

Ilana Weibel

Make Your Passion Your Reality

*A practical guide for coaches,
counselors, and anyone
looking for vocational fulfillment*

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NO SHORTCUTS. JUST RESULTS



To Uri, Ziv and Reut; my Life

Table of Contents:

1.	Starting the Journey	11
2.	Swimming in a Sea of Opportunities	21
3.	‘Transitional Calling’	27
4.	Your Calling - A Model for Success	49
5.	Calling - Axiom Axiom: ‘the existence of your Calling’	75
6.	The Mirage - Latent Personal Calling	79
7.	Increasing Frustration	87
8.	All that Glitters isn’t Gold!	95
9.	The Mist Clears, the Path Is Revealed.	111
10.	Toolbox - Application of the P.Q.R.R.C Process	127
11.	Application of the CALLING Model of Success In Different Areas of Life.	151
12.	Notes from the Journey	169

A moment before we begin...

To explain how this book came to be I must tell you about my life as a young woman. I had just finished my service in the Israeli army, feeling free and happy, in many ways blissfully unaware, or what I now think of as 'unknowing'. I thought that I was 'grown-up', but I didn't know what I wanted to do with myself. I didn't know what path to follow in my career, or my life. My twenties were not a great time. Supposedly, I was a success; I was in good health, I had a desirable job with a nice salary. But something inside was bothering me, gnawing at me incessantly. I knew that I wasn't in the right place. But what was the right place? Where did I want to go? Even when I had reached my thirties, I still didn't know the answer. As a mother of two, I still asked myself with a heavy heart: 'So what is it going to be, Ilana? What are you going to do when you grow up?'

Eventually, I realized that life is too valuable to waste on a job with no intellectual reward, with no joy. I still didn't know where I was heading, but I knew that I wanted to experience a new dawn. I desired meaning for myself and I wanted to have an impact on the world around me. I wanted something to happen with my job, the sort of thing that happens with a soul-mate. Love at first sight.

As the days passed, my feet began to walk by themselves. My journey was beginning, I didn't know where I was going, but I was careful to keep on walking. After a while the fog had cleared. New horizons

began to dawn. In between, dear teachers showed me the way I should go and walked with me, until I was strong enough to go on without them. Gradually, I saw the tip of the mountain. When I started to climb, I knew that I would reach the top.

I wrote this book so, that it will be easier for you to find your 'calling' in life and to find the feeling of happiness and fulfillment that we all deserve to have.

The system that I work by is both complicated and perfectly simple. It claims that each and every one of us has an extremely precious gift: the gift of your calling, expression, and your career. How do we find it? With three simple elements: perseverance, faith, and the toolbox that is waiting for you in this book. I know that you will reach your Calling just like I did. Good luck!

Sincerely, and with affection for your future,
Ilana,

Starting the Journey

‘I want to invite you to join me in the search for your path.’

I wrote that single line three years ago. It was the beginning of a paragraph, clear and concise. After weeks of writing, the paragraph had turned into the first chapter of my book. In the years that followed, I added other chapters. My thoughts have become realized.

This book is a clear and sharp mirror, a comprehensive summary of my fifty years. Its pages reflect the person that I am today. It is the sum of all my successes, achievements, professional progress, and experiences with students and friends that joined me during the journey, alongside the questions, failures and miss-steps. To those of you who are searching for their path, I can say that each and every one of us has a safe shore just waiting to be found.

If you only look for the right lighthouse, and if you take with you the necessary amount of faith and trust, you will find yourselves carried away to that shore. All you have to do is believe and move forward, just like I did at the beginning of my own journey.

Fulfilling others' expectations

In 1973 you would have found me in the second row of a classroom, staring at the blackboard. This was in the 'vocational' school 'Bosmat', in a working-class neighborhood in Haifa. The classes I took were Electrical Engineering and Electronics. You might ask what such a bookish student, as I was then, was doing in a vocational school. Let me remind you that we just took the time-machine thirty-five years into the past. The question of which high school I would choose didn't even exist. The decision had already been made, as always. 'Our girl will attend vocational school,' my father used to say with great joy. 'In three years she will get her high-school diploma, then she will go to the army, and after her service the entire world will be open to her. With vocational training, what could go wrong?'

