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When I had my son, work balance became a challenge for me. I quit my job and became a stay-at-home mom. That lasted ten months. It wasn't for me. My husband was a history professor, and I was watching him pursue his passion.

The nexus of these two things was that I came to The PhD Project conference. I got a front row experience of what it meant to be a professor. I realized that I could do it – and that I probably would. There had been a ticker tape in the back of my mind for some time – get a Ph.D. When my son was born, the ticker tape moved to the front and became a flashing neon sign.

I had been doing well as a consultant. It was five years since I'd been in a classroom. So I had to unlearn things, and accept that as a doctoral student I would be going to the bottom of the totem pole for a while.

Now that I am a professor, this side of it is so sweet. It is my calling. I love to share and connect with people. I present them with a different version of academia: it challenges the paradigms to have a Black female teach a course that had typically been taught by a white male.

I enjoy the career counseling and life coaching I offer to the students. They have been known to line up outside my door during office hours.

Looking ahead, I want to mentor undergraduates, MBA students and doctoral candidates. And of course I want to master the art of publishing, publishing, publishing. I focus on management (organizational behavior) and my research examines how people are made to feel valued as members of a team and how to engage those who feel marginalized.

Becoming a professor was an opportunity for me to be who I authentically am. All of me is accepted and valued. I don't have to wear a mask. I can freely study topics that I believe will help bring justice to all people.

And the lifestyle is fantastic. My husband and I have lunch together twice a week on the same campus!