

## Finding Your Dream Job

### Getting Started

Do you wake up in the morning full of excitement and enthusiasm about your day? Or do you dread going to work? If your job is sapping the life out of you, then it is time to reassess your life and your work. If you feel like an old dream is stirring and just won't go away, then it is time to discover and pursue your calling. The following questions provide thoughts for reflection as you take the first steps in responding to your calling:

- What keeps you in your current job, even though you are unhappy?
- What skills and talents are unused?
- What dreams have you buried because they weren't "practical?"
- What would a "dream job" look like to you?
- What are you willing to sacrifice in order to have a dream job?

### FAQs

*Isn't work supposed to be painful? Isn't that why they call it work?*

No, work is not supposed to be painful. If you believe that, then you will settle for less and never be completely satisfied. Work is as natural to human beings as breathing. We feel bored, dissatisfied, and empty if we cannot contribute to the world in some meaningful way. Freud said that there are two important things in life: work and love.

*I'm just getting started in my career. Don't I have to pay my dues first before I can find work I truly love?*

Certainly you shouldn't expect to jump into the job of your dreams straight out of school. Unless, of course, you started the company! You do need to spend time in a new job learning the ropes and making connections. But don't ever think of it as "Paying My Dues." This kind of thinking encourages staying in a job that may not really suit you. You should expect to be excited about going to work each day.

*I'm getting near retirement. Isn't it a little late to be thinking about finding my calling?*

Many people who are nearing retirement grew up in a culture where work was expected to be drudgery. You may have sacrificed your dreams for most of your life, but now is your chance to take the time to do something you really love. You might consider volunteer work, being a mentor to someone getting started, or finding a company that really appreciates the wisdom of older people.

## **Making It Happen**

### *Assessment*

Begin by assessing your skills and talents. Make a list of all the things you have been good at. On this same piece of paper, make three columns. The first one is labeled "Current Job." In this column put a check next to all the skills and talents you are currently using. The second column is labeled "Joy and Meaning." Here put a check next to any skill that brings you joy and a sense of meaning when you are using it. This includes skills that you may not currently be using in your job. The third column is labeled "Dream Job." In this column put a check next to any skills that you would like to use in a "Dream Job." As you are doing this exercise, you may think of other skills and you can add them to the list. After completing the checklists, make some notes for yourself about any thoughts and ideas that came up about what a dream job might be.

### *Dream*

Think about the dream you may have buried because it wasn't practical. Dreams can come true, but you have to be willing to believe in them. Read stories about people who have made their dreams come true. "Find Your Calling, Love Your Life" is an excellent source of inspiration. The source of a "Calling" often comes from difficult or painful experiences that we have experienced or overcome. It becomes our Calling, then, to help other people with similar difficulties.

### *Be of Service*

Focus on the principle of service. All vocational callings have a strong element of service in them. Whom do you serve? How can you use your gifts and talents to serve them? What issues in the community, in business, or in society do you care about? Have you ever wished you could make a difference? These are clues to your calling.

### *Do What Brings You Joy*

In order to be of service to others, we first have to do what brings us joy. So do what pleases you, and you will probably find that you are acquiring knowledge and skills that will help you to be of service to others in the future. And sometimes it is enough just to know that if you do what brings you joy, even if it is not of service to anyone else, the world is a better place. The world could certainly do with a little more joy.

### *Make It Real*

Make your dream real in some concrete way. Write down a description of your dream job. Write in your journal about what "calls" to you. Tell other people about your dream job. You will find that as you get more and more detailed about what you are looking for, opportunities will "coincidentally" appear. Make sure you are paying attention to these opportunities.

### *Talk To Others*

Don't be afraid to tell others about your calling. The more you tell others about your dreams, the more real they become, and the more likely you are to notice opportunities that will help you fulfil your dreams. Also, by telling others about the job you would love to have, you are increasing the chances of finding someone who has just the right piece of information, or just the right connection for you.

### *Learn to Fly*

Remember the rule of the bumblebee. According to the laws of mathematics and aerodynamics, it is physically impossible for bumblebees to fly. Fortunately, no one ever explained that to a bumblebee. Keep in mind that the most successful business people and entrepreneurs were frequently told that what they wanted to do was "impossible."

### *Let Go*

In order to follow your calling, there are always necessary sacrifices that must be made. Before you make the move to another job or to starting your own business, spend some time thinking about what are absolute necessities in your life and work. Is it essential that you have high earnings, or are you willing to earn less money to do work that is more meaningful? Is it essential that you have a steady paycheck, or are you excited about the risk and potential in working for a small start-up organization? Is it essential that you work with people, or are you content to work alone? What things are absolutely necessary to you in your work, and what can you do without? Make a list of five things that are necessary and five things that you are willing to do without.

### *Look In Your Own Backyard*

There's an old song that goes, "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with." This can apply to your job too. Many people cannot easily leave their current job. The challenge, then, is how to see your current work as your calling. Once again, the principle of "Service" can be very helpful. If you need to stay with your current job, write yourself a brief reminder about how the work you do is of service to others, and keep it somewhere nearby.

## **Common Mistakes**

Many people think that their dream job already exists, and that they just have to look around hard enough until they find it. The truth is that most people who have found their calling have actually created the work that they do. Don't go looking in the classified advertisements for the dream job. You must network, make connections, and tell other people about your dreams.

When you begin to follow your calling, there will always be people who will tell you that you are impractical, unrealistic, idealistic, or selfish. It would be a mistake to listen to them. They are the people who want to tell the bumblebee that it can't fly. Remember that just because it's never been done before, it doesn't mean that you can't do it.

Beware of a job that is too good to be true, especially if you are being asked to put in your own money, or to work for very little money at first. Scam artists understand the hunger that people have for a dream job, and they can play on that. If you are being offered a job that really seems to fit what you are looking for, make sure that you are going to be paid what you are worth.

Sometimes people get too attached to their idea of what a “perfect job” would look like. Beware of being too picky and of passing up opportunities that could turn out to be even better than the job you are looking for. Keep an open mind, but at the same time don’t settle for something that doesn’t fit your values, or that doesn’t really use your most important skills and talents.

## **For More Information**

### *Books:*

Finney, Martha, and Deborah Dasch. “Find Your Calling, Love Your Life.” New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

Levoy, Gregg. “Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life.” New York: Harmony Books, 1997.

### *Web sites:*

Martha Finney’s Web site, Working From the HeartLand, [www.heartlandatwork.com](http://www.heartlandatwork.com)

Fast Company: “Find Your Calling,” [www.fastcompany.com/feature/00/act\\_corcazzini.html](http://www.fastcompany.com/feature/00/act_corcazzini.html)