

Beverly Stanley

“ Sometimes it is like being a little kid again and asking yourself, What should I be when I grow up? ”

BEVERLY J. STANLEY
Graduate Student

Graduate student Beverly Stanley has dedicated herself eventually to earning a Ph.D. in psychology, a personal goal requiring almost as much traveling as class time. Currently, she commutes twice a week from Lemoore to California State University, Fresno to work toward her master's degree.

As a reentry student, the 35-year-old Stanley has had to divide her time between her graduate studies and her home life. Having been married for 17 years and having a 16-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son, Stanley has frequently had to schedule her academic program to accommodate her family's needs. She plans, for example, to wait a year after completing her master's degree before moving somewhere to start her doctoral work at another university so that her daughter can finish high school. "My daughter's senior year is a very important time for her, and I don't want to take her out of high school before she graduates," says Stanley. She continues, "But, the following fall semester, I hope to enter a Ph.D. program in developmental psychology. My daughter will be going on to college at that time, and my husband will be retiring after 20 years in the Navy. It will be a better time for the whole family to make the big move."

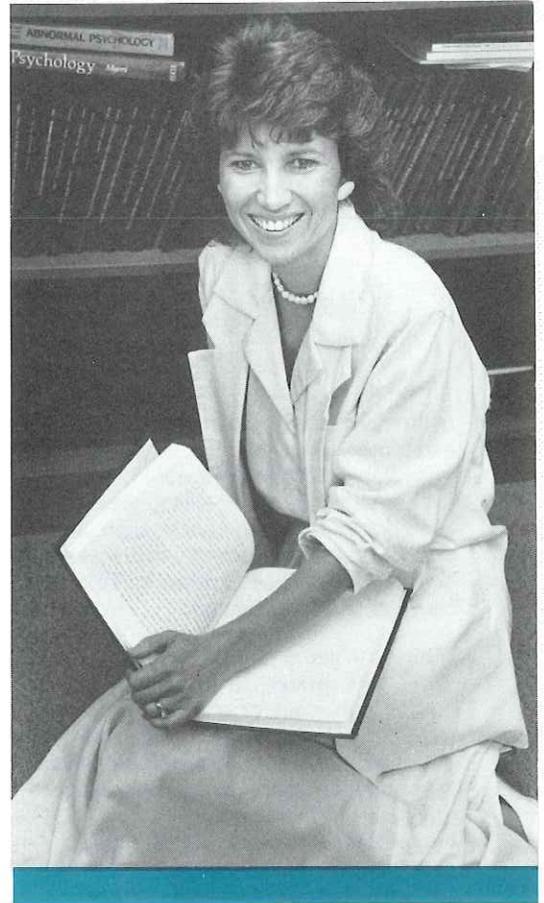
Stanley married immediately after graduating from high school — where, she confesses, "I never tried to do well, but I still received good grades." Previously, in elementary school, she had been placed in a group designed for slow readers, making her feel that "I must not be very smart. I labeled myself (not so much that other people did it) a failure, believing I couldn't compete. That belief stuck with me for a very long time."

Stanley ventured into higher education in

1980, while her husband, a Navy man, was stationed in San Diego. "I started with a course in American history, and I earned an A in it," she says. "I was surprised that I could do well. Something snapped inside me and I said, "I know I can do this."

Stanley earned an Associate of Arts degree at West Hills Community College in Coalinga, California. And upon graduation, she received recognition from the Social Science and the Humanities divisions for her outstanding academic achievement. The 66-mile roundtrip to Coalinga started her many years of commuting for her education, which has continued on to CSU, Fresno. "I have never been able just to go down the street for my college education. I've always had to drive a long ways," she says. "I'm used to it." Living in Lemoore, Stanley regularly logged 85 miles roundtrip to CSU, Fresno for three days each week. She estimates that she has driven about 70,000 miles pursuing her college education. In 1985, she earned her bachelor's degree from the university, receiving the prestigious Dean's Medal from CSUF's School of Natural Sciences. As that school's outstanding graduate, Stanley achieved a 3.96 cumulative grade point average. She also was the recipient of the Dr. E.V. Tenney Outstanding Graduate Senior Award from the psychology department.

Nowadays, besides being a graduate student, Stanley teaches three Extension Program classes for West Hills Community College. Before that, Stanley was head teaching assistant at CSU, Fresno for Psych. 10 (Introductory Psychology) laboratories. From that experience, she became interested in teaching psychology at the university level. "I love communicating ideas to other people, and I try to challenge them to grow intellectually," she says.



In what area of psychology are you most interested?

I have specialized mainly in developmental psychology. I became interested in developmental psychology as an undergraduate when I did an independent study on social cognition with Dr. Joel Grossman. Social cognition refers to an individual's understanding of social situations. I am interested in children's conception of friendship. For example, a 5-year-old child often sees a friend as just a momentary playmate, while a 12-year-old may see friendship as a long term relationship that requires time, effort, and commitment.

What's the focus of your research?

Most of my research has been done in the area of competition and cooperation. Initially, I worked with a group of graduate students, CSUF faculty members, and several developmental psychologists from the Child Development Project in San Ramon, California. We wanted to look at the differential interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes for elementary students working in a highly competitive school system versus a school system that stresses cooperative learning activities. We specifically examined cooperative/