

# Organizing Your Life for Personal Fulfillment and Service: A Discussion Framework for Student Groups

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Most people when asked say that they want to leave the world a better place as well as have personal happiness and success. But how do we juggle these often competing impulses? If we are saddled with large student debts, the well-paid work in finance or other lucrative fields is hard to turn down. For those willing to work in public service, whether in government or nonprofits, job opportunities are often few.

The purpose of this series of weekly sessions is to help you learn more about options – in terms of both traditional jobs, “alternative work,” how lifestyle choices that affect your ability to do meaningful work. We will read and hear about people who have taken different paths and look at the data that’s available on life and job satisfaction.

This framework could be presented over the course of several sessions. However, our preference is that, if the group is willing, it would be extended indefinitely into a regular meeting of students who take combining service with personal development seriously and who would meet on a regular basis to support and learn from one another and from additional presentations and readings.

## Options for long-term full-time work

- State and local government
- Federal government
- Big or little nonprofits
- Different activities, different organization cultures: arts, schools, working with people with disabilities, international development, housing, other human services
- “Social benefit” businesses
- Traditional business

## Options for a summer, a year, or two

- The big Americorps-funded programs: Teach for America, Public Allies, City Year
- VISTA: one year assignments
- Civilian Conservation Corps, Mercy Corps, etc.

## Business and social entrepreneurs

- How much time are you willing to put in?
- Are you willing to put your own money into it?

- What's really "new"?
- What does it take to start your own nonprofit organization?

#### Lifestyle choices

- What's that new car worth to you in happiness?
- What's an apartment vs. a group home worth in happiness?
- How much do you really need to live?
- A holistic framework: "Emotional intelligence," leadership skills, and a holistic approach to physical, emotional, social and spiritual development can go hand in hand with professional success and service to others. This section would examine some of the research on the topic and provide a framework for personal reflection and, if the members are interested, ongoing meetings.

#### Community teams: Formal and informal

- Are there others that share your passions?
- What would it take to work with them? Do these sorts of partnerships usually work?