

If you answered our January survey...hats off to you!



In January, our survey asked how you envisioned your life when you were younger...and how your life has turned out so far. The answers we received were especially heartfelt, open and insightful. So read on, and enjoy our members' thoughts, stories and feelings — in their own words — about where they started out and where they are now.

- When asked what I wanted to be when I grew up, all I ever replied was "I want to be a mommy person". In my small head, doing laundry, cleaning house and preparing sack lunches for my children was the best I could imagine. I did grow up to be a mommy. It truly was the best I could imagine.
- When I was younger, I thought I would be married and be a stay at home Mom like my Mom was when I was little. Instead, I am single and working full-time.
- I envisioned my life much the same as it is. The only thing different was I wanted to be a doctor. I always wanted a big family, own my own home and attend college. I did not become a doctor though.
- I planned to be a high school science teacher, be happily married with two or more children. I'm now in the Finance Department of a large corporation, divorced but with two wonderful, talented children.
- In 4th grade I wrote a paper about how I wanted to be a mechanical engineer designing robots. I am currently a mechanical engineer designing aerospace electrical products, so pretty close. I also wanted to live in the mountains and now I live in Salt Lake City and go rock climbing multiple times every week.
- I envisioned lots of kids but I only have one (fertility challenged) but I did foster many over the years. I planned to be an attorney. I still love to argue but I am not an attorney.
- When I was a child, I thought that life would be easy and fun. I thought that I would marry young, have a good career, and be a great parent. I was unprepared for the loss and disappointment of adulthood. But I suppose I am stronger.
- I was born in Vietnam living there in my early childhood was full of nature wonders. I climbed tropical fruit trees to pick fruits, help my mother raise and feed ducks, collect duck eggs and care for the ducklings. We have a pond in our back yard that my brothers and I would catch fishes and eels, I would hide and skip naps just to hang around outside the back pond. We lived in the suburb of Saigon and our house have just enough land for banana plants and jack fruit trees, just enough to keep my young mind to dream and wonder about nature. But then the Vietnam War and the American involvement ended, it mean Saigon would fall into the communist control. Time for my family to immigrate to the United States looking for a better life! At thirteen I didn't know what does a better life in United States mean? For me in 1975 was a difficult journey to get to the dream land of America, and culture shock, I didn't know a word of English, although I took an English class for a month before I have to leave my home land. We have no money or home, job, but we have security, peace, opportunities and education! There were federal help and good Samaritans that pull us through and gave us a new life in this vast land. My home is the US is very different, all sturdy structure building, carpets and heaters and constant electricity and water plus flushing toilets. My times are now consumed with studying especially English and being indoor watching television. I really did not know what my life would become until I graduated in high school after 5 years being in United States. I knew I love animals and nature and wanted to be a Veterinarian. I graduated at OSU with a BS in animal science, and never find a job that I can use my degree for. So my life turned out average! I am blessed with

good health, husband and children and a comfortable life. But I would have to say no one could have predicted the pattern of accomplishments in my life!

- I wanted to be a singer or teach music at Junior High level now I'm a special ed. teacher teaching k-12
- I thought I would be married with a wonderful husband, and I would be working in law enforcement. My life is very different from what I envisioned. I am single, never married. I left law enforcement because I did not like the way the job made me feel about myself. I now work as a procurement professional in a highly analytical capacity. It probably is a much safer path than being a law enforcement officer. Thank God there are others that are true to the course of law enforcement, to protect and serve. They are brave and I am grateful for them.
- I envisioned myself a broadcaster. It was different due to things I couldn't control.
- It was going to be an adventure and it has been all that and more. I thought that I would set a path and stick to it but that was far from actuality. I learned to be flexible and when opportunities would present themselves if it felt good I would give them a go. There are things I would change if given the chance but for the most part I would not change a thing. I have a wonderful companion, awesome kids and the best grandkids possible. I look forward to more of the same.

I envisioned being a happy and healthy person. Getting married and having children and providing for my children and being as good of a parent (or close to) as my parents were to me. Most of these came through so far.

- As a little girl my dream was to be a wife and mother. Those dreams were fulfilled; however, there were many serious challenges with our oldest child. Then I became a widow at 49 and it became necessary to focus on a career due to financial reasons. My dreams were shattered and life was nothing like I had planned. I had to choose to live and be happy or be miserable. I chose to live well! It took many hours (years) of soul searching and educating myself on grief to find ME. Getting physically healthy, nutrition and exercise are part of my life. Fostering family and friend relationships, increasing my capacity to love and accept people in my life. Opening up to a different life, not the life I had planned, but a happy life.





- Always knew I'd use my back more-so than my brain. And that's pretty much how it went.
- Pretty good thus far!
- I thought that all my brothers and sisters would get married. I am the only one who did!
- When I was younger I wanted to be a doctor, have six children, 5 boys and one girl. I was never getting married as didn't have any positive role models of a "happy" marriage. However, I ended up with 2 girls (childbirth is no joke!), married (happily) for now 37+ years and a 40+ year career in Mortgage Banking. Just a little different:-)

My life is very different from the way I envisioned it, when I was younger. I envisioned myself raising only a daughter by myself, I didn't want to be married, and having a cat or two as pets. Instead, I've been married for over 20 years and I'm a proud mother of 4 boys, and I have an allergy to cats. Go figure, LOL. Nothing like I'd envisioned but I wouldn't trade it for the world.

