

What did you want to be when you grew up?

One of the great questions that children are asked when they are young is: "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

When I was really little, I wanted to be Superman and fly around and leap tall buildings, (oh yeah, and save the world, too!). After several injuries to my head from jumping off of furniture and crashing into a locked gate, I realized the impracticality of being such a hero.

Later, with a growing love of music, I thought that I could inspire the world by writing music. I could be someone like Glenn Miller, especially as portrayed by Jimmy Stewart in the movie "The Glenn Miller Story". My favorite scene is where he kept directing his band in the song "In the Mood" through an air raid in London though the crowd scattered. And though I have enjoyed creating music for years, it was not my real future.

I always had an interest in math and science, and I went to college to follow these subjects as a career. Perhaps I could be another Albert Einstein, discovering the secrets of the universe. And I have had a very enjoyable life in this pursuit now for more than 30 years. But I have not significantly enhanced the reservoir of scientific knowledge (even at the level of a peanut, as with George Washington Carver).

As I grew more spiritually in my life, I decided that I wanted to be somewhat like C.S. Lewis, who could help people to think about God in new ways. I guess that I'm still hoping to be of some value in this area, but so far nothing spectacular has happened.

In re-considering the original question, one might ask a follow-up: "How do you feel it all turned out?" My answer would have to be that I have realized that you don't have to influence the entire world to accomplish your goal of what you wanted to be. Not everyone can achieve success on such a large scale. But it might be that in inspiring one particular person to be something greater, you will have just as much real effect.