

Nabanita De Foundation Return-to-work manual Book

Nabanita De Foundation aims to take on humanitarian moonshot challenges through leveraging technology, advocacy and entrepreneurship. Our return-to-work nonprofit initiative is transforming stay-at-home caregivers in 93 countries into career professionals and helping them return to the workforce after a career gap. We bridge the gap between return to work programs and opportunities and caregivers in a one-stop-shop fashion and provide a support network through our forum and members site. We inspire by amplifying stories of domain level experts like Returnship Program directors, career coaches, recruiters, people who successfully returned to the workforce and underrepresented demographics through our Podcast and articles. We provide free grassroots level upskilling and reskilling like learning English/Computer Science, picking between relevant career paths, degrees and skill sets or explaining a career gap, through our free course. Our initiative to debunk misinformation, Project FiB has been downloaded & published in over 134 countries. Our health-care initiative, CovidHelpforIndia, streamlines all Covid-19 resources, in a one-stop-shop fashion, with engagement from over 30+ countries. Our non-profit initiatives have been represented on Platforms like Unicef, Power to Fly, Globant, Unesco, Generation Equality Forum, Princeton University, University of Maryland and more. If this speaks to you, feel free to reach out to our founder Nabanita De at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/nabanitaai/> or www.nabanitade.com and join our movement.

Our return-to-work initiative is helping caregivers from 93 countries return to the workforce through our [free course](#), [podcast](#), [forum](#), [community page](#), [cohort](#) and [book](#). Join our movement by sharing your voice on our [forum](#) today or volunteering with our initiative [here](#). Your voice will be amplified on all our social channels : [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). Subscribe to our Newsletter or contact us [here](#).

Our latest health-care initiative, [CovidHelpforIndia](#), aims to streamline all resources for Covid-19, in a one-stop-shop fashion, with engagement from

over 30+ countries. Our [debunking misinformation](#) initiative has been downloaded & published in over 135 countries.

Connect with the writer on her personal [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) or [Twitter](#).

4 Ways To Support New Moms In The Workforce

The advocacy for educating & retaining more girls and women in STEM careers stops when we lose them to motherhood due to lack of resources and support, leading to over 2.5 million women leaving the workforce during the pandemic. [Nabanita De Foundation](#) is working towards bridging the gap between stay at home caregivers & returning to workforce opportunities, after a career gap through our [free course](#), [forum](#), [community](#), [podcast](#) and [book](#). Here are our recommendations to support and retain employees (new moms) in your company in 2022:

1. “Return-to-work” hiring pamphlets at Caregivers centric spots like Grocery Stores - “Nearly 3 billion people, about 37% of the world’s population, haven't used or do not have access to the Internet,” according to the United Nations. “Out of the remaining 63%, about 16 percent of U.S. adults are not digitally literate,” according to [Nces.ed](#). “The pool gets further smaller, when someone has taken a gap for caregiving, as they are unlikely to be browsing LinkedIn or job sites on a daily basis to stay informed of the opportunities available. To hire back this demographic, moving hiring-related marketing for “returnship” or “return-to-work” opportunities in the form of pamphlets distribution at grocery stores, daycare centers, schools and more caregiver-centric areas could be a way to raise awareness and attract talent. Making the hiring process less virtual, through initial telephonic screens to explore fit or potential opportunities, could help several caregivers get their foot in the door.

2. Access to affordable childcare services - Since the onset of Pandemic, school closures, lack of affordable daycare centers and inadequate help at home, as many as 12.9 million or 45% of working mothers living with their own school-age children were not actively working, [according to Census.Gov](#).

“Depending on where you are, there are places in our state that we call child care deserts, like there literally is not a licensed child care available near where the family either lives or works,” explained Lisa Brown, the director of the Washington State Department of Commerce to [King5](#). “When it is available, it's in short supply so there are waiting lists. It's expensive, it can be as expensive as college tuition”. According to [Move](#), “On average, infant child care costs \$216 a week, which is 17.1% of the national median household income.” “In 2020, the median hourly earnings of wage and salary workers in the United States was 16.36 U.S. dollars”, says [Statistica](#). If you do the math, often it makes more sense for these women, who want to work, to sacrifice their careers and stay at home to bear the childcare costs themselves, rather than go to work.

Introducing affordable childcare reimbursement as a wellness benefit and/or converting spaces in your workplace into “childcare zones”, can allow these women to work peacefully. If your office lacks the space or such a wellness reimbursement, your organization can also partner with local childcare offices, to offer a discount to your employees & preference of times to book childcare during their work shift, especially if the moms are deferred to a random work shift.

3. Helping transition into a maternal break

- Support through Postpartum Depression - According to [CDC research](#), about 1 in 8 women experience symptoms of postpartum depression. Symptoms listed through this research include:
 1. Crying more often than usual.
 2. Feelings of anger.
 3. Withdrawing from loved ones.
 4. Feeling numb or disconnected from your baby.
 5. Worrying that you will hurt the baby.

6. Feeling guilty about not being a good mom or doubting your ability to care for the baby.

Supporting your employees - new moms through matching them in coffee chats or mentoring sessions with other women from leadership or cohorts with other female employees who recently overcame postpartum depression or are in their maternity breaks, could help them feel less alone through the process. Allow paid therapy sessions to provide support during this time.

- Paid Maternity Leave - Companies like Netflix, Fedex and more, provide 50+ weeks of Paid maternity leave. Checkout the entire list, [here](#), and introduce paid leave in your system if you haven't already. Follow us on our [Nabanita De Foundation's LinkedIn account](#) as we publish more Industry paid leave data.
- Training to refresh their skills - A career break doesn't have to mean a skills break. However it often becomes the job of the employees to actively find new skills to learn and keep up, which defeats the purpose of a “break”. With the fast adaptation of today's technological skills, it can become almost impossible to not fall behind. Taking into account an employee's career aspirations and a 2 year plan, can help you plan necessary employee self-paced training during that maternity break, helping them bounce back faster than ever.
- Transitional Volunteering opportunities - A majority of employees take a caregiving break, when they can no longer keep up with the 40 hour work week but it doesn't translate that they don't want to work at all. Allowing opportunities to take caregiving sabbaticals with a reduced workload or pay, without having to leave one's job entirely could be an attractive option for moms, who wish to “step down from their career a little bit”, to be there for their kids, without having to entirely sacrifice it.

4. Bringing kids to Virtual Work & Practicing Mindfulness - In 2022, the conversations can shifted from work-life balance to a life-work harmony, where our living rooms and bedrooms are now our offices, thus blurring life & work boundaries. Lets normalize having kids in the background while

working, instead of shaming parents. Lets normalize flexible work hours, as long as the work done is completed up to standard.

Covid-19 has taken a toll on everyone around us. *“Staying away from loved ones, being on a sort of house arrest, school closures and the additional burden on working parents, cancellation of various tournaments, gatherings and examinations, poor access to education in the internet-deficit areas, loss of livelihood, living with an uncertainty that knows no bounds, loss of loved ones and the inevitable rise of mental health issues that tag along are some of the after effects,”* says [Debasmita De](#), a Medical undergrad, pursuing MBBS in India. Let's practice grace and mindfulness for our employees - mothers, who have been working 18 hours non-stop (work+life) without any break.

Taking The First Steps Towards Digital Literacy In 2022

Technology has seeped into everyday lives in the form of laptops, mobile phones, tablets and more and more processes have continued to become data driven and virtual. The surge of opportunities readily available on the internet hasn't translated into easy accessibility as continuous technological adaptability has caused a significant divide. The Internet was born in 1983, and search engines like Google started making information accessible as late as 1998. However, only in the past decade, the computing devices, through which these tools could be in the hands of common people, has become more affordable and portable. “Motorola Dynatac,” one of the first phones in 1985 costed around \$4000, equivalent to almost \$10,000 dollars in 2020. Today, a higher end “Smartphone” is priced as low as \$150, according to this history of phones [flowchart](#). Yet, 37 percent of the world’s population – about 2.9 billion people, still have never used the internet, according to the United Nations.

There is a huge education curriculum divide for the generation prior or in developing countries, as technology hasn't been the norm or required in

everyday jobs. For someone with a gap in their career, to return to the same job they had less than 5 years ago, means having the additional necessary skills to operate the company's and world's digital tools with ease. Every process of getting hired has gone virtual, right from finding and applying to jobs to being successful in one, which actually prevents a significant population from taking the next steps. That's where [Nabanita De Foundation](#) is trying to make a difference, by bridging the gap through grassroots level free training of digital skills & knowledge of opportunities, to return to the workforce after a career gap, in an one-stop-shop fashion, through our [free course](#), [forum](#), [podcast](#), [community](#), [cohort](#) and [upcoming book](#).

These are some of our recommended basic digital concepts and knowledge to help you take the next step towards becoming digitally literate:

Picking a computing device: When choosing a computing device, picking the right configuration can help you achieve the most bang for your buck. They include:

1. **Memory & Hard Disk:** Memory stores files, folders, pictures, apps, operating system and more for your computing device. Hard disk is the physical disk, allocated for this memory. Solid State Device (SSD) & Hard Disk Drive (HDD) are two variations of the storage device, with SSDs being faster, better battery life, shock resistant, while HDDs being cheaper for more memory space.
2. **Random Access Memory (RAM):** A temporary memory utilized to load software/apps for faster access. 8 GB RAM should be sufficient for casual use like browsing the internet or writing documents. For intensive tasks like high resolution video editing or rendering, consider higher configurations.
3. **Processor, Cores, Clock-speed:** Central Processing Unit (CPU), the computer's brain is known as the processor. Commonly known processor brands are Intel i-series(i3, i5, i7, i9), amd series and recently Mac M1s. Clock speed is the speed of CPU to retrieve/Interpret Instructions; measured in Gigahertz - Ghz. Cores are the CPU's Processor– If your machine has more cores, each core can be assigned a task in a multitasking way, to make

the CPU more efficient. Although Cores, Clock speed, Processor are some of the factors to determine the efficiency of the machine, using PC benchmark tests to test a particular machine performance is the way to go.

4. Operating Systems: “Windows,” “Mac,” “Linux,” “Chrome OS,” are some of the Operating Systems options available for personal computers/laptops, while Android (By Google) and iOS (By Apple) are popular operating systems for phones or tablets. Operating system is the base software on which all your apps run.

Additional preferences to look out for, could include Display size, Touchscreen or non-Touchscreen, Graphics Card, Form-factor and Brand.

