

# What is meaningfulness?

**F**ramed copies of our mission statement adorn the walls of many offices at UF, and many who work at the University take time to reflect on how well we achieve our mission. Productive careers are relatively easy to quantify: Numbers of graduates employed in their fields of study, numbers at a certain level of leadership or achievement.

But how does one measure meaningful lives? And what, exactly, is meaningfulness? Does it involve one's occupation, or something more?

Authors Charles Christiansen and Elizabeth Townsend note in "An Introduction to Occupation" that a spiritual dimension of occupation involves contemplation to make sense of the larger purpose of life. "Contemplation of one's occupations over time may contribute to a sense of satisfaction about life and the emergence of a satisfactory identity," they write.

Christiansen and Townsend use the word "occupations" in the broader sense; not only the work one does to earn a living, but the ways in which one chooses to spend his or her time.

The pair summarize: "... when Roman poet and philosopher Horace offered the admonition 'carpe diem,' meaning 'seize the day,' he was suggesting something far more than passing time or existing. In rethinking occupation, we can surmise that Horace was recommending that people live life to the fullest by learning about and making full use of occupation as the fabric for experiencing and structuring everyday life."

Typically, people understand the meaning of their lives by considering their occupations — or their works, in the broader sense — as part of their life stories, the authors add.

As people, we all are storytellers, and the stories of many Findlay grads are particularly compelling examples of meaningful lives.

We have chosen to feature a handful of alumni from different majors who have found very different ways of giving their life special meaning — and in so doing, have brought greater meaning and growth and light into the lives of others.

We are sure many other stories we have not yet heard will come to light as a result of this issue. We are also sure that the stories you will read in these pages will make you even prouder to be alumni and friends of The University of Findlay. Enjoy!

**"The mission of The University of Findlay is to equip our students for meaningful lives and productive careers."**

