

Wander Woman

How High-Achieving Women
Find Contentment and Direction



MARCIA REYNOLDS

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Chapter 1

The Road to Somewhere

Chapter 1 starts by exploring what differentiates you from the women who came before you to clarify your own needs and desires. The second half of chapter 1 presents real-life quotes and stories to enhance the descriptions of both the light and dark sides of your typical behaviors. There are checklists you can use to determine how much of the Wander Woman archetype is actually in your blood.

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Five factors drive your success in the workplace. On the surface, these drivers define why you are so remarkable and shine above your colleagues. If you aren't careful, these drivers can also lead you to make decisions based on emotional needs instead of on a long-term plan or purpose, leaving you feeling aimless and discontent after a few frenzied decades.

The following checklists will help you determine your areas of vulnerability. *These behaviors can sabotage your goals and dreams.* Claiming these pitfalls will help you overcome or avoid them as you work through the following chapters. Check the ones you have experienced.

#### **Driver 1. Extreme confidence**

*Give me a stick and I'll build you a bridge.*

What is the dark side of being so confident?

- Taking on too many projects then spending all your free time catching up.
- Never prioritizing because every project you do has to demonstrate how great you are. If you are taking on too many tasks, this can be overwhelming.
- Not seeing other possibilities while busily persisting down one path. Because of this, others may accuse you of not being strategic or visionary, which hurts your leadership potential.
- Steamrolling a project because you think you are right without broadly looking at the total impact on everyone involved.
- Risking an addiction to work—more and more, work becomes your priority over family, friends, and health, even when you say this isn't true.



# Chapter 1

## The Road to Somewhere

### **Driver 2. Constant need for new challenges**

*Give me a stick and I'll build you a bridge,  
unless I've already done that, so give me a  
bigger challenge or I'll move on to something else.*

What is the dark side of having a constant need for new challenges?

- Feeling as though you've wasted time figuring out what you want to do.
- Making impulsive job choices based on what you don't want instead of what you want for the future, so some choices are good and some are not.
- Not stopping long enough to enjoy the fruits of success.
- Resenting jobs that started out well but failed to fulfill your needs over time.
- Not staying long enough in a company to earn an executive position where you could make significant changes to improve the organization.

### **Driver 3. A strong drive for recognition based on performance, not on gender**

*Don't do me any favors; just applaud me when I'm done.*

What is the dark side of having a strong drive to be recognized for your performance?

- Appearing insensitive to other people's needs, desires, and solutions.
- Reacting harshly to criticism.
- Others see your persuasiveness as intimidating.
- Holding people to high standards you create without tolerating differences.
- Coming across as argumentative, obstinate, and blunt when disagreeing with others.
- Not listening well unless you really want to.
- Allowing discrimination to continue if it's not stopping your progress.



# Chapter 1

## The Road to Somewhere

### **Driver 4. Work is your life's blood**

*Retire? Never. I love knowing the world needs me.*

What is the dark side of making work your life's blood?

- Desiring peace of mind and balance but never creating the space for it.
- Being seen as arrogant instead of confident and self-serving instead of bighearted.
- Disconnecting with life outside of work.
- Caring so much about immediate results that you lose sight of the big picture.
- Able to deal with setbacks but not failures.

### **Driver 5. Experience is the best teacher**

*Kick me down, I'll bounce back up.*

*But that will never happen again.*

What is the dark side of learning the hard lessons at work?

- You are shocked by office politics and then only see the negative aspects of people's behavior instead of trying to understand what drives them to act the way they do. Your disillusionment keeps you from trying to work out differences. You would rather just leave even if you don't have a plan for where you will go next.
- You have difficulty recovering from being laid off, removed from a position, or placed in a position you don't want.
- You need reflection time to best understand what is going on within an organization. Because you love to stay busy, you may not get the quiet time you need to thoroughly think through complex situations.
- You may not seek or accept help and advice when offered. This could lead you to misread people's motives. You may learn from your mistakes, but you could avoid some of the problems if you accept guidance more often.

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## Chapter 2

### The Burden of Greatness

Underneath this restless pursuit of new challenges is the feeling that there is always something more to do. You meet a goal beyond expectations and then immediately say, "What's next?" In chapter 2, I explore my personal experience with this phenomenon and how it played into the darkest period of my life. Then I share questions you can ask yourself to keep from carrying this burden in the future. You can live in harmony with your urge to wander and even use it to define your future if you better understand the source of your impulses.



Today's high achievers are brought up not only to be good, but also to believe they should be superstars at anything they choose to do. Because this goal is just as hard to define as it is to achieve, their restlessness rarely subsides. Even if they are aware of this phenomenon, they have to be continually alert to avoid succumbing to their overachieving habits which tax their health and peace of mind.

In order to overcome my own burden of greatness, I have to continually explore the dark side of my upbringing by asking myself some very difficult questions. When I find myself working too hard and filling in my free time with tasks or planning what comes next, I ask myself:

*Who would I be if I were to stop everything and give voice to my heart? What have I imprisoned that wants to be free?*

*Would I cease to exist if I didn't do everything? Who will I then be?*

*How can I be "ordinary" in some parts of my life without feeling like I've given up?*

*Is there a way to enjoy my restless rumblings without sacrificing love and peace of mind?*

These questions, and others like them, have initiated powerful discussions for my clients as well as for me.