

# FIVE CLUES TO YOUR CALLING

This is the start of something (literally).

I think about calling, purpose, and your life's work every day. Every. Single. Day. I don't take breaks. I don't take weekends off. I don't take vacations.

It may be a little obsessive, but here's the thing: I do it because I love it!

I haven't always been like this. For a long time I spent most of my days trying to fit into a job that didn't work. It's like getting stuffed into a locker by a bully— except I was the one doing it. It was painful.

All along I couldn't stop thinking about calling, purpose, and helping people find their life's work. As simple as it may sound, the question for me that changed things was: what if I just let myself do THAT?

That's first clue to finding your calling.



# CLUE #1: YOU ENJOY IT.

When you're doing your life's work, you enjoy it. There's a beautiful give and take that is at play: you're working hard and giving a lot of yourself to it, but you're also somehow energized and sustained by it. It doesn't feel like work, at least for moments. This doesn't mean it's not hard (more on that later). It may be very hard; but you enjoy the challenge and the tension. You get pleasure from doing the work you're called to.

## THE QUESTION IS THIS:

What do you enjoy doing that takes work? What are the things you've created/built/contributed to/aided in/etc that you've truly enjoyed doing?

# CLUE #2: YOU GET LOST IN IT.

Your life's work will have moments where you're so invested that you lose yourself in it. Time feels like it doesn't exist—it feels like it's paused, yet it passes faster than ever.

I remember going to a friend's house as a kid—a “play-date” before the term was invented. I'd go off to my friend's room or the backyard, and what felt like thirty seconds later my mom would tell me it's time to go. Of course it was actually 2 hours later, but it went by just that fast. That's what it's like to get lost in something. It's effortless concentration.

Not all of your work will be like this, but work that has some part of your calling in it will have moments of this kind of release. You're able to give yourself wholly over to the task at hand without struggling to stay invested.

## THE QUESTION IS THIS:

When in the last few months have you lost track of time? What were you doing?

# CLUE #3: YOU WORK HARD FOR IT.

Your life's work is something that you're willing to work hard for. Not all hard work is good work, but good work is usually hard work (that's a tongue twister!).

As much as you enjoy taking vacations, watching movies, and other leisure pursuits, those aren't your calling. Your calling is work. It's hard.

That said, there are different kinds of hard. Think of it in terms of exercise: you can feel good pain and bad pain. Good pain is when you're pushing yourself. You may sweat and grimace, but your body is doing what it's made to do. Bad pain is when your body does something it's not made to do—you pull a muscle or sprain your ankle.

Similarly, there's a difference between working hard because you love it, and doing work that's hard in a painful way. It's a tough distinction to make, but you know it when you feel it.

## THE QUESTION IS THIS:

Where in your life have you worked hard for something—maybe even harder than necessary? Where do you put in an extra 10% above and beyond?



# **CLUE #4: YOU FEEL SATISFIED BY IT.**

All too often we get to the end of our work days and feel like we did nothing of consequence. If you have enough of those days in a row, it'll drive you mad!

The crazy thing is that a majority of people are currently unsatisfied in their work (according to studies). This means most people go home on most days feeling empty!

A day of working hard on something related to your real work is a very satisfying experience. It can be exhausting, sure. But to know that what you're doing truly matters is a great feeling. It's not that everything will always feel perfect (that doesn't happen often in real life, sorry), but when you're working on something related to your purpose you will have a sense of satisfaction that what you're doing matters.

## **THE QUESTION IS THIS:**

When have you felt most satisfied at the end of your day? What did that day hold? What specific parts of it contributed to the feelings?

# **CLUE #5: YOU FEEL GRATEFUL FOR IT.**

It's a privilege to be doing work worth doing. Not everyone has the opportunity to make choices about what they do with their time. When you work hard and at the end of the day feel grateful that you had the chance to do that work, it means you're onto something.

Meaningful work is work that is connected to the way we are made. As we put our hopes for helping and impacting the world into action, we feel grateful to have the opportunity to make an impact—to make a difference.

## **THE QUESTION IS THIS:**

When have you done work simply for the pleasure of doing it?  
When have you helped someone and felt like you were the one benefitting from it?