

EXCERPT



Discover Joy in Work
Transforming Your Occupation into Your Vocation

September 10, 2019 | \$22, 224 pages, hardcover | 978-0-8308-4574-3

On My Journey

My perspective of work is informed by the full complement of my work experiences. I began working odd jobs at the age of twelve and moved on to formal part-time jobs and internships beginning in high school. Post college, the nature of my employment has ranged from salaried positions to sole proprietorships principally focused in business and finance. Over the course of time, I've worked in a wide variety of environments ranging from small private firms to large public companies. A sample of my paid work experience includes the following jobs: mowing lawns, shoveling snow, washing cars, cutting hair, sorting mail, selling magazines, filing medical records, performing audits, analyzing financial statements, trading bonds, selling stocks, developing investment products, publishing books, and managing business ventures. I've experienced great joy in unassuming jobs and deep unhappiness in highly coveted roles. I have therefore come to believe all honorable work offers the potential for both professional growth and personal fulfillment.

My vocational journey continues to evolve with different assignments, changing circumstances, and new seasons of life. I would love to attest that I have arrived at my oasis of vocational bliss. That, however, is not my testimony. As with any journey, my vocational experience is marked with highs and lows. The difference at this stage of my maturation process is I know the source of true joy and how to kindle joy through my work. I have greater contentment today than at any point in my professional life. I am passionate about my work and I more readily recover from inevitable mental and emotional setbacks. I realize my work experience is part of my perfecting process. My gratitude for this instance of grace is part of the reason why I experience greater joy in my work and also my motivation for sharing my perspective and my journey.

Our character, calling, and convictions affect how we view and experience our work. On the greater path toward self-discovery, we build character, answer our callings, and live out our convictions. This is also the pathway toward discovering joy in our work. And through this perfecting process, we transform our occupations into our vocations.

May you be fully engaged in work that brings you joy.

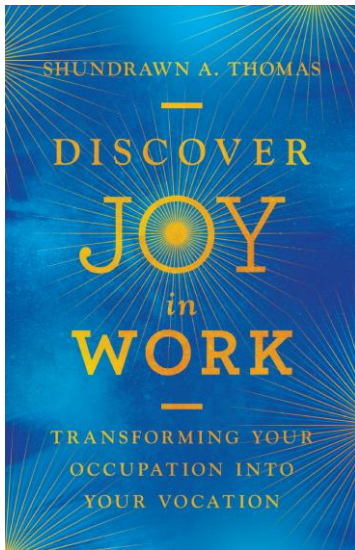
—Taken from the introduction



Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com


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Change How You See Your Work

“Teachers Quit Jobs at the Highest Rate on Record.” This *Wall Street Journal* article recently caught my attention. The article reported public educators voluntarily leaving their jobs at the highest rate in nearly two decades. Concerns over pay, poor working conditions, and increased opportunities given the tight labor market were cited as drivers for the trend. I hold educators in high regard given the important role they have played in my vocational journey.

I decided to contact Lisa, a long-time friend who teaches elementary school in Florida. Lisa is one of the most cheerful people I know. She has a gift of discernment and her optimism is contagious. I asked her, “Why did you become a teacher?”

Lisa quickly replied, “I never gave serious thought to becoming a teacher until I was in college. I was walking through a room with shelves filled with books and for a moment I was completely transfixed. I heard a quiet voice from within say ‘You are supposed to be a teacher.’ The next day I went to my advisor and changed my major.”

Lisa explained that she believed teaching was her calling. As an educator, she doesn’t simply instruct. She believes she is called to love, serve, and inspire her students. Lisa acknowledged that teachers face some formidable challenges. In her case, she finds it difficult to deal with the bureaucracy that is common in public education. I asked, “What causes you to continue given the challenges?”

“I focus on the students. The most rewarding part of teaching is when one of my students accomplishes something he once felt was impossible. This attitude shift can create a ripple effect of success in his life.” Her response is apropos to the consideration of our workplace experience. Her disposition not only impacts the attitudes and achievements of her students it also leads to an abiding sense of calling and fulfillment in her work.

