

# destiny's child

THERE OFTEN COMES A POINT IN OUR LIVES WHEN IT'S TIME TO reassess where we are professionally. Sometimes because we sense that something is missing—we're not feeling challenged or fulfilled, we're losing our enthusiasm or we're feeling empty inside. Sometimes, external events — like losing a job or having to move — force us to rethink our options. Other times, we're exposed to a new experience that inspires us to aim in a different direction.

Years ago, I became fascinated by the idea that there's an "ideal career" for everyone, but only a small percentage of us manage to find it. I came to realize that for many, true fulfillment only comes after some period of disappointment or disenchantment. All of this happened while I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with my own 9 to 5 life. Although I was president of an advertising agency and was successful by all outward measures, I still felt like something was missing. I began to doubt if I was on the "right path" and if I would ever be truly fulfilled in my current profession.

I questioned people to see if I could find common traits among those who had a real passion for their work. I discovered that the most highly motivated and fulfilled were those who were making use of their natural gifts. In effect, they were working in the career they were born for. For these people, work isn't about money or title, but satisfaction, empowerment, feeling energetic about their work, making an impact, fully exercising a talent and inspiring others.

These were all things that I wanted to get from my work, but wasn't. It was at this time that I decided to go to India. The trip was led by my friend Caroline Boudreaux, founder of the Miracle Foundation, an organization dedicated to helping orphans in India. In this faraway place, away from my everyday routine, I spent 10 days interacting with the orphans — and doing so helped me see my own life with a different perspective. I was struck by how little these orphans had externally, but how much spirit and radiance they had inside. They were truly a joy to be around. In comparison to their circumstances, most of us live like kings and queens. If they could be happy living with the bare minimum, I could afford to take the risk and venture into a different career. The concept was freeing.

For years I had wanted to be an author, but after reaching a level of "achievement" in my field, the idea of change was uncomfortable and seemed threatening to my security and lifestyle. Essentially, I was handcuffed by my success. My experience in India was the final push I needed to make a shift. Upon my return to the United States, I left the agency I had been with for



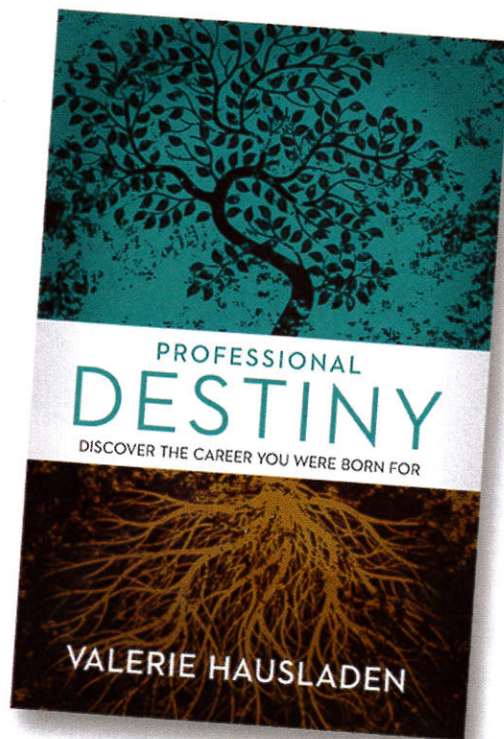
BACK CENTER: VALERIE HAUSLADEN

nearly five years and formed the idea for my book, *Professional Destiny*.

As I wrote in my book: *A job is something we do to earn a living. Oftentimes it is too small for our spirit. Our life's work is a mighty undertaking that challenges us, taps into our creative energy and reawakens our spirit. It is our work with a capital W. Once we start on the path, the urgency of this work is bigger than us. Our passion and creativity are ignited.*

My experience, of course, was unique. In my research, I've found that we all arrive at these types of discoveries and self-realizations in different ways that each of you can too. Now is the perfect time to rethink your own goals and assess the gifts you were born with, so you can pursue a new career that makes you feel energized and alive. The truth is, a time of uncertainty can become our time of greatest opportunity. This is when new doors and new possibilities are open, and we have that added incentive to venture out and try something new.

What is seemingly a hardship could, in fact, become a great opportunity. You can emerge from this on a path headed for true happiness and satisfaction for the rest of your professional life. So really, what are you waiting for? VALERIE HAUSLADEN



Valerie Hausladen is the author of *Professional Destiny: Discover The Career You Were Born For*, now available at BookPeople and Amazon.com. She works with individuals and companies as a professional coach and consultant. Formerly, Valerie was Managing Director of the Austin office of global advertising agency, Enfatico, President of Tocquigny Advertising and a former executive at Dell. For more information, visit [www.professionaldesire.com](http://www.professionaldesire.com).