

When I set up my loom, I typically put on a lengthy warp for yardage. I never have a goal for that yardage, just that I like to weave, and if I'm going to go through the warping process, I might as well have lots to actually weave. In the weaving community, setting up the loom for 5 scarves is about the same effort as setting up the loom for one scarf. Weavers always think in multiples.

And I don't have a plan. Inspiration comes from many sources, like a bale of blanket selvages from the Pendleton Woolen Mill I procured while on a tour during a weaving conference in Oregon. I look at raw material, or potential raw material and wonder what I can do with it. And then, once I weave it, the finished yardage becomes a new raw material that I will eventually turn into something else, usually a garment.

Occasionally I'm given yarn for a challenge, as I was in 2008 for a design challenge/collaboration for Convergence Handweavers Conference in Tampa, for the Handweavers Guild of America. I love those kinds of challenges, the parameters are really tight, and I have to be very creative within those tight parameters.

The metallic top, and subsequent vest from the leftovers, was a commission from many years ago. The client, (my mom), gave me a bag of yarn she bought for knitting and decided she would never use it and asked me to weave her something. Many years later, the top came back to me as all things do from a parent.

Because I never have a plan for what I weave, I use all the yarn I have pulled for that specific yardage and that often determines how much I weave. Typically, I have lots of yardage leftover, which allows me to use the remainder for either another garment, or an endless supply of tote bags, zippered bags, small gift items, to sell at my weaving guild's annual sale. Cloth is cloth and using up all of an 8-10-yard length of yardage gives me great satisfaction.

-Daryl Lancaster