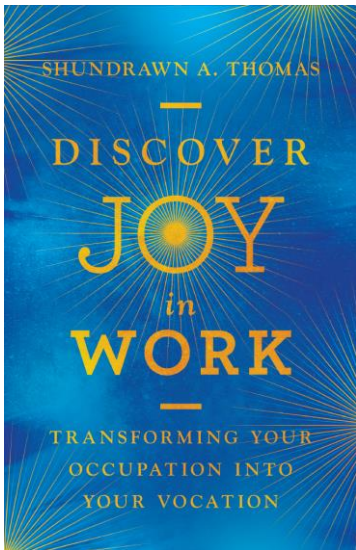
Lisa’s example raises an essential question. Does your workplace need to change, or can you change the way you see it? I am not suggesting your experience in the workplace will always be peaches and cream. Far from it. We each bring our strengths, weaknesses, passions, and problems to the workplace daily. Each of our proverbial houses has rooms that need improvement and those developmental opportunities are generally more evident to others than to us. As the Scripture goes, we see in a mirror, dimly (1 Cor 13:12). Some might ask, What happened to paradise in the workplace? *People* happened to paradise in the workplace. However, if you view it through the right lens, you realize that the essential link between humanity and the workplace is a good thing. It’s one of life’s most precious gifts. The opportunity to unite with a shared vision and engage in meaningful work is uniquely human. Yet the common enterprise is not without challenges. The workplace, not surprisingly, reveals our humanness in all its facets. However, the potential of the enterprise is infinitely greater than the individual. How we choose to see the workplace establishes our foundation for working in community and discovering joy in our work. We must learn to develop the proper attitude toward the workplace.



Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kcayton@ivpress.com


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Let's focus more intently on our attitude. *Attitude* refers to our mindset or manner of thinking. It is the first of four factors that shape our experience in the workplace. As the first of the four factors, it is foundational. We will explore three attributes of attitude to better understand how it impacts our experience in the workplace. First, attitude is an inherent quality of our minds. Attitude emanates from the inside and is a portrait of one's inner self. Second, our attitude determines our perception. Specifically, it determines how we view other people, our circumstances, and ourselves. Like the way an optical lens affects our physical eyesight, attitude affects the perception of the mind's eye. Third, attitude influences our emotions, behavior, and decisions. In fact, our emotional welfare, conduct, and choices on any given day are principally a reflection of our attitude.

Because our attitude is an innate quality, our experience in the workplace has more to do with our disposition than what happens to us on any given Monday. Attitude is not merely about wishful thinking, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach for developing a healthy attitude. Developing a healthy attitude is, however, an essential component of experiencing fulfillment in the workplace.

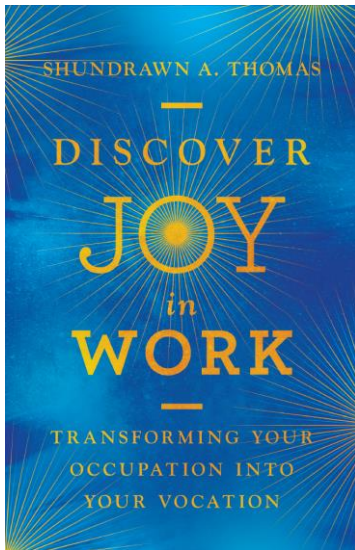
—Taken from chapter one, "Change Your Attitude"



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Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com


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ENDORSEMENTS



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Is it possible for us to truly flourish in our work? Business executive Shundrawn Thomas reveals how work is intended to produce lasting value and should be meaningful and productive. Addressing issues of work ethic, character formation, and work-life synergy, Thomas helps us to a greater understanding of our abilities and passions, which in turn helps us find better harmony between what we do and who we are.

The Power of Merging Purpose and Profession

“During my career I have had the opportunity to work with many exceptionally talented individuals—all of whom, to a varying degree, have practiced some of what Shundrawn Thomas offers in this groundbreaking book. After reading *Discover Joy in Work* all of our views on work and the workplace will be significantly changed.”

—**Samuel C. Scott III, former president and chief executive officer, Corn Products, board director for Abbott Laboratories, Bank of New York Mellon and Motorola Solutions Inc.**

“From the very beginning work has been a significant part of our human experience. And thankfully we are wired for it. Adam was built to work the garden and steward its beauty. But like everything else in life, managing what we are built for can be a challenging task in and of itself. So for all of us who are tempted to think that work is a necessary evil . . . we desperately need to read Shundrawn Thomas’s revolutionary thoughts about how to turn our work from drudgery to joy!”

—**Joe Stowell, president, Cornerstone University**

“With *Discover Joy in Work*, Shundrawn Thomas combines profound insights, practical experience, and vivid anecdotes to produce a road map for those seeking greater fulfillment in their work. This book is a must-read for anyone seeking to grow professionally and personally.”

—**Leslie D. Hale, president and chief executive officer, RLJ Lodging Trust**

“*Discover Joy in Work* is about transforming the way the worker sees work by understanding why God has us do it as stewards. What is amazing is that as you read this book you will see it not only can change the way you see work, it will change you as a person in ways that both include and go beyond your work.”

