

Passion

Noun

a feeling of intense enthusiasm towards
or compelling desire for someone or
something

Passion

Ethos of Learning

“In over a decade of teaching at the RGS I have not seen such a passionate staff. For that matter, I don’t think I’ve seen such a passionate student body either.”

Alex Wallace, Deputy Headmaster

I had the very real pleasure of listening to Martin Johnson present yesterday evening. For those of you who don’t know who he is, Martin captained Leicester Tigers, the British Lions and led England to their only World Cup rugby triumph. He was very softly spoken and yet an inspiring colossus of a man. He spoke for about 90 minutes late in the evening and yet each member of the audience hung off his every word. The reason he held the room so well was because he was talking about his passion. It was evident in the way he held himself and gesticulated. It was evident in the way he spoke without any script and it was evident in the pride he had in what he was talking about. Rugby was his passion and interestingly it still is. He has managed to create a second career of public speaking; in my view, he is exceptionally good at it. This is not because he has no doubt been given great guidance but more so because he is talking about his beloved game. I am sure he spoke for far longer than he was being paid for because he genuinely appeared to love sharing his stories and inspiring others. It must be a real joy for him to have a job he is so passionate about. I can’t imagine he is ever clock watching when doing his job.

At this time of year, RGS boys are starting to make choices about A-level and GCSE subjects and university interviews

are well underway. There is lots of great advice and guidance out there, but the most crucial factor should surely be to follow your passion. I was very fortunate that by the age of 14 I knew I wanted to be a teacher and I have never looked back. I never clock watch, I never resent working late in the evenings or over weekends because it is what I am passionate about (I also know I have good holidays to recharge). One of the best things about teaching at RGS is that the vast majority of staff feel exactly the same way. We are passionate about our jobs, we are passionate about improving young people's lives and we are passionate about making RGS World Class.

So, how do you find your passion? You need to be prepared to try things, to make mistakes, to feel embarrassed! We ask all our students to get involved in our co-curricular programme. It is not called "extra-curricular" as is the case in many schools. The "extra" does not apply to us, it is just part of who we are. If you just want great exam results, then I am pleased for you, but you could probably get that at many other local schools. We want you to become more than just an exam result. We want you to love coming to school, to share in multiple experiences and numerous moments of joy that you will remember for a lifetime. We want you to be the best possible version of yourself. Many of you will become the stars of the future and exam results alone won't get you there. You need to be able to empathise, communicate, collaborate and ultimately be a team player. Many of these skills can be developed in the classroom, but the RGS offers so much more than this. Over 70 different clubs are offered to students. Try them, meet new people, share common interests and maybe you will find your passion.

I am sure many of the readers of this article will also be as fortunate as I am in being very passionate about their job. But, like me, there will also be aspects of the job they don't enjoy. Occasionally, there are aspects of my job which need to be done but I struggle to see the direct impact on improving students' experience at RGS. At times like these the passion can wane. When this happens, I generally try to persevere, get the job finished, pick myself up and quickly get on with a task that will have a direct impact. The point is that being involved in something you love is really important, but there will still be days when it can be frustrating. It's not totally dissimilar to my marriage!

I see students following their passions all the time at RGS. Whether that is the 60 members of the Junior Choir belting out their songs together or the 30 lads who went away on the Warhammer Club at the weekend. They have found their

passions and they are now benefitting in so many ways from being part of these passionate groups of people.

A final thought...

Don't be disheartened if you are not sure what your passion is yet. Bazz Luhrmann put it nicely in his song, Everybody's Free to Wear Sunscreen, "Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life... the most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year olds I know still don't."



I think you'll have a good chance to find your passion at RGS.

For further information on the Ethos of Learning please refer to the RGS website: www.rgshw.com or Alex Wallace, Deputy Headmaster, arw@rgshw.com.