

## ***Reading Resources:***

### ***Discovering Connections Among Meaning-Making, Mentoring, Vocation, and Spirituality***

#### **BOOKS**

**Kronman, A. T. (2007). *Education's end: Why our colleges and universities have given up on the meaning of life.* New Haven: Yale University Press.**

In this recently released book, former Yale law professor Anthony Kronman asks the pivotal question of what living is for and “what one should care about and why.” He explores the present phenomenon of why our colleges and universities have excluded this question from their classrooms when the meaning of life was once the central element of all curricular inquiry in higher education. Today, Kronman argues, questions of meaning and purpose do not seem to have a place in our institutions due to the influence of modern research and the pressure of political correctness over the past half-century. Kronman advocates for a time of change and urges a revival of the humanities’ lost tradition of studying the meaning of life through the careful, but critical reading of great works of literary and philosophical imagination.

**Palmer, P.J. (2000). *Let your life speak: Listening for the voice of vocation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.**

In *Let Your Life Speak*, Parker Palmer presents the searching question “*Is the life I’m living the same as the life that wants to live in me?*” in order to help readers reflect on their true calling and life purpose. Palmer demonstrates that our sense of vocation comes from listening to and accepting our true selves, both with our limits as well as our potentials. In this way, he encourages each reader to become more self-reflective and aware in order to discover a deeper sense of personal fulfillment as well as a larger connection and communion with others as we listen for the voice of vocation in our lives.

**Parks, S.D. (2000). *Big questions, worthy dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose, and faith*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.**

In *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, Sharon Daloz Parks explores meaning-making and spiritual development in the young adult years that are characterized by a sense of searching and are formative in one's development into adulthood. Her previous work, *The Critical Years* (1986) was rewritten as *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams* (2000) based on her experience with and research about undergraduate and graduate students and the *context* in which young adult development can flourish. In this book, Parks describes the significance of creating and sustaining mentoring environments to support young adult growth and development in order to ask "big enough" questions and offer young adults access to "worthy dreams" as they continue to search for meaning, purpose, and faith. (See also the interview with Sharon Daloz Parks in this edition: "The Undergraduate Quest for Meaning, Purpose, and Faith").

**Schwehn, M.R. & Bass, D.C. (2006). *Leading lives that matter: What we should do and who we should be*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.**

In order to explore a sense of vocation, Mark Schwehn and Dorothy Bass present a compilation of some of the Western tradition's most influential writings that capture human life as a search for meaning, purpose, and faith. Drawing on fiction, autobiography, philosophy, and theology – from Milton and Steinbeck to the Holy Bible and Tolstoy – Schwehn and Bass share 67 compelling works in this volume that will help readers consider how they view their own personal stories as they relate to the larger human fabric of life.

## **ARTICLES**

**Hall, D.T. & Chandler, D.E. (2005). "Psychological success: When the career is a calling." *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26, pp. 155-175.**

This article looks at one's career choice from subjective and objective perspectives – the subjective being when one feels a sense of calling and/or purpose in his or her work, which is not necessarily connected to a set of religious beliefs. This subjective view of "the career as a calling" reflects a generalized form of psychological engagement with the meaning of one's work. Based on this subjective notion of the career as a calling, the authors present a model of psychological success in order to clarify the dual-relationship between the subjective and objective career perspectives. They also offer propositions and present a case study to illustrate this model as it relates to the sense of meaning and purpose in one's career choice.

**Kasworm, C. (2003). "Adult meaning making in the undergraduate classroom." *Adult Education Quarterly*, 53, 2, pp. 81-98.**

This paper presents the results from a qualitative study that explores adult undergraduate beliefs about their construction of knowledge in the classroom as it relates to their adult roles outside of the classroom. From the 90 interviews of adult undergraduate students, five belief structures, or "knowledge voices," were defined, including the entry voice, the outside voice, the cynical voice, the straddling voice, and the inclusion voice. The differences between and among these knowledge voices illustrate a particular construction of the adult student learning world that differs from the meaning making processes in traditional aged undergraduate students.

**Rehm, M. (1990). "Vocation as personal calling: A question for education." *The Journal of Educational Thought*, 24, 2, pp. 114-125.**

In this article, Rehm considers how the historically positive meaning regarding the concept of vocation relates to the practical role of vocational education. She highlights the history of vocation as a spiritual calling where one's personal gifts and contributions to the common good are central, and relates vocation to the modern notion of "spiritual quest" both for meaning in one's work as well as one's intra- and inter-personal understanding. Rehm contrasts the benefits of vocation with the difficulties in actualizing a sense of vocation in our current society and educational system, and presents implications for the future of vocational education.