

## What Do I Want to Be When I Grow Up?

by Marilyn Reeves

If I had it all to do all over again, would I make the same mistakes? Would I be able to satisfy that inner voice that keeps urging me to “*Get up! Get out there! Go do that thing you’re supposed to be doing!*”? Would I finally be able to solve the riddle of what “that thing” is?

Like so many girls of my generation, I was programmed to believe that the only worthwhile goal for a woman was to marry the right man, raise a passel of kids, and live happily ever after. Didn’t all the stories we read, all the movies we saw, verify that fact? Would Cinderella have inspired us so passionately had she yearned not for the handsome prince but for a seat in congress?

As a child I also had dreams of being a movie star. I wanted to be Elizabeth Taylor! Lacking her natural beauty, perhaps I could have succeeded in less glamorous roles (think Elsa Lanchester as “Bride of Frankenstein”). But following a performance in a high school play, I was approached by a recruiter from Adams State College, and actually turned down a Dramatics Scholarship, as I wanted to go to the University of Colorado. I wanted to go to the Big School. I was tired of small town limitations.

My parents reluctantly allowed me to attend CU, but were convinced that it was a waste of my time and their money, even though I had been a good student and made good grades.

In their view, the only thing a girl could hope to accomplish was to get her M.R.S. Degree. Had I not been bound by pre-established boundaries, might I have become an actress, a psychologist, a teacher or an architect?

My vision was limited by my upbringing, however, so as prophesized, I married the boy I met in college. But where were the white horses? Where was the “Happily Ever After”? Despite years of trying, and that it gave us our son, the marriage was a failure. And that niggling little voice in the back of my head started whispering, “*This isn’t what you’re supposed to be doing with your life, you’re supposed to ...*” What? Supposed to do what?

Not having identified my evasive calling, my only choice seemed to be secretarial work. It paid the bills, but it wasn’t what I was born to do. Eventually I stumbled into the printing business and a career in typesetting which I enjoyed for the next 20 years or so.

Then that haunting voice in my head started up again, commanding me to “*Find what you’re supposed to do and do it!*” But, to this day, I remain clueless. Whatever it was that I was supposed to do with my life continues to elude me.

Perhaps when I’m lying on my death bed it will come to me, “Ah, yes! THAT was it! That was my calling. How could I have missed it?”

And then fade to black, dreaming of princes on white horses.