



What do you consider your greatest accomplishments (both personally and professionally)?

I definitely have much to be grateful for, however personally, I consider raising both my son and daughter, as a single mom without their father's involvement as my greatest accomplishments. Not only in the nurturing and caring of them, but even I am amazed with the fortitude and courage that I possessed during their development, overcoming some of life's hardships (e.g., two divorces, domestic violence, and devastating financial setbacks.) As I watch them pursue their dreams, my son a PhD candidate in Bio Medical Sciences and my daughter an undergraduate studying Cell Molecular Biology. Statistics tell us that they should not be where they are, however they've beat the odds and although, I think they are a bit smarter than I am, I am very proud.

Professionally I consider my education as my greatest professional accomplishment. I was awarded a BBA in Business Administration, MA in Human Behavior and completed graduate coursework in both Education and Criminal Justice-Law. I have over 25 years of work experience in five different industries. My education opened many doors of opportunity and promise for me, especially during times of hardship. I was often able to re-enter the job market without compromising my skills and abilities.

I realize that many people are "successful" without college degrees; however, in the enormity of this global economy, they are the exceptions to the rule. According to National Center for Education Statistics, "[College enrollment was 20.4 million in fall 2013, which was 3 percent lower than the record enrollment in fall 2010.](#)" On a positive note, student retention and graduation is on the rise across the board.

How did you become interested in your field and what do you enjoy most about your current position?

Without sounding too cliché, I've always had a compassion toward helping others, but my first love has always been business. As an entrepreneur, my interests emerged by way of volunteerism, education and experience. Over the years, I volunteered for several agencies coordinating health fairs, training as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), mentoring incarcerated single moms and girls aging out of foster care, being a union representative and co-instructor for freshman success courses. Nevertheless, it was during periods of unemployment that I became most resourceful.

I have a very eclectic background and a wealth of experiences. While attending Woodbury University, I had great dorm mates from New York, Africa and California who encouraged me to become a professional model. I did just that, runway, television on the Grammy's twice and editorial. In 2004, I found and operated *Consumer Complaint Mediation Service* assisting consumers resolve consumer complaints, workplace grievances, minor slip and falls, contract negotiations and settlement agreements with national insurance companies. Again, my current business as the *Single Parent Counselor* originated out of adversity. After my diagnosis with PTSD, I developed an outlet as an author, which allows me to combine my practical skills and creativity. In 2009, I authored, *The Myth of the Broken Home-Guidebook for Single Parents*. However, when parents, educators and organizations sought my services I realized I could transition out of a daily 9-5 and make a significant contribution as a speaker and life strategist in a niche market that most of America remains oblivious of. I believe in my parenting formula and I practice "preventative parenting" with simplicity, and usability. What I enjoy most about my current position is the idea that I can make this business about other people.

Do you think your time at Woodbury helped you to pursue this? If yes, how?

I definitely believe Woodbury helped me pursue my career endeavors. I attended Woodbury when public universities were the only affordable option for students of my socio-economic status. After graduating high school, I received a scholarship to attend San Diego State University but was intimidated by the size of the campus. I was attracted to Woodbury because it's private, intimate environment. Before I arrived, I was unaware of its diversity and inclusivity, a school much more progressive with this model over 25 years ago. The more I learned and engaged with other students, the more I appreciated the university. I attended a predominantly black high school, in a lower socio-economic community in San Diego, so I found it refreshing to be amongst students comprised of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, from different countries, demonstrating their cultures through dress, religion and ideology.

As a freshman, Woodbury provided me with invaluable student experiences. Being away from a secure home, alone for the first time, forced to make my own decisions, Woodbury provided a secure environment for me during this critical period in development. I developed extraordinary leadership skills because of the small class sizes, collaborative learning teams, one on one attention from professors and being able to live and work on campus.

What have been the biggest challenges in your career? Did your experiences at Woodbury help you to overcome those obstacles you've faced?

I am a black woman and a survivor of domestic violence. However, being a single mom has been one of the biggest challenges in my career and I'm still trying to catch up. There were few concessions as a single mom in private industry. Although I possessed more experience and education, than most of my colleagues, as head of household, I always earned less than men and married women. After the domestic violence, I felt ostracized from the workplace, and being a single mom was one of the primary reasons I left corporate America and returned to work at San Diego State University. I felt this was the only place where I could work part-time to drop off and pick up my children from school, receive decent wages, medical benefits and help my son financially through college.

It was my experiences at Woodbury that nurtured my individuality and leadership abilities, through interacting with a very diverse student body early in my adult life. I learned tolerance and what it means to commit to fair non-discriminatory practices.

In what ways has your Woodbury experience made you who you are today?

My experiences at Woodbury helped to create the lifelong learner and the independent thinker that I am today. When I left Woodbury to return to my hometown I didn't hesitate to return to school and complete my studies. I searched for a similar university, private and intimate, and I found National University. Many people are unaware but at the time, National University refused to accept students under the age of 25 and without extensive work experience. They requested that I test, and retain three letters of recommendation from people in business community to prove that I was mature enough to complete their rigorous program. It was because of my success as a student at Woodbury and a letter from a former supervisor on campus that I was accepted. I am equally devoted to the highest standards of excellence.

What advice would you give to younger alumni or current students who aspire to follow a similar career path?

Young alumni and current students, as a *discipulus* your education is a down payment towards your future regardless of whether you seek self-employment or decide to work for someone else. It is one of the most rewarding investments you can make in your life. It will take more than just intelligence to achieve your goals, but also mental and sweat equity. Here's my advice:

- 1) Never allow negative situations or people define your present or your future.

- 2) Build a community of friends, family, mentors, business partners who are interested in your success and will surface when you need them.
- 3) Give back to your community and it will reciprocate.
- 4) Find something positive to learn in every situation. Find a trusted individual to vent your frustrations to, when you are done, move on.
- 5) Remain curious and always seek knowledge.
- 6) Challenge yourself to dig deep and don't allow complacency to take a hold of your life.
- 7) Think outside the box. Think bigger than the box. Create your own box.
- 8) Yield to and respect the opinions of others who do not understand or agree with your ideas.
- 9) Embrace your individuality and do not compare yourself to anyone else, this will keep you humble in times of greatness.
- 10) Look and learn from great mentors and leaders, but nobody can do you as well as you can. You are the best version that you have to offer.
- 11) Maintain a healthy balance and take a 360 approach towards wellness. When life gets too overwhelming, don't be afraid to talk to someone, take a break and jump back in the game.

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