



LUMUNOS

FAITH & LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY

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Work in Transition

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Doug Wysocky-Johnson

Our work changes all the time. When we are very young, our “work” might be learning to walk, or talk, or read. During our school years, work is more about learning. As life goes on, sometimes our work is in the home and sometimes it is elsewhere. Sometimes we get paid a lot for our work, sometimes we get paid a little, or nothing at all. As we address the topic of work and change in this issue of the newsletter, please know that we are defining work broadly as the thing in our life that requires our time, attention, and effort. All of us have work to do regardless of our age. And it is changing all the time.

The Timing of Our Time

At Lumunos gatherings, I often hear people wrestling with change and timing questions. For a stay-at-home parent it might be whether this is the time to go back to work outside the home. For the “restless at work,” the question might be whether this is the right time to look for something else, something better. Still others are headed toward retirement, but they aren’t sure if now is the time.

In most of these examples, there are practical and financial considerations—factors like health insurance, age of children, and the local job market. But there is an inner dimension as well. How do you know when it is time to make a change at work?

Deciding or Discerning?

This inner spiritual dimension points us toward discernment, which is a little harder to describe than deciding. So, I’ve been asking people at Lumunos events to define

Discernment at Work

discernment, and this is what I have heard:

- *Listening with ears, eyes, mind, spirit, and heart to God, other people, the earth, and your gut, and then coming to clarity on moving in one direction or another.*
- *The process of being guided by our deepest values and a power greater than ourselves. It is cultivated through listening, testing, risking, failing, trusting, and then listening again.*
- *A willingness and ability to re-center out of anxiety...it’s an opening of the ears, heart, soul, and mind to possibilities. Figuring out what the right question really is. Transitioning one’s focus from short-term needs to long term...from just the personal good to the greater good. It is a turning towards God...a turning over to God*
- *Discernment is the “sound of silence,” “the still small voice,” that when we hear it—for it is always speaking but is often drowned out by the noise in our lives—it resonates deeply, and we trust it, and it leads us (though we cannot see where), and it provides a certain deep calmness.*

Defining discernment is a good thing. But more importantly, how do we do it? What do we do when things are changing at work, and we are wondering if “now is the time”?

How to Discern¹

Here are just a few non-original ideas—spiritual practices for times of discernment. Even if you have heard of these practices before, how might you apply them to your most pressing discernment questions today?

Listen for the Echoes:

Ignatius suggested making a decision without telling many others about it. Then listen for the internal “echoes” of that decision—do you feel peace or anxiety? He called these feelings consolation and desolation. Make a trial decision internally and then listen for what you hear inside.

Pretend to Give Advice to One You Love:

If it weren’t you in the midst of this difficult decision, what would you say? If someone you loved very much were asking, what advice would you give? Often this can be a clue to our deepest values and beliefs.

Find the Question Below the Question:

So often discernment is about uncovering the question you are trying to answer. And often that question isn’t the

first one on the surface. For example, in a potential job change, what are you looking for? Salary and benefits are a part of the equation, but what else? Is there something else you need in your workplace, something that might make your life better?

Talk with the Trusted Friend:

Who in your life listens well? Who in your life understands that their role is not to tell you what to do, but to help you clear the clutter, fear and other junk that prevents you from hearing more deeply? Buy that person coffee or a glass of wine and ask them to listen.

Think Big, Think Small:

Sometimes it helps going big. What is the bigger vision you are after? What do you imagine for yourself three years from now? Other times you just need to go small, thinking just about the next step. In the words of Henri Nouwen, “When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go.”²

It Is All About You, And It Isn’t All About You:

This decision is all about you—your gifts, your experiences, your strengths and the unique circumstances of your life. But don’t forget that true discernment is not just about you. It is about the common good and God’s hopes for this world. It is about something bigger than just you. (Which ironically and wonderfully will probably make you happier too.) Don’t forget to ask how your decision impacts the good of others.

As we move into the fall, change is in the air. The natural world is changing and so are we. There will be decisions to make. Some of those decisions we see coming, others are around the corner, out of sight for now. I pray that you and I will not just decide but discern.

¹ For more ideas on how to discern, go to 10 Things to Do When You Are Standing at the Crossroads (www.lumunos.org/videos-and-links).

² Nouwen, Henri. “Enough Light for the Next Step.”// henrinouwen.org/meditation/enough-light-for-the-next-step/ (January 8, 2019).

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Voices on Work and Parenting

Edited by Becca Perry-Hill

Before my daughter was born, I was getting a lot of messages about how you should return to “normal” life after about six weeks. Although I knew this wasn’t exactly true, I had no idea how profoundly a child would impact my relationships, energy, finances, and especially career. Looking back, I’m so glad I went through these changes, but it was also one of the most challenging transitions in my life.

In this article, we wanted to explore the changes and transitions working people go through when they become parents. What factors impact their decisions about work and career after having children? How do their relationships change? How does becoming a parent impact their sense of purpose or calling? In this article, we hear how some parents always knew they wanted to stay at home with their children and how others never imagined they’d be in that position. Other parents stayed in their full-time careers, but struggle with balancing time and energy for both work and family.

This article is by no means a representation of everyone’s experience. Rather, it’s simply a compilation of excerpts from personal stories (to see the full versions, visit www.lumunos.org/parents). Most of these stories are written by parents of small children and babies—people in the thick of it, so to speak. And, most of these parents are women. Though some men make big changes in their work lives, it’s still more often women who change their career paths when becoming parents. Regardless of your experience, we hope that you find these stories about parenting and work to be meaningful and relatable. For those of you who are past this stage, you might reflect on how this transition went for you.

