
EDUCATION FOR LIFE-WORK: INTEGRATING HAND, HEAD, AND HEART

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Education optimally fulfills a significant role in creating a life worth living—and living well.¹ This education properly integrates the realms of hand, head, and heart to reveal a hidden wholeness that is amplified through the eudaimonia of personal meaning as reflected in one's work in the world.² However, overly instrumental educational orientations often miss this bigger picture that congruently connects education, life, and work. These conventional forms of education appear to favor developing the exterior of the self at the expense of the interior of the self.³ Consequently, the realms of hand, head, and heart are divorced from a larger, more encompassing hidden wholeness. By, for example, developing the persona of the social self at the expense of a north star that might potentially guide the essential self,⁴ education often overlooks an essential, integrative element to living—and living well.

In what follows, I describe different educational orientations to life-work. The first orientation I describe is *Taking Jobs*, a job orientation informed by the competency of our hands. Second, I describe *Picking Careers*, a career orientation influenced by the challenge of our heads. Third, I describe *Calling Vocations*, a calling orientation inspired by the courage of our hearts. A fourth integrative orientation, which integrates with the character of wholeness, is presented near the conclusion of the article. In short, these orientations span from the outside-in to the inside-out and from an orientation pointed towards the hedonic happiness of oneself towards a much more encompassing eudaimonic meaning that not only includes oneself, but also includes worldly awareness and purposeful action—or in educational activist Parker Palmer's terms, self, society, and service.⁵

¹ For the purpose of this article, living well involves increasingly integrating wholes. The Whole Being Institute advises that “optimal well-being comes not from fragmentation, but by integration—the whole, not the parts.” <https://wholebeinginstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/SPIRE-check-in-.pdf>.

² David Orr, *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004).

³ Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, “Integral Education by Design: How Integral Theory Informs Teaching, Learning, and Curriculum in a Graduate Program,” *ReVision* 28, no. 3 (2005): 21–29.

⁴ Martha Beck, *Finding Your Own North Star: Claiming the Life You Were Meant to Live* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2001).

⁵ Parker Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak: Listening to the Voice of Vocation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

THREE EDUCATIONAL ORIENTATIONS TO LIFE-WORK

Drawing largely on the work of organizational developmentalist Amy Wrzesniewski and colleagues,⁶ I now describe three educational orientations to life-work:

TAKING JOBS

Taking Jobs is a job orientation informed by the competency of our hands. The etymology of the word job ultimately points to the torture of devouring a chunk of work and the drudgery of work identified by organizational developmentalist Douglas McGregor as Theory X—that is, self-interested workers who avoid responsibility and are motivated by income alone.⁷ In this production-based orientation, workers are occupied or held hostage by their occupations.⁸ Work is unreflectively viewed as a means-to-an-end and a concrete necessity in life. With life and work being highly fragmented in terms of work and play, this orientation believes happiness, fulfillment, and meaning is found outside the locus of work. Everyday language cues, such as “working hard or hardly working?” and “work hard, play harder,” exemplify how in this orientation pay and benefits are received in order to support personal life outside work, such as families and hobbies. With a preference for jobs that do not interfere with personal lives, the Taking Jobs orientation is less likely to be personally connected to the workplace.⁹ This narrow-outcome orientation can be visualized in a linear but fragmented manner that reflects the deficiency-based survival drive inherent within traditional, ethnocentric value structures which culturally birthed manual work in America (i.e. pre- and industrial age economies).¹⁰

⁶ Amy Wrzesniewski, Clark McCauley, Paul Rozin, and Barry Schwartz, “Jobs, Careers, and Callings: People’s Relations to Their Work,” *Journal of Research in Personality* 31 (1997): 21–33.

⁷ Douglas McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960).

⁸ This is a very different understanding of “occupations” than presented by John Dewey in *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916). I interpret Dewey’s understanding of occupation as deriving from the outside-in, whereas his understanding of vocation derives from the inside-out.

⁹ Wrzesniewski, et al., “Jobs, Careers, and Callings.”

