

# Integral Passion: the many faces of the Kosmic impulse

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An increasing number of people feel passionately drawn to usher in new levels of being and to facilitate the tangible manifestation of higher consciousness in the world. This paper examines the role of passion in awakening a higher quality of being, that consistently expresses depth, wholeness and authenticity. Passion is defined as the deep inner drive to reach for what we love. Passion lights up our inner space (thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values), aligns it to our outer space (actions, behaviours and achievements in the world) and ignites possibilities in coming together harmoniously and co-creatively with others. This paper uses an integral framework to explore the many faces of passion and the *Passion Mapping* tool and process for awakening and anchoring passion in our lives. Case studies are discussed to highlight the transformative power of awakened passion.

## Introduction

Our next great evolutionary leap as human beings is to stabilise new and higher levels of consciousness that take us beyond our narrow sense of separateness and plug us into the living reality of being one with the unfolding universe. Currently our individual and social conditioning - within the context of postmodern developed nation states - prepares us at best: to be highly educated, materially comfortable, strong willed and individualistically focused people. Yet despite all our crowning achievements extending from the days of huddling in caves, people often feel exhausted mentally, fragile emotionally, dull physically and depleted spiritually. Our interiority has not evolved nor flourished as a result of the exterior developments we have achieved and the material abundance we have created.

Changing human consciousness toward higher integral expressions is fundamental to our capacity to create new sets of values and expanded perspectives that are pivotal to the emergence of new expressions of human culture (McIntosh, 2007). It is in the area of collective action and interaction that we are not progressing at a rate fast enough to match the complexity of situations we are increasingly being required to face. Our poor performance in coming together at higher levels of expression shows up in our bullying in children's play grounds; relationship failures; conflict in workplace teams; corruption in organisations; power struggles in politics; wars within and between nations; gaping holes between the haves and have nots and global imbalances and crises. The lack of engaged global leadership is more than amply demonstrated in the recent failure of world leaders to collectively respond to climate change at the recent Copenhagen summit. Many of our human dilemmas are 'joined-up' though we struggle to join together 'as one' to transcend them.

This paper looks at the role of passion as a transformative fuel that can align us with the Kosmocentric evolutionary unfolding. A Kosmocentric perspective is one that is concerned with both the inner and outer dimensions of the manifest evolving Kosmos.

Andrew Cohen (editor of Enlighthennext magazine) defines a Kosmocentric perspective as one in which:

“the awakening human being begins to see his or her own emotional, psychological, and spiritual experience, in the present moment, as potentially being the very furthest reaches of the evolution of the interior of the Kosmos. And this is not just an inspirational metaphor; it's literally true. This is what brings the sacred dimension of life into everyday awareness—when you realize your own experience of consciousness itself from one moment to another is potentially the leading edge of the possible”

(<http://www.andrewcohen.org/quote/?quote=240> 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009)

Evolutionary theorist John Stewart (2008) suggests being aligned with “evolutions arrow” frees us to live as complex multi-dimensional living organisms in a symbiotic relationship with this highly interdependent organic Kosmos. In this paper we are looking at passion as tapping in to the well-spring of energy that is driving the evolutionary impulse forward toward creating a new kind of future fuelled by the desire to create newer, higher forms of human possibility. Passion is therefore a signifier of the evolutionary impulse being ‘turned on’ in a person. It is “the deep inner drive to reach for what we love” (Wallman, P. & Flower, R. 2003: p.19). Love in this context being a vast impersonal energy that beckons us to unite and be in a state of non-separation to that which calls us forth.