—Becca Perry-Hill

Alicia from Chappaqua, NY:

Since becoming a mother, I went from working full-time, to part-time (with one kid), to staying at home with both kids. I started losing myself in the process of raising these two tiny humans. After about two years, I’ve started to find a balance, and I’m making myself a priority. I joined the Board of Directors of the non-profit that I used to work for, so that I could continue making a difference. I started taking a Spanish class to keep my brain sharp. I am not afraid of bringing in a babysitter for a couple of hours every week so I can go get a cup of coffee by myself or catch up with a friend.

As for my relationship with my spouse, I feel like we’ve gotten closer. We’re a team now. We each had to step back a bit from individual ambitions and priorities in order to create the sense of family that we wanted for our kids. Our New Year’s Resolution the first year after our son was born was to have a date night each month. We see this time to reconnect as the center of our family. If we’re not strong, the rest of the family is not strong.

While adding two kids to a family has certainly added chaos, noise, and a messy house, it has also added countless belly laughs, moments of immense pride, and overwhelming amounts of love. I know looking back that I will not regret the decision to stay home with the kids. I sometimes feel bad for my husband that he doesn’t get to enjoy them as thoroughly as I do and doesn’t know

Continued on page 4

Conversations: Continued from page 3

them in the same way I am able to know them. With that said, I'm still looking forward to returning to work once the kids are both in school.

Kate from Saunderstown, RI:

People gave me all sorts of advice prior to having kids. I have no idea who told me the following (because my memory is real crap since having kids): being a working mom you will never feel like you are doing a complete job at home or at work. I have found this to be mostly true, but I don't know what it would have been like to parent while not working or to be in my current research scientist position not pregnant or with kids, either. I do know that I am sometimes too tired to analyze data or write coherently and that I miss my kids like crazy at other times while I'm at work. I sometimes wish to have a specific moment of time off from work, but I believe that it is a better fit for who I am to be a working mom rather than to stay at home.

My husband and I have adjusted our lives greatly to accommodate being working parents. We had both spent more than three decades with high mobility, independence, and levity. Kids don't allow for that (except the levity which is required with kids). What they do allow for is sheer, unexpected magic in mundane events, a way to see the world a second time, and a realization that we owe the next generation a better world.

Michael from Asheville, NC:

Finding a childcare "answer" while both my wife and I worked was incredibly challenging. We would work long hours just to pay for childcare. Once family finances were "creatively stable," I was in the position to make the leap and quit my job. I have been a full-time stay-at-home dad for a little over a year.

Being able to personally take care of my two kids every day is the most rewarding and challenging "job" I have ever had. Thinking about past jobs makes me laugh at their insignificance. Priorities and purpose get solidified being a parent to young kids. It is enlightening, freeing and incredibly rewarding. It is also stressful, taxing and incredibly nerve-wracking day in and day out. All the other priorities take a back seat and get done later (or don't). I feel incredibly fortunate to be in this position and am constantly aware of how rewarding this time of my life is. I know it will be gone before I know it. I need to make sure I don't take it for granted.

Becky from Toledo, OH:

Since I graduated college, all of my jobs centered around environmental education, conservation, and teaching science. My sense of purpose was getting kids excited about science and developing a connection to our natural world.

Early in our relationship, my husband and I made decisions about our careers and hopes for a family. We chose his career as an interpretive park ranger to support our family and knew my career would stop and start with each inevitable cross country move as my husband's career developed. When we were expecting

our first child, we moved across country and it was an easy "stopping point" for my professional life. I transitioned into being a "stay-at-home mom."

Ten years, four kids, and two more moves later, I am still at home. Our youngest is two, and my transition back into the working world is approaching. I worry about finding fulfilling work as I can't simply return to my old profession. Now that it has been a decade since I've been employed, will I be at a disadvantage in the applicant pool? I don't regret giving up a paid career, but the reality is that I never stopped "working." My sense of purpose remains the same and the drive to inspire and succeed is stronger when the children at stake are your own.

Amber from Madison, WI:

While in graduate school, I got baby fever. We decided to start trying to get pregnant as I was starting my 3rd year of the PhD program. With how the timing of getting pregnant and applying for postdoc positions worked out, I ended up accepting a position in Madison in March or

April, defending my dissertation in May and moving to Madison to start a new job June 1st. This meant switching doctors and jobs and cities all at once while about 6 months pregnant. I wouldn't recommend that much stress on anyone else! But I went into it with the mindset of wanting a tenure track professor job at a large research university.

Lilly's birth was traumatic for me—particularly because I had some complications that left me less able to physically care for her than I had envisioned. Then having to go back to work after seven weeks, I felt I didn't get the chance to bond with and enjoy her for long enough. I was surprised by how much I loved her and wanted to spend all my time with her. For these reasons, I struggled to enjoy work but didn't want my degree (and all I'd been working on before becoming a mom) to "go to waste".

After a lot of thought, reflection and guidance from others, I realized I was too focused on what I thought I was supposed to do, rather than what I actually wanted. At that point I decided to leave my Postdoc early and spend more time with Lilly. I remind myself that this is temporary—babies are only babies for a short time. This doesn't mean I'll never want to work a lot and advance in my career, but right now this is what makes me happy.