Operating a laptop or computer: common questions

1. Authentication: The process of letting someone into a system, website or app through login and password, almost like a lock and key mechanism. On starting your system or going to a website for the first time, you would often be asked to “login”, provide username, password or authenticate through your google or facebook accounts. If you don't have an account, you are prompted to “sign up” or create a new account. Remember every authentication is different from the other, when it comes to different websites or systems & is a way for you to provide exclusive access to your account. In case if you “forget” your password, click on “forget password”, which can send a code to your recovery email or mobile number, linked to that account.
2. Home screen & taskbar: On starting your computing device, you are prompted to the screen which contains the icons of your apps. The first screen when starting your laptop after you are successfully authenticated is called “home-screen” in PCs and laptops. The taskbar is an additional accessory on the homescreen like a long banner, with the basic system apps embedded into it, usually located in the bottom on windows & both bottom and top on mac. You can open apps on the homescreen in the form of popups & come back to this screen, by

minimizing or closing your apps, as a starting point to navigate to.

3. **Single/double clicks & right clicks:** The single or double clicks are usually clicked by pressing on the top left hand side of the mouse or left hand side of the trackpad. The single click is done to select something while double clicks serve as a way to open that app, file or folder. The Right click is done by pressing on the top right hand side of the mouse or right hand side of the trackpad and is done to both select and open a host of other options related to that particular file or folder, apart from the traditional option to “open” the file.
4. **Operating systems vs software:** The Operating system is like schools and software is like uniforms. Operating systems is the mothership on which various apps are hosted and downloaded & the apps are built unique in a way to the operating system, for it to be supported.
5. **Connecting to the Internet:** If you own a computing device for the prime using of browsing the internet, here are some factors to consider:
 - **Connection to Wifi or LAN:** LAN is basically connecting in the form of a wired connection through a cable between modem/router/broadband service and your computing device and provides a much more stable & faster access to the Internet. Wifi is the wireless form of connecting to your router/modem to get access to the Internet & allows internet connection to multiple devices at the same time. Make sure you are connected to the internet through either of these methods, by pairing your computing device.

Accessing the Internet

- **Browsers:** If you wish to go to a particular website, a browser is a type of software which allows you to type in a website url and connect you to the website. Common browsers being Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari, Opera and more. Nowadays apps have bridged the gap by providing you a version of that site,

in interactable form, to open a specific site directly by opening their app. For example, open Facebook.com by opening the Facebook app. Apps can offer specific services or serve various purposes like “Photoshop apps” to edit pictures or “banking app” to access your bank.

- **Tabs:** If you wish to open and refer to multiple websites at the same time, you can utilize the tabs on the top in a browser to do so. Each tab would have their version of the website.
- **Maximizing, minimizing & closing windows:** The browser’s size can be decreased, through the minimizing button (⌵, - or yellow button), increased through the maximizing button (square or green button) or closed out through the close button (red) on the browser’s top right (in windows) and top left (in mac).
- **Websites:** An equivalent to a website can be a shop in a shopping mall. Once you enter a shop, you are offered with its specific goods and services. You may sign up on your membership list or purchase an item or just browse their items and leave. Similarly websites on the internet allow you the option to check out these “landing pages” or “websites” of different companies and brands, and understand their offerings and further interact accordingly.
- **Search engines:** “Let me Google it.” This phrase has become pretty common to search indexed information on the Internet including websites, apps, news and more. This is done by search engines like Google, Bing and more. These search engines (websites with these search capability) also understand natural language, so you should be able to append additional words like a specific language or your expertise level to find more refined search results.
- **Keyboard shortcuts:** Some of the most basic keyboard shortcuts include Cut, Copy, paste and undo. “Cut” (Command+X in Mac and Control+X in Windows) allows you to “literally” cut the selected word or app & saves it temporarily on your clipboard & “Paste” (Command+V in Mac and Control+V in Windows) allows you to paste it anywhere. Similarly “Copy” allows you to make a copy of a selected item (Word, files or folders) in the same fashion & needs to be followed by “Paste” in the new destination.

In case if you made an error, you can “undo” using Keyboard shortcut (Command+Z in Mac and Control+Z in Windows).

Common digital tasks in the workplace:

1. **Sending emails:** Usually employees are given an official email through which they can do workplace related communications. Emails allow you to attach files and write paragraph texts. You usually need a Recipient (the person whom the email is being sent), Subject (the subject of the email) and the body - content. You can cc someone to send them a copy of the email (public to all recipients) and bcc to private notify someone of the email. A general email looks like “[someone@something.com](#)” where something.com is the domain name of the email and someone is the user.
2. **Official messaging platforms:** Slack, Teams or Discord has become a common messaging platform in various workplace. They are very similar to Facebook messenger, you can send people private messages, create groups & further send group messages.
3. **Video-conferencing platforms:** As work has moved virtual due to the pandemic, software like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Webex, etc., allow people to conduct meetings or connect over video conferencing, where you have the options to mute and unmute yourself, change your background (to work from anywhere and hide clutter), share your screen, chat or even give control to virtually access your screen. You are also able to record meetings and access them later.
4. **Productivity software:** Commonly used productivity software includes Microsoft Office or Google Suite (Word, Powerpoint and Excel). This software works from a data driven standpoint by allowing you to create reports virtually. Microsoft Word or Google docs allows you to create documents in the form of paragraphs (like article or report writing) with an option to add additional collaborators to your doc and append pictures, charts and tables into the report. Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets

allows you to create documents in a tabular, grid like format where you can easily crunch numbers, see trends, create sum, average, plots and more. Microsoft Powerpoint or Google Slides allows you to create a “powerpoint” (ppt) with each slide being like a flashcard but with text, pictures or reports, so as to present an idea, concept or work to your team. You can add multiple slides and present all of these slides by sharing your screen at a “zoom” meeting.

How Organizations Can Benefit From A “Harry Potter Sorting Hat” System To Retain Talent

Hogwarts – the school from the Harry Potter fiction universe, is renowned for sorting their incoming freshmen into one of the 4 houses: Gryffindor (signifying courage, strength, bravery, nerve, chivalry and leadership), Hufflepuff (signifying loyalty, inclusivity, fairness, justice), Ravenclaw (signifying wit, learning, logic, artistic, creative, intelligence, thirst for information) and Slytherin (signifying Ambition, Resourcefulness, Power, Determination, Self-Preservation and Cleverness). The sorting system achieves this classification by taking into account the individual’s primal values, motivation, potential, preferred learning/reward system and big life goals, determining the individual's day-to-day decision making. Once aligned to the right clique, the individual feels the sense of belonging, is better supported/understood by their peers and equipped with unique environments to support their core persona. For example, the house Ravenclaw’s common room requires a riddle instead of passwords to enter, supporting the house’s theme of inquisitive minds for learning and logical thinking. The popular fan-fiction characters rose to fame, on being sorted into the right houses. It's often a talked about topic, on how misclassification

would have deterred these individuals from reaching their true potential and feeling lost at the organization.

Yet when it comes to joining new schools, organizations or looking for jobs in the real (muggle) world, people from different personality types, mental capacities (neurodiversity) and value systems, are pushed to fit into a generic system, evaluated solely on their education/work-experience strengths and are expected to figure it out on their own and thrive. According to Workingnation and [Special Olympics](#), “6.5 million people in the US have autism, intellectual and/or development differences, with about 81 percent of this population working unpaid jobs or unemployed. 1–3 percent of the global population has an intellectual disability—as many as 200 million people.” A generalized metric for hiring and retention doesn’t work neither in wizarding, nor muggle worlds.

Here are some of the ways, a value-based evaluation system like “Hogwarts House sorting system” can help your organization, attract and retain talent:

1. Assign employees a potential values-based cliques (“houses”)

- Assigning new employees “a house” at their new employee orientation: Conducting an evaluation, to sort new employees into potential values-based cliques (houses), instantly gives them access to a targeted community and dedicated mentors, who share their intrinsic motivation, morals & strengths. Finding an instant fit within the company & house-specific insights, can boost employee morale and make it easier to navigate a career in the organization.
- Mapping houses to potential career paths early in career or people returning to workforce: Each career path requires unique strengths to succeed. For folks early in their careers or returning to the workforce, there is a lot of wiggle room as they are still figuring out the right fit. Based on previous organization employee success data, Implementing a values-based categorization can help suggest/place employees in careers, where they may actually feel fulfilled. For example, someone with Hufflepuff-like traits can be an excellent addition to Human

Resources to attract & retain employees for their alignment for people-focused values vs someone with Slytherin-like traits may find fundraising or running a startup-like team a great fit.

- Using houses for team matching: Job roles with the same title can vastly differ based on the teams & its requirements in organizations. For example - a Software Engineer in a startup-like team would require someone who is willing to take bold bets, be ambitious/self-sufficient, wear multiple & move fast vs a Software Engineer in a team, maintaining legacy code would require someone, good with the details and prefers perfecting & maintaining a routine legacy system. Identifying the values-based clique of a potential employee, can be highly instrumental in the team matching process, thus reducing turnover costs & improving employee retention.

2. Creating more targeted common areas or morale/company events:

Pre-pandemic, several tech companies have invested in common employee spaces and morale events, based on popular hobbies and interests. As the pandemic hit, it has been a challenge to engage various employees into generic virtual morale events, as it's an easy choice to rather spend time with close friends or family who share the same inculcated values system. Instead of enforcing employees to work from the office post-pandemic, “for better collaboration or company feel,” virtual dedicated morale events in intra-value-based cliques could be an alternative to boost participation & better alignment of employees with the organization, at the comfort of their homes.

3. Performance reviews & career growth catering more to the employee’s personal values:

Performance reviews or criteria to be successful in a role can become more fulfilling and personal if the employee’s values and core beliefs are also met at the end of the year. For example, someone with a “Ravenclaw house like traits,” can find learning new tools, technologies and an increased learning curve more fulfilling in their role vs. someone with “Gryffindor house like traits” can find having a say on proposing and undertaking an ambitious project, a much more fulfilling year. Being able to incorporate more individualized performance benchmarks, identified from

their “value-based cliques,” to be achieved and evaluated by the end of the year can help employees feel that employers are more invested in employee’s personal success and fulfillment.

4. Allowing employees to change houses or evaluate them every year: People grow and change based on timing, priorities and self-awareness. Being able to re-group into a different value based clique every year, just like how people are able to elect different benefits each year, could be the way this entire structure gets productionalized.

“18.9 million Americans exit the labor force each year with an average of 20% turnover. The cost of employee turnovers can be 1.5-2 times an employee salary”, says [Financesonline turnover stats](#) and [Builtin](#). 4.4 million people quit their jobs in September and about 6.3 million people are currently unemployed in the US, according to the [Dec Census.gov report and CNBC](#). An initial solid investment in devising new ways for employee satisfaction, retainment and good team matching, will save money in the long term.

