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300 Conshohocken State Road, Suite 550 | West Conshohocken, PA 19428  
Tel. 484.531.8380 | Fax 484.531.8382 | [www.templetonpress.org](http://www.templetonpress.org)

## New Survey Data

Graduates nationwide are seeking direction and purpose. According to a new, national survey, 18-24-year-olds say that purpose is crucial to being an adult—but they don't feel like they have it.

More than 86% of young adults say that making decisions in line with their purpose makes them an adult, but only 43% say they have a clear picture of what they want in life... and only 30% know why they are here.

**And this isn't good news.** Coasting is existing, not thriving. For young adults who don't have a clear picture of what they want in life, the majority say they are existing not thriving, while those with purpose are more likely to say they are thriving.

Young adults want to do things that are in line with their purpose and passions, but they haven't figured out what those are yet: Only 36% of 18-24 year olds say that the career path that they have chosen is aligned with their life purpose.

Key findings of this national general population survey of more than 700 adults ages 18-59 include:

- **Meaningful work is more important than salary:** As they head into the job market, 69% of young adults say that they would be willing to take a cut in pay to work at a job that allowed them to focus on more meaningful work.
- **Pursuing your passions matters:** 18-24 year olds are significantly more likely than adults 25 and older to say that their ideal job is one in which they are able to pursue their personal passions, integrate work and personal life in meaningful ways, contribute to society as a whole, and receive good pay.

Among older adults, the #1 piece of advice they would share with their 20-year-old self is to make sure you know your purpose before making big decisions.



**Christine B. Whelan, PhD**, a clinical professor in the School of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, is available for interviews to discuss this new survey data and its implications for graduates and employers.

She is also available to discuss her new book, *The Big Picture*, which is the first small-steps program for young adults to uncover their personal sense of purpose. More information about this book can be found at [TheBigPicture.Life](http://TheBigPicture.Life).



**FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, CONTACT:**

Angelina Horst | 484.531.8380 | [ahorst@templetonpress.org](mailto:ahorst@templetonpress.org)

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