Sarah from Hingham, MA:

I have never resented my position of being home and over the years my gratitude for the time I have with our children has grown. I also have a visceral understanding that mothering our children very mindfully and with extreme presence is quite valuable to us all. However, I have constantly wrestled with knowing I have other gifts and talents to offer.

Now that our children are growing into teenagers, I am more aware of my position as a role model. There is less direct instruction happening with them and more watching and listening on their part. When they were younger my tasks were focused on safety and healthy physical development. I now realize the more important

"Being able to personally take care of my two kids every day is the most rewarding and challenging 'job' I have ever had."

—Michael

"I realized I was too focused on what I thought I was supposed to do, rather than what I actually wanted."

—Amber

lessons to share with our three are how to be kind and helpful contributors to society, how to cultivate joy in one's life, and how to be empathetic and compassionate to oneself and others. As I consider entering into my "career" for the first time, I am very conscious of my children observing and this definitely informs my choices.

I fully believe that it is because of my position as a mother and the timing of raising my children that I have found a path leading me to purposeful work. It has taken time and patience, but now is my moment to really engage my other gifts and talents and move towards folding in additional work that engages, excites and provides me with meaning beyond, but also inclusive of mothering.

Holly from Asheville, NC:

I always knew I wanted to be a stay at home mama. My first son just turned three, and my daughter is eight months old. It has been quite the journey, even though I knew it was what I wanted. I would say that it's only been recently that I've stopped thinking about my "past life" (before kids) and my job I had when my son was born. I felt a loss that I hadn't expected when I stopped working. I also became very isolated as a new mom and had to find my path and my people. Only recently do I feel I have begun to find it.

It is also quite a shift going from a dual income household to a single provider. While my husband has been super supportive and made it so easy, it was hard for me to rely solely on him. I am so grateful for these two beautiful humans, and although I always wanted to be a stay-at-home mom, it is hard, relentless, rewarding work. I think in some ways I've been harder on myself through the transitions because this is what I always wanted.

Joella from Charleston, SC:

I never wanted to be a mother. I know this sounds harsh (especially to those who want so badly to procreate but are unable), but it's just the way it is. I should also state that I (obviously) love my daughter beyond measure and can barely remember life before her, but nonetheless it wasn't in my life plan.

My mother always said that when I have kids it'd be good to stay home with them at least until they start school. My problems with this were: 1- I might never have kids so don't get your hopes up lady; 2- what about MY career?; and 3- who says we will be able to afford living on a one salary income, and if we can, what if my salary is bigger than my spouses'? So, of course once my daughter arrived all I could hear were her words. As it would happen, I was working a mediocre part-time job, so it was a no brainer to quit and stay home.

My sense of purpose has changed. I realize that it is now my job to let my daughter know that she is loved, intelligent, kind and capable of making positive change in this world. I am slowly coming to terms with not having a wildly successful career, but the patience, perseverance, negotiating (HA!), and lightheartedness that I am learning in my current "job" will definitely see me through when my time comes to enter the paying workforce again. Let's hope my future employer agrees!

From a spiritual perspective, seeing my daughter's innocence is a constant reminder of forgiveness from a greater being. She teaches

me patience (which I really struggle with) and laughter. A child's innocence and love are like nothing I have truly known before. Seeing how she learns from and mimics me is finally a legit reason to put all of my years of "churchin" into real practice.

Bekah from Boone, IA:

Job opportunities in my field are limited and competitive, so I never considered staying at home after Oliver was born. Besides, I felt being a stay-at-home mom wasn't what I wanted.

Although I didn't realize the extent until much later, I wasn't myself during maternity leave—feeling anxious, isolated, and emotional. We spent almost two weeks in the hospital after Oliver was born, primarily because of feeding challenges, so my anxiety led me to record every milliliter of milk he drank. Returning to work was overall good for me, allowing me to regain some perspective. However, I came back from maternity leave at the beginning of a very busy fall field trip season.

I knew my coworkers had already picked up the slack during my pregnancy and maternity leave, and I struggled with still feeling less able. Physically, I wasn't in the same place I had been, and mentally, I was even less focused. Pumping was one of my biggest anxieties and complications. It was hard to ask [my employer]

for accommodations, but I also had this strong feeling that I was setting the stage for whoever was coming next.

The tension of trying to give quality to work and home made me feel like there was very little of myself left over for creativity and reflection. I felt like I'd lost myself for a while. But one friend reminded me that our lives have seasons, and I was in the middle of something that would change.

“Seeing my daughter’s innocence is a constant reminder of forgiveness from a greater being.”

—Joella

Elizabeth from Weaverville, NC:

