

Decide Who You Want to Be, Not What You Want to Do

A lot of us wonder what we are here to do.

People spend so much time agonizing over this question – and producing such dubious answers – that I wonder if maybe this is the wrong question.

Dispute me if you'd like, but there's no sure way of knowing if there's any ONE thing you really should be doing with your life.

Some skepticism about "one true callings" is in order, but I do think there's a reason we have the notion of vocation, and I don't think it's all just idle imagination to think that there are better and worse ways to spend your years.

However, I do think there's a better way to find what the right way is. Instead of asking myself what I want to do with my life, I ask myself what kind of person I want to be.

In my humble opinion, deciding who you will be – and then sticking to it – is about 90% of the battle for anyone.

Some of the best artists and doers have been really terrible people – addicts and abusers and manipulators. It's debatable whether they left the world better than they found it, or if they were really at home in their own souls. For them, doing what they were "meant to do" either required or allowed them to neglect basic honesty and decency.

On the other side of the coin, even the most common person has it within them to become the right kind of person, even if they don't have a Michelangelo-esque career of doing things in their future.

If you are one of the lucky few people who manages to keep their integrity and maintain their values, finding out what you want to do can be very easy. If your main needs for meaning are met by the struggle to become the right kind of person, any task that facilitates that self-transformation will be worthwhile.

Maybe working as a fry cook helps you become more honest. Good! Do that. Maybe once you finally become as honest as you seek to be, you will have the kind of inner power to become something even greater by the world's standards. But don't put the cart before the horse. Finding what you love will be made easier if you the courage and stability of temperament to be the kind of person you have committed to being.

Let's say you never find what you were meant to do. If you can at least become who you wanted to be, you can be pretty sure that your existence won't be something to regret. If

you get far enough along, you may realize the possibility that a man's purpose really is to become, not to do.