Manifesting Your Dream Life And Career In 2022

Do you have all the resources and are aware of your goals but feel stuck in a rut? Mental fog? Analysis Paralysis? Cannot physically make yourself get started on taking the first step towards your goals? Planning your dream life for weeks in your head but everything is still in the planning phase?

Intimidated by the amount of “work” needed? Endless scrolling on social media and procrastination taken over for weeks? Feel like everyone is already so ahead and you are falling behind?

But at the same time, you want to manifest your dream life, house, car, career, business or body. You want 2022 to be your comeback year. Here are some of the immediate steps that can help:

1. Identify what is holding you back

What is holding you back? Get creative and write it down. Is it the uncertainty of the path ahead or the fear of an actual successful and happy life and wondering if you truly deserve it? Is it the work necessary to get the ideal outcome or an associated trauma or depression, related to it? Is it fear of not knowing anything or your Perfectionism kicking in and the stigma against failing? Is it the perception of what people think about you and fear of not being good enough or a surrounding not supportive of your goals and threatened by your potential? Is it a worst case scenario you assumed and are actively working towards making it a reality or your anxiety? Is it the fear of leaving your comfort zone or codependency, trauma bond and fear of starting over?

By gaining clarity on what is that you fear, you can evaluate the actual truth behind your thoughts, differentiate it from imbibed beliefs and [seek targeted help](#) from mentors, therapists and coaches, to overcome those barriers.

Behaviors mislabelled as “Procrastination”, can actually be “Depression”,

“Anxiety” or “Neurodivergence ” and require professional medical treatment. According to [WSJ](#), “Employees may be able to file for Short Time Disability if a medical professional diagnoses them with an anxiety disorder, depression or other mental illness.”, since it affects employee’s day-to-day tasks.

“*Short-term Mental Health Disability Leave* (MHDL) is longer than a normal sick leave. Depending on your employer’s disability insurance and the state you live in, MHDL can allow up to 6 months of leave, although shorter durations (4-6 weeks) are more typical to help you get back on your feet.” [says OneMedical](#). Just like how a yearly routine physical health check is recommended, start your new year’s taking a [mental health checkup](#) through [Nabanita De Foundation’s free Mental Health Resources](#) (including Depression, Anxiety, Codependency, ADHD, Autism, OCD, ODD, Dysparia, Dyslexia and other Neurodivergent tests).

Mental burnout during the pandemic shouldn’t be taken lightly. If you are overwhelmed, set boundaries, guiltlessly put yourself first, make time for yourself, identify tasks that can be delegated, delegate them and take some time off. In cases where delegation is hard, like a mom, with a special needs kid, ask your medical insurance for resources like [Respite Care](#), [ABA Therapy](#) and also consider hiring babysitters from Speech Language, Child Psychology department or Educated Special Needs Teacher.

2. What do you want? Building your vision board

The first step towards knowing what you want is knowing yourself inside and out. Discover yourself through [Nabanita De Foundation's Discover Yourself module](#) and [article](#). Create a list not for the benefit of your spouse, partner, children, parents or friends but with a focus on yourself. Making yourself the main character of your story.

Making your vision board can be as simple as putting down a list of every single thing that would be nice, to come true. The most atrocious, impossible benchmarks that you would like to achieve. What does your best life look like? Write everything down.

Once there is a list, for each item in the list, write down every small step you need to do to achieve those goals. Get into the minute details.

See big patterns or common items that need to be done to get to all your goals.

The repetitive items are your first priority tasks that need to be completed.

Similarly prioritize the rest of the items based on their common occurrences.

Find tasks that have dependencies on some other tasks and list them as second priority.

Review your current life with your dream life. What stays? What needs to go? Which tasks/chores/people/work of your today's life don't fit with your wants and make you stuck in a dead end? That needs to go. Write down 3 tasks that can be accomplished the next immediate day, do them and repeat. Incorporate them all in the form of a vision board and put it somewhere where you can see it everyday.

3. Find an accountability system or partner

Every year “new year resolutions” are set, and lose momentum as time rolls by. It's important to find a system that works to track your progress. It could be through finding a friend who is trying to achieve a similar goal or a mentor who has already walked your path, overcame your obstacles and is living your dream. It is okay to have different mentors for different goals and move onto a new mentor as your goal is served. Find ways on how you plan to keep yourself accountable - Is it through daily check-ins with your accountability partner to track your progress or on hitting milestones? Is it through setting up a reward system to positively reinforce yourself on achieving some of your tasks? If you don't have a support system already, leverage [Nabanita De Foundation's community & forum](#), start blogging about your goals and find an accountability partner.

Journaling and reading affirmations could be an alternative to replenishing the momentum. However there will be days, when it seems like giving up is the best option, Focus on the next step and take one step at a time and repeat.

4. Believe in your dreams

By visualizing what it would feel like when you have already achieved your dream, your mindset would shift and align you towards taking all the steps towards making your dreams a reality. Live and breathe your dream. Believe that you have everything you need at this moment, to achieve your dream. You have survived the hardest day of your life until now. You have come out victorious. You will be fine.

Go through the affirmations: “I am worthy of my dream life and I easily attract it. I am ready to put in the work and receive the fruits of my dream life.

Nothing is standing between my dream life and I. I am worthy of respect, love, affection and fame.” The fact that you are reading this blog, is a sign that you got this.

Take your first step towards attracting your dream life and career today, through taking Nabanita De Foundation’s [Free course](#). Manifest a dream career into your life by [exploring the careers module](#), which doesn't require a college degree. [Join our community](#) and find an accountability partner for

your dream job in 2022. Seek help from our community of expert mentors, career coaches, recruiters, therapists by [listening to our podcast](#), signing up for our [mentorship cohort](#), creating your [first post on our forum](#) and [pre-ordering our book](#).

Correlation Between Domestic Abuse, Financial Dependence And Child Psychology

Staying in an abusive marriage/relationship due to financial dependence and for the “sake of your children?” Let [Nabanita De Foundation](#) help you break free through the cycle of abuse, restart your life and return to the workforce after a career gap through our [free course, forum, community, podcast and book](#), and save you and your children from lifelong trauma and therapy bills.

[According to Census.gov](#), Covid-19 forced one in five (19.6%) of working-age adults to take a career break due to disrupted childcare arrangements. Women ages 25-44 are almost three times as likely as men to take a career break due to childcare demands. The percent of mothers aged 25 to 44 taking a career break due to childcare responsibilities grew by 4.8 percent points, as compared to no increase for men. At the same time, “The world experienced a surge in domestic abuse by 300% in Hubei, China, 25% in Argentina, 30% in Cyprus, 33% in Singapore, 50% in Brazil, 18% in San Antonio, 22% in Portland and 10% in New York City”, according to [American Journal of Emergency Medicine](#), [UN Women](#) and [Time](#). “One in three white women report to have experienced domestic abuse and the numbers are significantly higher for

marginalized races, ethnicity, sexual orientation, citizenship status and cognitive physical ability.”

Nspcc.org.uk defines Domestic abuse as emotional, physical, sexual, financial or psychological abuse, such as:

- Kicking, hitting, punching or cutting
- Rape (including in a relationship)
- Controlling someone’s finances by withholding money or stopping someone’s earning
- Controlling behavior like telling someone where they can go and what to wear
- Not letting someone leave the house
- Reading emails, text messages or letters
- Threatening to kill someone or harm them
- Threatening to harm another family member or pet

Giving up your career for childcare responsibilities, automatically leads to financial dependence on the spouse and thus making it extremely hard to leave an abusive marriage due to lack of available resources. “By Blocking or controlling access to financial assets, abusers can coerce their victims into staying with them, locking them into a cycle of abuse. Lack of financial knowledge or resources is the number one indicator of whether a domestic violence victim will stay, leave or return to an abusive relationship. Financial abuse by ruining credit, getting someone fired and losing source of income through harassment at workplace, hiding money or asking to give up someone’s career, is just as effective in controlling an abuse victim as a lock and key,” says a [Atlantic and Huffpost](#) article. “A 2014 survey by Allstate Foundation states 98% of domestic-violence victims experienced Financial abuse.”

Sharing children with the abuser makes it way more difficult to leave, as several domestic abuse victims stay in those marriages/relationships to be able to afford a “better future” or “prevent divorce trauma” for their children. According to ncadv.org, “1 in 15 children are exposed to domestic abuse each year and 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.” No matter

how hard it gets, it is important to leave the abusive marriage/relationship. Call the [domestic abuse hotline](#) at 800.799.SAFE (7233) today. [Nabanita De Foundation's, free job upskilling and reskilling resources](#) will help you prepare to reenter the workforce without necessarily having a college degree.

Here are some of the reasons why you should leave your abusive marriage, restart your life and strive towards being financially independent. Staying in that marriage will do way more harm than good and leave your children with a lifetime of trauma:

1. Creates an unsafe environment for your child: A home where a child grows up in needs to provide safety for the appropriate psychological development of the child. In a home frequenting with domestic abuse, every moment is unpredictable, unstable and leaves children with constant fear. According to a [The newsminute article](#), “when children grow up in abusive households, it changes their neurobiology, adversely affects their physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth & makes them prone to depression, anxiety, PTSD and oppositional defiant disorder. Such children either turn aggressive and lash out at the smallest provocation or become completely withdrawn and submissive. They feel confused with the experience and end up blaming themselves for the cause of the violence and not being able to prevent the violence.” They have to actively gauge the mood of the abuser, walk on eggshells and go-to-extents like leaving living rooms to hide in their hiding spots (or bedrooms) or learn differences between the footsteps of their parents to gauge the mood, to prepare themselves of what's coming next and avoid escalating the already agitated abuser. The constant chaos often becomes the said “normal” for the child, where they repeat the childhood patterns in adulthood, finding themselves in chaotic and abusive situations.
2. Being a physically present but emotionally unavailable parent for your child: After continued exposure in hands of your abuser, it is not uncommon to experience signs of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and become emotionally unavailable for everyone around you, including your children or becoming an abuser

yourself. Taking out your frustrations on your children, belittling or insulting them can leave them feeling helpless/worthless and undeserving of love. According to the [New York Government website](#), Emotional abuse and Neglect falls under Child Maltreatment and violates Child abuse and Neglect law. Emotional Abuse for children is defined as “when a child is constantly exposed to negative and abusive statements, is likely to suffer from emotional abuse impairing psychological development, patterns including constant rejection, exposing a child to violence or criminal behavior, irrational behavior and verbal abuse (excessive yelling, belittling and teasing). Emotional Neglect is defined as the failure of a parent or caregiver to supply a child with the love and support necessary for a healthy development, examples include failure to provide warmth, attention, supervision, affection, praise or encouragement to a child. Just providing the bare minimum like education, food and roof isn't enough, children require your affection, attention, praise and encouragement to develop in healthy ways.

