

Vidya Satya

Rise and shine, Vidya Tandra Satyanarayana

Just five years ago, I was a mom struggling to land a job after a decade-long break from the workforce. It was never easy, but now that I look at my struggles, it was all worth it. As a stay-at-home mom turned IT professional who manages teams across the world, I'm here to share my story to let the fellow moms and aspiring women know that if I can do it, you can do it too! It's a challenge to get back to workforce if you had a break in your career. Have you heard this phrase before? If you nodded yes and think that's true, let me tell you it's not. With the right attitude and the right tools, nothing is impossible.

When I decided to get back into the workforce, I wanted to carve my path to success and create an identity for myself. The intention I set for myself became clear: to be financially independent, to support myself, help others when possible, and experience joy through the I started my journey back into the workforce, explored all my options. My background was not in information technology IT and I wanted to get into IT. That's a big challenge on its own. Now, combine it with a decade break, a new country, unfamiliar faces, and my introvert personality, and the challenge becomes even more complex. Instead of freaking out, I kept my focus. on my intention reminded myself to take things one step at a time. First step I spoke with my family and friends, people who knew me well.

The more conversations I had, the more clarity I got on what I should do. Based on the data collected from all my interactions, I registered for online courses to help me understand the various roles I could pursue. I finished many projects around the work with the constructive feedback I got from my teachers. I loved it. It helped me understand the areas I was lacking and how to. As I said, the process was not easy, but it was so worth it. As a mom with a little kid, there were days when I would work on my projects after he went to bed. I hoped to get feedback back from the project reviewer before my toddler woke up, so I could work on the feedback.

I remember when I passed a specific project and earned the nano degree certificate; I got the email at around 2 a. m. and wanted to scream and celebrate, but my son was sleeping in the next room. I celebrated very calmly, and it was such a happy time for me to accomplish something I worked so hard for. It was the fruit of all my hard work and persistence; despite the many challenges and hurdles there were times I gave up. That's the truth. But I would restart again in a day or two after remembering. my why I started this process in first place I didn't want to give up after going so far in my journey. Also, I had a pair of little cute eyes watching what mommy was doing.

I wanted to inspire him through the process too, the quest to solve this puzzle of breaking through the job market after a decade break and trying to update my professional knowledge. I also reached out to a local nonprofit aimed at helping women get back to the workforce. This organization trained and certified me in data analysis. Among my classmates were women who had similar stories to mine and who shared my intention. Women supporting women was magic. This certification process also provided an opportunity to interact with instructors who were working

on projects that involved all those technologies. I knew I was in the right place. Getting certified and standing with my certificate surrounded by people from diverse backgrounds clapping and cheering for me is one of the proudest moments of my life.

Even better, I invited my parents to join me and participate in my joyful moment of this major achievement, 8,000 miles from where I was born. Other big challenge I faced was speaking in front of people. Before I landed a job, I wanted to improve in this area. I decided to address this, in combination with what I loved doing best, volunteering at a local butterfly house. Butterflies have always given me a very positive, beautiful vibe and calmed me down. Also, I believe butterflies are our ancestors who are staying close to us. I began speaking about the various insects to the visitors at the butterfly house. One fine day, they handed me a beetle and asked me to talk about it. I hate beetles! But that was the whole point of me volunteering-to face my My intention was very clear. After some self-talk, I called on my courage and perseverance.

As someone who would run away if I saw a beetle in my house, I smiled. I patted myself on the back because of my success. I was invited to join the team to work on documents for the various insects and butterflies for publication on their website. Halfway through my time volunteering at the butterfly house, I got an opportunity to be interviewed for a financial company. In a few weeks, I got the offer and was asked for. My manager at the butterfly house was the first one to give me a great reference. The beetles were so worth it. That's how my journey began. With every new challenge, I saw an opportunity to find a. This helped me keep going. Through the process, I also learned the importance of being mentored.

Mentors all along my journey who were telling me there is light at the end of the tunnel and kept guiding me towards it. That meant the world to me. Today I am an IT professional managing teams across the world. It brings me joy to do this every day. It's been a challenging journey, but I am grateful for every experience, every opportunity, and every person who helped me along the way. My clear intention helped me through some dark days. I overcame the taboo of about women re-entering the workforce after taking a break. I want to shine my light on others who are hesitant to take their first steps into a new career. I'm happy to hold their hand tell them to take a deep breath and smile as we take steps together and prove that it's okay.

We got this. To anyone out there who is thinking of returning to work after a, my advice is to believe in yourself, stay focused on your intention, and be willing to put in the work. Don't be afraid to ask for help or guidance. It's never too late to pursue your Returning to work after a long break can be challenging, as it was for me. You can be successful. Be patient, take the next steps, and don't give up on your goal of achieving financial independence and personal fulfillment. Through my process of chasing my dream, I want to give credit. to three very important people in my life. First and foremost, my parents. No matter their challenges or how bad their day was, my mom and dad supported me to the fullest.

My slightest doubts vanished when I shared my day with them and saw a proud smile on their faces. They are my biggest blessing. The next big support came from my who kept assuring me that he had my back, dropped me off for my classes after his work, and waited outside till I was done

to bring me home safely. He wiped my tears away many times and gave me his shoulder to rest my head on. Last but most important is my son. After a long day of work, I always look forward to coming home and his big tight bare hugs. His hugs gave me the energy to fight for my dreams again the next day. At the playground, he inspired me to take chances when he climbed the monkey bars or slid down the tallest slide without hesitation. He taught me more about life and to enjoy the little things that we take for granted. Summing up my I have just one quote to share which has always inspired me: Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. By Swami Vivekananda. Good luck to all those who are facing challenges, big or small. Know that I am always cheering for you. If I can do it, you can do it too.