Passion is important to awakening this new quality of being that we so desperately need on earth right now. It can propel us forward toward consistently expressing depth, wholeness and authenticity. When we are ‘plugged in’ to Kosmocentric passion it obliterates self consciousness, self concern and illuminates any stale dark corners. Coming alive in this way expands out the dimensions of who we are, taking us from something narrow and constricted, to being part of a cosmic matrix that urges us to reach onward, upward and forward. Passion at the deepest level involves being connected to the energy that is behind the life force itself. It is impersonal, vast and Kosmic in nature (encompassing the inner and outer regions of the universe) and takes us into the frontiers of living “thy will, not my will”. This version of passion is different to what some psychologists call obsessive passion (OP) that causes negative affect and rigid persistence and conditioned automatic responses (Vallerand et al., 2003). It is akin to comparing the fuelling of our lives with fossil fuel and its resultant impacts rather than utilising sustainable technologies. The definition below is at the other end of the spectrum to the narrow constricted view of obsessive passion. It offers us an enlarged sense of passion that is beyond a closed circuit personal dimension.

*It [connecting with passion] is to have a sense of something beyond, of something more, that confers added meaning and value on where we are now.*

ROBERT FRITZ

This paper uses an integral worldview and examines the ‘many faces of passion’ and its transformative power in developing human life. Using an integral perspective we draw upon Ken Wilber’s integral theory particularly the core of his work represented in the “all quadrants and all levels” (AQAL) model. Thus we are interested in how this Kosmocentric passionate impulse urges us to develop from something lower to something higher; and how it may change expression according to the level of

development within us. The model also points us to pay attention to the interior dimensions of how passion might move us and interconnect with the exterior dimensions of how it might manifest. Similarly there are individual dimensions, and collective dimensions to engaging with the passionate impulse. There are also different perspectives from which we might relate to passion:

- 1) in a first person sense as a force within;
- 2) in a second person sense as an energy I respond to in another; and/or
- 3) as a vast impersonal “it” energy that is the source of life itself.

The next section goes further into examining passion from these different perspectives.

### **The Many Faces of Passion**

Ken Wilber uses a matrix to present his all levels, all quadrants model and proposes that all perspectives are valid and fundamental to existence. The right sides of the quadrants are concerned with tangible manifest observations. The left sides of the quadrants focus on subjective interior experience and meaning. Wilber contends that currently there is a schism between the left and right sides of the quadrants with a weighting on the manifest realm of existence and a denial of the left ‘invisible’ sides as having no real objective meaning. Within each quadrant there are different lines of development (example Cognitive, Spiritual, Emotional), different states (Gross, Subtle, Casual) and various types of expression. Wilber believes that in order for an account of the Kosmos to be complete, it must include each of these categories and the levels within.

Table 1 below shows how passion can manifest in our lives from within the different quadrants. It delineates between the interior side of passion within an individual (upper left) and its tangible external expression within an individual (upper right). It examines the collective dimensions of how passion might express itself (lower quadrants) including: an inter-subjective dimension that comes alive between people and; external structures that are co-created by groups and impact on collectives.

#### **Upper-Left**

⊗ **“I” INDIVIDUAL INTERIOR:** vision, directionality, awareness, recognition, meaning, engagement, pleasure, wellbeing, clarity, commitment to possibilities, opportunities, enthusiasm, motivation, appreciation

#### **Upper-Right**

⊗ **“IT” INDIVIDUAL EXTERIOR:** energy, health, articulation of passions, congruent actions, connection to and use of tools, initiating change, success

#### **Lower-Left**

⊗ **“WE” COLLECTIVE INTERIOR:** Investment (time, energy, resources) in relationship, connection, confidence, interdependence, reciprocity, trust, empathy, acceptance, passion resilience, quality of relationships, shifting of cultural values, manifestation of new forms of harmony

#### **Lower-Right**

⊗ **“ITS” COLLECTIVE EXTERIOR:** Collective engagement with others with similar passions that result in the emergence of new tangible systems & structures. Participation in group expressions that influence the environment (cultural, political, human-social, economic, biophysical).

Table 1 – An integral theory perspective of passion

Awakening passion within us means creating clarity in our vision of what is possible and important in our lives. This process can involve getting clear on my intention, of what I most long to reach for and express in my life right now. It can also be a process of remembering and examining the pattern of preferences that abides within as I clarify my intention. Opening up awareness on my interiority can include wondering at the relational qualities between the elements that I hold as most true and the hierarchical order of priorities they may form once I appreciate what holds most meaning for me. From the vantage point of an illumined perspective within, I can begin to direct energy to manifesting outwardly in a way that is integrated with the source of energy within. This might mean articulating to the world what my passions are and aligning my actions with those words. Often this will involve initiating change in areas that I have expressed only unconsciousness conditioned responses up until now. From my illumined interior, and with clarity in my intention, I am more likely to be successful in bringing to bear the fruits of that which I plant seeds for.

