



UNIVERSALIST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF HAVERHILL

“My Life Calling as a Wayfinder,”
a sermon given by Tom Ellis
on July 20, 2014

Many years ago, while on the Search Committee for this Church, we had the chance during the interview process to ask Reverend Frank some powerful questions. Specifically the one that stood out in my mind was the question... “Reverend Frank, What was it that called you to ministry?” His response was impactful. Then to my surprise, he asked us, “what called us to this community.” I froze. This question pushed me to ask a bigger question, “Tom, what is your calling in Life?”

I was shocked that an ordained minister was asking this question, what calls you here. I felt only those that were either studying or practicing ministry, were worthy of having a calling in their lives. Understandably so, my paradigm, my beliefs and views of the world, from the eyes of a former altar boy, I was very uncomfortable with the idea that I would have a specific purpose or a calling in life.

In my mind, such divine inquiry was the privilege for only the few. And I was not one of them.

It felt odd and quite foreign. In hindsight, little did I know that I was about to take an amazing journey in my life. And so this morning, it is my intention to share with you aspects of my journey in exploring, discovering and eventually living my calling, my sole purpose in this life.

Before I tell you what I am called to do, I going to give you some personal details I learned on my journey.

At the start of the journey, I had to face the difficulties I was dealing with in this area of my life. You see, I never told anyone that I struggled with answering questions such as, “Who am I? Why am I here? Do I even have a purpose with this life? Is there something more important for me then waking up every day going to a job and paying taxes? Will I ever find some peace in my heart and do those things that make me happy? Why should I bother continue living a life that was meaningless? It was a very dark period for me.

And so, a little voice in me said, “Yes!!!” Do it!!! I wanted to confront this head on. I needed to know the answers to those questions I just mentioned. I needed to know what gifts I can bring to this world and be valued by so many. The thought of having a life purpose became both scary yet hopeful.

So I continued on my journey and at one point, I bought so many books on this topic. Then I took a few classes, some cheap and some not. Yet, I felt more discouraged and less hopeful with no sense of direction. I even asked myself if I was going down the wrong path and was getting ready to accept the fact that I will never know my purpose and be stuck at a job that was eating away at my soul.

Eventually, I did find my way to amazing course that changed my life completely. But most importantly, I realized the process for finding your purpose in life does not need to be a difficult one. In fact, during that course, I was amazed at how easy it was to identify what was important to me and then go on to create the steps for me to live my calling in life. At that point, I began to feel joy for the first time in my life. I was so joyful at this new discovery. By now, I bet you are wondering, “When is Tom going to tell us what his purpose in life is? Well, not yet, but before I share my purpose with you, I want to offer some tips I have learned just in case, by any chance you may be on your own journey at this time.

First, Tie a rope to the Back door. Let me explain.

I once read somewhere that farmers in the Midwest are encouraged to tie a rope from their back door to the barn so that during a blizzard, they would find their way back home. So metaphorically speaking, I knew I had to tie my rope to the back door of this church in case my life got hectic, which it did, and I was able to reach out to you in the community for support. For that, I thank you.

Secondly, Be gentle with yourself.

Exploring any aspects of your life is a new one. Most of us are not used to sitting down and going deep within, asking complex questions around what we are here to do. It takes time. It takes courage to be a human being. And so be gentle with yourself, as you are with a newborn child. You too, need and deserve gentleness.

Thirdly, Find a Process and Trust that Process.

As mentioned in the beginning, I went right out and bought so many books and took a bunch of classes related to finding one’s purpose. As a result, I was overwhelmed. As I just mentioned, I was not gentle with myself during the process and when I became gentle, it became clear and easy.

I learned to avoid the trap of a self-help junkie and try all the programs at the same time.

Once I found a program that worked for me, I discovered how easy and simple it was to identify and support my purpose in life.

There are so many ways for you to discover your purpose. Maybe it's a chat with Reverend Frank or perhaps searching for a book. There are countless programs out there to choose from. Take your time and trust the process that you will get what you need.

Fourth, Share your discovery with your community.

Discovering your purpose is a wonderful experience. It is important that you keep that purpose alive. Reach out to the community and let us know what we can do to support you living the life you were born to live. Community support is vital.

And now, I would like to share my calling in life with you. My purpose for living in this world, at this time is to support individuals, who are at a crossroad in their lives, where the need to clarify, plan and take the necessary steps they need in going forward on their journey in life.

I have found a phrase that **perfectly** fits what I am here to do. I am a WAYFINDER. I help people find their ways.

And So today, I invite you to explore, if you have not already done so, what is your calling in life? What are your deepest gifts you wish to share with the world? How can we as a welcoming, caring, faith community support you on your journey? As you go back out into the world, remember to tie your rope to the back door so that when things get hectic, all you need to do is pull on your rope and find your way back to this sacred space.

Be joyful

Be gentle

Be curious

Be Loved

and just

Be Yourself