

Reflection Guide: Tugs at My Heart Strings

God calls us to bring our creativity and healing to the world in order that all of creation may be as the Creator intended. The novelist Frederick Buechner writes that “the kind of work God usually calls you to is the kind of work (a) that you need most to do and (b) that the world most needs to have done.” That is, vocation is “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC*, Harper and Row, 1973, p. 95).

Listed below are several issues of concern in our world. All provide arenas in which one’s gifts might be used in ministry. Some may especially call out for your unique gifts; they may have a special pull on your heart. If you feel a deep compassion for people in some of these life circumstances or if you are passionate about the need for change in one of these arenas, you may be called to minister with your gifts there.

Review the issues listed in part 1 and place a checkmark by those that especially tug at you. In part II, identify the two arenas about which you have the strongest feelings. Note which particular aspects of each issue are of the greatest concern to you. In part III, identify some of your unique gifts that could be used in that arena.

Part I: Societal Issues

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Grief and loss; life transitions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Health care; illness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The arts | <input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Care for and dignity of the elderly | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Child development | <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster relief | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination (racial, gender, age, sexual orientation, or religious) | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty and economic disparity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic and community development | <input type="checkbox"/> Prisons and rehabilitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Refugees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Self-esteem/actualization of children/adults |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual meaning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families and parenting | <input type="checkbox"/> Violence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governmental and political reform | Other: _____ |
| | Other: _____ |

Part II: My Deepest Concerns

My deepest feelings and strongest concerns are for the issue of _____

The second area of concern for which I have the strongest feelings is _____

The specific aspects of this issue that I feel most drawn to address are _____

The specific aspects of this issue that I feel most drawn to address are _____

Part III: Applying My Unique Gifts

I have these unique gifts that I might apply to the issues that tug at my heart:

A Passion Exploration

Some of my persistent tugs, ideas or areas where I feel my heart speaking:

Experiences I have had when I felt energized:

What I really want more of in the next year is:

What I really want less of in the next year is:

Are my choices and decisions leading toward greater self-esteem, aliveness, wholeness, health, love, justice? Or are my choices and decisions leading toward alienation, isolation, fear, resignation, and death of self?