas. As they parted ways, Curt's colleague exclaimed "I can't go back to my regular job now!"

Curt too was super-charged by the conversation. He reflected on his gift as a coach, supported by a natural curiosity and non-stop ideation. Getting people excited about their own possibilities, from the pursuit of their own passions, was his passion.

This realization happened to occur during the dotcom bust, providing further reason to leave marketing behind. To prove to himself that he really could charge for something he had always done naturally for free, Curt charged another colleague a nominal fee for a set of five sessions. By the end of the first session, Curt realized that this came more naturally than marketing ever did. And he was a lot better at it. Curt happily set out to make a full-time job out of his passion, and the Passion Catalyst was born.

"Career" Should Not Mean "Costume"

As Curt sees it, most people treat their career as a costume - an identity they hang up on the coat rack when they come home. Not only does this phenomenon create a disconnect between someone's private life and work life, it also results in folks feeling they are but a job title when they put on the workday costume.

But Curt has found that when people align their work with what energizes and inspires them, rather than the external drivers that most people use to make their career decisions, work becomes a projection of who he or she truly is. "A projection of who I am?" That's not the traditional way people think of their careers, and that's why just a fraction of workers actually love what they do.

More than half of the American workforce is dissatisfied with work. The next time you're stuck in traffic on the way home from your job, remember that the person in every second car is unhappy with what he or she just spent the last six to twelve hours doing. Ours could be a much more pleasant country if we abandoned the career costume altogether.

Aligning Your Path With Your Passions

Passion means different things to different people. Curt defines passion as **the energy that comes from bringing more of YOU into what you do**. Think of how a river flows in a riverbed. Not only is no energy expended in getting that water from one place to another, but energy is actually created because it is flowing along that path.

It's the same with your career. When you find your true riverbed, the path that aligns with who you are and what you're naturally drawn to, the work you do energizes you. That's passion. Unfortunately, most people are trying to pump water over a mountain in their careers, endlessly burning energy moving forward because their work is ill-aligned with their natural inclinations.

To discover a work role that is a projection of yourself, and not an obstacle to your flow, you must identify what is natural to you. Here are some of Curt's first steps:

Step One / Make a list of what you love to do - but don't stop there!

For each activity, ask why. Love to travel? Many of us do, but for different reasons. Answer: "I love to travel because..." Reverse engineer what you love to identify why. As you do, you will find common themes start to appear. For example, Curt loves travel photography and educational events because they allow him to explore new things. For him, exploration and discovery is what he calls a Passion Factor, one of the underlying characteristics that tend to be in place when he feels energized about what he is doing. Compile those Passion Factors into a list. You now have an "internal compass" that points the way to a path that energizes and inspires you. If passion is the energy that comes from bringing more of YOU into what you do, this internal compass is a snapshot of who you are. More specifically, it's a snapshot of where the energy comes from.

Step Two / Ask, "What kinds of careers will let me experience these Passion Factors?"

Use the Passion Factors you have identified to brainstorm possible paths that will let you experience them. If exploration and discovery lights you up, what are the career paths that have that? For example, you could be a career coach, or a travel photographer, or a genealogist, or a private investigator, or a research scientist, or any number of other careers.

What many people would describe as their passion, Curt sees as a vehicle for them to experience their Passion Factors. Love travel? It's not just because you love travel, but because you experience those Passion Factors when you travel. Your aim is to find a career path that allows you to experience as many of your Passion Factors as possible.

Step Three / Use your internal compass to evaluate career options

When you're evaluating a career option, use that internal compass to help you gauge the likelihood that it will energize and inspire you.

The concept is simple. If you identify the underlying characteristics that tend to be in place when you're on fire about something (your Passion Factors), and a career path has many of those characteristics, the odds are excellent that you're going to feel on fire about that career.

These steps don't just help you identify the right path, they also help you avoid the wrong one. Curt's clients have used their compasses to avoid taking jobs that were appealing because they were "sexy," but didn't synch with what really energized them. The compass also helps you ask better questions during the job interview to determine if the job aligns with your Passion Factors.

Remember how natural your right path will feel, just like the river flowing in its bed. Think about your daily activities in terms of energy management: happiness is maximization of gain over drain. Bring as much as possible of what energizes you into the picture, and minimize what drains your energy.

Final Words of Wisdom from the Passion Catalyst

Passion is the best investment you can make in your career

As Curt is fond of saying, "You can never be anyone else half as good as you can be you." That means if you are wearing a costume in your work instead of being who you really are, you are limiting your potential. Finding a path that energizes and inspires you gives you more fuel for your success. Skip the career costume, be yourself.

You don't always have to feel upbeat

Humans have bad days sometimes, and that's okay. Motivational books often avoid allowing you to admit you feel down or off for a day. But it's perfectly alright to experience occasional low points, which are a natural part of life.

