

Eleven

A Weekly Bulletin from
the Center for Academic Advising

5 Things Worth Knowing about Vocation

by Dianna Rhyan



When she is not practicing yoga, reading poetry, fingerpainting, or building Lego dinosaurs with her son Nicholas, Dianna directs the Lilly Project for the Exploration of Vocation and teaches Classical Studies and Women's Studies. She loves actively engaging the big life questions with students, and hosts a Tea & Creative Journaling Hour at Lilly House every Friday afternoon at 3:00--all students welcome.

1) **Vocation comes from the Latin verb *vocare*, meaning “to call.”**

By sponsoring summer humanitarian internships and other programs, the Lilly Project works with students interested in questions like: What am I called to do? Who was I created to become? How do you want the world to be different because you lived? Here are four brief points to get you started thinking about your purpose in life—not just your major, your job, or your career, but your LIFE.

2) **Vocation comes through your natural gifts and through your passions.** What do you absolutely love to do? What activity do you love so much that you lose track of time when you are involved in it? If you find yourself with a few free hours, what do you do? These are clues to discovering your vocation.

3) **Vocation comes when we act in accordance with our core commitments.** The word integrity comes from the Latin noun *integritas*, meaning “wholeness.” What feels right, just, and fitting to you with respect to other persons? How do you live out your ethical values? What you find yourself returning to and acting from in your moments of integrity and truth are clues to finding your vocation.

4) **Vocation comes when we listen.** All too often we live at a pace that lacks time for rest or play. Yet rest and play are every bit as necessary to a human being as is meaningful work. The answers to questions like “What should I do with the one life I have been given?” and “What is my gift to the earth?” will not come to us as we rush across campus talking on our cell phones. Here is where the beauty of nature, the comfort of sacred places, and the serenity of our favorite nook in the library beckon. Times of reflection, meditation, prayer—these are the moments when our vocation begins to reveal its promise.

5) **Vocation requires imagination.** Very few of us are born knowing exactly how we can best serve others and be fulfilled through meaningful work. We know we want to serve, and we know that we seek fulfillment and happiness...but how? We cannot settle for easy answers here; others' quick solutions, no matter how well meant, often do not fit. Instead, creativity is essential, consciously expanding our vision. Looking further into an issue assigned in class because it moves us. Asking a friend in need many curious questions because we care to stand in someone else's place with compassion. Seeing beyond what already exists, into what can be if we work together to make it happen. These are all acts of the imagination, and if you can imagine a vocation, then with dedication, perseverance—and taking a chance!—and play!—you can become it.