—**Darrell L. Bock, executive director for Cultural Engagement, Howard G. Hendricks Center for Christian Leadership and Cultural Engagement**

“Most of us will spend many of our waking hours in our work environment. Few of us have reflected on how our work can be joyful. The author of this book was able to find joy in his work and transform his occupation into his vocation. As a result, he grew into the person he was becoming and in his contributions to those he worked with and those he served. *Discover Joy in Work* will open new opportunities for work to become a pathway to joy in your life.”

—**C. William Pollard, former chief executive officer, The ServiceMaster Company, and author of *The Soul of the Firm***

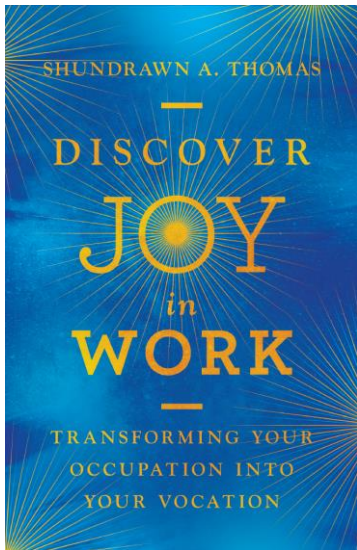


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“Shundrawn Thomas is a shining example of the power of merging purpose and profession to the glory of God.”

—**Nicholas Pearce**, professor at Northwestern University, assistant pastor of Apostolic Church of God, author of *The Purpose Path*

“With *Discover Joy in Work*, Shundrawn brings an insightful and unique perspective to the age-old question of how we find joy in the work that we do every day. His book is a practical guide to the steps anyone can take to create a more fulfilling career journey and to love what they do.”

—**Lisa Warner Wardell**, president and chief executive officer, Adtalem Global Education

“In Shundrawn Thomas’s *Discover Joy in Work*, I’ve found at last the book I’ve been seeking for the business people, professionals, and students looking for career guidance in my church. I love the fact that this book is both current in its research about issues related to occupation and vocation as well as rooted in sound theology and biblical understanding. Amazingly, it is also a wonderful read, filled with well-told stories and practical application. In reading this book, people’s lives will be transformed as we begin to see our work not as something we have to do but as a place, people, and task to which God has sent us.”

—**Greg Waybright**, senior pastor, Lake Avenue Church, Pasadena

“Shundrawn Thomas has written a remarkable book, a work full of cosmic wisdom and concrete advice for anybody seeking to live a life of greater joy, fulfillment, and service. By highlighting the ways our work lives might be improved, Shundrawn shows us a path where our whole selves can be enriched. I highly recommend this book.”

—**Eboo Patel**, author of *Acts of Faith*, president of Interfaith Youth Core

“Transformed! That is the best word to describe your mindset after reading *Discover Joy in Work*. Shundrawn Thomas’s ability to seamlessly weave together timely research, piercing insights, and vivid storytelling provides a truly unique perspective on work as a calling. Reader beware! This book will impact you intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, encouraging your growth in the process.”

—**Carla A. Harris**, vice chairman of wealth management, Morgan Stanley, author of *Expect to Win*

“Shundrawn Thomas delivers a prophetic message to this generation and generations to come. In *Discover Joy in Work*, his keen insight and principled character shine through as he inspires the novice and the elder to realize their true vocation and higher calling.”

—**Emery Lindsey**, presiding bishop of the Western Diocese, pastor of Christ Temple Cathedral



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BIO



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Shundrawn A. Thomas

“As a dynamic leader in business, higher education, church ministry, civic engagement, and family life, Shundrawn Thomas knows how finding joy in our daily work can impact our personal well-being and professional success. In this enthralling book full of personal experiences and practical insights that come from his Christian convictions, Thomas guides his readers through a process of self-reflection that can transform the drudgery of a job into the joy of a calling that serves other people and gives glory to God.”

—Philip Ryken, president, Wheaton College

Shundrawn A. Thomas is president of a trillion-dollar global investment management business and is a management group member of a leading financial services company. He previously advised institutional equity investors as a vice president for Goldman Sachs and held positions in sales, trading, and research in the fixed income division of Morgan Stanley. He is an engaged civic leader serving as a trustee for Wheaton College and as a board director of the Museum of Science and Industry. He also serves as board governor for the Investment Company Institute.

Thomas is a motivational speaker and lecturer, speaking nationally on topics including professional development, leadership, values, faith, strategy, and finance. He also serves as an elder and board member of his local church. Thomas is happily married and has two sons. In his personal time, he enjoys reading, running, and traveling. He is the author of *Ridiculous Faith: Ordinary People Living Extraordinary Lives* and *Driving Under the Influence: Finding Your Way on the Road of Life*.



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