

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



212 Follow Your Passion? Maybe Not.

A lot of career counselors tells us to follow our passion. Decide what it is that's important to us and mold our career, in fact, our life around it. Not everybody agrees. I'm Jerry Roberts and we'll dig into that, today, on The Extra Point.

It sounds great. We should just figure out what it is we like or what turns us on, and that should be the focus of life and career. I'm not going to argue that it has worked for some people. However, there are people with dissenting opinions.

Former star of the Discovery Channel's "Dirty Jobs", Mike Rowe, is one of them. Rowe wants to close America's skills gap.

Right now, it's estimated there are more than 7 million job openings across the U.S., with not nearly enough qualified workers to fill them. Rowe has partnered with footwear and apparel company Wolverine to provide financial support for folks interested in trade career.

Wolverine reports just 9 percent of high school students are planning to pursue a trade career. Some see a trade as tougher work, lower paid, and not a "good job." They believe these are misconceptions. And then there's the issue of telling 18, 19, 20 year-olds that they'll be happy if they follow their passion. Before I tell what Rowe thinks, let me toss this in: Most kids that age have no idea what their passion is and to force them to choose a career path on that basis is just asking for trouble and a lot of frustration.

They typically get career advice and then choose expensive education, which usually leads to a mountain of debt. Wait a second, I thought we were leading them to happiness. Rowe says, "In the end, many people end up trapped — swimming in debt, without any viable job options."

What's the option? Rowe advises young people to follow opportunity and then add in passion.

"On 'Dirty Jobs,' Rowe met countless people who were doing work they hadn't planned on doing. When he asked questions he found many made six figures a year, took a vacation, and had enough balance to be involved in their children's activities — and they had no debt.

Entrepreneur and Shark Tank star Mark Cuban agrees. He says the he believes one of the great lies of life is follow your passions. He said: "I used to be passionate to be a baseball player. Then I realized I had a 70-mile-per-hour fastball," about 20 miles-per-hour slower than the average Major League Baseball pitcher. So much for that passion in terms of career.

Cuban believes we should pursue the things we devote the most energy to. "The things I ended up being really good at were the things I found myself putting effort into," he said.

Rowe, now the host of TBN's "Somebody's Got to Do It," believes that telling young people to "follow your passion" leads them to ignore potentially good opportunities. Further, he is a strong believer that a person can be passionate about anything we do for a career." I second that. All we need to do is ask the question, "Why are people better off because of my work?" We're all passionate about helping others. Some may find their way to do that in college, while others can find that path in a trade.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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