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# OBSESSIONS, FASCINATIONS, AND CURIOSITIES

My brother, Brad, has an undergraduate degree in mathematics and a master's degree in biology. Right now you're probably picturing him working as a scientist and wearing a white lab coat at work every day. If so, you're wrong. Dead wrong.

*He's a television writer.*

For as long as I can remember, Brad has been obsessed with television. Not the get home from work and slump in front of the tube for hours of mindless consumption kind of obsession (that's not really obsession, it's numbing out). Brad was always – and continues to be – an engaged television enthusiast, particularly for television comedy.

He could (and does) watch, analyze, discuss, critique, and create television for several hours every day. He gets caught up in it and loses all track of time when he's fully immersed in it. I can't think of anything he loves to do more.

Brad probably could have got a steady gig with great pay working in the sciences after completing his master's degree. He's a smart guy with a talent for math and science and he even has some of his research published in scientific journals. But that's not what he wanted.

He didn't exactly hate biology, but he didn't love it either. In his spare time during his degree, he wrote spec scripts as a hobby. He wrote, filmed, acted in, and edited a web series, and a cable access sketch comedy series. None of this made him any money. He just loved it so much that he felt compelled to do it. Impractical and far fetched as it seemed, Brad decided to change course completely and try to make this television writer dream of his a reality.

He graduated with his master's in biology on a Friday and began his studies in film and television writing the next Monday. He poured what

little money he had into it. He lived in a shitty apartment and worked part-time as a math tutor to make it happen. It wasn't (and still isn't) glamorous or lucrative, but now he's doing what he loves and getting paid for it.

Is there something in your life that you're obsessed with? Some kind of persistent fascination or curiosity? What makes you lose track of time? When have you been so fully engaged in an activity that you felt fully energized, like you could go on forever?

### **My obsessions / fascinations / curiosities:**

For Brad, it was television. For my friend Lisa, it's decorating cakes. She's completing a PhD at a business school and plans to be a full-time professor one day, but she also has a side business making cakes. She's proud of her creations, and posts photos of her masterpieces on Facebook. She didn't go to school for it. She's not making a bunch of money from it. But she loves it, so she's made room for it in her life.

One of my clients – I'll call her Miranda – is obsessed with film, specifically cinematography. She wouldn't let herself indulge in this fascination until very recently; it wasn't practical. What good would come of it? I encouraged her to indulge anyway. She started attending film discussion groups and started her own film appreciation blog. In doing so, she's building a community of other film enthusiasts. She's even considering taking a film course, but she's in no rush. One thing at a time.

My partner, Phil, is a theatre nut. It doesn't pay the bills for him, but he's found a way to make it a part of his life's work. He works doing tech

support (which he also loves) for a progressive startup. He has flexible work hours and his employer accommodates his requests for time off to produce and perform in shows. Flexibility and accommodation were two of Phil's most important career ingredients. He found a gig that had them, and he's written, directed, and acted in four shows this season thanks to it.

My friend, Kylah, is curious about spirituality and religion. She started her master's in theology in September. My friend, Steph, has always had a curious fascination with the cultural norms and traditions surrounding death. She dissolved her public relations company to go back to school to become a mortician. Pretty cool, right?

**Indulge your obsessions, curiosities and fascinations.** Don't wait until you know how to make them pay off the mortgage. Maybe they never will. Or maybe they will, plus much more. Or maybe they'll become part of a really unique mix of things that make up your life's work.

*Learn.*

*Dabble.*

*Explore.*

*Indulge.*

Invite the things you love to be a bigger part of your life. Lean in to your passions and curiosities. You have no idea where they might take you. At the very least, they will add more happiness to your life.

**How can you lean in to your obsessions, fascinations, and curiosities?**

List the ways you can indulge your passions, and commit to at least one of them now.