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Oranges and Towers

What's special about you? What are you uniquely adept at accomplishing? Maybe you can answer instantly, but if you are the typical person, you will answer by telling yourself that there's nothing so very extraordinary about you. But if that's your answer, you've probably missed your calling. Everyone has some God-given calling. It just needs to be identified, and pursued.

Norma Kehrberg tells an amazing story of one young man who thought he'd found his calling and was unstoppable in its pursuit. Felipe was a high wire artist. One day, some years ago, Felipe managed to stretch a wire between two towers on the New York City skyline. Early the next morning, before he could be observed and stopped, Felipe ventured out on the wire, well over 1,000 feet in the air. Cold winter winds whipped the cable, and bright sunlight glared from the sheets of glass on the neighboring skyscrapers, obscuring his vision. Felipe walked hesitantly onto the wire at first, swaying and wobbly. But suddenly, as he successfully walked, one step at a time, Felipe felt his fear begin to subside and the thrill and joy of the walk begin to emerge. To the amazement of the crowd of onlookers and the group of police officers that had gathered, he began to dance. When Felipe reached the end of the rope, he turned and took another turn, and then another and another, happily dancing along his way. He danced seven times back and forth on that wire that morning before jumping into the arms of the waiting police officer at one end of the wire.

Hours later Felipe was facing a judge, and was asked to explain this seemingly foolhardy exploit. "Why did you do it?" the judge asked. And the smiling Felipe replied, "When I see three oranges, I have to juggle. When I see two towers, I have to dance."

On one hand it's certainly hard to defend the risky behavior of Felipe that wintry morning in New York City. But on the other hand, you just have to admire his single-minded determination. Felipe had offered his very best, and in doing so, he found tremendous joy and self-satisfaction. Had Felipe found his calling?

Well, almost. Frederick Buechner says that the place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet. By that definition, Felipe's behavior satisfied the first requirement of a call: he had found his own gladness. But perhaps he missed a bit on the second half of the definition. He probably could not claim to have satisfied a deep hunger of the world.

But the claim of faithful people is that every one of us is called to something, and can fulfill that call. It may not be carried out as flamboyantly as Felipe's dance across the high wire. But maybe it can be even better. Because when we identify our calling it will make our own hearts glad **and** fulfill a deep and serious need in another life.

So what's your calling? We hope you find it, and that even if your feet never leave the ground, you'll dance for joy!