

Job vs. Vocation: How Following Your Inner Child Can Lead You to Paradise

What's popping, people?

It's Dante — getting my morning started here in the Centennial Arboretum. Look at this beautiful view. The morning sounds are different this time of year. Summer's here, and the cicadas are back. It's peaceful. Perfect time to reflect.

The Thought of the Day: Job vs. Vocation

So today's thought is about the difference between a **job** and a **vocation**.

We spend so much of our lives working — pouring time and energy into producing one thing:

Economic energy. Money.

If your goal is to make money and that's it...

That's a job. Plain and simple.

And if you do that for 30, 40, 50 years?

Is that really a life worth living?

A Vocation Is a Calling — Something Divine

A **vocation** is something different.

It's a calling. A divine pull.

You usually hear that word in religious settings — monks, priests, nuns. But in truth, a vocation doesn't have to be religious.

“A vocation is when you listen to your conscience and align your work with your soul.”

Yes, it can be burdensome. Yes, it requires labor.
But it nourishes you spiritually. It fulfills you deeply.
It's rare — but real.

Why Most People Are Miserable

In my experience, 99% of people I talk to don't actually like what they do.

That's not just a personal crisis — that's a **societal illness**.

If most people are just clocking in for a paycheck, without any real joy or connection to their work...

That's a problem.

How I Found My Vocation

For me, the path became clear by returning to my **inner child**.

I used to:

- Build teepees in the woods
- Make stone bridges
- Climb trees and swing on vines
- Explore the unknown

Now as an adult, I work as a **horticulturalist** in Philadelphia — and I have this vision to revitalize a **27-acre forest** that’s overgrown with weeds and vines. There’s no clear path... and that excites me.

“I want to blaze the trail again. I want to build that teepee. I want to create paradise.”

There’s even a literal treehouse in that forest under construction right now. I’m not kidding — it feels like I’m living my childhood dream all over again.

When I Quit My Job

Here’s a story:

I once worked as a city photographer. I went to a banquet. There were awards. Buffets. People drinking. Laughing. Eating.

And I sat there wondering:

“What did we even do to deserve this? What are we being rewarded for?”

It felt hollow.

And worse than that, it felt like **sin**.

“I felt shame. I felt like I was generating money from nothing. I felt like I was committing a sin.”

That day, I quit.

And I returned to what was calling me: **the soil, the sun, the sweat, the slow days**.

Finding the Garden of Eden

Now I work with my hands.
I design Zen gardens.
I labor in the dirt.
And I feel like...

“I’ve returned to the Garden of Eden.”

Literally. Not just metaphorically.

And it all came from listening to my conscience, from following that child inside me who just wanted to **play** again.

Enthusiasm = Possessed by God

Let me tell you something:

The word **enthusiasm** comes from the Greek *entheos* — meaning *possessed by God*.

When you wake up **enthusiastic**, it means the divine is moving through you.
You’re not *forced* to play the game of life — you’re **voluntarily showing up** to play it.

And that changes everything.

Cultivating Paradise on Earth

This isn’t about escaping to a monastery.

Although, sure, if I lived in another time, maybe I’d be at Mount Carmel or chilling with monks in the Vatican.

But I love **street photography**, I love **society**, and I love **people**.

So I've decided to:

“Design my life like a modern monk.”

A monk with a camera. A monk with dirt under his nails.

A monk building a Zen garden in Philadelphia.

You Don't Have to Play the Game Like Everyone Else

That's the big takeaway.

“You don't have to live life the way others do. You can design your life. You can cheat the system. You can follow your vocation.”

So maybe take a moment to pause.

Ask yourself:

- Are you working a job?
 - Or are you answering a calling?
 - Are you waking up with enthusiasm?
 - Or are you hitting snooze?
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A Final Thought: Achilles' Flower

Look at this: the **Achilles flower** — also known as **yarrow**.

Apparently, Achilles used this to heal soldiers on the battlefield.

“Achillea. My new favorite plant. Kinda cool.”

Be still. Listen. Play. And you just might find paradise.