

Halftime Defined

Halftime, rooted in Jesuit education, is the beginning of a life-long search for what is best in you and most rewarding to you so you can give it to others.

Jesuit education: it is nourished by the Ignatian spiritual tradition, a resource accessible to all who study, teach, and work at Boston College.

Beginning: it is an introduction; it is not over at the end of three days and two nights.

Life-long: it needs periodic work: starting now, continuing for the rest of your time at BC, after graduation, and beyond.

Search: you will look for and pay **attention** to things already present within you and in the world but that you do not recognize now or cannot put together yet.

Best and rewarding: you will **reflect** on clues to what makes you unique and what brings you joy.

Give it away: for the immediate and distant future, you will think about ways to share your talents and your **love** with others who really need what you can give.

What gives you joy?

Who are you? What are you passionate about? What excites you? To answer these questions, it might help to ask yourself what have been the “defining moments” in your life? What have been the turning points that shaped who you are? What have been the moments when you made decisions that, consciously or not, have made you the person you are today? Do any of these point to what gives you joy?

Note that we are talking about joy, not happiness. Feeling happy often depends on external things, your physical well-being, the weather, whether you had a good night’s sleep or a good meal. Joy comes from within and has to do with a deep and abiding sense of the rightness, the goodness, the fruitfulness of what you do with your life. It results from the harmony between your ambitions and your achievements. It is a gift that comes from acceptance and patience, from being at peace with the reality that surrounds you, even when that reality calls for change or when it challenges you.

And we are not talking about satisfaction. To be satisfied means to be full, and want nothing more. Joy comes from a quest that challenges you to grow, to learn more, to become more, to give more. Maybe you are good at several things. Which choices will not only use your talents but also stretch them?

No one can answer these questions but you. You can get advice from others, and learn a lot from them, but ultimately only you can say what really gives you joy.

-As presented by Michael Himes in the *Three Key Questions* video

What are you good at?

Do you have the talents to pursue the things that you are passionate about? Maybe it's clear to you that you do. But maybe you don't even recognize the talents that you have. Or maybe you do know some of the things you are good at but you don't think they're important. You don't see them as real strengths.

Unlike the question about what gives you joy, this question can't be answered by you alone. Your talents and skills have been nourished by significant people in your life and by communities you have belonged to, both before you came to BC and since. These relationships constitute a dialogue, a conversation about yourself with people who value you enough to challenge and support you. We seem to need these people and these communities to point out our talents to us, to give us a chance to try out our skills, and to confirm them as strengths when we succeed and even to tell us that we don't have certain talents when we fail.

So one way of answering this question is to ask yourself: Who have been the key people in your life—the relatives, teachers, coaches and mentors who have helped you know who you are and what you can do? Who have been your models? For whom are you grateful when you look at your life? What have you learned from them about yourself and about the talents that are special to you? If someone asked them to describe your strengths and weaknesses, what specific ones do you think they would mention?

-As presented by Michael Himes in the *Three Key Questions* video

Who does the world need you to be?

The novelist and theologian Frederick Buechner describes vocation as “the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” We don’t live for ourselves alone. We don’t invent really big questions and worthy dreams by ourselves; the communities we belong to offer them to us. Only in relationships—and especially when we give ourselves in love to other people, to communities, and to significant ideals—do we really discover the full meaning of our lives. Because you have been shaped by your relationships and by the communities that mark your personal history—your family, your school friends, the people you have met in service programs—you have become part of an ever wider circle of belonging.

To belong is also to take responsibility for and to contribute to the group that has nurtured your ability to donate yourself, your talents, and your time to help other men and women. This can mean sacrifice, or putting aside your immediate convenience or interests to be there for someone who needs you. True, you have an obligation to keep your self-donation truly free, something that you choose to give and not something others impose on you by coercion or guilt. **But finding your true self in this life means matching your gifts with the world’s needs.**

So a crucial third task is to define the horizons that give meaning to your life. Who are the people, what are the ideals, where are the needs that invite you to give yourself to them? Have you begun to identify these in your own life? Do they begin to suggest directions for your future?

-As presented by Michael Himes in the *Three Key Questions* video