¹⁰ This evolutionary trajectory from traditional, ethnocentric value structures, through modern, sociocentric value structures, postmodern worldcentric value structures, and beyond is synthesized by Ken Wilber in *A Brief History of Everything* (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 2001); Peter Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* (New York: Harper Collins, 1999) applies this evolution to economies and work. For instance, in the 1950s and 60s, the manual work associated with the Taking Jobs orientation was rapidly losing its hold in organizations as information and knowledge were coming to the forefront.

PICKING CAREERS

Picking Careers is a career orientation influenced by the challenge of our heads. The etymology of the word career ultimately points to a carriage trying to get to the end as fast as it can, all-the-while being engaged in work that is personally and professionally satisfying—what McGregor identified as Theory Y.¹¹ More process oriented than the Taking Jobs orientation, workers seek to better themselves for the sake of professional improvement. No longer held hostage by occupation, the agency inherent with the picking (as in actively choosing and identifying with) careers orientation involves a professional orientation that includes professing a sort of faith in one’s career and willingly identifying self with work. For instance, “I am” a professor, lawyer, accountant, physician, etc. Personally connected to the workplace, this orientation tends to be interested in upward mobility, raises, promotions, and the social standing that derives from upholding the conventions of the profession.¹² Work/life balance comes from this orientation, which reflects the transitional nature of the advancement-based strive drive inherent within modern, sociocentric value structures that gave rise to knowledge work in America (i.e. information age economies). Picking Careers can be visualized in a linear way as in climbing a ladder often without reflective attention to the suitability of the wall it is placed upon.¹³

CALLING VOCATIONS

Calling Vocations is a calling (or vocational) orientation inspired by the courage of our hearts. The etymology of the word vocation, which refers to voice, points toward what humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow, drawing on McGregor, identified as the self-transcending Theory Z.¹⁴ In listening for vocation, intuition, creativity, purposes, and meaning come to the forefront of people’s life and work. This orientation is the work one cannot *not* do.¹⁵ Work is not only integral to life, personal identity, self-expression, and fulfillment, but work itself is also purposeful and meaningful for life. As such, this orientation often modifies duties and develops relationships to further support meaning and purpose.¹⁶ For instance, while the Taking Jobs orientation fragments life and work and the Picking Careers orientation balances life and work, the Calling Vocations orientation often integrates life and work. For educational philosopher

¹¹ McGregor, *The Human Side of Enterprise*.

¹² Wrzesniewski, et al., “Jobs, Careers, and Callings.”

¹³ Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013) differentiates management from leadership in terms of ensuring that the ladder is placed on the right wall.

¹⁴ Abraham Maslow, “Theory Z,” *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (1969).

Retrieved from <http://maslow.org/sub/theoryz.php>. While this orientation points toward Theory Z, the fourth integrative orientation actually represents Theory Z.

¹⁵ Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*.

¹⁶ Wrzesniewski, et al., “Jobs, Careers, and Callings.”

John Dewey, vocation brings to focus “the connection of thought with bodily activity; of individual conscious development with associated life; of theoretical culture with practical behavior having definite results; of making a livelihood with the worthy enjoyment of leisure.”¹⁷ Compared to other orientations, this orientation fosters greater satisfaction with both life and work.¹⁸ Often reflecting the more sufficiency-based nature of the thrive drive sparked within post-modern, world-centric value structures which culturally originated creative work, this orientation can be visualized in a more fluid, circular way that holistically meanders more than it directly progresses—in short, finding one’s north star and living the life of one’s essential self.¹⁹

SUBJECTIVE MEANING OF WORK

These three educational orientations do not necessarily point to objectively different types of work; rather, these orientations point to the subjective meaning that people attribute to their work. For example, in the English parable of the bricklayers, three bricklayers working at a church site described their work using distinct language. The first bricklayer described how “I’m working hard laying bricks to feed my family.” The second bricklayer described his work in terms of “I’m building a wall.” The third bricklayer exclaimed with a gleam in his eye that “I’m building a great cathedral to The Almighty.”²⁰ This example shows how on the taking end of the spectrum, the Taking Jobs worker viewed the task as external to oneself, while on the giving end of the spectrum, the Calling Vocations worker brought forth a more essential self to inhabit the work itself. Further, each bricklayer identified his work using distinct terminology: a bricklayer, a builder, and a Cathedral builder, respectively. These identifications transcend and include what came earlier as each subjective meaning encompasses larger and larger wholes—that is, from concrete function (i.e. bricklayer), to subtle identification (i.e. builder), to self-transcendent meaning (i.e. Cathedral builder).