As Table 1 shows, the expression of our passion can also have a collective interior dimension (lower-left quadrant) where we preface investment (beliefs, thoughts, time, energy, resources) in relationship. Many of our passions might involve co-creating with others which requires an ability to foster connection, to reach out with confidence and engage my interiority with that of another. This inter-subjective space involves entering into a relationship of inter-dependence. That is, a space that transcends needy dependence on the one hand and rigid separateness masking as independence on the other. It involves appreciating true reciprocity and the creation of shared values that allow us as a ‘we’ to move forward together in a space harmony and upon a bedrock of profound trust. From upon this bedrock of co-creating and engaging with others with similar passions we might manifest new systems that influence the shared environment (cultural, political, human-social, economic, biophysical) in tangible ways (lower-right quadrant).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to burrow in extensive detail into each of the different dimensions of how passion can express from an integral perspective. It is more important in this context to note that these different dimensions are really aspects of reality and that development within an individual, their environment, their relationships and collective systems is enhanced when the different dimensions are activated and inter connected instead of suppressed or ignored. Passion felt, experienced and expressed only from within an individual perspective could stunt development and the reach for what is true. Human beings are social creatures embedded in cultural systems. To bring passion alive so that it is transcendent in nature and Kosmocentric in focus involves the operating system of any given individual to be illuminated across the many faces of passion.

### **Passion Maps™ as a Tool for Enlivening Passion**

Passion Maps™ is a process developed by Peter Wallman over a decade ago and continues to be developed by Wallman and his associates and facilitated by accredited practitioners around the world ([www.passionmaps.com](http://www.passionmaps.com)). Wallman, P. and Flower, R. (The Wisdom of Passion, 2003) raise the importance of seeing passion as something different to motivation. Motivation in their view is a narrower construct that tends to be

about using ones willpower directed toward logical goals and anticipated results. “Motivation may be able to flow when it is aligned with your passion. But on its own it can be very dry” (p.19). Ones passion on the other hand, is a more intuitive, inner driven and is more enduring.

Passion Maps™ programs aspire to empower people (personally and collectively) to connect with the essence of who they really are, what truly energises them and what they are most passionate about. It aims to support the creation of a rich picture of the potential of life and work, focusing on what gives life meaning and purpose. The programs are designed to help people learn new skills for self insight, life balance and authentic living and generate energy, excitement and creativity in a person’s life. Passion Maps™ programs can be facilitated with individuals, in a relationship, partnership and family context and with groups, teams, organisations and communities.

The personal program is conducted in four stages with three of them being facilitated sessions, with an initial self directed task involving the completion of a reflective journal which lays the preparatory foundation for the rest of the journey.

*Stage 1- Journal Preparation;* a reflective practice where a person analyses their life’s journey and taps into where, when and how they are most alive and invigorated. Elements and qualities are synthesised from the journal in preparation for stage two of the program.

*Stage 2 (Session 1) - Passion Discovery;* a facilitated session involving the articulation of elements from the journal that provide a platform for diving into an appreciative discovery process where passion is tapped at the source. The process of synthesising one’s passion into concise, energetically charged statements clarifies intention and priorities.

A practitioner with sensitivity to integral theory and practice will encourage exploration from across the different quadrants during this process. It is interesting how many people have elements that reveal a passion for creating a better kind of world whether expressed through deeper levels of relating, healthier forms of living or environmental sensitivity.

*Stage 3 (Session 2) - Passion Mapping;* an embodied experience drawing upon the full senses, integrating intelligences, enlivening the mind-body connection whilst mapping the passion elements into a coherent and connected whole. This often taps into archetype and metaphor to express the power of the patterning of elements.