- I could not envision a future life because all I could consider was my present which I disliked. My life has turned out better than I envisioned because I have always considered what I want I considered important and strived towards those principles (regardless of if they were traditional guiding principles).
- I was going to be an astronaut. Of course back then almost no one encouraged women to go in to the sort of fields needed for that; math and sciences. Later, I wanted to work with animals. I have spent most of the last 40 years working in the exact field I swore I would never work in after hearing my mom complain about it for the years she worked in that field. I would have to say most of my life has turned out very differently than what I imagined it would be when I was a kid.
- I had envisioned a life all about me...doing what I want to do! It's funny that when you have kids that the world completely changes it's rotation around yourself and starts to revolve around others.
- I envisioned myself as a wife and mother but with the option of having a career in case I would need to go to work due to some life changing event ie death of spouse. Wife and mother, yes but I have had to work all of my adult life.

- Then and Now. When I was young, I envisioned all kinds of things from being a Truck Driver, a Chef, Police Officer and working for the CIA. Although I had struggles, including a learning disability, physical and sexual abuse. I loved school but always had terrible grades because I couldn't spell or read books. I could understand the dictionary and encyclopedia. I graduated high school without the ability to functionally read or write. After struggling for years in my 20's, I decided to develop my senses; I attended symphonies so I could learn to hear and listen. I looked at art so that I could see. I learned how to understand/ taste foods, to develop my gustatory sense, I smelled the food when I was eating. I paid attention to smells in my environment including nature and perfumes to develop my olfactory sense. For my kinesthetic sense, it was a more significant issue due to the abuse. However I started receiving massage, Roling, in addition to movement classes and Feldenkrais. For my mind, I attended psychology workshops, I became a certified hypnotherapist, NLP, and new age sociology, and I received sexual abuse and depression counseling. For my spiritual sense I studied religion and mythology (Joseph Campbell), watched PBS and shows related to each subject. Don't tell me you can't learn from TV! Found I could read technical material, so I started reading about all these things I was doing, Art History, Food, Wine, Midcentury Design, psychology. Today I still struggle with my learning disability. BUT, with technology and computers developed in the 1990's, I received my Bachelor's degree (it took ten hard years of full-time work). I have a great job related to one of my childhood dreams and make over the median income in my area. Although I still struggle at work because they don't understand my disability. I've been a National Subject Matter Expert, own a part-time consulting business and have trained internationally. I have an active life, a beautiful home filled with my art collection, an extensive collection of mid-century design. I still attend workshops and watch PBS; to date, I haven't been able read a "book"!

- I've always been an artist, always drawing and painting. I wanted to create art for a living, and have 6 or 7 children, staying home to care for them. We would live in a big house in a small town in the country, ride horses and hike every day. My father made it very clear that art is for a hobby only, and I needed a career. So I went to college to be a veterinarian. It didn't work out, so I took a clerk job and worried about being an old maid - at 20. It wasn't long before I married and started a family. We moved to a small town in Montana, and I had four children before the marriage ended. Raising kids alone is tough, and I had to work to make ends meet. No horses, but we hiked and camped a lot. I still painted and drew, but was told that I would have to give up raising kids if I wanted to be an artist! The kids have grown now. I made mistakes, but they have all turned out well. It wasn't all roses and smiles, but we made it through. I'm a grandma now, still working, still creating art. I did get a teaching degree in Art, but never used it (they are phasing out art and music in schools here). I work at a mental health facility and have worked to get an art program started here. That is slowly coming to fruition. I am hoping to have enough artwork at home to have a show soon. My art is important to me, but so is family. I've managed to embrace both.

I envision myself leading others, helping others, managing my time... life is not quite there yet but this year I am so inspired and have GOALS that will take me to the life I envisioned.

- Sort of similar, but life is decidedly less fabulous. I live in the city that I've always wanted to live in, and I have a lot of good friends and am doing interesting things.
- I envisioned working as a "draftsman" creating buildings on paper. That I would travel the world alone, working long enough to sustain myself and moving on to the next destination.
- I always said that I wanted to be a teacher. My husband is a teacher and so is my son. I have done office work all my adult life. I did attend college.



- My life is very different than how I imagined it when I was younger. At this time of my life when I was younger I pictured I'd be have tenure as an English Professor, still be married, have a house, a dog, etc. Instead I'm a program manager for a real estate firm, divorced, sold the house, and the dog died. Definitely not where I thought I'd be.
- I envisioned becoming a nurse, but thought when I had children I would stay home to parent them. That didn't happen, but they turned out just fine. And I am still working-hopefully another 10 years!
- I always wanted to graduate high school, get a good job, meet and marry my best friend, and have two children. All of these things came to fruition.
- I've always been a big advocate of envisioning what you want to happen. When I was young I dreamed of being a successful worker in my career with a family by the time I was older. I have those things but I will admit the gratification and satisfaction I thought would intrinsically come with those achievements have been less than what I had imagined. It's become more about how to enjoy those aspects of my life more than just having them that makes them worthwhile.
- As a young child I always was the caregiver, to my community, family and friends. I was willing to help at all times. I was a giving child. I'm very observant of all things I could figure out things without a person telling me. As an adult I find out that I'm still the same. I'm still a caregiver to my community, family and friends; the only difference is my giving has increased. I say that because now I'm caring for my co-workers which is great.

Thank you for all your responses. We look forward to hearing from you in our next survey!