

What is Vocation? What is Discernment?

The Quick Reference to Having a Different Kind of "Big" Conversation

Vocation (vo 'ka shen)

To call (from the latin "Vocare")

Life task by which one earns a living

- "Vocation at its deepest level is, 'This is something I can't not do, for reasons I'm unable to explain to anyone else and don't fully understand myself but that are nonetheless compelling.'" ~ Parker Palmer
- "Vocation is responsibility, and responsibility is the whole response of the whole person to reality as a whole." ~ Bonhoeffer

Good discernment and decision making mark the intersection of the following four questions:

1. What do I deeply enjoy about who I am and what I do? What am I most passionate about?
2. What talents do I have naturally? What gifts have I most developed?
3. What does the world around me need right now? What career path have I chosen and how will that fit into the needs of the world?
4. Which option is best for me? Which option will be best in providing service to the world?
5. Involves feelings of joy and fulfillment

Consider discussing

these questions with students:

Finding a "Calling" is more than finding a job. It is...

1. Thriving not surviving (beyond paying the bills)
2. It is a gift to others
3. Connects who we are with what we do
4. Is always active
5. Involves daily choices (not some far off moment in time after graduation!)
6. Expression of gifts
7. Something you don't do for money or recognition
8. A labor of love



Discern (dis 'cern)

To identify

To perceive as being different, to distinguish

To recognize or comprehend

To sift and sort

What defines us are the choices we make and the actions that reflect them — our decisions.

Realistic Expectations

*Where is the student at developmentally during the college years?
What are some realistic expectations for young adults aged 18–25?*

Jeffery Jenson Arnett (2015) conducted extensive research about the development of young adults. He suggests we should expect the following..

Features of Emerging Adulthood:

1. Age of identity exploration
2. Age of possibilities/optimism
3. Age of feeling “in-between” (not a kid not an adult)
4. Age of instability
5. Most self- focused age of life

*What if my child can't decide on a major? Should we be worried?
How can we help ease any anxiety he/she might have?*

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average worker currently holds 11.9 different jobs before age 40, and this number is projected to grow. Forrester Research predicts that today's youngest workers will hold twelve to fifteen jobs in their lifetime.
- The Liberal Arts focus at Graceland means the potential for another major, minor or the opportunity to take classes in the name of interest alone. Employers are telling us that choice of major is only one thing they consider when choosing an employee. Outside of class activities and broad areas of interest are great too!

*How can we assist college-aged adults in discovering their
calling or passion?*

Questions to open the door for discussion with your child...

- What need do you sense (in your family, community, in the organization I work for)?
- Do you think you possess a true talent that, if disciplined and applied, can meet the need?
- Does the opportunity to meet the need tap into your passion?
- Does your conscience inspire you to take action and become involved?
- What is the best thing you can do under these circumstances?
- Is this worthy of your time? Is this a worthy way to spend your life?

For additional support and discussion on this topic, contact the Career Services Coordinator at 5460.



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