*Stage 4 (Session 3) Life Visioning;* a deeply reflective process of allowing and exploring the natural threads of emergence, of bringing passion fully and richly alive and delivering it into the manifest world of action.

Again a practitioner with sensitivity to the integral quadrants and levels will look for threads across the whole spectrum of human experience that the client can use to weave rich tapestries of possibility.

The following section explores a series of personal case studies that evidence the transformative power of Passion Maps™ programs and the diversity of contexts in which they can be used.

### **Case Study 1 - Being the Integral Whole**

A senior academic working nationally and internationally was at a cross roads in her life. She was in her early 50's, widowed with two teenage children and one grandchild living at home with her. She undertook her Personal Passion Map (PPM) program in January 2009 with the aim of achieving "authentication and focus".

On completion of her PPM, she described her overall experience as "letting go of the specifics (people and tasks) and finding the essence which future specifics can be mapped onto to gauge focus and authenticity". Learnings and insights from the PPM program included "Quite profound, felt authentic and allowed focus. Recognition that 'being brave' was beyond 'letting go' which shows a lot of personal growth in recent years. Have self-awareness of when not experiencing passions. Open to change, opportunities and movement."

Comments on the process and the facilitation included "Very good, silence, different strategies, patience - all effective, non-judgemental and focussed on me".

Within three months of the completion of her PPM she travelled overseas on sabbatical for six months to fully live all her passions. On her return, she booked in to refresh her PPM to "continue the exploration" and to consider how to embed her passions into a new life in her old territory. She commented that the initial PPM program had empowered her in a number of life changing ways including; supporting her daughter to build an independent life with her child, downsizing and selling her family home, reconfiguring her academic life to live and work more internationally and in the area of pure research, and in reaching out and exploring new relationships.

Comments on the process of refreshing her PPM included: "Embodied wisdom. Drawing together of what seemed to be unconnected threads. Where at in life's journey and where going. Brilliant, calm, respectful, joyous. Life affirming." She expressed the essence of her refreshed PPM as "consciously being the integral whole".

### **Case Study 2 – Living my Life's Work**

An Aboriginal woman in her early fifties working as a professional in government stated her intention for undertaking her Personal Passion Map (PPM) program was as a "Pathway to enlightenment. To get on board my life train and move the journey and refresh myself at life's 'bar'".

Following the completion of the PPM program in February 2009 she described her experience as "Refreshing to get the messages through to me so clearly, what I needed to go forward with my life's work."

Commenting on how well she achieved her intentions she stated “I was able to move past me to realise a realm that exists for the beauty of being. I realised that I have a purpose and direction that is inherent and obviously simple for me. It moved me into a place I should have been but now am. I am home!”

She also commented “It was a great way of waking up to the senses, to be alert to the now and present for myself. I was able to stand still and gather my thoughts through excellent facilitation. Mapping my thoughts in sequence is very eye opening and helpful to fulfil my life’s dream.”

In relation to insights gained and future directions she stated “I can see a pattern of experience that has built my 50 years on the planet and I know that there is so much more to go – so I better stop and realise the potential of life. I will now be very familiar with the way I want to work and the vision for my life’s work. I have a journey to go on that can be transfixed or fluid but I know the ‘playing board’ that it is to be played on now and I roll the dice.”

Within three months of the completion of her PPM she had resigned from her government position and immersed herself full time into the development of her dream – a healing centre cleverly disguised as a tea house!

### **Case Study 3 – Letting the Soul Shine Again**

A 24 year old woman was seeing a psychiatrist and a psychologist for a couple of years. She had been suffering anxiety, depression and did not want to leave her room and engage in life. She had a couple of suicide attempts in the past couple of years. She had been raped when she was younger and then later had attracted two different boyfriends who had treated her poorly and both had been physically abusive. When at school she had been highly creative and had dreamed of working in the creative multi-media industries, particularly with film which she had excelled in at school and later at university despite struggling with her mental health problems. She could feel the calling to live a creative life though this impulse was being smothered by a darkness that kept undermining her. Her state intention for engaging in the passion mapping process was to find a way “to bring my flame alive”.

