

# Finding Sacred Purpose

BY KRISTA KURTH

From a spiritual point of view, each of us has been given a specific purpose to fulfill. According to the Buddha, it is our destiny to discover this sacred purpose and then give ourselves to it with all our heart. The integrated framework that follows is to help you become clear on your higher purpose and from there, your right livelihood or "life's work." Laurence Boldt, author of *Zen and the Art of Making a Living* (Penguin Arkana, 1993), writes that our life's work is the way we express our personal purpose in the world. It is the actions taken to make our highest vision real. The framework combines the four elements of life's work that Boldt describes in his book with the four sacred ways we can relate to the world.

Although for each of us our life's work will be different, all meaningful work will include the following four elements:

**INTEGRITY:** Our true work reflects who we really are and what is essential to us. It is inspired from within and is based on our personal values, visions, intuitions, and ideals.

**SERVICE:** Our life's work provides us with an opportunity to give our gifts in a meaningful way. It involves making the world a better place and putting love into action.

**ENJOYMENT:** Our genuine work allows us to take full advantage of our innate talents and abilities. It is natural to us and is created around something we love to do.

**EXCELLENCE:** Our life's work is something that inspires us to do our best work. It is something to which we dedicate ourselves wholeheartedly.

There are also four levels of the world to which we can relate in a sacred way. Each level has a particular focus of rela-

tionship and intention.

On the **SPIRITUAL** level, the focus is the Divine. The intention is to have more conscious spiritual awareness in our daily life.

On the **PERSONAL** level, the focus is the Self. The intention is to grow and learn to love with more integrity and authenticity.

On the **RELATIONAL** level, the focus is the Other. The intention is to establish caring relationships with others we work with and love.

On the **COMMUNAL** level, the focus is the organization, community, and environment. The intention is to build communities and care for the environments in which we live and work.

## How to Use the Integrated Framework:

When the four elements of life's work are combined with the four levels of relating to the world, you get an integrated framework for exploring your sacred purpose and life's work. Each of the four elements

## The Framework for Exploring Your Sacred Purpose

	ELEMENTS			
	INTEGRITY What gives meaning to my life and work?	SERVICE How can I make the world a better place?	ENJOYMENT How can I bring creativity to my work?	EXCELLENCE To what can I dedicate myself wholeheartedly?
LEVELS				
SPIRITUAL Having more spiritual awareness in daily life.				
PERSONAL Learning to live with more integrity.				
RELATIONAL Creating caring relationships with others.				
COMMUNAL Building communities in the environments in which I live and work.				

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and levels provides powerful clues for discovering your life's work. Go through each column and row of the framework, one at a time, using the accompanying questions to guide your exploration. Keep notes in a journal or draw a larger version of the chart and fill in the boxes.

## Contemplation Questions

**I. INTEGRITY COLUMN:** What speaks to me? What gives purpose and meaning to my life?

What gives meaning to my life on a spiritual level? personal level? relational level? communal level?

What work would be the best expression of my most closely held personal values, ideals, and visions—my highest aspirations?

**II. SERVICE COLUMN:** What touches me in the world? What gifts do I want to share and with whom?

What work would enable me to make this world a better place on a spiritual level? personal level? relational level? communal level?

What work would enable me to meet a need in the world that I care about?

**III. ENJOYMENT COLUMN:** What do I love to do? How can I bring joy and creativity to my work?

What inspires me and what energizes me spiritually? personally? relationally? communally?

What work would allow me to take the most advantage of my innate talents and abilities?

**IV. EXCELLENCE COLUMN:** What draws out my best?

To what can I dedicate myself wholeheartedly enough to work toward excellence on a spiritual level? personal

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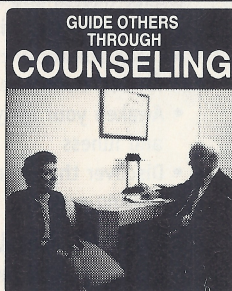
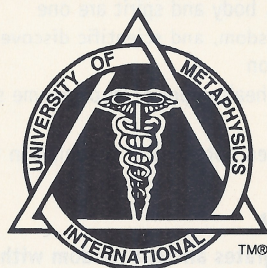
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level? relational level? communal level?

What work inspires me and evokes dedicated action and wholehearted commitment?

**V. SPIRITUAL ROW:** What work would enable me to relate to the spiritual dimension of life and support me in bringing a spiritual awareness into my daily work?

**VI. PERSONAL ROW:** What work would enable me to live with more authenticity and integrity? What work would support my growth and learning?

**VII. RELATIONAL ROW:** What work would facilitate the establishment of caring relationships with others? What would give more meaning to my relationships?

**VIII. COMMUNAL ROW:** What work might enable me to be involved with the world around me on a communal level, building communities in and caring for the environments in which I live and work? Is there a social cause for which I am interested in working?

Once you have thought about and responded to all the contemplation questions, take some time to see whether there are any themes that emerge in your responses, or new insights and understandings concerning your purpose and life's work. You might also see which areas of the framework or which questions speak to or inspire you the most. These observations may help you find your true calling.

*Krista Kurth, Ph.D., is a cofounder of Renewal Resources LLC, a consulting firm that works with individuals and organizations on spiritual renewal and revitalization at work. Kurth also speaks at national and international events on topics related to spiritual renewal. She can be reached at Renewal Resources LLC, 9428 Garden Court, Potomac MD 20854; (301) 765-9551; e-mail RenewalKK@aol.com.*

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