

Lisa Katleman is a junior majoring in psychology. She originally is from Omaha, Nebraska, but she traveled and worked for over ten years before entering college. She transferred to Reed as a sophomore from a California community college. She works with autistic and drug-affected preschoolers, an experience that may become the basis of her thesis topic next year.

"I came to Reed after many years of the Real World. I'm 31, originally from Omaha, Nebraska. Right out of high school, I moved to Dallas, where I got a job at Neiman-Marcus, selling ladies' handbags. I was one of their top salespeople. Now, they're not purses—don't ever call them a purse. I was selling \$1500 handbags. Then I moved to L.A. and got involved doing commercials. I said annoying things for a lot of money like, 'Welcome to McDonald's, may I help you?' I did commercials for Burger King, for American Airlines (I was a stewardess in training), and I worked for a cut-rate furniture warehouse, the kind where the commercial only comes on late at night. They bouffanted my hair, put me in a silk dress and pearls, and I talked about these cheap couches they were trying to sell. It was during a taping of 'Divorce Court' that I realized there had to be something else. I auditioned for a part on 'Silver Spoons' to play Ricky Schroeder's girlfriend, and I'm thinking, 'I'm 23, I'm supposed to play 14.' I started to read and the phone rang; the producers stopped the audition, and at that moment I decided, I hate this. There's something else inside me. I don't know what it is, but I'm going to find it. I stood up and walked out the door.

"At first, I attended a community college, did really well, and I was getting ready to transfer to a state school when my sister said, 'No, you should try for a tough school.' I thought, they're just going to laugh; I'm from a community college, and I'm old. But she convinced me to give it a shot. I had heard about Reed from an English professor whose parents wouldn't let her attend in the '60s, because it was supposed to be a hotbed of free love. Every time I heard from Reed, there was such a sense of humor, individuality, even self-mockery, and that really appealed to me. Every time I talked to somebody from Reed, I came away smiling. I wanted a place where my ideas would be accepted and where I wouldn't be

ridiculed for being a woman, or older. At Reed there's nothing to hold you back. I think precisely because Reed allows so much freedom and doesn't place restrictions on you, you are forced to create your own expectations and, of course, they're always going to be higher than anyone else's.

"Reed was a very different challenge from my life of going to auditions, not saying a word, biting and smiling and getting thousands of dollars to bite and smile the right way. I realize now that I never really read anything until I was 27. I was awed by my classmates here. The first paper I wrote was on Mary Wollstonecraft, and it was an answer to Rousseau, who was not very kind to the feminine gender. I wanted to write about the duality of two different voices and to interject my own. I cried in my closet for 45 minutes, because I just didn't know how to say it. My professor, who himself graduated from Reed in three years, joined the Peace Corps in Africa and taught physics in French, even though he knew no French and little physics—an amazing man—guided me through that dilemma. He was a tremendous influence, asked questions in a way that made me go in directions I'd never considered, challenged me in ways that made the solutions my own.

"Now I am a psychology major and proud of it. I teach once a week in an integrated classroom with 'normal' children, autistic children, and drug-affected crack kids from three to five years old. I just adore these kids. Even though they may be severely messed up, I have the opportunity to help them develop some skills, and even more, to teach them how to interact with other people.

"Student Services at Reed has a lottery sign-up for the Portland Symphony. I won two tickets last year and got to see Joshua Bell play the violin. When he finished, I realized I had been holding my breath throughout his performance. Since then, I have become a member of



the Portland Symphony. I also attend as many 'Friday at Four' concerts at Reed as I can, where students perform classical music in the chapel. It's a great way to end the week.

"My story is sort of like 'The Making of an Intellectual,' even though I don't consider myself an intellectual. Coming to Reed was a second shot at creating the kind of life I really wanted. I've learned I can speak my mind, and I do so at every opportunity. I will leave Reed

with the ability to express myself no matter what the cost. And there is a cost in speaking up every time; it's a little scary. But I find that at Reed, if you work hard, there are all kinds of rewards."