While all three orientations and identifications hold value—indeed, it is important to simply “get ‘er done” and to emphasize the subtle process-of-progress—I suggest that an obsessive cultural disorder with Taking Jobs and Picking Careers represents a cultural shadow that blocks the light of vocation. Poet David Whyte further illustrates the subjective meaning of work:

Through work, human beings earn for themselves and their families, make a difficult world habitable, and with imagination, create some meaning from what they do and how they do it. The human approach to work can be naive, fatalistic, power-mad, money-grubbing, unenthusiastic,

¹⁷ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, 329.

¹⁸ Wrzesniewski, et al., “Jobs, Careers, and Callings.”

¹⁹ Beck, *Finding Your Own North Star*.

²⁰ Jim Baker, “The Story of Three Bricklayers—A Parable About the Power of Purpose,” *Sacred Structure*, April 9, 2019, <http://www.sacredstructures.org/mission/>.

cynical, detached, and obsessive. It can also be selflessly mature, revelatory and life-giving; mature in its long-reaching effects, and life giving in the way it gives back to an individual or society as much as it has taken. Almost always it is both, a sky full of light and dark, with all the varied weather of an individual life blowing through it.²¹

Clearly the excessive cultural attention on Taking Jobs and Picking Careers is reinforced by conventional forms of education. Extended to its logical conclusion, strictly developing these exterior reference points in education, life, and work positions people as passengers on a treadmill in which one hastily commutes to work, endures a job or advances one's career, and then recovers at home. This notion is reflected in the French phrase, "métro, boulot, dodo," wherein métro refers to the subway commute, boulot informally points to working a job, and dodo is baby talk for sleep. Yet, of course, this hasty attitudinal orientation inherently lacks an absence of the revelatory, life-giving maturity introduced by Whyte. If we are to create a life worth living—and *living well*, education is wise to upshift the direction of its attention beyond Taking Jobs and Picking Careers to also awaken the more interior elements of the self. Doing so would not only support the emergence of a *whole new mind*,²² but also offer access to a hidden self that is essential on the quest for life-work.

QUEST FOR LIFE-WORK

Whereas the Taking Jobs and Picking Careers orientations offer little in the way of opening into one's richest potentialities for education, life, and work, the Calling Vocations orientation supports a courageous quest to unfold one's work in the world. In support of this quest, cultural anthropologist Joseph Campbell draws attention to the invisible hands that show-up by listening to the truest callings of life. Reflective of the Calling Vocations orientation, Campbell suggests that when "you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while waiting for you, and the life you ought to be living is the one you are living."²³ On this quest of leaving the known, entering into the unknown, making the unknown known, and then leaving the unknown again, he suggests that we begin to meet people who also share in that field of bliss and open doors. As the doors of the quest open and importantly also close through this maturation of a whole new mind, our questions evolve from exterior

²¹ David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity* (New York: Riverhead, 2001), 3.

²² Daniel Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future* (New York: Penguin, 2006). Pink asserts that right-brain senses—empathy, creativity, design, synthesis, and pattern recognition—are essential in the twenty-first century. This wholistic mindset supports Calling Vocations, whereas the more fragmented left-brain senses reflect the Taking Jobs and Picking Careers orientations.

²³ Joseph Campbell and Bill Moyers, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 120.

to more interior-oriented reference points. For example, these inquiries might mature from “What skills do I need to acquire for this job?,” to “How do I organize and market whatever skills I have in relation to a job or career?,” to “How do I combine my skills with other people to be more valuable in workplaces?,” to “Where do I focus my learning, expertise, and areas of greatest contribution?,” to “What do I do that nobody else does?”²⁴ and, ultimately, “How can I profoundly and uniquely serve the world?”