Following the completion of the Personal Passion Map (PPM) program in February 2009 she described her experience as “Feeling the real, real me” and “starting to see the sunshine again”. The physicality of her map became a metaphor from which she could “sprout a new life free of this period of darkness”. In the life visioning session she had seen a way she could move forward and be strong and true to her most cherished dream of actively living without her hood of suffering.

Within two months of completing her PPM she had moved out of her parent’s home and had moved interstate and taken up “a job that makes me feel alive again” in the multi-media industry. She had “removed the cloak of anxiety and depression” by tapping into the source of life that “had always been there free of the suffering” she had experienced. It was this that she said had taken her forward and the PPM had helped her call forth this

life affirming warmth within her, that no mental health professional had been able to reach.

#### **Case Study 4 – Being Zappy**

A business consultant in his early 40's had been working professionally up until mid 2008 when he experienced, in his words “a meltdown” and was subsequently diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder. He began taking lithium under the supervision of a psychiatrist and had only been able to work casually.

At the suggestion of his wife, a family therapist, he decided to undertake a Personal Passion Map Program (PPM) in September 2009. His psychiatrist had suggested he consider undertaking Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) but he stated he felt “more comfortable at the thought of re-connecting with my passions than doing CBT at the moment.” He had several discussions with his PPM practitioner about how well he was managing his Bipolar Disorder, the likely outcomes of the PPM program and his capacity for self awareness and self regulation. He and his PPM practitioner made an informed decision to trial the process with reflection after each of the three sessions. It was also agreed that the PPM program was not a substitute for CBT.

He stated that what he most wanted to achieve from his PPM was “To get zappy again. To assist in finding my way and manage my Bipolar.” He described his overall experience of completing his PPM as; “Outstanding, insightful. Up to me to live the passion.”

Other benefits he experienced included: “Reduced anxiety. I went with the river and the river took me where I needed to go. Covered all aspects of life. Facilitation was fantastic – all the goodness!”

Some key insights for him were: “That I do have passions. Very useful for my mental health management. Very high on the Zapometer!”

One month following the completion of his PPM, he commented “The experience was absolutely worthwhile. My Passion Map is a visual tool, prominent in my head. I'm getting better at self regulating when I'm down as well as harnessing and regulating mania. My self-awareness and self-regulation has improved. I'm achieving more, more focussed, more realistic. I'm not taking on too much and I'm moving beyond any sense of failure. My outlook is changing for the better on every single front. I'm aware when I'm down and know that this too shall pass.”

#### **Conclusion**

The case studies above show how the energy of passion can generate clarity of awareness that illuminates and shines across the different dimensions of a person's life. Passion can be the flame that lights up our inner space (thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values) and aligns it to our outer space (actions, behaviours and achievements in the world). Joyous and energetically alive, our passion ignites amazing possibilities in coming together

harmoniously and co-creatively with others: in one-on-one relationships, in families, partnerships, groups, teams, organisations, communities and globally.

Let's imagine for a moment what it would be like to have leaders and workplaces full of energetically alive people who are living passionately and creatively and who have made a conscious choice to be where they are and doing what they are doing. Let us imagine what it would be like to have workplaces, or co-creative connections, where people can come together with others harmoniously and are able to consciously create shared values that move things forward positively and toward higher levels of expression for the greater good. As any person who has tried to lead a group of disparate individual egos will attest, having a workforce of fully alive and individually and collectively integrated people to work with means you could go so much further: even as far as the edges of the Kosmos.

It is from the expanded and far reaches of the edges of the Kosmos that we wake up and begin to feel passionately drawn to usher in new levels of consciousness within and between ourselves and to facilitate the flowering and tangible manifestation of higher consciousness in our world. Passion is the ultimate renewable energy source fuelling us from within - soular power. Awakening our individual and collective passions is one way we can tangibly move forward in this evolutionary journey that is calling forth for our conscious participation, our aliveness, the cellular "YES" that dances in our DNA.

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