Nurture your eco-system

Remember the people around you are your eco-system and critically impact how you feel - make sure they're positive and supportive. They're key in assisting you during the challenging times.

Anything positive, like a movie or a book, can help you forward

Curt stopped watching the news because it's so disturbing. Be wary of what you ingest mentally; life is complex enough that you're wise to avoid unneeded mental toxins. Also maintain physical fitness, proper hydration and nutrition, which are major mood-shifters.

If you hit bumps and get bruises, it means you're moving

If your mission is compelling, you are happy to do it every day whether or not it's immediately "fun." Don't think that angels sing just because you pursue your passion. Truth is, by following your path you might meet more external resistance because the career you once wore as a costume was conformity and the path to least resistance. Rest assured, however, that in your natural path, you'll meet far less internal resistance and be able to sustain external challenges because you are newly tapping into sources of personal energy.

You can talk about the right job for you for hours

If you were being interviewed about your current job, would you be guarded, pessimistic, or going through the motions? Those speak volume of you not feeling energized in what you're doing. You could be like Curt and feel so jazzed about your job that you could speak about it for hours to a brick wall.

Curt was interviewed by NIS Board Member Ariyah Desouza, ariyah.desouza@gmail.com. You can contact Curt via his email, website or blog:

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web: <http://www.passioncatalyst.com>
blog: <http://mapmaker.curtrosengren.com>



Happy Holidays from the Net Impact Board! 2010 will be an exciting year for Net Impact Seattle. Our Leading Change Series and Impact at Work Spring launch will provide our Professional Chapter members the tools and resources essential for leading meaningful change. We hope you'll join us in our collaboration to make an impact.

Warm regards.

Professional Development

Dinner & Dialogue II: Kick-Start Green

Date: Thursday, January 14, 2010

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Cost: \$10 covers dinner and beverages

Want some innovative ideas that you can use to energize yourself and your Green Team? The second Dialogue in the Leading Change Series will explore innovative twists on ideas and strategies that you can use to make an impact at work.

The Dialogue will be led by Libuse Binder, author of *Ten Ways to Change the World in your Twenties*. Libuse left an ambitious career in Hollywood to make a difference in the lives of the next generation. Through her experiences as a teacher, writer, and environmental activist, as well as her research into how technology has energized grassroots movements everywhere, she has grown to believe in the powerful potential of this next generation to change the world in revolutionary ways.

Directions and details will be sent on registration. Paid Net Impact members have registration priority. RSVP by confirming your attendance on our Facebook Fanpage or by sending an email to niseattle@gmail.com. We will add non-members to a waiting list. Renewing your membership is easy! Click [here](#) to update your membership with the Seattle Net Impact Professional Chapter.

Build Your Career

Climate Corps Fellowships

Building on two successful years, Net Impact and Environmental Defense Fund are expanding the Climate Corps program to place 50 fellows in host companies around the United States next summer to analyze and make the business case for energy efficiency improvements. Over the last two years, Climate Corps fellows have uncovered efficiencies in lighting, computer equipment, and heating and cooling systems that can save \$89 million in net operational costs over the lifetime of the projects and cut the equivalent of 280 million kilowatt hours of energy use per year.

Fellowships run for 10-12 weeks in summer 2010.

>> [Learn more and apply to Climate Corps by January 11, 2010](#)

Advance your Career at Net Impact Central

We are expanding our team at Net Impact Central in 2010, in order to achieve the ambitious goals set out in our new three-year Strategic Plan. You will have the opportunity to play a key role in furthering Net Impact's mission and growing our impact.

Net Impact is currently hiring for:

- Director of Development
- Senior Membership Manager
- Communications Manager
- Communications Associate
- Program Associate for Chapters
- Career Program Fellow
- Membership Intern

>> [Learn more and apply today!](#)

Be part of the solution and apply to be a 2010 Corps Member by January 8, 2010

Across the country, 14 million children are growing up in poverty and only half will graduate from high school. It does not have to be this way. Teach For America is seeking individuals with business backgrounds to join our corps of outstanding leaders who teach for two years in urban and rural public schools and become leaders in expanding educational opportunity for all.

"When I announced to my co-workers at Citigroup that I would be headed to the Mississippi Delta to teach math, most of my managers were very supportive – indeed, proud of my decision. I think that everyone – myself included – was very focused on what I would be giving to the kids and greater community that I would serve. I quickly realized though, that I had entirely underestimated the amount that I would learn in the process."

-Morris Liao, 2003 Mississippi Delta Corps Member
Pre-Corps Profession: Investment Banking Analyst, Citigroup
2007 Kellogg MBA

>> [Hear more](#) from Morris and other alumni in the business sector about why they chose to teach in a low-income community and the valuable skills they gained from the experience

>> [Next Application Deadline for the 2010 Corps: Friday, January 8th, 2010](#)

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