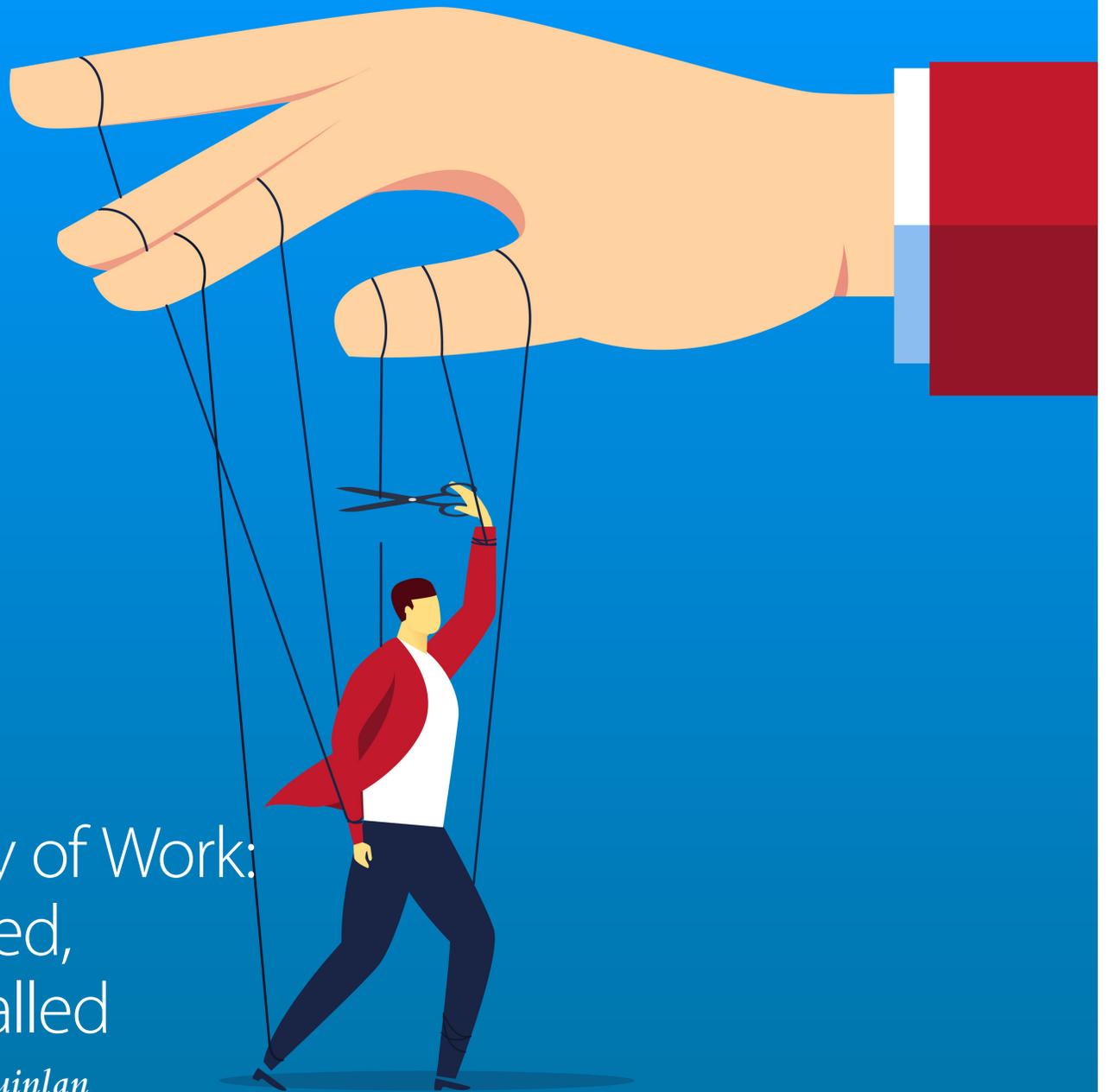
I knew I wanted to be a stay-at-home mom before I had children. When I got pregnant with my first born, I was teaching school and I was burnt out. During that pregnancy, I spent my days in a classroom and my nights looking for other jobs. Jobs that would keep me at home. I'm so grateful that it ended up working out and after having my first born, I was able to work from home.

I have always felt like my calling was to be a mom. I loved teaching and loved my days in the classroom, but I remember thinking, "something is missing from my life." It wasn't until I had children that I truly felt complete. Let me be clear, I still have days where I lose my patience, where I crave alone time or a clean house. I miss my husband and all the time we used to have together—these days it's a quick kiss or a loving look across the room. Each season is hard and beautiful in its own way. But even on the hardest days, I feel really lucky that I get to live out a life I always imagined, and I wish that for everyone.

I think we, as moms, really need a village. I think we crave it and it's really how we are meant to raise our children—in community. Finding like-minded women who we connect with but also finding other children that our own children connect with—it's hard. But once you find your people, it is like rain in a drought to a mama heart.

A Story of Work: Lost, Led, and Called

By Dan Quinlan



“We’re lost, but we’re making good time.”

-Yogi Berra

For a few years in the mid-00’s, I worked with a small group of folks who delved into all sorts of business questions for the management committee of a \$16B year tech company. We looked at inquiries about opening operations in new countries, finding companies to buy, figuring out what markets we should get out of, and lots of other big strategy questions. The job was fun and very challenging – by many measures ideal.

Then there were two hard wake-up calls. One was the realization that some very powerful leaders of the company were in way over their heads. The second red flag was that these same people didn’t give a damn about the employees. In a nutshell, while some executives were behaving like real leaders, other powerful people were ignoring all sorts of alarm bells, and potentially huge opportunities to turn things around, as they drove the company off a cliff. One of the repercussions was that dedicated people who had worked for the company for decades were being let go (including friends of mine). As all that was happening, these executives got paid millions. If I hadn’t witnessed all this firsthand, I wouldn’t have thought it possible. Greed is a powerful magnet that realigns some people’s moral compasses.

“Ego is another word for blindness.”

- Richard Rohr

In 25-plus years of working in all sorts of jobs (everything from delivering dentures in high school to this job in corporate management), I had apparently misread a few things about the reality of capitalism, about some people who I had looked up to, and especially about myself. Maybe “a few” is a tad understated. If I could stretch them end-to-end, the list would be longer than my arm. No – I think the list might actually encircle the earth several times.

