

Superhero

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I've come to the crossroads and made a crucial life decision! I'm going to become a Superhero! I recognize, now, that all my life I've had this basic desire but I lacked the maturity to refine my ambitions sufficiently.

After all, our goals must be specific in order to be achievable. My earliest recollections of the recognition of my calling involved becoming a cowboy. Of course, I wasn't going to be one of those cowboys who actually worked with cows. I was going to be one of those cowboys who shot bad guys and got kissed by sweet girls. I would have a white horse and wear two guns on my gun belt. I would be the unquestioned fastest gun in the West and no one would have the nerve to challenge me except those bad guys. Those bad guys, being bad, possessed every undesirable trait imaginable including stupidity and ignorance. That's why they wouldn't know better than to go up against me.

I don't remember experiencing any trauma over the realization of the non-corporeal status of Santa Claus. I don't even remember a moment of that realization. But I still have a faint taste of the bitter disappointment that slowly settled in as I grudgingly and slowly digested the reality of the passing of the old west. Fords and Chevys were ambling down the streets of Laredo and any cowpunchers who may have been spied there weren't even armed. Yippee kiyiyo, indeed!

While my disillusionment faded, my real calling occurred to me. I was going to be an All-Star baseball player! I didn't know which position would be my regular one since I'd be able to play any of them at a Hall of Fame level. Being a catcher didn't look too appealing since you had to wear a mask, squat all the time and you hardly got to move around unless you got a hit. Then, you probably couldn't run as fast as the rest of the guys. This probably had something to do with all the squatting. Besides, some of the catchers in the league were kind of chubby or less than dashing in other ways – like the Yogi Berra way. Fortunately, I was left-handed so I

had a ready made excuse not to catch (even though I could have been an All-Star there, too). Major League baseball managers didn't put lefties behind the plate.

I wasn't greatly deterred from my baseball destiny when my little league manager pulled me from my spot in right field (little league's distant outpost for the least gifted athlete on the team) because he was afraid I'd get hit with the ball and get hurt. The manager was a poor judge of talent. I could forgive him because this wasn't his full time job. He worked as a car salesman during the day and couldn't be expected to fully understand the nuances of the great game. My vision did begin to blur somewhat when I became more interested in football. At first, I didn't see any problem with playing both baseball and football. Since baseball was my first love, football would have to wait until baseball season was finished before I reported. This could be particularly vexing during our World Series years since I wouldn't be able to report until October, but all would be reassured after my heroics rescued my football team from early confusion and uncertainty and led them to the NFL Championship. As I mentally prepared myself for my life's work, I began to have some questions about whether I really could star in both sports and, if I couldn't be a star, why participate? I agonized over the choice and how best to gently let the officials, participants and enthusiasts of the losing sport down.

Before the dilemma could cause me any psychic damage (or, maybe, further psychic damage), puberty struck! This bestowed upon me a more mature and realistic vision of my place in the future. I would be James Bond! It was so obvious! I was born for this – stamped from Bond's exact mold. I could appreciate fast sports cars and glamorous women. It was pitiful that so many others in the world lacked the taste and refinement and settled for so much less in life. It was just a matter of time. High school and college had to be endured, then several years of work. Degrading as this may have been to a man of my cloth, my urbane, worldly outlook gave me the vision to recognize that I needed to establish a place in the world where I could become celebrated. My super hero voyage was still on course.

Then it came – in a most unexpected and unplanned-for way. I got married and raised four children. It took me some years to realize that I had attained my goal. But, as many of you will understand, I truly did. What greater appellation exists than DADDY?! Still, now that the youngest has left the nest, I can't wait to get my cape!

Steve Alm moved from Pennsylvania ten years ago chasing his four children who all lived in the Carolinas. He has lived on Hilton Head for 3 years.