

FINDING YOUR CALLING IN MINISTRY SERVICE

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As a practitioner advising mid-career adults for the past 35 years, I believe there are three basic steps to “finding one’s calling” for our lives. Furthermore, each of us at mid-life and beyond can determine that calling with confidence. These three steps are:

1. Identifying your life’s passion
2. Knowing the difference between your occupational skills and innate skills
3. Matching your aptitudes to career options

Step 1: Identifying Your Life’s Passion

Having studied the process which many people undertake in choosing their occupational direction, we have determined that one’s passion has a profound impact in choosing one’s calling, as well as verifying if one’s job is a good fit. Passion can include any or all of the following terms: excitement, adventure, continued challenges, interests, values or motivation—other expressions would be the “fire in the belly”, the “adrenalin rush”, the “spark”. All of these terms are subjective and describe one’s feelings.

Feelings are an important part of one's career choice but they are only part of the final decision. What is important is to first determine how to evaluate your feelings and then direct them to their logical place in the world of business, government, nonprofit, ministry or military service. The caution is to not allow one's passion to overshadow common logic and reasoning which determines your best job fit.

Step 2: Knowing the Difference Between Your Occupational Skills and Innate Skills

One's attitude about past work experience and education will have a profound impact on how one chooses their calling. Some believe that their prior occupational skills and occupational knowledge gained from education are the prerequisite that will determine whether they are capable of being a doctor, teacher or a mechanic. Others believe that each person has innate talent and when that talent is properly identified it can be used to select the appropriate career direction and, if necessary, the educational path which can empower and raise the performance quality of that innate talent. It is the second approach which I feel is the most valuable in coaching men and women for a lifetime of career fulfillment. Most of the time, our clients do not want further education--they want a career that provides fulfillment.

When your job is a logical extension of your innate nature, every year becomes an opportunity to grow and achieve at higher levels of mastery. Ultimately, over a lifetime, one can expect to arrive at the level of a master craftsman where one's work is smarter and not harder. Therefore, Step 2 is an accurate appraisal of one's innate talents which may be different than one's occupational skills and educational degree. In order to help our clients determine their talents, we have developed six levels of talent assessment, each designed to fit a person's need and budget.

Step 3. Matching Your Aptitudes to Career Options

Step 3 is the logical combination of matching Step 1 with Step 2. Step 1 defines your passion translated into a type of organization, work setting or team of colleagues. This future work environment should verify your feelings that your life counts, that the service or product in which you are involved is making a difference and that the values you have are being affirmed by the work you do, as well as the individuals with whom you work.

The information from Step 2 defines your innate strengths. These strengths should lead to compatible job duties and ultimately ideal job titles. If you know what types of organizations your passions affirm and the types

of job titles your talent strengths describe, there is a matching process to bring these two together like the two sides of a coin—the “heads” is the ideal type of organization and the “tails” is the ideal job duties.

Let’s take an example. Pat has a passion for helping individuals who are impacted by hurricanes and/or natural disasters. Every time Pat reads about these world calamities, Pat’s heart yearns to be there to pass out food and clothing and build shelters. Types of organizations that represent aid to international victims are disaster relief organizations, which include government international aid agencies and nonprofits, as well as ministry service organizations. Each of these different work settings represents different values and co-workers. Pat has also identified innate talents in Public Speaking, Researching, and Problem-Solving. These natural talents appear to match the job duties of a first-team responder who is able to meet at the disaster site with local area leaders, present a plan to provide immediate relief and get the local area citizens organized and cared for.

All of this information together needs one final part and that is a list of disaster relief organizations, be they government, nonprofit or ministry service. Without quick access to names of organizations in one’s own local

community, it would be hard to do the research to determine if this truly is one's calling.

Conclusion

We at IDAK Group have assisted many individuals achieve these three steps and have coached them in their job search to get the job of their choice. Contact our office for a free “visit” to discuss how we might help you “find your calling”.