



## A PATH WITH HEART

*A path is only a path; if you feel you should not follow it, you must not stay with it under any conditions. But your decision to keep on the path or to leave it must be free of fear or ambition. All paths are the same: they lead nowhere.*

*Before you embark on a path, ask the question: Does this path have a heart? If the answer is 'No' you will know it and then you must choose another path. A path without heart is never enjoyable. You have to work hard even to take it. On the other hand, a path with heart is easy; it does not make you work at liking it....*

Carlos Casteneda The Teachings of Don Juan

If you can honestly say you love what you do, you are a very lucky person indeed. When you love your work, it ceases to be work. You find it so fascinating that you can't wait to jump out of bed in the morning for another day. It brings you pleasure, challenge, growth and fulfilment. Maybe you also derive self-esteem and a sense of identity through what you do, too. The hours you spend working are so much fun, it doesn't feel tiring.

Unfortunately, some people are less lucky and find themselves caught in jobs they thought would be fun, or a career they believed would bring them success or money, but clearly they found paths without heart. They hate Mondays and look forward to Fridays. They count the minutes during the day, and find every excuse to have time off. They have to compensate for the drudgery of the hours they spend at work, by submersing themselves in something more pleasurable after hours.

Then there are people who are either made redundant, or have found the courage to chuck in a drudgery job, or who need to find a new career path for some other reason. Suddenly they face countless opportunities, unknown risks, and the loss of everything familiar.

After years of preparing to become a Coach, one of my clients described the inertia she felt about taking the final steps forward, as being stuck in treacle. Instead of feeling excited about her new career, the middle of her chest felt like a heavy rock, dead and dull. Not surprisingly, not much was progressing. She wasn't sure what her purpose was, despite having many great ideas of different projects she wanted to undertake. Her fears were about not being good enough. She judged herself as arrogant for thinking she knew enough to guide others! The inertia of doing nothing felt so much more comfortable. She was also afraid her new career could possibly upset the balance of her marriage. All of these fears seemed to outweigh her intuitive desire to help people and her fascination with unleashing people's potential.

The heavy 'rock' in her chest was keeping her safe, but limited. This part of her lacked courage, and wanted her to keep doing the stuff she knew how to do. This rock had appeared 3 years ago, ironically at the time when she



became extremely bored with her previous job. She had gotten tired of doing the same things, all bogged down in detail. Although there was an opportunity to take that project to a whole new level, she didn't feel she knew how to do that. More importantly, she didn't want to! So she had resigned. She realized that what had been driving her in that job was a sense that 'if she didn't do it, she would let herself down'. In fact, this was a hidden 'Have to'. Although when she had first started that job, it had felt exciting, over the years, she had outgrown it. Now her heart wasn't in it anymore.

But was her heart excited about the new projects she was contemplating? Her head came up with all kinds of logical, reasonable answers about how good each idea was. But what was a true path of the heart for her? She had forgotten to tune into her feelings. When she focused on how she was feeling in her heart, at first it felt too small for its job, it was full of fear and confusion. There was a bit of conflict, and even some hysteria, but as all these feelings passed, she re-discovered her inner wisdom, calmness, energy and optimism. She re-accessed a deep sense of wholeness where she could feel what was real for her.

This was the only ingredient missing. Any one – or all – of her ideas and plans for her new projects were wonderful. All she needs to do now is to tune in regularly to make sure she chooses a path with heart, and stays on that path. It is so easy to get seduced by thoughts of what you should do, or have to do, or can't do! When you choose a path with heart, it will sustain you with the sheer joy of doing it.

*The miracle comes quietly into the mind that stops an instant and is still.*

A Course in Miracles

How can you tune in and be sure you choose a 'path with Heart'?

1. First it might help to do a 'brain dump'. Get a pen and paper and write down all the good ideas you have, all the opportunities, all the projects, and plans you have in mind. Be thorough.
2. Assess each one: Why do you think that would be a good idea? What do you expect to gain from it? Where did you get that idea from?
3. Then do an 'emotional dump': what are all the fears and negative feelings that might be pushing you, or holding you back? These may be about your current career, or about some new opportunity. Again, be thorough.
4. Meditate, go for a walk in nature, do whatever will help you to clear your mind and access your heart. Be willing to just FEEL. Hold, respect, listen to and feel each emotion until the next one comes up.



Keep going until you reach a place of emptiness, or no more feelings appear. Feel the emptiness and keep going even deeper until you can finally access your deepest inner core – the real truth in your heart. You will recognise these – they are ALWAYS positive and feel true.

5. From this perspective, think again of your lists. Which one if any, feels like a path with Heart for you?