

Checklist: How to Find Your Career Passion

Everyone tells you to “Do what you love!” It’s great advice, but what if you don’t yet know what kind of work will be most fulfilling? Check out the ways that LinkedIn can help you find your professional passion.

□ Search high and low

Pick absolutely anything that interests you and type that word or phrase into the “Advanced Search” box on LinkedIn. For instance, let’s say you love basketball. Just type “basketball” and your results will include the profiles of anyone on LinkedIn who mentions the sport in his or her profile. Review these profiles to discover the professional and educational experience, skills and qualities needed to land various positions related to basketball and see if any organizations, job functions or groups in these peoples’ profiles catch your eye as potential options for you. Don’t love what you find? Try searching on a different term!

□ Be a joiner

You can join groups on LinkedIn related to any career interest that even vaguely appeals to you. Go ahead and explore! If you like cooking, join a group for professional chefs. If you’ve fantasized about starting your own business, join a group for entrepreneurs. Then, if you find yourself really engaged in the content, start contributing to discussions and connecting with other members. Your interest may be an indication that this is a career path you should pursue. On the other hand, if you lose interest after receiving a few updates from a group, then that profession might not be the best choice for you.

□ Eavesdrop on employers

You might have a few organizations in your mind that sound like good places to work -- organizations you’ve seen around campus or heard about through your friends or family -- but you’re not sure exactly what kinds of jobs exist at that company or even what that company actually does. LinkedIn Company Pages will give you insight into any organization’s employees, divisions and types of jobs. Plus, by “following” any company on LinkedIn, you can “listen in” on their news, events, announcements and more. Company Pages provide a window into a company’s culture as well as alerting you to available positions.

□ Be curious

Once you’ve explored some things you know you’re interested in, start expanding your horizons. Scan the discussions in your college’s LinkedIn Group and read about something new and different. Click on the “Jobs” tab on LinkedIn and start searching through thousands of unique possibilities. You can limit your job search to positions within 10 miles from home or broaden it to include cities around the world. Finding job openings in Paris or Sydney is just as easy as finding a job down the street. Play around. Experiment. It’s quick, it’s easy, and it’s free. You never know what might ignite a passion.

□ Connect with passionate people

Look around your life for other people who share your passions -- or any passion. Just as you should connect on LinkedIn with people who share your alma mater or a past internship employer, you should also connect with people who share your personal interests or hobbies. Look for people who inspire you in groups and send them a connection request asking for a few words of wisdom. Most passionate people are happy to share their excitement about what they do.

□ Don’t be afraid to fail

It’s unlikely that you’ll find your passion just by sitting at your computer. You have to go out in the world and try new things. Do more volunteering, take on part-time work, sign up for a class in something you’ve never studied. Use LinkedIn to discover your passion and find opportunities, and then get out there and take action! Your path is out there, just waiting to be discovered.