The nagging doubts that troubled me back then did not disturb my father at all. As a Holocaust survivor, he was a very pragmatic man. For him, everything was black and white. One of his core values was being able to provide basic needs for living. For him, dreams, aspiration and personal desire all served the former. In other words, my father and his contemporaries didn't talk about destiny, fulfillment, or the connection between personal ability and professional contentment. Instead, they spoke of their jobs, financial security, and the future of their children. And what about me? Despite my desires and dreams, I had but one wish: to fulfill my father's expectations. I wanted him to feel proud, as he saw it. I knew that the day I crossed the gates of Bosmat, my father would feel that his daughter had 'made it'. Having been born ten years after 'that war' she would be qualified in an important profession.

My destiny was of course, intertwined with my father's, and it has been impossible to separate them ever since.

'Personal Calling'

Calling: Noun, - a strong inner impulse toward a particular course of action especially when accompanied with great faith. This course could be an occupation, profession, or career.

Calling, or destiny are words that so many psychologists, managers and professionals talk about - This concept is not an exterior thing, but an inner point, sometimes hidden, found in every one of us. It is a point that encapsulates the feelings of fulfillment, satisfaction and a great deal of personal contentment.

The journey to that point can be long, frustrating and sometimes tortuous. When we reach it however, the veil of doubt is immediately removed. Everyone who reaches that place knows that from now on they will be accompanied throughout their life with feelings of comfort and deep understanding. Suddenly, expressions such as 'the meaning of life' and 'destiny' have an actual tangible meaning, and our ability to express the entire spectrum of our personal abilities becomes clear. Moreover, you could say that the term '**Calling**' includes an inner knowledge of a goal, our reason for being, and the hidden factors that move us. The knowledge that is hidden within our '**Calling**' can provide answers to questions such as:

'Why am I here?' 'Where is my life leading me?' 'What is my goal?'
And more.

And you are right to ask! How do we know what our real goal should be?

The answer to these million-dollar questions are ones that you will find, paradoxically, at the end of the road. The search itself leads the person to the answer. Unfortunately this answer, or part of it, is not given easily, nor will you find it at the beginning. That is why we have to stock up on faith and strength. The truth about ourselves will be known to us only when we meet our destiny. Only the power of that meeting will let a person know that their way was the right one, that their calling was fulfilled.

‘That’s well and good,’ my clients tell me doubtfully, but many of them ask me;

- ‘How will I know my **Calling** when I see it?’
- ‘Is there something else that I should look for, besides my **Calling**?’
- ‘Is have reaching our **Calling** really that important?’
- ‘In what way will it change our life, and turn us into happier people?’

These are tough questions and of course do not have a single answer.

The goal: to study psychology

Although my high-school notebooks were filled with terms such as ‘alternating current,’ ‘ions,’ and ‘logarithms,’ my dreams were very different. I found myself imagining a small therapy room, with two chairs and a listening, thoughtful psychologist. That psychologist was me. I was only sixteen, but deep in my heart I already knew that I wasn’t in the right place. I knew that the road to the Psychology

faculty started at a different high school. That is where my dreams were, where I knew my real talents lay.

As so happens to many good students, I wasn't only pressured by the powerful messages that were sent to me by my father. Since my report card was decorated with high marks, my parents said: 'Little Ilana, you are good at everything. If so, you should keep studying practical subjects. Those professions are the best. You can make the best money with them.'

Old beliefs and fake causes

Equipped with beliefs taken from my parent's traditional values, I continued with my mistake. I knew that in a good profession I could earn a decent salary, as long as I received good marks. And indeed, I used all my powers in order to excel in electronics. I was focused on the goal. I aimed high, positive that I was hitting the target over and over again.

In the middle of the 1970s, I didn't know that this talented young lady, the woman destined to help other people to find their calling and connect to their destiny, was aiming at the wrong target. That girl was wasting her ammunition and energy for nothing.

As is often the case, I insisted on sticking to the wrong track. So I took advantage of the national conscription, by becoming an Electronic Technician in the Israeli Defense Force. It was an intriguing offer.

For the first time since its founding, the Israeli Air Force agreed to open its doors to female soldiers. The message was this: 'You'll be

part of our land team. For our part, we will help you get an attractive profession and prestigious military experience.'

