Authenticity at Work:

Doing What You Love, Loving What You Do

Dr. A.R. Elangovan (Elango)
Professor & Director, Int’l Programs
questions that keep us awake

‣ what is it that I really want to do?
‣ what is my (work) life all about? what’s my purpose?
‣ what is that drives me? (why am I not driven?)
‣ why am I doing this? what does this all mean?
‣ what am I doing here? what’s the end?
‣ is this it?
what does our work mean to us?

- it’s a job
- it’s a career
- it’s a calling
it’s a job

✓ it “puts food on the table”

✓ it’s a “9 to 5” thing - can’t wait for Fridays!

✓ a contractual approach to work

✓ life is what happens outside of work hours
it’s a career

✓ this work is engaging and challenging and you can see a path forward

✓ motivated by a sense of achievement and the rewards that accompany successful performance (monetary, perks, recognition, status, prestige, etc)

✓ a transactional approach to effort and changes

✓ if the progress or rewards are not satisfactory, may look for other things to do
it’s a calling

✓ “living a life” and “earning a livelihood” seem to merge

✓ “what you do” and “who you are” converge - a sense of wholeness

✓ driven by a passion that is unrelated to external recognition or rewards (or objective measures of success)

✓ a sense of contributing to make the world a better place

✓ “a full-time consciousness that engulfs the person”
four key questions

- If one feels “called”, is it always to an occupation?
- How do I know if what I’m doing now is my calling?
- What are key factors in the process of discovery?
- How do I start this process?
different interpretations of callings

Religious

Secular

Non-
Occupation
Related

Occupation
Related
the notion of multiple selves

- the actual self - who I am
- the ideal self - who I’d like to be
- the ought self - who I should be
- the possible self - who I could be
discrepancies among the selves

Actual Self

Ought Self

Ideal Self
discrepancies among the selves

I *am* what I *want* to be and *should* be
key factors

- An urge to find meaning in one’s life
- Attentiveness
- Willingness to experiment with new paths
- Growing understanding of the self

* necessary but not sufficient conditions
so near yet so far

Discovering your calling

vs.

Pursuing your calling
discovering your calling

- “highest goal” approach
  (“most meaningful” exercise)
Look for the “essence of you” in what you currently do and build your work around it (i.e., locating oneself in the fourth box)
Publication: April 2010