3. Children serving as a therapist or referee: In a situation of domestic abuse, often children become the confidant and emotional support person for the abused parent, which should be sought from an adult partner instead, thus defined as “Emotional Incest.” According to [GoodTherapy](#), this often leads to the child's emotional needs to be compromised in favor of the parent's, creating an unhealthy dynamic where the child essentially becomes the parents, and is emotionally abandoned and robbed of their childhood. Children are also often dragged in the middle of fights, asked to pick sides between parents or often take the initiative to go in between the fights of parents “as a referee like in a football match” to stop things from escalating further. This prolonged behavior has damaging effects on a child's psychology as they struggle with setting boundaries, getting their needs met as adults without excessive guilt and develop fear of intimacy, afraid that they would eventually become their parents in their relationships. The unhealthy sense of loyalty on having to pick sides can lead to love/hate relationship between parent-child

dynamic & prevent bonding with parents, thus leading to substance abuse, low self-esteem, inadequacy etc.

4. “Abuse” is modeled as love: The foundation of attachment styles of children are formed with their relationship with their parents. The relationship dynamic shared between the parents, becomes the primary model for “relationships” for children. So when it's solely “abuse” the child’s brain starts to associate abuse with love. Research suggests children from abusive childhoods or raised by narcissists, do not form secure attachment styles and gravitate towards partners who model their abusive parents, often trying to repeat and “fix” the situation or model & finally get the love they deserved in childhood, or model what they learnt as a “healthy dynamic” in childhood and become the abuser. With constant instability growing up, unable to trust in caregivers or losing the expectation of being protected, they often develop “trust issues” or “fear of abandonment” in relationships they go into, unable to feel safe in being truly vulnerable with their partners and ashamed of the experience they went through in their childhood.
5. Making children feel like “they owe you”: After staying in that abusive relationship for so long for financial stability of your children and sacrificing all of your emotional or physical health, it's normal to feel that your children “owe you” their life and is your retirement plan. However this isn't healthy. Children don't owe their parents anything, as it's a parent’s responsibility to provide emotionally and financially for the child. By deciding to stay in this abusive situation yourself, as a parent, that is entirely your own decision and your children might not be in a place to factor into your decision. According to Psychology Today, there is a 45% to 60% chance of co-occurring child abuse in domestic abuse cases. Thus by staying in this situation, you are exposing your children everyday to potential abuse and your children are the one, owed here. The person who owes you is your abuser and the only way to get what you are owed is calling the domestic abuse hotline and getting out of the situation.

As a parent, it is your sole responsibility to break this cycle of domestic abuse, get out of that abuse, seek therapy, heal and be the parent your children deserve. This is not something that can be delegated to your children to take care of, when they “grow up and become something.” Take action today. Prioritize your mental health and find a therapist/life coach today at [Nabanita De Foundation’s Therapy/Coaches/Mentors Module](#). Contact the [domestic abuse hotline](#) at 800.799.SAFE (7233) today.

Becoming financially independent and getting a new job is as easy as going to [Nabanita De Foundation’s website](#) and taking [our free course](#), checking out [Potential careers](#) that don’t require a college degree, listening to our [free Podcast](#) with domain experts and stories of women who navigated returning to workforce with similar challenges or [asking for help at our Forum](#) or signing up for [our upcoming mentorship cohort](#). Check out our additional resources on our [Linkedin](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

You and your children deserve better. Let [Nabanita De Foundation](#) help you and change the life trajectory of you and your lineage.

Connect with the author and founder on her [webpage](#), [Linkedin](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

The Struggles Of A First Generation Immigrant

This week, Leena Nair was named the new Chanel’s CEO, a major luxury fashion brand with over \$10 Billion Revenue. Last week, Parag Agarwal was named the CEO of Twitter, with the Company revenue of \$3.72 Billion. What do they have in common? They are both Indian born immigrants, dominating their respective industries with exceptional leadership and impact. According to Fwd.us, 45% of Fortune 500 companies are founded by immigrants. A [Nabanita De Foundation](#) research list states some of the world’s biggest companies and their current/former *Immigrant CEOs*, employing over 13.5 million people, with trillions of dollars in combined annual revenue:

- Sundar Pichai, Google, Company revenue \$182.5 billion, No. of Employees - 150,028
- Satya Nadella, Microsoft, Company Revenue \$168 Billion, No. of employees - 182,268
- Elon Musk, Tesla, SpaceX, Paypal, Neuralink; Tesla Company Revenue \$31.54 Billion, No. of employees 70,757
- Arvind Krishna, IBM, Company Revenue \$73.62 Billion, Number of employees 350,000
- Indra Nooyi, Pepsico, Company Revenue \$67.16 Billion, Number of Employees 291,000
- Anshu Jain, Deutsche Bank, Company Revenue \$28.76 Billion, Number of Employees 78,000
- Safra Catz, Oracle, Company Revenue \$11.2 Billion, No. of Employees 132,000
- Jerry Yang, Yahoo, Company Revenue \$5.17 Billion, No. of Employees 8600
- Dara Khosrowshahi, Uber, Company Revenue \$11.1 Billion, No. of Employees 26,900
- Francisco D'Sourza, Cognizant Tech, Company Revenue \$16.8 Billion, No. of Employees 289,500
- Nikesh Arora, Palo Alto Networks, Company Revenue \$4.26 Billion, No. of Employees 10,000+
- Rajeev Suri, Nokia, 23.33 Billion Eur, No. of Employees 92,039
- Sanjay Mehrota, Micron Technology, Company Revenue \$21.44 billion, No. of employees - 40,000
- Ajaypal Singh Banga, MasterCard, Company Revenue : \$22.08 Billion, No. of Employees - 21,000
- Shantanu Narayan, Adobe, Company Revenue : \$11.17 billion, No. of Employees - 24,000
- Dinesh Paliwal, Harman International Industries, Company Revenue : \$8.8 Billion, No. of Employees : 30,000
- Vivek Sankaran, Albertsons Companies, Company Revenue \$62.5 Billion, No. of Employees : 270,000

A [2012 White House](#) report states that immigrants are 30 percent more likely to start a business in the US than non-immigrants & form 18 percent of all US

small business owners. Immigrants added \$2 trillion to the US. GDP in 2016 & about \$460 billion to state, local and federal taxes in 2018.

According to a [government survey](#), one-in-seven of the total US population is foreign born (46 million people) and one-in-six workers in the United States are foreign born (28 million workers). The potential of this demographic, with the right opportunities, is impeccable. As part of [Nabanita De Foundation](#), we want to amplify their voices and generate awareness on behind-the-scenes challenges and pressure faced with this demographic, to survive & facilitate them with opportunities and education to be financially independent.

Here are some of the struggles we captured from our fellow immigrant communities:

1. Carving your own path without any guidance: Being the first generation immigrant and women in tech from my small community, I often struggled on identifying and characterizing my authentic identity. The lack of guidance to define unique milestones, goal set and lack of relatable micro-community role models in personal life, has been the most challenging part. Being the flag bearer and representative of a community, no-one really prepares you for the added unsaid responsibility to not only accurately represent the voices of your community but also put your community on a global map & pave way for your future generations, as often your actions could make or break the entire future of your entire community. When you become the first to achieve the most basic milestones through being your own knight in shining armor and a role model for your community, you become the source of inspiration for so many people. It often comes with the added pressure to keep your life together at all points since you become the indicator/possibility of “making it through”. Carving out your authentic path, battles community based traumas, while staying true to inculcated cultures of your community in a new country is entirely another journey to traverse on its own. Thus it often becomes difficult, explaining your own decisions, influenced by backgrounds, culture and thought processes, passed on by generations, to the peers around you.
2. Supporting everyone back home: A lot of immigrants come to the US, with dreams of changing the trajectory of their families and are the result of several years of collective hard work of their respective families and community to

send a representative as their biggest leap and ticket out of Poverty. As the Christopher Columbus of your community, you become the guide for your community back home, wearing multiple hats. Breaking generational traumas, supporting family financially, re-parenting/reverse-parenting your family/community with healthy practices and changing the course of your community for the better, often becomes a part of daily occurrences and takes enormous amounts of mental effort. According to a [NY Times article](#), “even when immigrants lost jobs, they sent money home. Remittances are also a vital source of hard currency for developing countries, often dwarfing foreign direct investment and foreign aid. Last year, the transfers accounted for 20 percent of the gross domestic product of El Salvador and Honduras.”

No one talks about the sudden realizations and grieving process of what it could have been, if things were handed in a platter, without constantly having to work for every simple small achievement. The invisible burden to take part and get on through the current rat race in the immigrated country, while being a changemaker of your home country community, is no longer running the same race, as it isn't the same starting point and cannot be quantified in any way or form. For example, If you are supporting several dependents in another country, they don't count towards tax benefits or health/life insurance.

3. The feeling of not truly belonging anywhere: In 2020, several Asian and Black communities, were verbally/physically abused in public, discriminated against their skin color, asked to “go back to their country” and their identity was diminished to a “virus”, despite building a life in their immigrated countries with hard-work. [According to Americanprogress.org report](#), policy to remove all undocumented immigrant workers from workforce would reduce the nation’s GDP by 2.6 percent and reduce cumulative GDP over 10 years by \$4.7 trillion. No matter how easy immigrants make it look, it's always considered the immigrant’s responsibility to adapt to people’s different upbringing, contradicting school of thoughts and navigate “Culture shocks” with grace, often making them feel alone in the crowd. [According to Teen Vogue](#), “Immigrant youth are more likely to be bullied than US Born. [An UN paper](#) on Violence against Children recognizes refugees and children, “Who are indigenous or belong to ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural or religious minorities, as groups at higher risk for bullying, pointing that it may include bullying that target another’s immigrant status or family history of

immigration in the form of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation or exclusion because of immigration status.”

While the immigrants' adaptability makes them the citizens of the world, the requirement to fit into a new country's culture, language, mindsets and way of living, the changed parts, no longer completely fits with their home country either.

