

# Discovering Your Calling

Your calling is both an inner urge and your capacity, expressed in work that's right for you—the work you love to do, the work that satisfies you—at this phase of your life. It's that simple. It may be a career or a volunteer position. It may be working for yourself or a nine-to-five job. It may be the work that pays the bills or the work that holds your family together or the work that transforms your community. Your calling may change over time, but it will always contain three core elements as expressed in the following formula:

## **Gifts + Passions + Values = Calling**

Your calling is based on doing what you love, because what you love to do is often what you do best. When looking at your current job, the next job, or the next organization, it's far more effective to build on what you enjoy doing than to try to remediate what you struggle with.

We often think work has to be painful to be meaningful. Actually, the reverse is true. When we're most effective is often when the work is the most enjoyable or even effortless. If you feel as if you're swimming upstream at work, you might be in the wrong pool. A true calling feels more like going with the current. There's still work to do, but you don't have to struggle against an overwhelming force pushing the other way.

# The Calling Card Exercise

How can you make the shift to going with the current? Exploring your calling is the place to start. Follow the steps outlined on the next several pages to help unlock and explore your calling.

## Step 1.

Below is a list of 52 calling cards, statements that reflect potential callings one might have. The descriptors are deliberately open to interpretation. And, to some extent, choosing one over another is subjective. You're looking for the ones that call to YOU. Review each card deliberately and thoughtfully. After reflection, determine which group to assign it to:

**Group 1:** Callings that fit your gifts.

**Group 2:** Callings that you're not sure fit your gifts.

**Group 3:** Callings that don't fit your gifts at all.

<p><b>Advancing Ideas</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 3</p>	<p><b>Adding Humor</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 3</p>	<p><b>Awakening Spirit</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 3</p>
<p><b>Breaking Molds</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 3</p>	<p><b>Bringing Joy</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 3</p>	<p><b>Building Things</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group 3</p>

**Creating Dialogue**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Organizing Things**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Researching Things**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Seeing Possibilities**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Exploring the Way**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Instructing People**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Facilitating Change**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Managing Things**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Composing Themes**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Writing Things**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Fixing Things**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Processing Things**

- Group 1
- Group 2
- Group 3

**Getting Things Right**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Translating Things**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Getting to the Heart of Matters**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Helping Overcome Obstacles**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Empowering Others**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Doing the Numbers**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Building Relationships**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Straightening Things Up**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Investigating Things**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Growing Things**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Giving Care**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Analyzing Information**

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

**Making Connections**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Creating Things**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Making Things Work**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Starting Things**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Opening Doors**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Healing Wounds**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Putting the Pieces Together**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Making Deals**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Solving Problems**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Operating Things**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Seeing the Big Picture**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Resolving Disputes**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Bringing Out Potential**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Getting Participation**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Selling Intangibles**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Performing Events**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Designing Things**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Discovering Resources**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Moving Physically**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Persuading People**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Shaping Environments**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

**Creating Trust**

Group 1  
 Group 2  
 Group 3

## Step 2.

In the space provided, write down all your group 1 callings. Then, examine this list and circle the five callings that feel like your most natural preferences.


## Step 3.

Consider the five callings you circled above. Knowing yourself as you do, which one calls to you most? Which is the one that, today, feels most consistent with what you love to do. If you were forced to pick just one, which one would it be? Which one can you answer yes to all the following questions?

- A. Does doing it feel effortless?
- B. Do you enjoy doing it?
- C. Do others observe you doing it effortlessly?
- D. Do you enjoy practicing or learning more about it?

If you feel it is the closest to your calling but isn't quite right, modify it. Consider borrowing words from the other cards in your top five. Write down the one calling in the space provided.

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## Step 4.

Discuss this calling statement with a close friend, family member, or colleague. See what insight they might offer into your calling. Write down insights in the space provided.

## Step 5.

Think beyond your current work. Imagine if you could do any kind of work in a way that reflects this calling. What are the possibilities?

## Step 6.

List all the ways in your current job you can express this calling.

## Step 7.

What is one thing you can do today to express this calling?