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Crafting a Fulfilling Job: Bringing Passion Into Work

Part 1

As Bruce takes care of a few last-minute preparations before his show, the audience enters the theater eager to experience this popular rock 'n' roll performer. When the time is right, Bruce bursts onto the stage and immediately captivates the audience. Not long into the performance, it is clear why Bruce's shows are always sold out. He passionately interacts and connects with the audience: throwing prizes to spectators, pulling people on stage, and using physical space to shake things up by performing in the middle of the crowd. Like any good rock musician, Bruce indulges in the performance right along with the audience, making it unclear whether he is there to entertain or to be entertained. His show has all the elements of a classic rock concert -- a charismatic performer, an engaged audience, and an ever-increasing energy felt by everyone in the venue. But Bruce is not performing music. He is a university lecturer teaching in a classroom.

Bruce's extraordinary approach to teaching is the outcome of an even more extraordinary career history. Performing music has been one of Bruce's passions since he was a young man growing up in New York City in the early 1960s. During this time, he was able to play with many of the great blues musicians of the day, but he was especially drawn to the vibrancy of rock 'n' roll. Bruce was also a talented painter and went to college on a fine arts scholarship. At age 20, he dropped out of college to tour with his rock band and did so for eight grueling years. Eventually, the rock 'n' roll lifestyle took its toll, and Bruce wanted out. He thought it was time to return to school but had no idea what he would study. He knew painting could not sustain him financially and he had little experience with anything else.

Fortunately, the dean of Bruce's former college took a chance and did him a significant favor by enrolling him back into school with no questions asked. Soon after, he took his first ethnomusicology course, where he studied non-western music. Bruce had found his calling. Ethnomusicology allowed him to fulfill his passion for music while studying an actual academic discipline. He continued his education and earned a PhD in ethnomusicology at Indiana University.

Timing appeared to be on Bruce's side. While he was finishing his doctorate, construction of the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame was under way in Cleveland, Ohio, and the institution was searching for a director of curatorial and educational affairs. Bruce applied for the job, and after a year and a half of interviews, he was hired as the first director of the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. Backstage passes and opportunities to



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