

# ANSWERING YOUR CALLING!

How do we really know what we were put on this planet for, at this time, in this place?

That is a challenging question that most people grapple with, especially during the current economic crisis. Now, this issue is more relevant than ever. So, this month I'll share with you some thoughts and strategies on how to answer your calling.

Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher and reformer summed it up in this quote,

"Find a job you love and you'll never work a day in your life." Powerful and true, but easier said than done. First, we must create the foundation to support the process of finding our true calling. The "solid rock" of that foundation is effort, time and a commitment to look at all areas of our lives. Without that concerted effort, we cannot recognize our true calling, when it indeed does manifest itself. This research is an examination of our physical, spiritual, emotional and mental make-up. Through an open and honest examination of these human components, we can work to create a balanced and rewarding life path. "Work" is the key word in the equation. Most people are not willing to commit the time, energy, effort, thought and investment to the process. We'd rather do just about anything other than serious soul-searching. It is much easier to balance the work-life equation, once we have clarity on how our work and life looks to us. If we deny the career factors that disrupt of work-life balance, they do not vanish but they do intensify. Be honest with realities of how to balance your life with your calling.



This so-called "balancing act," is not a one time task, but a life-long challenge.

I waited until later in life to embrace this process and now live the positive results. Better later than never! I now enjoy the results of that investment and it is a much happier life, to say the least.

Many people accept and follow the OPC (other people's career) route in life. OPC means, "Your father is an accountant, so you should be one too," or your best friend loves working at XYZ company, so you should work there too. A close relative to the OPC method is the BAD strategy (Broke And Desperate). BAD is a direct result of a lack of commitment to find your true calling. We ignore it for years and we find ourselves in a situation where we must take any job that comes along. Like it or not, we take it and live with the consequences. I know from experience, that is a very unhappy and unhealthy way to live.

I'll be the first to tell you that finding and answering a calling is not an easy endeavor. Most people experience a life path revelation, some in youth and others in maturity. It is the combination of our proactive work and that unique revelation that takes us to our calling.



We've all seen young people with an early calling to a specific path. Some refer to that as "grace, a blessing or a gift." What ever you choose to call it, reality is that all of us are here for a purpose, with special talents, gifts, graces or blessings to help achieve that purpose. Some talents/gifts flow easily. Others must be taught, developed, learned or extracted from the individual. All of the resources we need exist in the world to find and answer our true calling, if we choose to use them.

One of the most exciting dynamics of this process is that sometimes our true calling is some type of work that we claimed we would never do. Many times it is at the opposite end of the scale to where we began in our careers. This supports the popular quote, "Never say never."

What is the result of refusing to look for or answer our call? High-stress, low job satisfaction, physical, emotional, relationship, financial problems could be just some of the results of a calling not answered. Most of all, at the end of this life we may be faced with the question "What could have been?"

Here are some ways to help identify your Calling:

- When people around you are trying to show you the way-Listen.
- Meditate on your calling, by going within.
- Pray: ask God, The Lord, the Universe, yourself what your path is.
- Identify what makes you very, very happy and document it.
- What do you excel in with very little stress?
- Identify your life-work balance. What does it look like?
- Once you've created it, post a visual for daily, positive reinforcement.
- Write a time-sensitive plan and execute it.
- Remove all barriers. Create a "No Limits Zone."
- What is your passion?
- Do what you love and love what you do.
- Challenge yourself to network with people totally out of your "comfort zone."
- Clean up your diet; eliminate or reduce caffeine, sugar, alcohol, dairy, meat.
- Choose an exercise that you enjoy and commit to a regular program.
- Take "Baby Steps," this is not a push button process.
- Find a mentor and build that relationship.
- Be willing to "Pay Your Dues" all over again, at the bottom of the career ladder.
- Exercise your creativity.
- What do you like so much, that you would do it for free?
- Invest in professional career or personality assessments like, The Strong Interest Inventory, The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or Discover.
- Do a paid or unpaid internship in your field of interest.
- Take a "vocational vacation."

In closing, the most effective way to “answer your calling,” is to create a plan and execute it on a timely basis. Don’t slow down and don’t look back. Never look back.

Identify and leverage as many resources as you need to follow your path. As they claimed in the TV series, “The X Files,” “The Truth is Out There.”

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