Over time I slowly began to see that there was one really big thing I shared with these people – a wounded ego constantly trying to erect defenses while chasing bone-headed notions of success. As I have since come to understand, our “false” selves were in full control. And, we were all utterly oblivious. A very new notion for me is an argument that Richard Rohr makes eloquently in his book *The Naked Now*¹. That is, when Jesus was walking the earth, he was trying to convince people to turn their backs on their false selves (i.e., send the ego packing), and come to know God by seeking out their “true” selves.

My attempt at a summary of Rohr’s thinking is the following. When we work to put our true selves in control (while stuffing our egos into extra-strong Hefty garbage bags), we find ourselves paying attention to each other with more love and more compassion and more patience. We become grateful for every miraculous breath we take. We become aware that God surrounds us. And in so doing, we begin to live according to the path Jesus and all the wise spiritual leaders illuminated for us. We become truly human – in all its challenging and joyous glory. And, to boot, Rohr also suggests a definition of the word “sin” which for me is both utterly new and a notion that makes sense. In his telling, sin is being unwilling to seek out our true selves.

***“I am not what has happened to me;
I am what I choose to become.”***

- Carl Jung

You may be wondering, where’s this little story about transitions in Dan’s work-life headed? Many people who experienced the rude awakening I did would have packed up their desk and walked out. In theory, that’s exactly what I did. In reality, I hung around for another 3 or 4 years, working in one painfully unfulfilling company job after another. But I eventually did formulate an escape plan. I decided a career in the non-profit world was my next destination. So, I did all the stuff you’re supposed to do. I became an expert networker. I had coffee with all sorts of people I didn’t know. In the end, the wonderful irony was that I got a new job by sending in a letter in response to a newspaper ad.

And so I stumbled, or perhaps was led in ways I don’t yet understand, into finding my calling – working on the problem of climate change. A few years after that work started, I stumbled, or was again led, into becoming part of the Lumunos family.

***“The entire material universe
speaks of God’s love, his boundless
affection for us. Soil, water,
mountains – everything is,
as it were, a caress of God.”***

- Pope Francis

We were born into Eden, otherwise known as the planet Earth. I believe Jesus was telling us to always be very grateful for that gift. Yet, we have not heard that message. Instead, we leave in our wake a growing environmental crisis. How do we regain reverence and gratitude for the shared home that sustains us, our children, and our communities? If Jesus was walking the earth today, what would he be saying about the health of the planet?

Lumunos has become the place where I learn how to better understand my calling, to try to help others find their calling, and to be around others who understand all that having a calling means. Today, roughly 75% of my work life is focused on Lumunos, and 25% is focused on climate change education and advocacy.

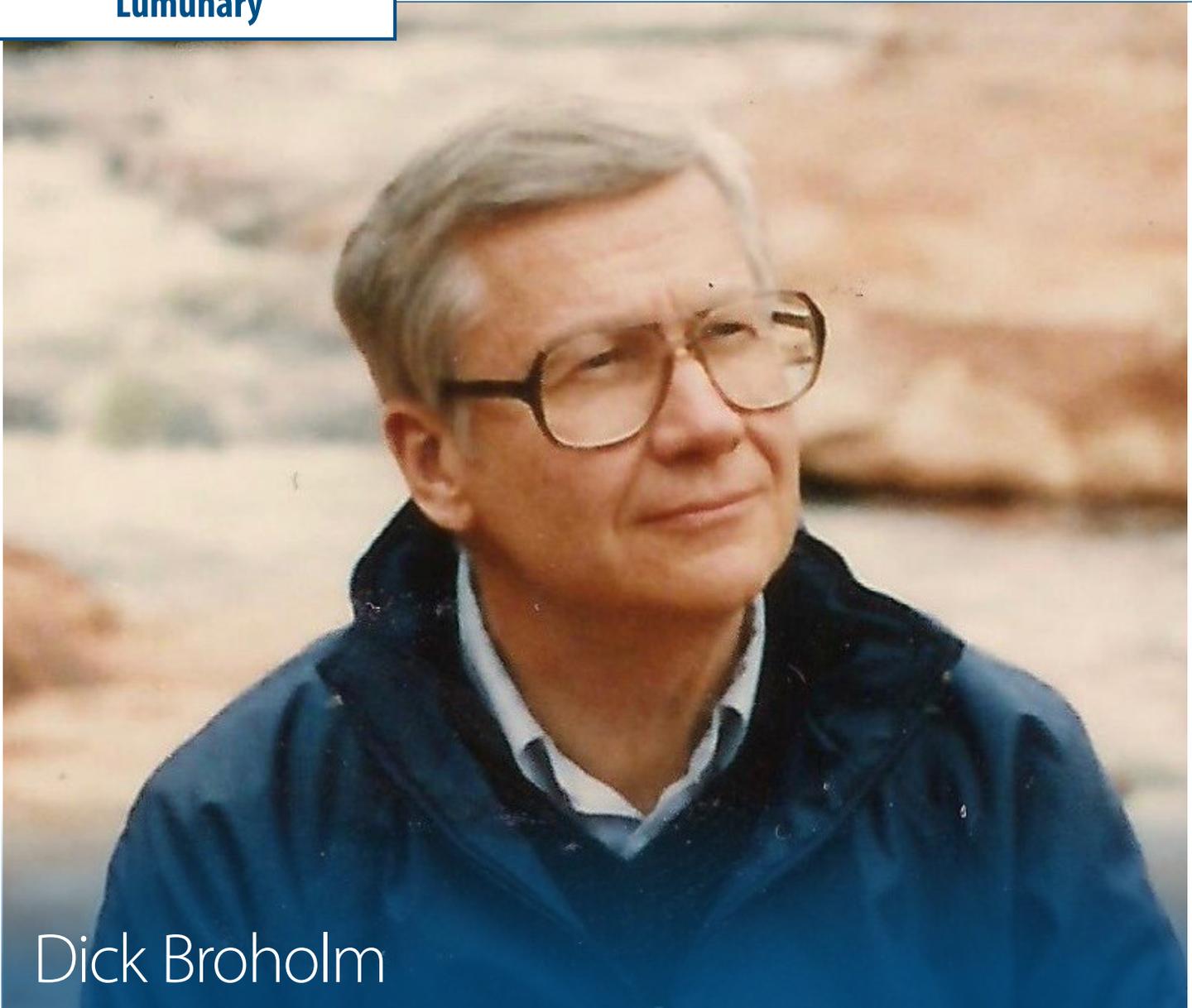
So, that’s my tale about work and transition and spirituality and God and the environment and calling. I could concoct a pretty good yarn (with a beautifully formatted resume as a map) about why my work-life is where it is today – built-up by brilliantly following a path of insightful analysis, worldly logic, intended successes, spiritual wisdom, and unfettered determination. In fact, my ego wants me to tell that story on a stage somewhere, in front of lots of people who are highly impressed and entertained. Off in the wings, my true self is bent over, laughing with wild abandon, as my ego pulls the marionette strings and I do my little dance.

