

Social Issues in Management and Business Ethics: Exercises and Activities

Exercise/Activity Title:

Meaningful Work

Exercise/Activity Explanation (150 words or less):

Work should be meaningful. This exercise helps participants formulate how their work is, or is not, meaningful based on a model and workshop from Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Lani Morris, 2011, *The Map of Meaning: A Guide to Sustaining Our Humanity in the World of Work*.

Participants conceptualize "meaningful work" using four factors: (1) Service to Others, (2) Unity with Others, (3) Developing the Inner Self, and (4) Expressing Full Potential. They assess their most recent work experiences for each of the four factors, share them in small groups, express their inspirations and frustrations, and develop plans to transform frustrations into inspirations.

Assignment is on the following page.

Optional – Contact Information:

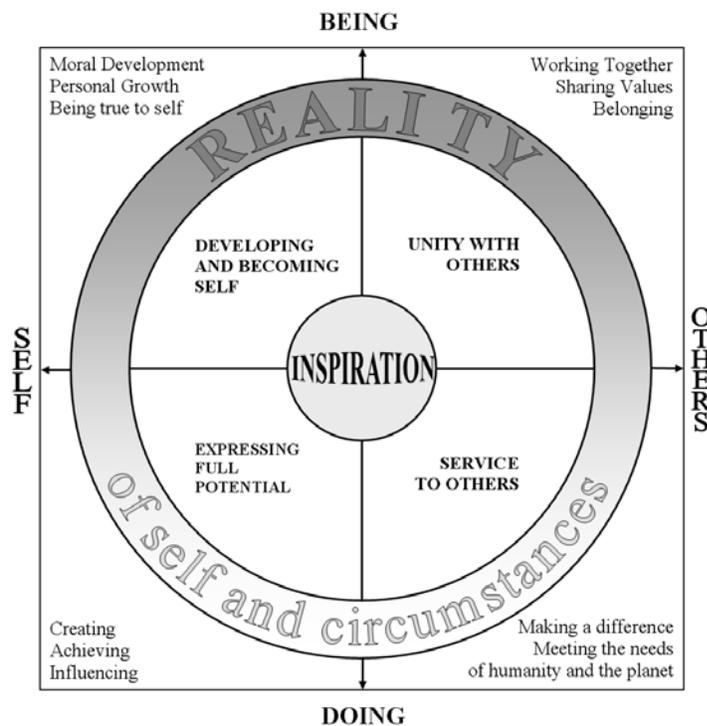
If interested in additional information, please contact Professor Denis Collins, School of Business, Edgewood College, Madison, WI; dcollins@edgewood.edu

Meaningful Work

Denis Collins, Edgewood College dcollins@edgewood.edu

Work should be meaningful. How to understand the idea of meaningful work?

Present and discuss the “Sources of Meaningful Work” diagram below (Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Lani Morris, 2011, *The Map of Meaning: A Guide to Sustaining Our Humanity in the World of Work*).



1) Meaning at Work

- Make a list of answers to the question: "What did I do, or experience, in my work in the past week or month that was deeply meaningful to me"
- In "Service to Others" what did I experience that was meaningful to me?
- In "Unity with Others" what did I experience that was meaningful to me?
- In "Developing the Inner Self" what did I experience that was meaningful to me?

- e) In “Expressing Full Potential” what did I experience that was meaningful to me?
- f) Place each answer in the appropriate Model quadrant
- g) Share answers with one other person or in small group

2) Meaningful Balance

- a) In terms of your meaningful experiences at work, what percentage out of 100% do you experience in each of the four quadrants
- b) Are the quadrants evenly balanced?
- c) If not balanced, what can be done at work to provide greater balance?

3) Frustrations

- a) What are all the things about your work that frustrate you?
- b) Which of these frustrations are within your control and can do something about?
- c) What can you do to eliminate or minimize these frustrations

4) Inspiration

- a) Look at the center circle in the Model – “Inspiration”
- b) What are all the things about your work that inspire you?
- c) Are there incentives or reinforcements that the organization can provide to support your inspiration?
- d) What incentives (goal accomplishment rewards) or methods (organizational values, inspirational talks) does the organization have in place to motivate you?
- e) What effect do these incentives and methods actually have on you?

Marjolein Lips-Wiersma and Lani Morris, 2011, *The Map of Meaning. A Guide to Sustaining our Humanity in the World of Work.*