The setting was perfect. Those who passed the obstacle course (I must admit that it wasn't hard) found themselves embarked on a traditionally masculine course. The contrast between a soft feminine look and heavy machines was considered sexy back then. In no time at all we were starring on the covers of Israeli magazines. Our motto was 'high in the sky.' As if that was not enough, at the final ceremony of the course, the force's commander shook each of our hands: 'Major-General David Hevry and I shook hands,' I told my friends proudly. 'So, what do you have to say about Ilana from your class?'

Everyone was impressed, and yet inside I felt empty. Gentle voices whispered to me that I wasn't even close to my calling. I didn't feel any connection between the metal and wiring and my desire to study psychology. However, this conflict was not yet strong enough. It would take more than professional frustration for me to understand that my calling was far away from there.

Milestones

Today I can smile when I tell my clients all the things that I couldn't say then:

It is impossible for a person to be born without a calling. In fact, in every person there is a wide spectrum of talents and abilities – dreams – that they will be able to find sooner or later.

For many people, that is a comforting message, soothing news. To know that somewhere ... over there ... there is a lighthouse, or

maybe some road signs. This thought is indeed comforting. How do we choose the track that will lead us to that light at the end? Where can we find these signs?

All this will be covered in the following pages.

Identifying your ‘Calling’ in the model of success

Let us put aside the young soldier searching for her path in the Air Force hangar, and examine for a moment several essential elements that are needed to create a model of success:

1. **‘Passion’** (dreams and enthusiasm) this is the supply of inner, emotional energy that expresses a person’s feelings and expectations regarding the essence that hides within their destiny. That element, without which personal success is impossible, gives us the tireless urge to move forward. These dreams are our inner, hidden wishes. ‘Passion’ refers to several drives that are being created within the person to move them forward – emotionally and intellectually – towards their personal destiny. Now, stop for a moment and check: Can that enthusiasm be found in you? If not, try to check where it is ‘hidden.’
2. **‘Qualities’** (Talents & Abilities) This refers to the overall skills and talents that assist the person and enable them to locate their calling. It is in fact a highly sophisticated compass. In order to analyze its data we need to look deeply into its facing. The danger: those who insist on choosing the wrong road will be able to ‘fabricate’ results and milestones according to their personal comfort.

Lastly I want to discuss an element that you will need in order to find your calling. It will not appear in the model directly, but you must have this if you want to achieve your goals.

‘Drive’ Every person is born with, and operates with, a certain supply of energy. Among successful people it is very easy to see the sparkle in their eyes, their joy and enthusiasm in doing things. On the other hand, among those who haven’t identified their calling it is easy to notice a downcast look, hunched shoulders and a weak handshake. It is a vicious circle. A person with low motivation will usually accept boring work with little reward and, because the environment will not be rewarding, will put very low levels of initiative, passion and energy into their work. In psychological vernacular we call those people “Shut down.” The professional term is ‘unmotivated.’

Free from home, fulfilling my father’s dream

In 1979, I happily said goodbye to the Air Force. After just two years I was once again at a junction of opportunity. And again, I chose the wrong direction. My world-view still held to a different set of values, to more basic ambitions.

What did I know about my passion? Nothing much. As a matter of fact, shared by most young people, both now and back then in the 1970s:

1. To finally leave my parents’ house and to live freely
2. To be independent and to earn money – a lot of money.

My wishes fit my father's dreams perfectly. A short while after I was released from the Air Force, I answered a 'wanted' ad by one of the first Israeli high-tech companies. The Electronic Technician position seemed tailor-made for me. At the age of twenty I had a great salary, rewarding benefits and the jealousy of my former classmates. Finally, I was free from the control and influence of my parents and family. The apartment that I rented in Haifa was also very desirable.

On the surface, I was filled with contentment and satisfaction. Deep inside, I knew that I was only at the beginning of my journey. In fact, even though I was superficially independent of my parents, I was still only fulfilling my father's ambition. I thought that I had spread my wings and flown the nest. **I didn't notice that although I was waving my own wings, I was carrying their nest deep in my heart.**

It was only twenty-two years later that I felt closure with my father. During all that time I wanted a different script for myself, a different life, and different parents. I wanted to have the courage to follow the path that I chose. Acceptance came only during my father's last moments. Only when he was ailing did I see compassion in his eyes. I realized that my father was a great man, one who always did his best according to his understanding and situation.

Only once I made peace with this, and closed the circle, I felt free, I had started my journey as a personal coach.