4. The silent uphill battles: A [Linkedin User](#), manager at a top Fortune 500 company, blogged that due to Pandemic, border closures and lack of H1b stamping slots in US itself, immigrants on work visas, on verge of renewal or job change, got locked out from traveling overseas, as leaving the country would prevent them from re-entering the country without a stamp and return to their job. He further states this also “prevented him from getting to his dying parents during Covid Pandemic”. According to [another Linkedin post](#), When the borders opened, the situation did not improve and more than 50,000 Indian H1b holders are not able to find appointments to get their visa renewed, with wait times more than 2 years and hence have continued to be stuck and unable to reunite with their families. In a dire unexpected situation like the Pandemic, enacting exceptions like Visa stamping in US itself, can help circumvent this problem.

According to the quint, “The current estimated wait time for an Indian national entering the green card backlog to get permanent residency in the US is 195 years – a number that is expected to reach 436 years in the fiscal year 2030.” Losing a job on H1b while waiting for the green card to arrive, could lead folks to be deported at any point, back to their country if it exceeds 2 months of career gap. The uncertainty that at any moment the life you have worked for can be uprooted and taken away can become a lot to live with.

5. The constant self-doubt and survivor guilt: [According to Ined](#), in 2017, 64% of international migrants (58% in 2000), or 165 million persons, were living in a developed country. According to a [Harvard study](#), imposter syndrome is significantly higher among ethnic minorities. Escaping the grim realities by coming to a country with land full of opportunities, can often lead to feeling the survivor's guilt, wondering if you truly deserve the recognition you have

worked hard for, knowing the community back home is still suffering through social-economic oppression or under the poverty line.

If you related to any of these first generation immigrant struggles or want to share your struggles, share this article and your thoughts with [#immigrantstruggles](#) on social media. Are you navigating the job market as an immigrant? Checkout [Nabanita De Foundation's free resources](#) with presence in 93 countries, to help you land that six figure salary and further support your family. Find mentors/Life coaches/therapists and help a first generation caregiver restart their life & return to work after a career gap, through our [free course](#), [forum](#), [podcast](#), [cohort](#) and [members site](#). Connect with the author and founder on her [webpage](#), [Linkedin](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Are You An Equal Parent For Your Kids Or Just A Financial Investor?

A Reddit user [shared his frustration](#) when his wife asked for a break for a few hours from watching their kids to have downtime. Being a pandemic work-from-home dad, he did not agree with the expectation to subsequently care-give. The reddit community was agitated, since OP worked unreasonable hours (84 hours) each week from home, has been an absent parent and despite making “good money,” didn't hire a babysitter or make other arrangements to give his spouse a much needed break.

Uneven caregiving expectations lead caregivers to sacrifice their life and careers. Here are some of the reactions from the Reddit community on this topic as well as relevant stats from our research:

1. Stop opting for unbalanced work life balance to avoid childcare duties

“Working 14 hours days six days a week is simply not sustainable for any family or marriage.” “If you need to be available early in the morning and late at night, why not give yourself a few hours of personal time in the middle of the day? It kind of sounds like you’re working really long hours to avoid childcare and house duties.” - Reddit

“Among working parents of children younger than 18, mothers in 2013 spent an average of 14.2 hours per week on housework, compared with fathers’ 8.6 hours. And mothers spent 10.7 hours per week actively engaged in child care, compared with fathers’ 7.2 hours,” according to [2013 Pew Research report](#). If a pattern of work taking over starts forming, it's important to reprioritize to be an equally present parent.

2. Hiring help to prevent your spouse from burnout and becoming a single parent

“He’s glad he gets to see his kid for 20 minutes a day but his wife is a single mom year-round. If someone works that many hours and takes pride in their sacrifice, perhaps they could pay for extra help to compensate for their extra work hours, and it would alleviate some of the resentment from the partner.”

“You are not pulling your weight at home because you are making money, that

should be paying to bridge the gap instead of relying on your spouse to pick up the slack.” - Reddit

“The average working mom works 98 hours per week, more than equivalent to full time jobs” - [Salon](#) and [Bustle](#). It’s most natural to face burnout.

According to [healthyplace.org](#), the definition of Parenting, is:

- Process of raising a child from birth to independent adulthood
- Facilitating the upbringing of a child through all stages of development.
- Caring for and nurturing a child.
- The act of caring for a child rather than the biological connection to a child.
- Establishing a healthy environment as the child grows.
- Providing a financially stable home.
- Adjusting to the changing needs of a child as they grow.

Providing financially is just one part of several parenting duties. If you aren't doing all of the above and not making an effort to share responsibilities, you need to find ways to compensate.

3. Thin line between earning money for family vs family neglect for career

“My ex brother-in-law thought it was so important that he makes as much money as possible. He is my ex brother in law because neither my sister or her kids cared if they were wealthy - they just wanted a husband and father. He

wasn't able to be either because he thought earning as much money as possible to support his family was more important than the family themselves." - Reddit

[According to Harvard Business Review](#), in a recent study, more than 1,000 students graduating from the University of British Columbia completed an assessment measuring whether they tend to value time over money or money over time. The majority of students reported prioritizing time. According to [Guardian](#), the top 5 regrets on deathbeds are: "I wish I hadn't worked so hard" and "I wish I had stayed in touch with my family and friends." [Research suggests](#) that good work-life balance significantly boosts productivity at work. So go ahead and block out a significant chunk to spend quality time with your family & watch your productivity and overall happiness skyrocket.

4. Start considering the non-earning spouse as an equal

"You know if you work 14 hour days, so does she right? How much do you think a nanny would charge for that? It is unreasonable to expect her to be a solo childcare worker for more than 8-10 hours a day." "There are plenty of lucrative careers that don't make the breadwinner feel entitled to not do housework or basic adult/parenting duties." - Reddit

A professional hourly cost of one home health aid is \$21 and can reach more than \$50, according to [Mass Mutual](#) and [CaringVillage](#). Average maid services range from \$120 - 280 per hour, according to [Home guide](#). The national average hourly rate for a babysitter is \$17.73 for one child, \$20.30 for two and \$21.49 for three kids, according to [Parents.com](#). The average cost to hire a personal chef is between \$45 - \$100 per person per hour, according to [fash](#). The average cost of a therapist for an hour is \$60-\$120 per hour. Your caregiver partner is doing all the above services for free, 7 days a week, without a holiday.

5. Prevent trauma on family by being an absent partner or parent

“What is the point of getting married and having a kid if you’re not going to spend any time with your family? You can’t undo the damage of never seeing your wife and child.” You need to start focusing on your life or you wont have them anymore.” -Reddit

Delegating and sharing uneven caregiving studies, as an absent parent, not only affects marriages but leaves children with mental issues. [According to Fatherhood.org & US Census Bureau](#), stated in [Fatherhood.org](#), on surveying 18.3 million children, 1 out of every 4 children live without consistent support from a biological, step or adoptive father. Absence of a parent can affect

children to more likely have behavioral problems and [attachment issues](#), face abuse & neglect, abuse drugs and alcohol, commit crimes or 2x more likely to drop out of school.

6. Arrange a suitable work-life arrangement with employer

“Compartmentalizing work vs home while working from home is not going to work perfectly everyday. It's important to discuss an arrangement with your employer where you can take necessary breaks or rearrange your schedule to accommodate situations that do arise.” “Being chained to your desk isn't directly correlated with your productivity.” “The people I’m on work calls with, have seen me feeding a baby, fixing toys etc. and everyone has been nothing but wonderful about it.” - Reddit

With almost 2 years of work from home, employers are adapting to the needs around one’s family. If you are struggling, have a conversation with your manager or leadership and devise ways to find a good work life arrangement. Speak to a [career coach or therapist](#) if you are struggling with setting boundaries at work.

7. Avoid a potential divorce in near future

“Your wife has been the only caregiver for 6 out of 7 days for 4 years. If two of you split, on joint custody, she'll be looking at at least 2-3 days to herself a week. But she has chosen to stay with you for all these years despite basically being a single parent. If she wants one day, figure it out.” - Reddit

[According to CDC and Legaljobs](#), the divorce rate in America is 2.9 per 1000. By identifying the wants and needs of your spouse and children before it's too late, you can prevent yourself from being among the 2.9.

The pandemic has seen a surge of posts concerning stay at home moms, where the career spouse has an unrealistic expectation for their stay at home caregiver spouse/partner counterpart to go above and beyond to support their family and children without any breaks or consideration. Read another similar post and online community standing against it, [here](#).

At what point, does the parenting dynamic shift from being an equal caregiver and partner to being merely a financial investor in your family and children's life, leaving your spouse as a single parent with full time custody, despite being physically present?

More than 300,000 women have left the labor force in September to take care of their family. Women remain 2.8% points below their November 2019 labor force participation rate, according to the Minneapolis Fed and [CBS](#). To allow

these women a real opportunity to restart their life and careers, we need our men counterparts to step up and be equal caregivers in 2021.

Share this article and tell us how you are making an active effort to be an equal caregiver for your family with hashtag #equalcaregiver. Tell us what you thought about this article on our [Website](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [Forum](#) pages. Help a caregiver return to the workforce by sharing our [free course](#), [forum](#), [community](#), [podcast](#) and [book](#). Make a difference by donating to our cause [here](#).

Connect with the author and founder on her [webpage](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Amidst The Great Resignation: Return To Work After A Career Break As A Startup Founder

4.4 million workers in America quit their jobs in August, according to the U.S. [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), termed as the "Great Resignation" in the industry. The most common reasons often being job dissatisfaction through unbalanced recognition/compensation to work ratio and self-reflection, reevaluation of career paths, often leading to discovery of misalignment in life/career purpose/aspirations with job and company focus. Making a real difference vs just existing as an employee among many employees in a company, is no

longer fulfilling and leading people to languish in their careers. If you are in the process of quitting your job or already left the workforce in search of your true purpose or making a difference in this world, this might be an excellent time to start thinking about converting your side hustles/projects into startups. This entails getting to work on exactly what you want to work on - betting on yourself and building that idea that could change the world, defining your work hours that suits your family needs and building an inclusive culture, exactly the way you want. According to CNBC, Average age of a billion dollar startup founder is 45, so there is plenty of time to get started.

Starting Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership at BITS Pilani (Dubai) in 2012 as co-founder and Chief Financial Officer, I closely worked with students, faculties, VCs and Angel Investors, on foster entrepreneurship on Campus through idea brainstorming, fundraising, writing Business Plan, devising go-to-market strategies and get startups running off the ground. [Building several ventures](#), including two pandemic ventures later - [Nabanita De Foundation](#) - [Returnships.org](#) (helping caregivers return to workforce after career gap through [free course](#), [podcast](#), [forum](#), [book](#) and [cohort](#)), [CovidhelpforIndia.com](#) (Unified Covid Resources in one place) and [more](#), organically reached 92 countries in 8 months of inception, here are some of my takeaways on how to find and/or start your next successful venture.