The maturation of these questions grow through the spectrum of Taking Jobs, through Picking Careers, towards Calling Vocations—a maturation that points toward a hidden wholeness that is amplified through the eudaimonia of personal meaning as reflected in one’s work in the world. Briefly, the Greek word, eudaimonia, or “good soul,” points to the flourishing and integration of both inner and outer realms of self and world.²⁵ A central theme is that the earlier inquiries—actively driven toward the primary pursuit of something “out-there”—represent a trailing-edge of personal and cultural being and becoming, whereas the latter inquiries that firstly orient around the receptive meaning dwelling “in-here” in service of something “out-there” represent a leading-edge of personal and cultural being and becoming. This is to say that in creating a life worth living—and *living well*, the North American cultural nucleus is well positioned to move further along the quest for life-work and outgrow the largely unreflective consensus trance of Taking Jobs and Picking Careers that push away and prohibit people from listening to the truest callings of life. Forfeiting the richest potentialities to most fully and freely offer our unique gifts in and to the world is a consequence of these prematurely active pursuits. As such, we are like fish out of water with a hidden yearning that, if we are receptive to listening, calls us to return home. In the words of poet Rumi:

²⁴ These questions were adapted from Steve Miller, “Integral Career Development: The Implicit Career Search,” *Integral World*, October, 2001, <http://www.integralworld.net/miller.html>.

²⁵ Eudaimonia, which derives from the Greek words, eu (good, well) and daimon (soul, guiding spirit), includes depth structures beyond pleasure and happiness. Eudaimonic well-being involves living in a way that does not merely focus on the surface structures of immediate pleasure and happiness (i.e. hedonic well-being); rather, eudaimonia is inwardly concerned with depth structures of personal meaning and fulfilling human potentials. Whereas hedonic well-being emphasizes the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect, eudaimonic well-being involves living in a full and deeply satisfying manner to fulfill one’s truest nature. These philosophical distinctions are detailed in Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, “Hedonia, Eudaimonia, and Well-Being: An Introduction,” *Journal of Happiness Studies* 9 (2008): 1–11. In the context of this article, the eudaimonia of personal meaning necessitates attention to broader contexts, personal growth, and actualization of the richest potentialities of one’s essential self. A seminal philosophical example is Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Ross and Lesley Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). For Aristotle, the eudaimonia of the highest human good is portrayed as living and doing well. In this sense, eudaimonic aspirations that are reflectively valuable are also inwardly satisfying and ultimately more meaningful than achieving specific outcomes.

Sometimes you hear a voice through the door calling you, as fish out of water hears the waves, or a hunting falcon hears the drums. Come back. Come back. This turning toward what you deeply love saves you . . . Read the book of your life, which has been given you. A voice comes to your soul saying, Lift your foot. Cross over. Move into the emptiness of question and answer and question.²⁶

Related to this, we are simultaneously well positioned to redirect excessive cultural attention away from the externally-directed pursuit of happiness and towards the more inwardly-oriented unfolding of personal meaning in education, life, and work—qualities and characteristics inherent within the Calling Vocations orientation. Notably, a full three-fourths of people across America simultaneously report high levels of happiness and low levels of meaning.²⁷ Importantly, personal meaning, which points to the outer actualization of unique purposes that universally connect beyond oneself and through oneself, are considered one of the core capabilities of education, life, and work in this third millennium.²⁸ In this age of *relative* economic sufficiency and cultural affluence, in which the leading-edge North American cultural nucleus is no longer looking firstly “out-there” for sustainable work, purposes and meaning are becoming increasingly important to anchor education, life, and work.²⁹ A case in point is that while 80 percent of American college graduates say it is very important or extremely important to have a sense of purpose in their work, less than half actually find or more aptly uncover these purposes and meaning in work.³⁰ Further, evidence that an astounding 70 percent of American workers are disengaged in the workplace is troubling if we are to create a life worth living—and *living well*.³¹

All of this is saying that in education, life, and work, we are well positioned to upshift the direction of our attention. We must not continue to bank on antiquated models that support merely taking jobs, taking courses, and giving

²⁶ Rumi, *The Glance: Songs of Soul-Meeting*, trans. Coleman Barks (New York: Penguin Compass, 2001), 69.

