

## MY UNEXPECTED CAREER

Betty Rothenberg

A television professional shares the secret of her success.



### Still Don't Know What To Be When You Grow Up?

**Not to worry.** A career path is not always in a straight line. Like a piece on a board game, there are times you may go back to square one. **Enjoy the journey!**

### Getting Started

For career guidance, visit the West Virginia University web site:

<http://www.wvu.edu/~careers/>. You'll discover articles and links that answer questions and guide your decision-making process.

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There are lots of ways of getting through a career. You can start in one direction and end somewhere entirely unexpected. You might not even know you want to end up where you do, but you're happy with the way things worked out.

I studied art, literature, and French in college. It was beautiful. I took education classes and was preparing to teach in high schools. Yet, when I did my student teaching, I realized I didn't want to teach for the rest of my life. Instead, I headed to New York and adventure.

Once in Manhattan, I found a job as an assistant on a public TV show. When that job was done, I networked and worked, networked and worked. In each place, I learned new skills, advanced as a TV production professional and got to know people all around New York. I joined the Directors Guild of America and worked on public television shows, soaps, a sit-com, a variety show, and a talk show.

After eight years in New York, I moved to Los Angeles. Starting over in a new city, I called everyone I knew and didn't come up with great jobs.

A year at the American Film Institute confirmed that I liked the immediacy of video. Landing a job on a daytime drama, I started as a production associate, moved to associate director, and eventually directed numerous episodes of the program. Working with the same crew and staff for many years was very satisfying. The show did well; I received 10 Emmys as a member of the Directing Team.

I've stayed with my network employer and moved into a totally new phase of TV production: digitally restoring and revising old shows to today's technical standards.

There was no way I could have envisioned this path for myself. When I was a kid, I watched TV and movies and never saw myself working a lifetime in the field. But, as I said earlier, you never know where you might end up if you're open to ideas and new adventures. I hope you're as lucky as I.