

What Do You Really Want - a Job or a “Calling”

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Knowing what you want in your life and career is the most important step to achieving it. So what do you want – a job or a “calling,” and are you prepared to get it?

In coaching people to achieve a true breakthrough in their lives and careers, I’ve observed (and also personally experienced) the powerful impact of asking yourself the question, “Am I longing for a job or a calling?” – and answering it with brutal honesty.

Several months ago, I read a very thought-provoking article by Michael Lewis, columnist for Bloomberg News, about the difference between a “calling” and a job. He had some powerful insights about the differences.

Here’s the article (it’s certainly worth a read, especially in today’s times):

[*A Wall Street Job Can’t Match a Calling in Life*](#)

What struck me most were two intriguing concepts:

“There’s a direct relationship between risk and reward. A fantastically rewarding career usually requires you to take fantastic risks.”

and

“A calling is an activity you find so compelling that you wind up organizing your entire self around it -- often to the detriment of your life outside of it.”

I couldn’t agree more.

Many people dream of having a fantastic and thrilling career, but in essential ways are not willing to do the work (either externally or internally) to achieve it.

What *is* required then? Here’s a list of traits and characteristics that are essential to having a fantastically reward career (or following a calling):

- Deep and ongoing commitment (this is not about *wanting* – this is about *committing to having*)
- A wellspring of energy
- Frequent and continual leaps of faith and hope
- Self-esteem and the confidence to know that your dream is achievable
- Openness to learn from your mistakes and to get help when needed
- A healthy dose of reality about what’s necessary to succeed on this path
- Abundant risk-acceptance and tolerance, and the ability to proceed amidst instability
- The belief that you can’t live without pursuing this career
- A very tough skin
- An ability to “power up” (gain strength, skill, confidence, and self-mastery) as you expand
- And finally, strong boundaries that allow you to speak up for yourself and protect yourself from others who would say, “You’re crazy and stupid to do this.”

I agree with Michael that neither a job or a calling is better or worse; they're just different. "There are costs and benefits to both." You may have a job you enjoy (or can live with) yet know that what makes you feel passionate and powerful is not your job, but outside interests and experiences.

Or you may feel you have a calling, and will do anything to follow it.

The key to a fulfilling life is to follow your authentic path (not somebody else's). Figure out what that lights you up on the inside, and motivates you to be all you can be, and do it!

Michael's final words hit the mark – the critical question is not what the world can give you, but what you can contribute to the world, in a way that fills your soul and brings you great joy while doing it.

So ask yourself today:

- 1) Am I longing for a job or a calling? Which path will work best for me and my life?
- 2) If I know I have a calling, am I ready to do what it takes to pursue it?
- 3) And where will I get empowering guidance, support, and help to follow my calling successfully so I thrive in the process (rather than be crushed by it)?

Either way, having a great job or following a calling is a choice. But making this choice *consciously -- with commitment and aligned action --* is the difference between a frustrating, lack-luster experience that fails to satisfy, versus *living full out* – and expressing your true spirit each step of the way.