1. Find the idea

If you are in search of a new idea for your startup: The pursuit of startup ideas lies in your everyday challenges. What is a challenge you or your community faces everyday while existing through your life? Solve that problem. Is there a lack of representation of voices from your community? Become a platform for that voice. What opportunities and changes would have helped you or your loved ones lead a better life? Create those opportunities for others. What struggles have you overcome that no one else in your community did? Write a guide about it and coach others. What apps do you wish existed? Build that app. . By solving your everyday problems, you are changing the trajectory of millions of lives, who share the same experiences as you. There is way too much saturation and competition in the industries where people are aiming to solve an easy problem. Choose the hard problem and scope it enough to be solved. Aspire to make things 1000% better, instead of 10% better. Get to

market early. You are bound to get way more traction and stand out. Bonus: [Big themes of world challenges by United Nations](#), where you can make big differences by building social impact ventures.

When you have a side hustle/project/product with potential, here are your immediate next steps: Start by blogging about your learnings from building the product through the why (the problem statement), what you built, and how (the implementation). Not all side projects are worth making into a startup, this is a good time to evaluate its potential by asking these questions.

- Revenue/Customer - What is the feedback, traction and potential projected revenue from surveying potential customers on sharing early Minimal Viable Prototype (MVP) of the product or idea?
- Services/Features - What are the must-have features (Po) vs nice to have features? Focus on failing faster, through rolling out the initial must-have features, gauging traction and then reiterating based on feedback, instead of perfecting a product at the first go and delaying release.
- Product Lifecycle - If this is a product, define what is the lifecycle of this product? How long do you or your teammates plan to maintain this product? How many versions do you plan to rollout in the next few months?
- Time Commitment - How many hours a week do you plan to set aside to develop this product?
- Team - If you are a solo founder, how do you plan to explain your team? Complimentary Skills missing and necessary to be hired? Marketing, HR, Legal, Sales, Content Creators, User Experience, Developers - Backend, frontend, Data Scientist, Security? People needed to be hired/let go? Who would be doing what part of the project/startup? How frequently and when should be the daily standups?
- Craft Business Plan - Fill out this questionnaire for your business for your first stab at writing a Business Plan - What is the Problem, Solution, Unique Value Proposition, Cost Structure, Key Metrics, Unfair Advantage, Channels, Customer Segment and Revenue Streams.

2. Divide and conquer a hard problem: No problem is an impossible problem if it is scoped enough. The way I solve a hard or [moonshot problem](#) - something no one has built before - is by scoping it and dividing it smaller enough that each part of it is already built by domain level experts, then integrating and bubbling it up to create a concrete solution. When I built FiB, a chrome extension that can detect Fake News on the Internet in 24 hours, I started from a humane approach of how people detect Fake News organically. You read something suspicious on the internet, go on your choice of search engines, search up the news headline you just read. Google, returns the most relevant news articles. You go through the 1st few links and look out for news sources or websites you trust. Once you find a trusted website, you read the content of the website, match it in your head, if it matches the original piece and if it does, the first news link is determined as true. Else, you realize it was fake and decide to trust the content from the verified source you just read. To build the Fib Algorithm, by dividing the problem smaller enough, I could find each piece of the problem, solved by domain experts in that field and not reinvent the wheel - for example, utilizing Google's search ranking algorithm to get relevant similar web pages to existing content. Through devising a few use cases that work, for a hard problem and getting a MVP out, could be your way to start generating traction for your business, as you perfect the product on the side.

3. Get creative with Go-to-Market Strategies and finding early adopters

While fundraising or pitching, one of the most common questions is who is your customer? Who is going to pay for your product and invest in your service? So it's important to survey your customer and survey what features and services are the must haves of early adopters and how much they are willing to pay. Get creative with your go-to-market strategies to find these customers. It could be through content creation - blogs, videos or podcasts uploaded on social media, like the Tiktok Fyp or Instagram reels. You could tap into the Influencer market and their massive following and pay them to review your product. You could reach out to media and news publications for features by dropping them a tip. Say yes to speaking and outreach opportunities through conferences and events. Collaborate with other brands on the fitting niches, to cross market your product. Once you have generated a following for your brand, identify the early adopters for your product. Do a

soft/beta launch, by putting your product in their hands, get testimonials, request referrals and incorporate feedback for your products.

4 . Tell a story and Believe in your idea - Define the Why

This questionnaire below will help you craft your unique story for your business, while pitching or creating a mission statement:

- Why are you and your team the best person to solve this problem?
- What is your unique story?
- How did you find this idea?
- How did you get started?
- Why did you start this product/business?
- What is your goal/what are you trying to achieve?
- What is the problem you are trying to solve? What is its unique selling point?
- What struggles did you overcome while building on this idea?
- Where do you see your business going in the next 1 year? Next 3 Years? Next 5 Years?
- Describe an ideal character sketch or person, who would be using your product. What does their day-to-day life look like? What are their struggles? How will your product help?
- How is your product different from anything in the market? Is this disruptive innovation and borrowed innovation from another country to your region?

Craft a story and tie it with your purpose. Brands whose mission statement align with customers usually stand out.

5. Find the Money

Revenue and financial costs are another huge aspect of your business and potential. Ask yourself these questions to better understand your revenue structure:

- Product Pricing - Free, Premium, Freemium, Subscription Model, One time pay?
- Customer Segment - Who will pay for your product?
- Business Costs - Development, Scaling, Logistics, Salary, Hiring costs
- Funding to break-even & Profit.
- Funding Sources - Bootstrapping, Friends/Family, Angel Investors, VCs?
- Define market share and valuation.

Tech Career Paths For Caregivers Returning To The Workforce

Want to restart your career but unsure of your career path? What are some of the hottest jobs and highest paying jobs in the market? What skills from when I last worked, are still relevant today? Finances are tight currently - I'm not sure if I will be able to afford upskilling and reskilling to return to the workforce?

[Nabanita De Foundation](#)'s free [explore Careers module](#) is here to the rescue.

The module includes a list of several career paths with a high starting salary of 100k USD per year that include perks like paid maternal leave, remote work and more, with no need for a college degree. Returning back to the workforce after your career gap is an important milestone for you and we have curated a free exhausted list of resources for each career path to help you make an informed choice. This includes a day in the life of those career paths, free

training, comparative current industry salary expectations, stories of women who have successfully returned to the workforce in those career paths after a long career gap via our [Podcast](#), possible projects and work responsibilities, current jobs and more. Want to shadow or seek mentorship in your possible choice of career path? Join our [members site](#), leverage our [Forum](#) and upcoming [Cohort](#). Additionally take our [free Returnships course](#) and preorder [Return-to-work book](#) by [Nabanita De](#), aiding you through all stages of returning to the workforce after a career gap.

In the new normal of the semi-post pandemic recovering global economy, over 80% of job vacancies require digital skills of some kind. According to LinkedIn, remote work has grown by nearly 181% since 2020, indicating today's employees to be more tech-savvy than their counterparts. Employers now demand that their workforce align with today's myriad of technologies, platforms, and business practices. Here are some of the career paths in tech to pursue after a career gap, without necessarily needing a college degree.

1. Data Analytics

Data analytics is fundamental to modern businesses as it is the key to performance optimization through data collection, transformation, and insight generation. As a data analyst, your job is to make sense of data and

predict patterns/trends to use it to improve processes, optimize communication, foster innovation, and make business decisions. With an average salary of \$67,900 and nearly 338,000 jobs in the US alone, the data science industry is growing much faster than the national average by the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. To perform the basics of Data Analytics - Data cleansing, processing and predictions include knowing coding languages and Skills like SQL, Python, R, Microsoft Excel, SAS, PowerBi and Machine Learning. Checkout [Nabanita De Foundation's free Data Analyst career module](#), to learn about all companies who are offering free Data Analyst skills, possible data analyst projects, differences in job roles and salary between Data Analyst, Data Engineer, Machine Learning Engineer and Data Analyst & more.

2. Software Engineering

The current apps and websites, which have formed an integral part of your life, have all been built with the skills of Software Engineering. With an average salary of \$119,958, you can see that this is undoubtedly one of the most in-demand skills in the market with nearly 230,000 vacancies. You do not require any prerequisite, college degree or amount of smartness to get started. Coding is for everyone and easy, write [your first lines of code today](#). Coding can automate a huge part of your business and knowing how to code can save tons of money in development costs when starting a new business.

Get started with this basic skill of 2021 here: Checkout [Nabanita De Foundation's free Software Engineering Career module](#) featuring free resources - Free courses from Microsoft, Google and IBM to learn skills and coding languages like Java, Python, SQL, Q#, Javascript, Django, Cloud, App development, Web development, Blockchain, Virtual/Mixed Reality, Quantum Computing, Github and more, comparative industry salaries at each Software Engineering level, stories of women who have returned to workforce in Returnship programs of Software Engineering at Microsoft, Amazon, Goldman Sachs, possible Software Engineering projects to try and community support [here](#).

3. UI/UX Design

How should a website or app look? Where should a checkout button be in a webpage, for the customer to buy your product or sign up on your webpage? What font style and size makes sense? Where should the placement of your product and description be? An UI/UX Designer works on making apps, websites, digital consumption media and products, easier to use, more accessible and aesthetically pleasing, in order to bring in more engagement, reduce bounce off rates and increase revenue for businesses. Demand for UX designers are estimated to grow by 18% from 2015-2025, according to CNN. With an industry average of 100k USD salary according to Glassdoor,

thousands of companies around the world are hiring UI/UX designers to revamp their websites and mobile apps, following their customer demand. Checkout [Nabanita De Foundation's free UI/UX Designer Career Module](#), to learn about the day in life of a UI/UX Designer, free UI/UX fundamentals from Google, Figma, Hackdesign, CareerFoundry, General Assembly and Industry UI/UX Projects.

4. App Development

Mobile apps and smartphones are growing faster than beanstalk everywhere, as more people continue to use these handheld devices and apps for work and entertainment. As an Android developer, you'll have the chance to design, develop, and maintain applications. The fastest way to learn during your career gap is to take Google's [Associate Android Developer Certification](#) and publish an universal app on the app store. With an average salary of \$81,940, learn more about free App Development skills at [Nabanita De Foundation's app development resource page here](#).

