



The Biggest Green Networking Mistake of All

By Carol McClelland, PhD

Are you making the biggest green networking mistake of all?

- **Are you relying on your network, friends, spouse, or family to help you figure out your green passion or green career direction?**
- **Are you looking outside yourself for clarity that can only come from within you?**

If you answered “yes” to either of these questions, you are unknowingly sabotaging your future success.

At brainstorming event I attended a couple of weeks ago, several people wanted help figuring out their career direction. Each person gave a laundry list of things they like to do and want to do. Then they requested ideas about what job or career would be best for them.

My response to these participants was very strong – visceral in fact. I’ve spent the majority of my career helping people transform their passions into a career that fulfills and satisfies them. During these two brainstorming sequences I realized how little most people know about the process of identifying and claiming their passions.

Are you still unclear about your passions or direction?

Do you see yourself in any of my observations below?

- **Asking to be rescued by friends and strangers is not becoming.** I didn’t see these two women as the strong, skilled women they are. Instead I heard whining, confused, scared women who were sabotaging their own future with their confusion, indecision and ambiguity. Even if I had a job opportunity to present to them I might not do so because I’d be leery about recommending them to the hiring manager.
- **Ambiguity only attracts more ambiguity.** If you can’t commit to something you want, you’ll get nothing solid in return. Claim something that feels true to you, even if it is only part of your ultimate vision, and lead with that passion. Your commitment will lead to contacts, leads, and resources that will move you toward your passion, which is the direction you want to go!

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- **Someone or something outside of you can't tell you what you are passionate about.** Only you can discern what excites you. If you turn to others (or to a single assessment) to define your passion, you are abdicating your power. Any discoveries you make will be built on a shaky foundation that may crumble as you continue to build your future.
- **Your future is not and cannot be based on only one passion.** "I like sales" or "I want to travel" are not enough upon which to base your next career. Your ideal career is a unique blend of all of your interests. If you are having trouble coming up with your ideal career, make sure you are looking at all of your interests and passions.
- **Discovering your passions shouldn't take years.** If it is, you are going about the process in a way that will never give you the results you are looking for. Your passions may evolve and strengthen over time. You may find new ways to weave them together as you grow and your circumstances change. In that way finding your passions is a life long journey. But if you are swimming in confusion, year after year, something's not adding up. Stop what you are doing and look for a new approach to determining your passion.

Realize your career passions!

If you recognize yourself in my observations, use the following guidelines to redirect your quest for your passion.

- **Wait until you have some clarity about your passions before you ask others for assistance.** With clarity, even partial clarity, you'll leave a much better impression on your contacts.
- **Start a list of all the things you are passionate about, even if you don't see how you'll ever make money with them or how you'll get the training you need to pursue them.** Honor your passions. Feed your passions. Explore your passions. As you incorporate your passions into your life, you'll begin to see how they fit together in your life, soul, and work. Claim the passions you identify and then allow other passions to come into focus as you explore your initial ideas.
- **Learn how to identify when you are drawn to something—an environment, a work style, an industry, a philosophy.** Knowing when your inner language tells you that you are drawn to something is the very first, crucial step toward identifying your passion. Don't feel troubled if you don't know what this means or you can't do it. You aren't alone! So many of us were encouraged NOT to follow our own inner voice about our passions whether by parents, schools, or society at large. You can rediscover how to connect with your passions.
- **Your ultimate career is the combination of a number of skills, passions, and interests you have in your personal life and your professional life.** How these skills, passions, and interests come together is what makes you a unique individual. Don't stop when you've identified one or two key ideas. That's like trying to find a hidden treasure with only two clues. Keep your mind open. Each skill, passion, or interest you identify is another clue to your future career.

- **If you've been searching for your purpose for years, STOP!** There's a better way. The strategy you are using is not yielding the results you deserve. Let go of preconceived ideas about your purpose. Eliminate any "shoulds" you are holding onto. Focus on the topics and skills that excite you and engage you. These items are the clues that will ultimately lead you to your purpose.

When you can articulate what you know about your passion and direction, you will be in a much better position to network effectively with friends, family members, colleagues, and new contacts. They will be impressed with who you are you and with your vision. Better yet, they will *want* to help you succeed because you've inspired them.

Green Career Expert, Carol McClelland, PhD, is the author of *Green Careers For Dummies* and Founder and Executive Director of **Green Career Central**, an online resource center with easy-to-use tools, coaching programs, and training events to help professionals, students, and career counselors make sense of the green economy. Download our current free report to help you navigate the green economy at www.greencarecentral.com

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