²⁷ Barbara Fredrickson, Karen Grewen, Kimberley Coffey, Sara Algoe, Ann Firestone, Jesusa Arevalo, Jeffrey Ma, and Steven Cole, “A Functional Genomic Perspective on Human Well-Being,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 110 (2013): 1–6.

²⁸ Pink, *A Whole New Mind*.

²⁹ John Izzo and Jeff Vanderwielen, *The Purpose Revolution: How Leaders Create Engagement and Competitive Advantage in an Age of Social Good* (Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2018).

³⁰ Bates-Gallup, “Forging Pathways to Purposeful Work—The Role of Higher Education,” 2019, https://www.bates.edu/purposeful-work/files/2019/05/Bates_PurposefulWork_FINAL_REPORT.pdf.

³¹ Gallup, “State of the American Workplace,” 2013, <https://www.gallup.com/services/176708/state-american-workplace.aspx>.

talks in order to truly give meaning to who we are, who we might become, and how we might offer our unique gifts through purposeful action. We need to shine the light on these cultural shadows to more frequently reveal the potentialities, possibilities, and purposes of Calling Vocations. While callings, like personal meaning, are often associated with giving in a sacred way, happiness is often associated with taking in a selfish manner.³² For example, externally-birthered interests and internally-oriented passions, like hedonic happiness, are about oneself alone; purposes interiorized as meaning, on the other hand, extend these dimensions of selfhood into the world beyond and also through oneself.³³ Through this purposeful action, we might affirmatively address Palmer's poignant inquiry: "Is the life I am living the same as the life that wants to live in me?"³⁴

INSPIRING THE COURAGE OF OUR HEARTS

Recall that the Calling Vocations orientation is *inspired by the courage of our hearts*. Etymologically, courage derives from the word heart. It is here in the hidden self within where people are afforded access to the stillness and silence that rests beneath the activity and noise of the everyday world. This is to say that listening to the voices of vocation requires inspiring the courage of the heart amidst education, economic, and family systems that culturally do not support listening to callings. Palmer and career developmentalist Martha Beck are blunt in saying that from our earliest days in education, people are taught to listen to everything and everyone outside of themselves.³⁵ While externally hearing callings is in our nature, existential psychologist Rollo May alerts us that the choice and commitment to inwardly listen to the courage of our hearts calling us is a distinctly human capacity.³⁶ This is not firstly a matter of advancing a pre-established agenda; rather, it is a voluntary choice and commitment to receptively listen and allow what wants to emerge to emerge. Without this choice and commitment, the grander dimension of listening to the courage of our hearts and our essential self is often forfeited to imitating and mirroring what is outside

³² Adam Grant, *Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success* (New York: Penguin, 2013).

³³ As a contributing factor to well-being, purpose is especially closely associated with eudaimonia. Veronika Huta, "An overview of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being concepts" in *Handbook of media use and well-being*, eds. Leonard Reinecke & Mary Beth Oliver (New York: Routledge, 2015).

³⁴ Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*, 6.

³⁵ Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*; Beck, *Finding Your Own North Star*, goes to great length to describe the "generalized other" who constitutes "everybody."

³⁶ Rollo May, *The Courage to Create* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994). May describes how in contrast to natural environments, in which growth naturally occurs without choice and commitment—for example, a cat or an acorn, inherently grows into itself—the nature of human growth, especially after puberty, necessitates voluntary choice and commitment.

the skin-encapsulated ego. Whyte points to how listening to the first priorities stirring within inspires the courage of our hearts:

Finding a work to which we can dedicate ourselves always calls for some kind of courage, some form of heartfelt participation. It needs courage because the intrinsic worth of work lies in the fact that it connects us to larger, fiercer worlds where we are forced to remember first priorities.³⁷