5. Cybersecurity

As millions of businesses begin to digitize their processes and services, Cybersecurity threats include protecting IT infrastructures from malware, ransomware, and DDOS attacks etc. Spotting vulnerabilities in code and

networks can save your company from millions of dollars in data breaches. According to Cybersecurity Ventures, in 2021 alone, there are [nearly 3.5 million job vacancies](#) and the [average pay for a Cybersecurity professional is \\$100,000+](#) and rising quickly. Becoming a cybersecurity expert today by taking [IBM's Cybersecurity courses](#) and [free Microsoft Cybersecurity courses](#) at [Nabanita De Foundation's resource page](#).

6. IT Support

With digital adoption and remote work on the rise, IT support is rapidly becoming one of the most in-demand skills in the market. If you're intrigued at the prospect of returning to the world of IT support, you'll need to brush up on your concepts and even pick up new ones, such as technical support fundamentals, computer networking, operating systems, system administration, and IT infrastructure services, and Cybersecurity. With an average salary of \$50,800 and an industry with nearly 350,000 vacancies, get started with [Google's IT Support Course](#) and [additional free resources](#) for a career in IT.

7. Customer Support

Customer support representatives have always been at the front line of support for businesses in every industry. However, times have changed as

these professionals need to be more tech-savvy than their counterparts and use different technologies or channels to answer questions, solve queries, and provide information on websites, social media, email, video-conferencing, and phone. Fortunately, these are all tools you can learn to use on the job.

However, learning the soft skills in customer support, such as negotiation, conflict resolution, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence, are things you have to explore to deal with modern customers. If you don't have a college degree or special certifications, you can still take advantage of this in-demand skill, especially in tech companies and online services. To start, you can check out [Microsoft's service adoption specialist course](#) or [Skillbuild's customer service representative course](#).

8. Program Management

Love collaborating/talking to multiple people and understanding their needs? What to have a say on what gets build over how it gets build and own a project/product end to end. Do you see yourself keeping your family members accountable to finish tasks? Program/Product Management might be for you. The program manager has oversight of the purpose and status of the projects in a program and can use this oversight to support project-level activity to ensure the program goals are met by providing a decision-making capacity that cannot be achieved at project level or by providing the [project manager](#)

with a program perspective when required, or as a sounding board for ideas and approaches to solving project issues that have program impacts, according to Wiki. The National Average Salary for a Program Manager is \$113,446 according to Glassdoor. A lot of my colleagues in my previous companies in Program and Project Management came from non-tech backgrounds, had degrees in Chemistry, English or more and were very successful PMs. To learn all about Program/Product Management, explore free PM courses from Universities, Google, IBM, Coursera and more, and hear stories of women who returned to workforce in Program/Product Management in companies after more than 10 years of Careers gap to companies like Microsoft and Comcast, checkout [Nabanita De Foundation's Product/Program Management Module](#).

When It Comes To Your Career, Age Is Just A Number

Is your age getting in your way of restarting your career and life? “I am too old to go back to school, start a new business or career.” “Going back to work is for youngsters.” “Trying to get my life back is just a joke at this point or a waste of time, so why bother trying?” As a result, do you find yourself vicariously living your dreams through your family or children, instead of going out there and

making those dreams happen for yourself? Is this internal resentment, helplessness and pressure straining your relationships?

Through generations, an age timeline has been normalized for basic milestones like pursuing a career, buying a house, having children, raising a family, taking risks and building your empire. By 30, you are expected to have your life figured out. However life isn't a linear course. Everyone doesn't have the same starting line, privileges, resources or life experiences. It's time to change the narrative.

[Nabanita De Foundation](#) wants to eradicate ageism and encourage forging paths on your own timeline. Let's normalize taking career and caregiving breaks. Take the time you need, to cope with life as it happens. It is okay to pursue a new career at 50, go back to school at 60 or start a new company at 70. You are never late, you are on your unique timeline. Your special gifts include your life experiences, aligning you to make an impact in this world, that only you are uniquely capable of. By not taking a chance, you are devoiding all the people counting on you, including yourself and your purpose. Don't know anyone else who has done it before? Become the first person in your community to pave a new path of inspiration.

“This motivation is great but having a support group would really help.” Find your accountability partner or friend at [Nabanita De Foundation's Caregivers](#)

[Support Group event here](#). Additionally checkout our free returnship [course](#), [upcoming cohort](#), [forum](#), [podcast](#) and [book](#) by [Nabanita De](#) for all the inspiration you need in restarting your life and careers.

Still unconvinced to take the next steps? Here are some inspirational journeys of your favorite celebrities who set a legacy at their own timeline and did not let age be a factor for their dreams and career.

71-year-old Samuel L. Jackson landed his iconic role in "Pulp Fiction" at 45. Vera Wang switched careers and started her designer line at 40. Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, mother of 5, took a significant caregiving break and was elected into Congress at 47. Morgan Freeman reached his breakthrough year at 52. Kerry Washington landed her role with ABC's Scandal at 35. Julia Child, author of "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" started learning how to cook at 40. Angee Li, director of the movie "Life of Pi" and "Brokeback Mountain" was a stay at home dad before becoming a breakthrough director at 41. At 70, Kathryn Joosten started starring at the West Wing. Ray Kroc, the CEO of McDonalds, started the company at 53. At 45, Henry Ford produced the Model T, revolutionizing modern transportation. Jeremy Renner, "Hawkeye" in Marvel Cinematic Universe, landed his breakthrough role at 38. "The Office" was created by Ricky Gervais at 40 and brought to fame by Steve Carell at 43. Jessica

Chastain landed her breakthrough role at 34. Ken Jeong switched careers from being a doctor to becoming a comedy star at the age of 40. At 49, Jane Lynch rose to fame with "Glee." Kumail Nanjiani was 36 when he started playing "Dinesh" from Silicon Valley. Ted Danson, "Michael" from "The Good Place" rose to fame at 35. Alan Rickman, "Severus Snape" from Harry Potter, rose to fame at 42. Viola Davis, "How to Get Away with Murder" star with an Oscar, an Emmy, and a Tony, landed her major role at 43.

We all know J.K Rowling as the brilliant mastermind behind the amazing Harry Potter and the wizarding world. However, most people don't know that 12 years before the first Harry Potter book was released, 30 year old Rowling was a single mother-of-two, surviving on government aid, and clinically depressed. Twelve publishers' rejections on her first manuscript didn't stop her from persevering and eventually getting the green light for Harry Potter. Fast forward to today, her net worth is over a billion dollars, and Harry Potter is one of the greatest franchises of all time.

Sofia Vergara landed ABC's Modern Family at 37. At 21, as a divorced, single mother, she persevered through several modeling and acting jobs before she became one of the highest-paid TV actresses in the world. "I was a single mother very early, and what made me wake up every day, what made me be responsible, was that I had the motivation that I needed to make money, to

give my son all the things that I thought that he needed,” says Sofia in an interview with Coveteur.

Martha Stewart is a renowned entrepreneur and media personality known for her cookbooks, TV shows, and catering business. However, not many people know she worked as a stockbroker on Wall Street in the 70s and quit to change her career paths.

Michelle Williams is best known for her role as Marylin Monroe in “My Week with Marylin.” Upon the tragic death of her husband and actor Heath Ledger, she decided to take a break and focus on raising her daughter. However, when Violet was 12 years old, she returned to acting and appeared in critically acclaimed dramas and blockbusters like *Venom* and its sequel *Venom: Let There Be Carnage*.

Additionally celebrities who took Maternity and caregiving career breaks and returned to the workforce include Eva Mendez, Demi Moore, Adele, Zoe Saldana, Madhuri Dixit, Sridevi and Aishwarya Rai.

5 Ways Governments Can Support Women And Caregivers To Revive Their Careers And Lives

As a woman, managing family life and career is tough, especially in developing countries. The day-to-day struggles and lack of support and guidance can be truly traumatic. According to the [National Institute of Mental Health](#), serious mental illness is roughly 70 percent more prevalent in women than men.

Though structures to support women and domestic caregivers exist, their top-down nature and lack of representation render them incapable of providing the help that underrepresented demographics need. Secondly, even if the changes are recognized, their implementation requires numerous resources and years of effort to come into effect. Consequently, many women are deterred from reporting institutional and structural injustice simply due to an enforced *“it is what it is”* or *“we have always done it this way”* mindset.

Introducing Nabanita De Foundation

The lack of global platforms that work with a bottom-up approach is the first line of the problem. And tapping into underrepresented demographics as Nano-influencers of change is the first step in the right direction. This understanding led to the establishment of the Nabanita De Foundation - a global platform for people of any age to come forth and directly raise awareness on their day-to-day issues. [The Brown Asian-American Founder, Nabanita De](#), started spearheading the worldwide initiatives when she was just 18. In the past few years, Nabanita De Foundation initiatives have positively impacted 135 countries. Through fresh takes on modern-day problems, the Foundation strives to make a difference in the world. The organization invites people of all ages to offer suggestions and solutions for everyday issues.

Previous Nabanita De Foundation initiative - [Project FiB](#), downloaded in 135 countries and 7 continents in 2 years.

The Return-to-work Program

Nabanita De Foundations' non-profit initiative [Returnships.org](#) is helping people return to work after a career gap in 91 countries in 9 months. However, this is just the beginning. Many more factors need to be considered to create a level playing field to help restart women's lives and careers. Having grown up in several developing countries, Founder Nabanita De monitored women's day-to-day struggles closely. The Foundation aims to provide a global platform to amplify voices and issues of underrepresented groups. The Foundation also raises awareness and provides solutions to problems related to technology, education, gender equality, and more.

Major Roadblocks for Women

The following are some of the factors that continue to prevail as roadblocks in reviving women's careers and lives, which governments and organizations around the world can help with:

1. Lack of Home Loan Assistance for Single Moms & Domestic Caregivers Out of the Workforce

A domestic abuse survivor recently applied for a home loan assistance, only to be declined. Since she was unemployed and couldn't show income proof, despite having enough assets to cover a down payment, the bank's policies denied her request; this is a chicken-and-egg problem. Moving from an unsafe environment to a safe one is often crucial to restarting life and, eventually, a career. According to the [Single Mother Guide](#), 29% of single mothers in the US are unemployed. Employment as a prerequisite and a lack of institutional or governmental support forces women to stay in abusive situations. Women willing to turn their lives around often find no means of escape.

2. Lack of Low-Cost Therapy for Single Moms & Domestic Caregivers

Having to sacrifice your career due to factors out of your control can be detrimental to mental health. What makes the situation even worse is a lack of

support from other family members. Despite putting in hours of work daily in caregiving tasks, several women in abusive marriages are looked down upon and considered less of a partner for not being the family's breadwinner.

"I work several hours at work. What do you even do? Your degree is useless."