So, back to work. My next task – find some sharp scissors and put ‘em to work. Snip. Snip. One string at a time.

¹ *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See*, Richard Rohr, Crossroad Publishing, 2009.

Dan Quinlan is Lumunos’ Business and Operations Director. He’s also the founder of *SolaVida.org*—a non-profit umbrella for various climate change projects.





Dick Broholm

Through the years, Lumunos has remained vibrant in an ever-changing world because of the community of people who have been part of our work. We have been blessed by these “Lumunaries”—people who embody the values of Lumunos; people who are using their gifts and living their call; people who value authentic relationships and continue to grow spiritually. Lumunaries are also people who have supported Lumunos and advanced our mission in one way or the other.

Dick Broholm contributed to Lumunos in countless ways. Three different times he led the Board through strategic planning processes. From 2003—2005 Dick co-led an initiative called ‘The Mutual Ministry Project.’ As a mentor and friend, Dick often helped me think through Lumunos leadership questions.

Dick was also very generous. More than once he funded special projects that represented a good intersection between his interests and Lumunos values. Fortunately for us, there were numerous such intersections: understanding our work in the world as “ministry,” helping people claim their gifts and strengths, the essential role of community, and a faith that is willing to ask hard questions. And by including Lumunos in his will, Dick continues to support and enable us to continue our work.

What follows are two excerpts from talks given at Dick’s recent Memorial Service. The first is from me and emphasizes Dick’s impact on people’s work.

The second is from Dick’s son Paul and is an invitation to mentor as Dick mentored others.

-Doug Wysocky-Johnson

Remembering Dick Broholm

By Doug Wysocky-Johnson

June 1, 2019

Sometimes work is hard.

(And given where we are and why we are here this morning, I want to be especially clear that when I say work, I’m referring to how you spend your time and energy, regardless of whether paid or volunteer, office or school or home.)

But yes, sometimes work is hard.

Sometimes you are younger and feel lost and overwhelmed amongst all the options—and you aren’t sure what to do.

Sometimes you are older and have diminished energy, but still feel you want to give and contribute—and you aren’t sure what to do.

Sometimes you are a woman, or LGBTQ, or a minority and dealing

with discrimination or injustice—and you aren't sure what to do.

Sometimes you are working or volunteering in an institution and there are decisions to be made, and those decisions aren't between good and bad, but between bad and bad, or good and good—and you aren't sure what to do.

Sometimes you are having a hard time juggling all the different roles you carry in life—and you aren't sure what to do.

And then this guy comes alongside you. And literally from the first time you meet him, you can tell he is different. (Spoiler alert—I'm talking about Dick here)

On the outside, he seems pretty normal, almost boringly normal—same V-Neck sweaters, same sport coat, same mix of breakfast cereal, same homemade salad dressing every day. He acts like he has done something risky when he has beer for you in the refrigerator.

But in his inner life, his intellect and his actions, he is unlike anyone you have ever met. He reads voraciously, prays without ceasing, and always knows someone you should meet. Every day he writes in his journal; every day he looks at his journal from 10 years ago to the day. He learns from the past but is most energized by the future.

You have worked with consultants before, you have had sessions with coaches and counselors and spiritual directors, but your interactions with this man are some strange, wonderful amalgamation of all those.

More than anything, he makes you feel that you are important. The way he listens, asks questions, follows up and holds you accountable, you know that you matter.

And, your work matters. (In fact, he keeps calling it your “ministry,” which you find kind of confusing, but it also helps you see it in a different light.)

He seems to see possibility and potential for you and your work that you don't even see. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming to live into the vision he has evoked from you. But just when it begins to feel discouraging, he gets out his easel or that battered leather case with his legal pad and starts to break it down with his black Flair pen. What a surprise! He has some ideas for some of the next steps you might take or someone you need to meet.

So, the combination of his enthusiasm and his grasp of your practical reality make you actually think that this vision is possible. There are no promises, but the future feels a little less scary.

