



Following the Path: The Search for a Life of Passion, Purpose, and Joy

Joan D. Chittister

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This book is meant to give someone in the process of making a life decision at any age—in early adulthood, at the point of middle-age change and later, when we find ourselves at the crossroads without a name—some ideas against which to pit their own minds, their own circumstances. Its purpose, as they wrestle with the process of trying to find and follow their own special call at this new stage of life, is to both provoke thinking and to clarify it. —Joan Chittister

In our modern and mobile society, the range of answers to the questions “What am I supposed to do with my life?” and “How do I know when I’ve found my purpose?” can seem endless and overwhelming. *Following the Path* by Sister Joan brings the insights of her years of teaching and contemplation to bear on this issue, providing readers with a new way forward. Through her examination of spiritual calling and gifts, change and discernment, she leads readers home to the place where, finally, we know we fit, where we are the fullest of ourselves and a gift to the world, a timely and much needed message that many will be happy to hear.

Following the Path: The Search for a Life of Passion, Purpose, and Joy Details

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Alison says

I enjoyed this book and although it gave me things to think about, it didn't tell me much I didn't already know on my own.

Peter says

How can one turn from the advice of a master, who puts forth enough light to show that there is a path to travel, without judging what that path might be. The call is unique and the author assures us that it is worth heeding.

Naomi says

There are a few volumes I set aside on my shelf for lending out to those I meet who are seeking the courage to pursue their calling, though that calling demands risking social or financial success, or is separated from their paid labor. Chittister's will join that collection, as she sets forth teaching that gifts are what you must share, because to do otherwise is a diminishment of your whole self, and that calling is pursuing ways you can share those gifts. She is brilliantly clear about the difference between vocation and paid work, recognizing that for a great many of us -- even professed religious -- paid work can and does allow the pursuit of our calling, but is itself not that astounding luxury of being both work and calling.

Carol says

I have read more than ten books by Joan Chittister and this one belongs with my top three: Breath of the Soul, Wisdom Distilled from the Daily. This book deals with the sense of meaning or call and applies to three separate stages in life: the first call in our twenties; the mid-life call when we examine where we have arrived and the call post-retirement while we still have so much more life to live and more to contribute. This book energized me and renewed my determination to live a passionate life. I cannot recommend it enough.

Denise Hoecker says

I keep thinking these books are going to unlock the magic secret but they don't. I did think this book had a good message - your calling doesn't have to be what you do with your entire life. Your job can enable you to do something that would be your calling. That makes sense.

Sharon Thomsen says

A gem of a book. Sister Joan is an author I want to read more of. Deep insight that is often missing in spiritual books.

Cate says

Great insights, at all phases of life's journey. A helpful compass to aid in measuring your internal spiritual direction and external expression of gifts. Would be a great gift for graduates, but also for anyone who finds themselves a bit wandering through life.

Sheila says

This is the most common sense book about finding your purpose I have ever read. That's a good thing.

Happyreader says

As a non-Catholic, I have to thank the Catholic bishops' scolding of the "radical feminist" nuns for introducing me to the writings of the "unofficial spokesman of the extreme feminist left" Benedictine sister Joan Chittister. In this thoughtful book on finding your calling or purpose in life, she's less firebrand and more confident wise woman wishing to share what she's learned in 70+ years about the basis for true happiness and contentment. Bottom line, her message is no more radical than each one of us is given unique gifts. Our mission in life, if we're attentive, patient, and brave enough, is to find a way to use those gifts for the benefit of others. A gentle reminder that it isn't our paychecks but our contributions to improving the lives of others that satisfy our souls. God, if not the bishops, would approve of that message.

Christine Hiester says

I really love Ms. Chittister's deep, philosophical reflections on pursuing call— what that actually means, the reality of call as a lifelong pursuit (not a once-and-done phenomenon)— and the anecdotes and stories that she uses to support her thoughts. This book obviously came out of a life well-lived and deeply analyzed. It's not a 5 for me because I couldn't always connect with the sometimes rambly and redundant nature of the writing. Yet there has not been a book in recent years from which I have copied as many quotes. I'm looking forward to reading more from Sr. Joan and am inspired to lean more intentionally into my own call after reading this book.

Jaci says

A feminist, Benedictine nun, Joan Chittister is a personal favorite and this one doesn't disappoint. Her

encouraging words about passionate engagement with life, regardless of age, are appreciated.

p.17: Planning for a new tomorrow in the midst of an overwhelming present overwhelms the soul.

p.49: Or even later, at another stage of life, if my professional years have, for all practical purposes, come to an end, what is stopping me now from developing the parts in me that lie untested and untried--except perhaps the bogus notion that life ends with commercial retirement.

p.69: As if a job and what we're really supposed to be doing with our lives were the same thing.

p.89: Enough shovels of earth, a mountain. Enough pails of water, a river. -- Chinese proverb

p.156: Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for. -- Joseph Addison

p.180: The only answer, then, to the question of whether we should start over again is to do what we must in every stage and be ready, when the time comes, to go on living fully in the next one.

Kate Mayberry says

AMAZING, LIFE- ALTERING BOOK! This was not a book I could whip through. Every sentence made me think. I have renewed it 3 times from the library, and now that I have finally finished it, I am buying my own copy. Both a comforting and motivating force. LOVED IT!

Patty says

This is another of the books that I read for my vocation study. I am so glad that this book was included. First of all, I find Chittister to be an excellent writer. She is about twenty years older than I am and I find her work to be helpful as I explore each stage of life. She has been where I am headed.

The other reason I am grateful for this book is that it is the only book we are reading written by a woman. Given that over half of us in Vocare are women, this seems important to me. I have enough trouble with the fact that God is always referred to as male, it would be impossible for me to participate if we didn't include women's voices.

Chittister writes about the process of finding "passion, purpose and joy" in this work. Each chapter starts with a quote from a seeker and ends with another quote or a proverb. The latter are usually from a well-known source or person. I found both sets of quotations useful - it was interesting to hear from my contemporaries as well as "famous" people.

I believe that most books about seeking purpose have similar goals. How they differ usually depends on where the author is coming from. Chittister's faith is an important part of all her writing. If you no interest in Christianity, this book may not be for you. However, if you have faith in some religion and you are exploring your call, you may be able to take what Chittister says and adapt it to your circumstances.

Chassett says

Great book about finding purpose in your life at any age.

Dawn says

I first saw Sister Joan D. Chittister interviewed by Oprah on her Super Soul Sunday TV show on OWN and I was impressed and inspired by her soulful and spiritual revelations.