Whether one looks to the dharma of ancient India, the Japanese concept of *ikigai*, the native Hawai’ian notion of *kuleana*, the Spanish translation of *destino*, or the *telos* of Greek philosophy, this ultimate endpoint represents an enduring responsibility and reason for living—and *living well*. Put simply, to fulfil one’s vocation, one must have the courage to be oneself. For leadership writer Stephen Covey, this includes seven habits that culminate in an eighth habit: finding your voice and inspiring others to find theirs.³⁸ Pointing to the voice of vocation not as a goal to be actively pursued and achieved, but as a gift to be listened to and received, both Palmer and Beck acknowledge the enormous gap between the personality self, which is the outside-in object of conventional education, and the essential self that subjectively grows from the inside-out.³⁹ With self being out “out-there” prior to being “in-here,” we lean on social comparison to, for instance, find our niche and plan our career. In stark contrast, when self is firstly “in-here” then “out-there,” we lean into the evolving narrative of our being and becoming—who we were, who we are, and who we are becoming—to listen to the callings of life. Palmer elaborates:

Vocation does not come willfulness. I must listen to my life and try to understand what it is truly about—quite apart from what I would like it to be about—or my life will never represent anything real in the world, no matter how earnest my intentions. . . . Before I can tell my life what I want to do with it, I must listen to my life telling me who I am. I must listen for the truths and values at the heart of my own identity, not the standards by which I *must* live—but the standards by which I cannot help but live if I am living my own life.⁴⁰

In this sense, vocation opens people up to living in authentic ways that are embedded with purpose and meaning. More than the pursuit of agency that epitomizes the more conventional educational orientations, the Calling

³⁷ David Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity* (New York: Riverhead, 2001), 35.

³⁸ Stephen Covey, *The 8th Habit: From Effectiveness to Greatness* (New York: Free Press, 2005).

³⁹ Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*; Beck, *Finding Your Own North Star*, refers to the personality self as the social self.

⁴⁰ Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*, 4–5.

Vocations orientation means firstly listening to one’s essential self for guidance. By listening and receiving this inner direction, students can then act based on the courage of their hearts. Yet, even this educational orientation, which is often the purview of alternative education, is limited in that it often amplifies the interior of the self at the expense of the exterior of the self.⁴¹ Consequently, we now turn to the fourth integrative orientation.

INTEGRATING WITH THE CHARACTER OF WHOLENESS

This final orientation integrates the competency of our hands, the challenge of our heads, and the courage of our hearts with the character of wholeness. This orientation reflects the integrative nature of Education for Life-Work summoned by wisdom scholar Roger Walsh:

We go into ourselves to go more effectively out into the world, and we go out into the world in order to go deeper into ourselves. And we keep repeating this cycle until we realize that we and the world are one.⁴²

Through this iterative process of being and becoming, people inhabit a series of hero’s quests, meandering inward and outward over and over again to access eudaimonic meaning. Eudaimonia inhabits inner depth structures that are more enduring than the exterior surface structures that support mere happiness as in temporary states of “happen chance” to reflect its etymological origins.⁴³ The conclusions drawn by American transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau through his woodlands sojourn in which he sought to live deliberately within his nature, reflect on citizenship, and discern the nature of life and work, illustrates the eudaimonia of personal meaning as reflected in one’s work in the world:

If you march confidently in the direction of your dreams, and endeavor to live the life you have imagined, you will meet with success in untimely hours. You will put some things behind you and pass an invisible boundary as new universal and more liberal laws will begin to establish around and within you . . . If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost.

⁴¹ Esbjörn-Hargens, “Integral Education by Design.”

⁴² Roger Walsh, “Integral Service, Part 2: What Does it Take? Integral Discipline, Karma Yoga, and Sacred Service,” *Journal of Integral Theory and Practice* 9, no. 1 (2014): 133–144, 141.

⁴³ There are various interpretations of several of the etymological meanings presented in this article. At core are distinctions between happiness and eudaimonia. Quite distinct from the “good soul” of eudaimonia, Tal Ben Shahar, *Happier: Learn the Secrets to Daily Joy and Lasting Fulfillment* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007) explains that the Icelandic word “happ” (chance) also sources the words haphazard and happenstance. In this sense, happiness rests on external happenings, whereas eudaimonia rests on a more interior unfolding of a good soul.

