



Cultural Assembly – Morning Comment

Cultural Captains, Mia Walker and Marco Leighs

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Marco: How do you know you have found your passion? Well, what is a passion? It could be drama, it could be dance, it could be water polo, football, a video game, it could be absolutely anything. You could be passionate about the small things, like waking up early and seeing the glorious sunrise. Passion can be anything, being passionate is simply doing something you love for the sole reason that you love doing it. This obviously ties into cultural activities, sports and even academics. The great thing about being passionate about something is that it's not about winning or losing, it's about simply doing it. Look at any student in this school and they can tell you that it is about getting the opportunity to improve at whatever it is they love doing, whether this is on the sports field, in the classroom, or on a stage. The winning part is just an added bonus. Now Mia and I aren't the best people to stand here and talk about our passion for sport, but we can talk about what it is to have a passion, what it is to find that spark and how it feels to use it.

Figuring out what my passions are was a very long, complicated journey. Along the way, I have taken up netball, korfbal, touch rugby, tennis, T-ball, gymnastics, ice skating, swimming, triathlons, piano, ballet, and contemporary dance. When I first started at St Andrew's College in 2017 I was a footballer, not the best one at any rate – in fact my favourite part was being a sub for half of each game – but I was still a footballer. That's changed a lot. Honestly, I don't know how I did it at all, every time we now play football in Physica Education, I avoid getting into a tackle because I don't like my shins getting kicked. The point is, I've been down a lot of wrong paths on the way to finding my passion.

However, without all of this I don't think I would've ended up anywhere near where I am today. The ballet? Taught me how much I love being on a stage. The piano? It showed me my love for music. Sure, I took a few detours along the way, but there were always hints leading me in the right direction. When I was at Lincoln Primary School, I did the school



choir every single year. However, in Year 7 I decided to drop it after realising there were only two other students in my class doing it. Luckily for me my Year 8 teacher managed to convince pretty much the entire 8A class to join, with the very successful bribe of getting out of an extra writing class. And so, I got the confidence to rediscover one of my passions, dropping piano that year to make way for singing lessons, which I have done ever since.

After my acting debut as 'Earth' in St Andrew's iconic 2017 Preparatory School show 'The FAWE elements', I realized that there is nowhere I would rather be than on a stage, and to be honest since then it's been pretty hard to drag me off one. So, if I can get you all to take one thing away from what I've said this morning, let it be this: If you are searching for your passion, it will find you. Don't be afraid to make a wrong turn. Even if you aren't happy with where you are right now, step back and take a look at the bigger picture. What parts are creating a spark? Find what you are loving, and follow that, to wherever it leads.

Mia: I used to play hockey, defence, I was good possibly the best Year 8, six-a-side, C team defence player on the field, playing for the green colours of my glorious Heaton Intermediate School, and I have to say that was not fun. It would be either too hot or too cold; I had a wooden stick so every time I hit the ball it would vibrate my whole body, the game was like 15 minutes a half, I mean who can stand at the goal and hit a ball every 15 minutes for 15 minutes, it's just unreasonable, incomprehensible and hard. It was hard. So I looked elsewhere, more specifically, somewhere inside.

So, what did I do, I picked something harder something most people die trying to do, I joined the Heaton Intermediate Theatresports team and we Theatresportsed so hard those hockey guys looked weak compared to me and the three Year 7 students there. Obviously I am joking, and Theatresports isn't really my passion, but it was something I found when I didn't really know what I was looking for. I mean I kind of like drama but when my mum first signed me and my brother to do our primary school's musical, I was screaming begging my mum to not force me to go somewhere where I would have to act on stage and wear a costume. I wanted to be cool. Alas I went and I never really left.

The first film that I watched was a drama and I hated dramas, but my dad said stay watch this film about divorce and heartbreak, just the thing a 13 year old wants to watch. After watching that film, I got a little spark and now that spark is a massive flame engulfing me and making me want to do film for the rest of my life. Now the point I am making is that you will never know what your passion is or more importantly where to look for it, you may be sitting there as a Year 9 with no idea what you want to do with your time at school or you're in Year 13 and you don't know what to do with your life. It doesn't matter you have time. There is no rush, life is short but it's long enough for you to find your true passion or just a new fun thing that seems weird like Theatresports; but maybe Theatresports is cool and hip and swag. Or at least, I think so. I love that I have passions and finding my passions weren't expected, they were actively avoided, but because I watched that film and joined that Theatresports club and walked into that drama room, all this meant I would be here today and be the person I am today. So, look for the unexpected, even the thing that might not be



cool, might not be hip, might not be swag. The thing that may sound awful, and something you would never want to do, might end up being hip, swag and lit.

Marco: Although we went down different routes to get where we are now, it turns out both our situations led us to find out that our passions are very similar. Both Mia and I have discovered in the first 18 years of our lives that we share a love of culture, whether this be filmmaking, Theatresports, drama or singing. But why did we end up choosing culture? Because in the end, our passions are about storytelling, and understanding what it is to be human. The good, the bad and the ugly. These passions have taught us a lot about ourselves, and we are so excited to see where following our passions leads us in the years to come. And, how have these passions and activities effected our lives? Well, to put it simply, they have made them a million-fold better. There is nothing better than having a passion, pushing yourself in it and never settling, for there will always be another passion right around the corner. At the beginning of all this, we asked the question how do you know you have found your passion? The short answer is you won't. But that's part of the fun. You'll know you are close when you walk onto that field, that film set, that stage, that classroom and into that room, that you feel nothing but happiness, joy, and freedom.