Don't get me wrong, it isn't always easy being with this man. There are times you wonder if you are doing what you do just to please him. Your relationship feels unbalanced, because he has an uncanny ability to turn the conversation back to you, always. Sometimes you wish he could just lighten up a bit—every movie doesn't have to have a Christ figure, and not every conversation about the Detroit Tigers has to end in a discussion of servant leadership.

But the net of your conversations is that somehow you see your place in the world differently. When you leave his presence, life feels more meaningful. You have hope as you step into that challenge you were facing.

Sometimes work is hard. But once in awhile we get lucky, and a man like Dick comes alongside of us. And our lives are better, and the world is better. Thanks be to God for Dick Broholm.

Richard Broholm's Memorial

By Paul Broholm

June 1, 2019

Dad loved being a mentor, sharing his time with younger people, both family and friends and strangers who became friends. Dad was

a gifted listener but being a good mentor doesn't require Dad's gifts. To quote a recent article on mentoring, “You don't have to be a charismatic superhero. You don't need an advanced degree. ... The key is not being interesting. The real key is being interested — being present and paying attention.” Both things Dad did surpassingly well.

Being a mentor was an opportunity to give. It was deeply meaningful to Dad; and it helped keep him young and involved. We'd like to thank all those whom he mentored for giving him that.

I'd also like to ask those he mentored, and everyone else who feels so called, to give of yourself in the same way. You don't have to be a “charismatic superhero,” or even a Dick Broholm. You just have to be present and pay attention.

Do as Dick would do, as your gift to him and his memory. Teach, inspire, be a mentor, offer your time, listen deeply, ask difficult questions, and in doing so, remember Dick. Pass on this gift. He would be deeply grateful to know that this was part of his legacy.

Dad had pictures of a number of his mentors on the wall in his study. He also had a picture of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who inspired Dad. In closing, I would like to read from a letter Bonhoeffer wrote while in prison, that Dad had on his desk:

“Nothing can make up for the absence of someone whom we love, and it would be wrong to try to find a substitute: we must simply hold out and see it through. That sounds very hard at first, but at the same time it is a great consolation, for the gap, as long it remains unfilled, preserves the bond between us. It is nonsense to say that God fills the gap; he does not fill it, but on the contrary. He keeps it empty, and so helps us to keep alive our former communion with each other, even at the cost of pain.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, Collier Books, 1953





Release: The Inner Work of Leaving

By Marjory Zoet Bankson

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.”

— Ecclesiastes 3:1

The first signs of autumn always come as a surprise. It's suddenly dark when I leave the house for my morning walk. The rain has a chill in it. A gust of wind sends a flutter of leaves down before the first frost comes. Fall is a season of release, a harbinger of completion and closure, of harvest and preparation for the barrenness of winter.

Everything, including our work in the world, has its own life cycle. Work that was once life giving and productive begins to feel oppressive, demanding, even impossible. Tempers flare. Patience wears thin. Our bodies feel tired, driven, stressed. We long for rest and relief, but a day off or even a vacation doesn't provide the renewal we want. That's a sure sign we are coming to the end of a longer cycle and need to consider how to plan for a good transition.

Recognizing when a career has run its course has both an inner and an outer dimension. Some people know it's time to move on, but the institution isn't ready yet. Others are summarily dismissed before they have done the inner work of release. If we are to make a healthy transition from a challenging career into a different kind of work that is both satisfying and needed, we need to pay attention to the dynamics of closure in order to make space for new growth. Like leaves falling from a tree in autumn, release is part of creation's story. One phase must end so another can begin.

In the pattern of transition, release is the first of two ending phases. Release requires that we rework our identity associated with our career or primary role. We must detach from the image that we hold of ourselves through our vocation. Perhaps we give up the title or a parking place or a corner office. We may need to turn in the computer, give back the keys, receive a last paycheck. We may smile graciously and listen while others praise our work but feel empty inside. The task of release involves making peace with what has or has not been accomplished. We need to acknowledge that the time and opportunity for making a difference in the world through our work will never be repeated in exactly the same way.

Signs of the End

The intuition that we have come to the end of a work that has been deeply satisfying and challenging is hard to acknowledge. The signs may be there for a long time before we are willing to pay attention. We may see external pressures as simply challenges that we have to meet—until our bodies rebel, our hearts seize up, or may eat away at us, leading to depression or chronic frustration. We may feel lost, abandoned by the very purpose that once was

so compelling, and yet unable to move because we have nowhere else to go. That space can be desolate and lonely. Our dreams may be troubled; our thoughts jumbled, distracted, or fantasy-laden. We may have trouble concentrating because the task at hand no longer engages our soul. Or perhaps we'll choose to “put in our time” until we reach a particular retirement goal. But as the story of Moses reminds us, to move forward we first have to “get out of Egypt.” We need to find release from the hold that our work has had on us.

In the face of such pressure, our culture tends to focus on better self-care. We look to physical exercise, taking regular time off, therapy, and vacations to relieve the pressure and sustain the effort. But if the dilemma is really a spiritual question, we may actually need to let the tension deepen until the inner taskmaster that is driving us to meet our obligations (or whatever we tell ourselves that keeps us on the job) is ready to release us from work that has become bondage.

If our vocational path has been motivated by a greater cause—feeding the hungry or housing the homeless, for example—it may be particularly hard to release our work and be open to a new call that doesn't seem as grand or as noble. If we have been captivated by a greater purpose or simply attracted by the power of working for an organization with wide influence, then release will also feel like a loss of our ideals.

