

Discussion Resource for *Follow Your Bliss and Other Lies About Calling*

This guide offers examples of topics and questions that could be part of a discussion of the Big Read text. Please keep your particular goals for your Big Read and the context of your institution in mind as you consider how these questions could help you meet your goals for the Big Read.

FRAMING THE BIG READ

We encourage you to think carefully about the setting you create for discussing *Follow Your Bliss and Other Lies About Calling*. There are some potentially vulnerable conversations about experiences with calling that could emerge from the book that require hospitality and a safe space to engage well. You may want to consider keeping the discussion groups smaller (6-8 people) to make sure there is space for meaningful engagement with the concepts of the book. You also might want to consider providing some of the discussion questions ahead of time so participants can prepare for the conversation and consider what they would like to share with their colleagues.

The text can be approached from multiple perspectives: a personal lens that draws on one's own beliefs and experiences, a disciplinary lens that explores how the text connects to work with students, or an institutional lens that considers its relevance to the mission, culture, or student body of an institution. You may want to be explicit about the lens through which you plan to engage with the book. This could involve using all three perspectives, focusing on one at a time, or choosing a particular lens to carry throughout your Big Read. Examples of broad questions related to these perspectives include:

- ◆ How does this relate to my professional identity or values?
- ◆ Why is this text important to my work as an educator or scholar?
- ◆ What connections can I draw between this text and my students' learning?
- ◆ What assumptions did the book challenge?
- ◆ How will this influence my future course design or mentoring?
- ◆ How does the author define vocation and calling? How is it similar or different to our institutional understanding of vocation or calling?

POSSIBLE OPENING QUESTIONS

Among the many conversations you could have around the book, we hope that at least part of your conversation creates hospitable space for participants to reflect on their own callings in generative ways. To create space for this kind of conversation to unfold, we encourage you to think carefully about the first questions you ask about the book. Below are some suggestions for how you could launch your book discussion.

If participants meet before reading the book or after reading part of the book

- ◆ Consider starting with a conversation card activity. Selected cards from the Explore (green) or Engage (blue) decks will align well with the conversations the book is likely to prompt.

Once participants have read the whole book

- ◆ What chapter (or type of disrupted calling) resonates with your own experience or gives name to a part of your vocational story?
- ◆ Are there ways the language or concepts presented in the book help frame your current experience with your work?

QUESTIONS TO CONTINUE OR EXPAND THE DISCUSSION

Below are examples of different conversations you could have around the book as part of your ongoing conversations. While this is not an exhaustive list, we hope it sparks your thinking about possible ways your conversation could unfold.

Connections to campus work

- ◆ How could concepts from the book help students tell their own stories well?
- ◆ What could it look like to use this book in mentoring conversations or in the classroom with students?
- ◆ How could this book foster interdisciplinary connections within vocation, or cross-campus conversations about vocation?

Inviting other narratives into the book framework

- ◆ If you were to add another chapter to the book, what would the title of your additional chapter be and why?
- ◆ Consider other vocational narratives you have encountered, whether they come from a piece of literature, and individual, or a community with which you are familiar. What could these different narratives add to the perspective of the narrative present in the book?
- ◆ Definitions of vocation often include elements of joy, deep delight or gladness, and fulfillment. How do those elements intersect with the conversation about fractures, blocked callings, and other challenges to the 'follow your bliss' language that are in this text?
- ◆ If you were to write a conclusion for the book, what would it include? How would you help participants consider what is next and, perhaps, move towards hope?

Considering communities

- ◆ Consider our calling to communal well-being and the common good. Is there a difference between blocked callings of a community and blocked callings of an individual?
- ◆ Which lies about calling are most prevalent in the communities or cultures you are a part of?
- ◆ Which lies about calling from the book have impeded or harmed communities with which you have experience?

QUESTIONS?

Please address any questions to Rachael Baker, associate director of NetVUE, at rbaker@cic.edu.