



The Zookeeper's Secret: Finding Your Calling In Life

Erica Knight

Brigham Young University, Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics, emkni18@gmail.com

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Cover Page Footnote

1. Jeffrey A. Thompson and J. Stuart Bunderson, *The Zookeeper's Secret* (American Fork: Covenant Creations, 2018), 16. 2. Thompson and Bunderson, *The Zookeeper's Secret*, 34. 3. Thompson and Bunderson, *The Zookeeper's Secret*, 16.



The Zookeeper's Secret

By Jeffery A. Thompson & J. Stuart Bunderson

Book Review By Erica Knight

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” As we get older, we stop asking each other this question because we are supposed to have already achieved our desires. However, we may not have decided on our life’s mission yet. Jeffery A. Thompson and J. Stuart Bunderson invite everyone to find his or her calling in life and discover that it is never too late to do what you were meant to do. The authors had their own circuitous career paths before settling on teaching and research, and they have taught many individuals who have had their own doubts about whether they were on the right path. The authors’ stories, along with their friends’ stories, led to the publishing of *The Zookeeper's Secret*

and remind us that it is never too late to discover what we were meant to do.

Zookeepers are very passionate about the work they do, and many felt called to zookeeping at a young age; in fact, 84 percent of those surveyed by Thompson and Bunderson replied that their “jobs are meaningful and make a difference.”¹ One zookeeper interviewed told a story of a nun and her class on a field trip to the zoo. While working in the elephant enclosure, the zookeeper heard the nun tell the children, “See the kind of job you get when you don’t finish your education?” This particular zookeeper held a master’s degree.³ The long hours, low pay, and hard labor do not dissuade zookeepers from doing what they love.

The Zookeeper's Secret is divided up into “heresies”: false and limited views people may encounter while seeking their callings in life. The seven heresies teach that anyone can find a calling in life; your calling is not singular, and you can find many callings. The path to your calling is not up to you, but once you reach the end you will see every piece fall together. The path to your calling is not easy, but you do not need to set aside your calling to help your family and find meaning in what you do. Each chapter on a heresy includes activities for you to reflect on your own life.

Heresy number six states that when you find your calling, the world will take notice. One activity asks the reader to contemplate, “What types of projects would you be willing to volunteer for, without the possibility of pay?”² This question struck me, and despite considering myself very altruistic, I was surprised at how difficult it was to name what I would be willing to do without pay. I spent some time after this reexamining my efforts as a student, and I now ask myself this question when I contemplate internship and job opportunities.

This book is for anyone who has wondered what they are doing with their lives and what needs to be changed. Read this book, sincerely consider the activities, and soon you will be able to find meaning in your work or point your lives to something more meaningful.

Dr. Thompson is a professor at the Marriott School of Business.

Notes

¹ Thompson, Jeffrey A., and J. Stuart Bunderson, *The Zookeeper's Secret* (American Fork: Covenant Creations, 2018), 16.

² Thompson and Bunderson, *The Zookeeper's Secret*, 34.

³ Thompson and Bunderson, *The Zookeeper's Secret*, 16.