

Passions of the Heart

by Beverly Denver

How often we hear the advice, “Follow your heart and success will come.” Sounds right, but for many, the advice goes unheeded, ignored because their current position – even if they don’t like it – guarantees the lifestyle to which we’ve become accustomed.

For others, the wisdom of the words rings true and serves as a bell tone to their callings. They acknowledge who they *really* are and accept their passions (whether it be a talent, a gift or a thing) as clues to what their Creator might have had in mind for them. Soul-searching takes place. New and divergent paths are taken with faith and purpose.

Once upon a time, the women featured in this month’s issue paid attention to the stirring of their hearts. Because they did, their lives and of those they serve have been enhanced immeasurably.

Anita Carman, born in Hong Kong and raised in the 1960s amidst the Communist uprisings, immigrated to the United States in the 1970s to attend college and pursue the American dream. After receiving bachelor’s and master’s degrees, she flew up corporate ladders with ease.

Over time, however, Carman realized something was missing. She began to feel God’s calling on her heart. She knew she was supposed to do something more. Her passionate quest to discover just what that might be led her to seminary and the founding of Inspire Women, a 501(c)(3) corporation. Today, Carman is dedicated to helping women find God’s purpose in their lives. Since its beginnings, Inspire Women has raised over \$1 million to fund scholarships for biblical training and resources for more than 200 women – many who were once physically and/or mentally abused. Turn to page 11 and read more about Carman and the amazing work of Inspire Women.

Sandra Zimmer, a former actress, runs the Self-Expression Center in West Houston. She teaches acting for non-actors, presentation and communication skills. Her business grew out of a passion for the stage, working with people and helping them overcome their fear of public speaking. Students say she gets them in a comfortable place, which allows them to be authentic and come across the way they really are! The results are hundreds of program graduates that know how to connect, captivate and compel attention — true believers who are using newly acquired skills to improve both their personal and professional lives. Turn to page 15 and read more.

Twenty-five years ago, best friends Edith Gilman and Carol Gililand fell in love with Jeep Collins jewelry. The intense feelings and enthusiasm for the precious pieces sparked the entrepreneurial fire that led them to open, Heart’s Delight, a charming little gift shop in Westlake Square. It was on-the-job training for the pair, but year after year, trips to

market in Dallas and elsewhere resulted in a varied inventory of treasures. All gave witness to the fact the team shared more than friendship. Both had a natural eye for beauty and a keen knowledge of the pleasures of their customers. Heart's Delight is a great example of what following one's passion can lead to. Turn to page 19, and read more about Heart's Delight and its simply delightful proprietors.

Jane Luco has always loved music and staying physically fit. She combined those two passions 26 years ago by teaching Jazzercise classes in The Heights. Luco in action is beauty in motion. Positioned on an elevated platform to lead her students through the choreographed routines, Luco dances effortlessly and with heart-felt enthusiasm. All the while, she smiles broadly, makes motivating chatter and slips in jokes that keep everybody on their toes! Turn to page 29, and read Luco's story. Hers just might change your mind about working out and push you off the sofa and into the gym!

Taking a look at women who have given in to the passions of their hearts is a beautiful thing; it's like watching a radiant sunrise in the morning. It brightens the day for all of us!

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