That is where they should be. Now, put the foundations under them.⁴⁴

This eudaimonia of personal meaning is one's nature—a nature that inherently includes both self-transcending potentials and earthly limitations.⁴⁵ Just as the highest mountains originate in the depths of the ocean, envisioning higher castles in the air necessitates digging deeper foundations in the earth—foundations that unearth and integrate the hidden wholeness and character of soul. Notably, the etymology of the word nature refers to “birthing character.” In birthing the hidden wholeness of character, we thrust ourselves into the leading-edge of personal and cultural evolution that involves going-and-growing higher and digging deeper into one's work in the world as we begin to inhabit our uniquely connective places in an evolving world not strictly as manual workers, nor knowledge workers, nor creative workers, but as *wisdom workers*. With wisdom encompassing deep accurate insight into oneself, the central existential issues of life, and skillful benevolent responsiveness,⁴⁶ wisdom workers inhabit an integrative nature in a unique way that addresses a universal need. These workers inhabit the revelatory, life-giving maturity in Whyte's claim that “work at its best is the arrival in an outer form of something intensely personal; and the act of working itself—a bridge between the public and the private, a bridge of experience which can be an agony and an ecstasy to cross.”⁴⁷ Indeed, wisdom workers discern and fulfill work that only they can fulfill. Thoreau's mentor Ralph Waldo Emerson explains:

Each man has an aptitude. Do your work. 'Tis clownish to insist on doing all with one's hands as if every man should build his own clumsy house, forge his hammer, and bake his dough. But, he is to dare to do what he can do best, not help others as they would direct him, but as he knows his helpful power to be. To do otherwise is to neutralize all those extraordinary talents distributed among men.⁴⁸

By integrating the competency of our hands, the challenge of our heads, and the courage of our hearts, wisdom workers deeply commit to life-work in the nexus whereby one's aliveness, curiosities, talents, and passions meet with a clear challenge that embraces one's strengths and skills and that addresses a valued need, implicit or enduring, in one's world to deliver economic return for

⁴⁴ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*, ed. Frances Henry Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910).

⁴⁵ Palmer, *Let Your Life Speak*.

⁴⁶ Walsh, “Integral Service, Part 2.”

⁴⁷ Whyte, *Crossing the Unknown Sea*, 67–68.

⁴⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Spiritual Emerson* (New York: Penguin Books, 2008), 208.

one's work in the world. This is the integrative nature of Education for Life-Work.

Practical steps to enact this fourth educational orientation begins with ensuring that educators themselves embody the nature of wisdom work. At the core is a commitment to not only the horizontal development of informational learning (i.e. acquiring information, transmitting knowledge, and developing technical skills), but also to the vertical development of transformative learning (i.e. developing capacities, habits, integrated skills, and values) of both educators and students. A consequence of teaching who we are means building life-giving classroom cultures, physical places, and curriculum that involves continuous inquiry into what educators and students are learning about themselves and their places in the world. Educational practices might include reflective dialogue/journaling, embodied/engaged reading, perspective-taking, self-authorship, witnessing, and educator/student presence in carefully designed physical environments.⁴⁹ For example, in my teaching practice, I apply carefully designed daily protocols with check-in and check-out processes anchored in life-giving sentence stems to uncover and unfold our current state of being and our aspirational becoming individually and collectively. Moreover, classroom walls include inquiries that support wisdom work, such as: “What leadership qualities and values do I aspire to?, How strong is my love for the world?, Am I walking my talk?, Am I embodying my values?, Do I communicate with wisdom, peace, and compassion?, Do I understand the systems in which I live? Do I understand the systems I wish to change?”⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

In closing, I am proposing that education for a life worth living—and *living well*—properly integrates the realms of hand, head, and heart to reveal a hidden wholeness that is amplified through the eudaimonia of personal meaning as reflected in our work in the world. In honoring the etymological roots of philosophy—that is, love of wisdom—I am calling for us as educational philosophers and practitioners to individually and collectively unearth these roots and rise into the crescendo of wisdom work.

⁴⁹ Esbjörn-Hargens, “Integral Education by Design.”

⁵⁰ These questions are from Vernice Solimar, “Leadership for Sustainable Change,” *Integral Leadership Review*, March 2011, <http://integralleadershipreview.com/1658-leadership-for-sustainable-change/>.
