Is Counselling my Calling?

A Heuristic and Autoethnographic study
“I am living a plot written by my genetic code, ancestral heredity, traumatic occasions, parental unconscious, societal accidents”

Hillman (1996, p6)
Brief calling scale (Dik et al., 2012)

1. I have a calling to a particular kind of work.
2. I have a good understanding of my calling as it applies to my career.
3. I am trying to figure out my calling in my career.
4. I am searching for my calling as it applies to my career.

Give yourselves - 1 for not at all true, 2 for mildly true,
3 for moderately true, 4 for mostly true and 5 for totally true.
Results

Add up your results for questions 1 and 2.
Add up your results for questions 3 and 4.

Results show:

• Presence of calling: 1 and 2
• Search for calling: 3 and 4

What do you think?
• What is a calling? Write 3 words to describe a calling?
• Do you have a calling?
• Is it a religious calling?
Research questions

• What are my reflections and understanding of a ‘calling’ or vocation?

• How has this concept arisen and been present through my life experiences?

• Is becoming a counsellor associated with my perception of calling?

• How does this relate to the literature?
Research methods

Heuristic research (Moustakas, 1990) ‘a question lingering at the core of the inquirer’

Autoethnographic (Ellis & Bochner…) The place where autobiography and culture meet.
1. initial engagement (defining the question through self-dialogue)
2. immersion (being absorbed with the question)
3. incubation (stepping away from absorption so tacit knowledge can emerge)
4. illumination (conscious awareness of tacit knowledge and understanding)
5. explication (examination of newly found understanding)
6. creative synthesis (expression of what has been learned)
7. validation (linking own inquiry to the experience of others)
Data sources
My Kinship Diagram in 1977

Key
- Female
- Male
- Blue outline = minister/vicar
- Purple outline = missionary
- M = Mother
- F = Father
- S = Sister
- Crossed out = has died.

Crossed out circle = my father's father

My Kinship Diagram in 1977
Findings

1. Calling as inheritance
5th July 1993

“Being called to do something can be like being hungry and needing to eat – It is something that you have to do and if you don’t, part of you will die. For others, it is like seeing a box of chocolates – you want to eat it and it stems from a desire rather than a need to do something.”
2. Calling as Energy/Inner drive

longing calls stronger
energies necessity presence
inner calls pulling
God's inner feeling
achieve meaning
sense true called acceptance
towards continual forth
force wonderous deepest questions
hope driving shining
emotion ambition well source
love energy
Wrong
faith
onwards
drives diamond path
incredible answers search
given great desire
die hobos
need
real mystery going
inside
rubbed
listen
urge
depth ordained
purpose
follow hearts pain
yearning
satisfaction
optimist
within burden
own
strength
burden
Jesus
fire
capabilities
Wellspring
peace
unstoppable
burn
spiritual
edges
truth
resources
well
self-awareness
motivation
pure
constant
force
self
love
myself
feelings
surety
need
spiritual
Jesus
fire
within
being
yearning
satisfaction
optimist
3. Calling as superpower

13th March.

Is a calling like a superpower?

Has to be expressed has to be exercised

Not a means to an end a service to others

People

Natural gift
23rd February 1994

“I want to learn to live quietly with myself and to accept and love other people as they are – warts and all.”
4. Calling as Communication/Relationship
4th February 1993

“I’d love it if God could use me in some sort of counselling job like that but it’s up to him – he seems to use my pathetic reasons for doing good things.”
Calling and Resistance/Choice
“The reluctance to impose his view on others and his distaste for telling others what they should do or believe is already evident in this... fledgling seminarian.”

(Thorne & Mearns, 2012, p6)
Reflection

• What is your calling?
• Where does it come from?
• What is your experience of calling?

Think about the questions individually and then share what you can with a partner.
What does the literature say?
Classical definition

“The classical perspective of calling ...suggests that one is called by God to reach personal salvation by acting on behalf of the communal good” (Ponton et al. 2014, p185).
Modern definition

“emphasizes personal choice of career in response to an inner drive toward fulfillment or happiness” (Ponton et al., 2014, p185).
Neoclassical definition

• “a transcendent summons, experienced as origination beyond the self,

• to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and

• that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation”

(Dik & Duffy, 2009, p427).
“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deepest hunger meet”

Frederick Buechner as cited in Placher (2005, p3).
Calling and Counsellors

- Research with Counseling Students, Counseling Psychologists and those with motivations to serve others – all in the USA.

RE: Person-Centred Therapy and Calling

Duffy.Ryan <rduf@ufl.edu>
To: Liz Stamatiellatos

Great idea. No, I am not aware of any studies with counselors and calling, best of luck with your work.

Ryan
Reflection

• Who/What in your life has encouraged/discouraged your calling?

• Is religion or a religious background necessary for a sense of call?

• Any questions or comments?
Contact details

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References


