



Diamonds in the Dust

(the labyrinth of identity and calling)
by Mary Scott

“Oh God, please don’t make me be a secretary!” I prayed miserably as I stared out of the window one grey Oxford day in 1984 in my last year of college.

This was the start of a 20 year journey through a wilderness, or to use another metaphor, through a labyrinth - of uncertainty, confusion, low self-esteem and a belief that (as I said in grief and frustration to my husband a few years later) “God doesn’t *believe* in me!” It was a deep heartfelt cry... what was God calling me to, did He really care? Did it matter to him? Surely He must want to give me something to do that He could use for His kingdom and His world?

...not that there is anything wrong with being a secretary ... (for someone who is *called* to it!) But it just didn’t suit *me*. I was a really good Secretary/PA, and was offered many jobs, so surely I should have gritted my teeth and got on with it, as it was a “talent” (that shouldn’t be buried)?? The work just left me dull, tired and uninspired....deep down I felt I was *designed* for something else.

Death of a Dream

School wasn’t really that interesting to me – I worked hard and got good grades, but it was what I did in the playground and the back garden or friend’s sitting room at any and every opportunity that *said more about me*: inventing imaginary scenes and characters, creating and putting on plays and shows, when others were doing sports or playing games I was singing with friends or practicing dances From the age of 4, I had started training to be a ballerina and became fixated on this as a career. By 17 I was at a very good standard, until one day my back suddenly gave way (which turned out to be an inborn hip defect). In one fell swoop my dream was dead, and just after that time I became a Christian and so I didn’t grieve, I stoically accepted all, because surely God was guiding me, and who was I to defy Him? (and, anyway, the arts are not a *proper* job or very spiritual are they?...) However, the nagging artistic instinct and expression never left me and so over my student years and beyond I was in turmoil and confusion, even though I had a **vision** for the influence of the arts based on a Christian worldview penetrating our culture to change it and people’s lives.... But the suppressed grief at the death of my dream was starting to manifest and it was *protracted and painful!* Over ten years later whilst living in Canada, I discovered that the childhood fixation on ballet had become idolatry and the inability to stop grieving and let go was because of that “hook” in my soul. Once I repented, I was free of the grief and fixation and was able to hear God speak....

What? Me?!

Now I don’t normally hear the audible voice of God, but this was as close as it ever came... He told me to study theatre – at the age of 33! I laughed, a bit like Jesus’ mum, partly out of incredulity “What?! *Me* train as an actor? Are you kidding?!” , partly in fear (the acting course with the Christian Theatre company where we were based in Canada was renowned for it’s toughness and for sorting the “wheat from the chaff”), and partly in excitement.... because even as a child, I had not been so far off track after all, I had been in the right camp site - just pitching the wrong tent! I loved every minute of the training and discovered a whole side to me (and God!) that I didn’t know existed....

This was the start of a long process into coming into my calling. It involved more trips into the wilderness, but I was comforted that all the best people in the Bible went through the desert before getting going! After I finished my theatre training, my husband and I had to return to the UK, and due to difficult life circumstances and pressures I lost sight of everything again and sank back into my comfort zone. I became a “temp” in London and became dull and unfruitful again. Once again questions rose up: what was God calling me to? I recognised that I had many “strands” in my personality – I was a very capable organiser, administrator and facilitator, but I loved the arts – singing, dancing, (latterly) acting and I had a vision for this for the Kingdom. I also had a teaching passion, to develop other’s potential and help them flourish in their calling, particularly artists. None of these seemed to fit together! I thought you could only do *one* thing! I had plenty I could do well, but left me cold, and the things I felt I wanted to do I didn’t feel confident to do because of lack of self-belief and understanding of God and his ways, his kindness and *how* He equips us!

Diamonds are forever

Back in the Canada days I had a picture of a big, beautiful diamond with many facets, and it was turning slowly and so catching the light on different facets. It was wonderful and I knew it represented how God has created us – with many facets to our individual identity. I understood that our individual calling was inextricably linked to that. I also understood that as the facets turned to the light they were brilliant and beautiful but it did not mean that those facets in the shade *did not exist!* They were either hindered from coming to the light or not ready yet....Around the same period of time my husband and I were based at YWAM and received some teaching on calling and identity, and were given a book written by a man who designed a unique way for people to find who they really are, how they are “designed” and therefore how that is connected to the way God will call them. It was called SIMA (System for Identifying Motivated Abilities) and the book talked about the biblical foundation for calling – with a focus on how God has put in us a motivational “DNA” so to speak ... things that drive us, fire us up, make us tick and motivate us (regardless of whether we actually know God or not!), and how God placed these in us to give us a purpose and calling in life that we can find fulfilling and fruitful, not just focusing on duty and obligation! I was so excited by this concept that it never left me....

Lost and Fruitless

Meanwhile, back in London, typing letters and answering telephone calls, I was miserable and had completely lost vision and was not feeling confident enough to continue what had started in Canada. More importantly, I had a passion to “make a difference” in the world, through my own abilities, but didn’t know what to do or how. I was (- still am) a useless evangelist even getting the chance or courage to talk to people about my faith out of the blue is hard enough, let alone “leading people to the Lord”!!! – this left me feeling really guilty and useless for His kingdom.

It was at our local church one day in 1997 that our Pastor stood up and said “Today I want to talk about loss of vision” – within 30 seconds I was flat on my face weeping... all the vision from those early years flooding back into my mind. This was the start of a long slow process of recovery. It was about 5 years before I could begin to call myself an “actress” or “theatre practitioner” with confidence – I didn’t have to prove some special “talent”, be famous or give evidence of some special qualification, but because it was part of God’s calling on me and that was qualification enough. Of course I had to train my “talent” – it wasn’t a case of sitting back and saying “OK I’ve got it now”... there’s no doubt that with our 1 or 2 or 10 talents we have to *multiply* them by training, exercising and developing them! Wonderful opportunities started to present themselves which I had to proactively grasp hold of – training students, acting in productions, writing and directing professional work for the first time.

And when the going got tough I had to actively resist retreating back into my comfort zone...

Created for His purposes

“In my innermost being you created me, you knit me together in my mothers womb” Psalm 139

In 2004, through a number of God-directed circumstances I was able to make contact with the people who designed this wonderful “SIMA” process to help people find their identity and calling. I took the opportunity to train as a coach in order to help others, and so my sense of calling was complete. It is very satisfying to see the excitement and release that people feel when they discover that who they are is not just validated but was *created* by God for His purposes and for their fulfillment!

Mary Scott is an acting coach, actress and director as well as a licensed and certified coach in career and personal development with the SIMA® (Who do you think you are?®) process, and has been working with people aged 17 to 74 from Austria, Switzerland, Germany, UK and the US as well as companies and churches. She now lives with her husband, Danny and cat, Emily, in the West Midlands.

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