Understanding this tension as part of discovering the creative source of a new call—rather than the unwanted curse of aging—can make a huge difference between despair and hopefulness. If we understand that release is necessary before something new can develop in our lives, and if we allow ourselves to sense that God is at work to open a way through, we can hold the tension firmly but lightly, alert and waiting for the right time to act.

NOTE: This essay was originally published in the book *Creative Aging: Rethinking Retirement and Non-Retirement in a Changing World* (2010). It is printed here by permission of the author.

Marjory Bankson is a published author, working artist, and seasoned spiritual guide. Her books, *Call to the Soul* and *Creative Aging*, present a spiritual template for discerning call at every stage of life. Marjory was president of Faith at Work (now Lumunos) from 1985 to 2001. Now she writes, speaks and facilitates group discernment events around issues of call and transition.

Upcoming Events



Monthly LumZoom Calls

Check www.lumunos.org for dates/times

Denver Area Women's Retreat (Estes Park, CO)

September 20-22, 2019

Transitions and Change Mini-Retreat (Norwell, MA)

September 28, 2019

Denver Area Men's Retreat (Allenspark, CO)

October 4-6, 2019

New England Women's Retreat (Duxbury, MA)

October 11-12, 2019

For questions about these or other future Lumunos events, please email becca@lumunos.org.



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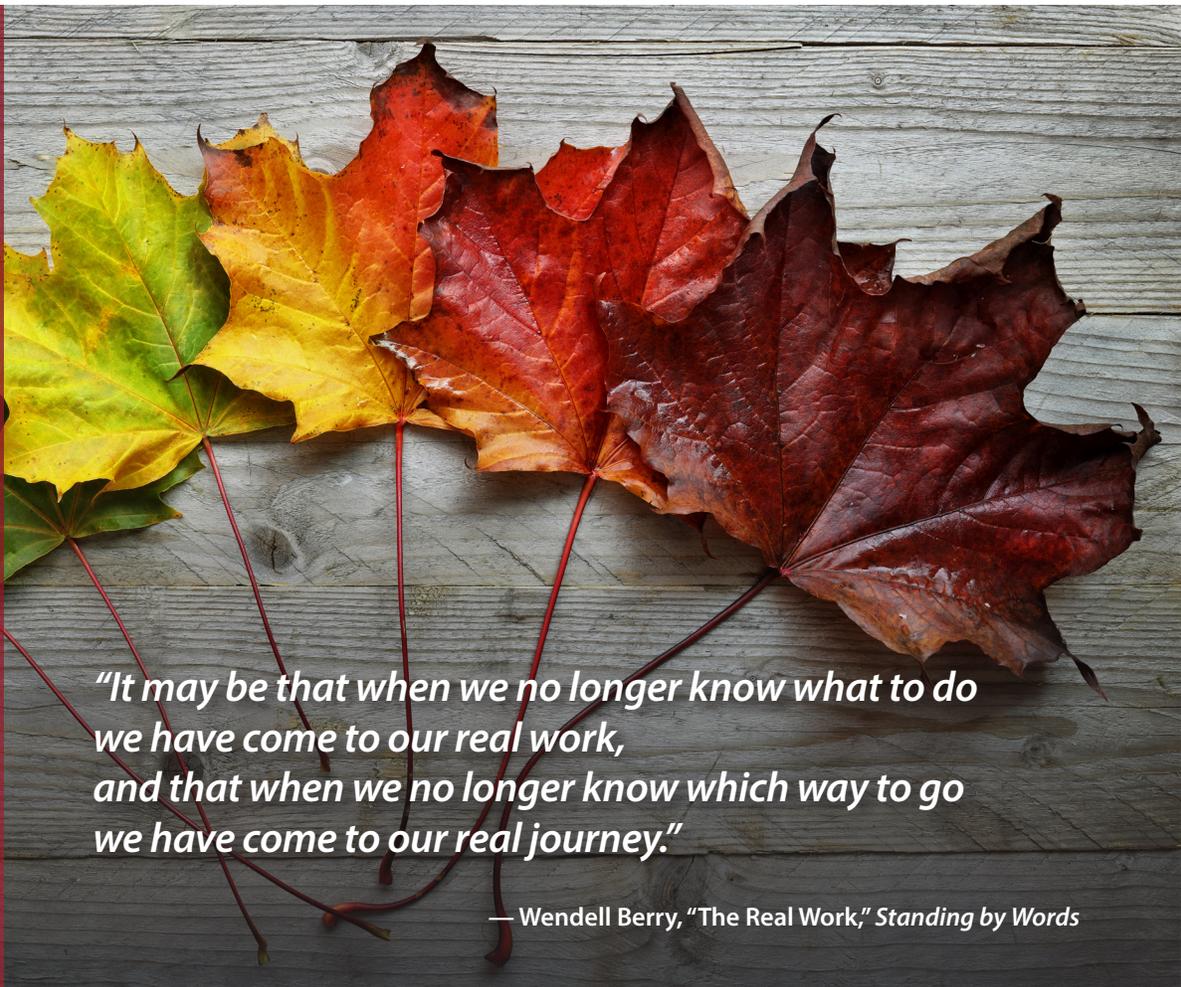
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*"It may be that when we no longer know what to do
we have come to our real work,
and that when we no longer know which way to go
we have come to our real journey."*

— Wendell Berry, "The Real Work," *Standing by Words*