One of our stay-at-home-mom participants was repeatedly told this by her husband. This demographic needs intensive therapy to truly let go of years of trauma and disrespect and have a fresh start. Roughly 4.1 million single mothers in the US come from low-income backgrounds. There is a need to establish free or low-cost therapy centers with licensed, experienced professionals who can truly understand these women's journeys, their feelings, and how to generate life-changing benefits.

3. Lack of Pro Bono Law Clinics, Stricter Law Enforcement, and "Restart-life Programs"

Generational trauma passes on in societies that have normalized abusive relationships and marriages where women are expected to "make it work." Women undergo abuse for years without realizing how toxic environments hamper them from reaching their true potential. Many of these women feel ashamed to come forward and share their experiences since they are taught to maintain the picture of a perfect family. Additionally, in some cases where women report first signs of abuse, often they are denied from getting concrete help since *"nothing major has happened to them yet."*

Often reporting takes a back seat due to lack of costs. It is important to create anonymous forums for this demographic to come forth and seek legal advice for free. Women-help shelters should be created for women to seek refuge when they see early signs of danger. "Restart-life programs" similar to Nabanita De Foundation's Return-to-work program should be common trade where women can benefit from new jobs and temporary housing to get them on their feet.

4. Lack of Healthy Marriage and Family Training Programs

Domestic violence affects not only marriages but also the children witnessing it. Children raised in an unsafe environment, separated from mothers for long periods, or with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) cannot form a secure

attachment with their parents. Instead, their [attachment style](#) will be avoidant, anxious, and disorganized, according to development psychologist Mary Ainsworth.

Breaking generational trauma shouldn't be only on the shoulders of the new generation. Raising awareness on what a healthy marriage and family looks like through setting good examples is essential. A framework for comparative analysis can help people recognize their roles and responsibilities and help them work on rectification.

5. Lack of Universal Paid Leave for Caregivers

According to a [Ziprecruiter statistic](#), an average private home caregiver earns \$43,649 per year. However when women sacrifice their career for caregiving for their family, they are expected to do this for free. This demographic often struggles through financial woes leading to confidence setbacks, trying to be a full time caregiver and find jobs to support their family financially at the same time. Recognizing “stay-at-home” caregiver as a job nationwide and passing a national paid-leave policy will induce stress-free career breaks and help retain women’s careers and improve gender equality at the workplace.

Your Company Needs A Returnship Program In 2021. How Do You Build One?

“After 10 years of career gap, a lot has changed in terms of technology & industry processes. When I first started looking, it felt impossible to get an interview when engineers currently working in the industry were applying for the same jobs I was interested in.” - [Returnships.org](#) Podcast Participant

Pandemic 2021 “Returnship” programs are traditional 12-16 week paid virtual remote programs, solely targeted to this demographic with at least one or more years of career gap through unemployment or underemployment (pause in professional career with part time or side jobs), with a potential to be hired for full time at the end as per performance. “Returners” are the participants of these Returnship programs.

Nabanita De Foundation Return-to-work helps caregivers return to the workforce after a career gap. Caregivers who do an amazing job in supporting their family by raising tomorrow's leaders and shoulder countless responsibilities, have amazing leadership and organization skills which they learnt "on-the-job" while running their house. This unique demographic brings unique perspectives to the table and contributes to innovation at work through empathy, prioritization, navigating ambiguity and meeting needs of clients who cannot articulate very well, like their children or a sick family member.

Founder [Nabanita De](#) amplifies voices of Returnship domain professionals including Audible “Next Chapter” Returnship Founder, Supriya Mimani and Amazon Returnship Program Founder, Alex Mooney on building, structuring, preparing and hiring for Returnship Programs. A [Returnships.org](#) study on current Returnship Programs, returnees and caregivers trying to return to the workforce after a career gap, unlocked these key takeaways on building a holistic Returnship Program.

Hire for potential and upskill: The expectation coming into Returnship Programs is that the candidate has leveraged the skills on their resume several years ago. “If a candidate pauses their career for caregiving, it's not likely that they are writing formulas on a daily basis. Focus on past professional experiences and current strong fundamentals, as a good indicator of a candidate's potential,” says Mooney. "If you are hiring for Software Engineering, it's better to focus on problem solving skills and familiarity with a coding language, rather than proficiency in a specific language."

Caregiving and experiences pursued in the career gap can also be a good indicator of fit with your company's leadership principles and culture. “A candidate helped her kid's school project team win a prestigious award. This

showed us her ability to learn, collaborate with different stakeholders and align towards a common vision,” says Supriya.

The skills and job roles that were relevant when your returner was last working may be obsolete, unfamiliar or replaced by newer technology and roles. Develop weekly behavioral and technical skills training around new age skills, industry and core company competencies to bring your returners up to speed. Add optional Grassroots level training like how to effectively use Microsoft Office, Google Suite or the operating system of your company. Include caregiver centric sessions like normalizing career breaks through amplifying employee stories, overcoming parenthood challenges, work-life balance, confidence building, networking, branding or super specific trainings like Writing Programs or Fast and Agile processes of your company. Incorporate regular interactions with leadership and opportunities to learn and connect cross teams, organizations, roles and products, to help Returners discover their true fit and passion. Have feedback check-ins with your Returners and help them feel like their voice matters. Identify Returner’s individual strengths, opportunities for improvement and aspirations to iterate and build a dedicated upskilling program.

Redefine interview processes: Certain Returnship Programs interview through an initial informational meeting with the recruiter/team, followed by a phone screen and 2 additional interviews, which span over the duration of a month and lead to a Returnship Program Offer. However, the main goal of hiring these candidates is to help them permanently transition to the workforce as a full time employee. With Returnships, hiring for potential over perfection, managers and mentors can use the entire Returnship duration as a low risk opportunity to collect rich data points about the Returnees performance and gauge with support and training. Is the candidate able to ramp up, learn quickly and provide value to the organization? Several companies have dedicated special projects assigned to Returners at the beginning of the Returnship to make a genuine impact. “Generally around week 8 is a good indicator to see if the candidates are able to operate more independently to contribute to the team and company and have stepped into the role,” says Mooney. Supriya states, “Many Audible Returnees received full time offers at the end of Returnship. This is the impact that we can make with the right level of learning support for Returnees.”

Train your staff for special programs like Returnships: Successful Returnship programs train their recruiters to be talent agents for the Returnship candidates. Some programs operate by recruiters hiring Returners and talent-team-matching for the entire company while others hire returners for dedicated roles. Incorporating algorithms in the hiring portal to automatically redirect candidates with gaps in career to the Returnships Program could be another way to seek Returnship talent. The first conversation with a recruiter should be simplified into a general story-telling conversation with the candidate. Normalize career breaks and encourage conversations around career gap, past skills experience (done several years ago), current career aspirations, what prompted them to apply and the nearest location, etc. Have your Recruiters prep the candidate on how to map experiences to answer interview questions in a Situation Task Action Result (STAR) format and give training recommendations on books, resources and more. Companies have also leveraged a mentor and onboarding buddy, separate from a Returnship Manager, to serve as allies and additional support for the Returnship candidate throughout the 16 weeks.

Build a solid plan for 16 weeks: A [Returnships.org](#) By [Nabanita De](#) study on Returnship programs, showed that Returners and caregivers trying to return to the workforce after a career gap unlocked this amalgamated structure as a plan of action for a 16 week Returnship Program:

- Week 1 - Returner Bootcamp: Returners get a feel of company culture, meet executive leaders, are acquainted with leadership principles, different teams, products, toolkits, roles and employee resource groups of the company. They are provided with a plan of action on how they and their team will create an impact for the organization on a weekly basis through deliverable timelines and weekly actions. They are also mapped to a mentor and onboarding buddy, for the rest of 16 weeks.
- Week 2 - Getting to know the work that the Returner's team and org does.
- Week 3 - Onboarding with day-to-day tasks and tools.
- Week 4 - Returner is assigned a specialized project/task, with clear milestones, success metrics and business impact value. The project may be assigned here to allow for ramp up time or at the

beginning of the Returnship. Focus on working with the help of mentors on tasks. May have a checkpoint here to set expectations.

- Week 6 - Organize a Returner internal career and mentorship fair to meet with different teams and learn what they do. HR Check-in to see if Returnship is going well and/if Returner needs to be mapped to a different team or mentor.
- Week 7-8 - More hands-off. Owning end to end workflow. Leveraging mentors for brainstorming or validation for decision making.
- Week 8 - Another check-in or Formal Perf Review. What is going well, what can be improved and building opportunities to develop in the next half of the Returnship to develop the missing skillsets. This will give the candidate an opportunity to showcase how they developed their skills through support and feedback.
- Week 12 - You may have another checkpoint here for the final 2 weeks.
- Week 14-16 - Full-time offers based on performance. Option to shadow/work with a team or role of their choice for a day or week.

Incorporate skills training and current returners happy hour with different org leaders for each week. Assign your current returners a cohort if you are a rolling program and invite them to morale events to build a community. Have regular standups to track their project succession.

Remove the anxiety from the first day: The first day back to work after a long career gap can come with a lot of anxiety for your Returner. Make sure you have a game plan for a smooth start. “I received the laptop and hardware and step by step instructions on how to set up my IT equipment ahead of time. My Returnship manager reached out before my start date and made me feel comfortable on what to expect on my first day. I was also introduced to my mentor and on-boarding buddy, who was assigned to help me throughout the process. It took away all the anticipation from my first day and made me confident to begin my Returnship Process. On the first day I was provided an outline of the upcoming 16 weeks of the Returnship Program, with weekly

activities and a deliverables timeline,” says Ramya, a current Returner in Amazon’s Returnship Program with 10+ years of a prior career gap.

Integrate flexible work hours: Moms and caregivers left the workforce in the first place due to unbalanced work-life balance. Incorporating flexible working hours instead of traditional 9-5 is crucial to retain them and prevent burn out, especially in the pandemic, where caregivers are working over 15+ hours, managing work and life. Thoughtful processes integrated to reduce their working hours would help you attract and retain the best talents. It could be something as simple as helping them plan out their day to structuring your Returnship program as a slow transition into corporate 40 hours, over the duration of 16 weeks.

Cohort vs. rolling processes: If your company wants to employ a Cohort model to build strong community culture and belongingness among your Returnees, check out [Returnship.org’s podcast with Nabanita De, Audible Returnship Program](#) on how they piloted their first Cohort. If you believe that you would rather meet the Returners at their own timelines of returning to the workforce and build community processes around it, check out [Returnships.org Podcast with Nabanita De, Amazon Returnship Program](#). Irrespective, build a community through hosting regular meetups with current returners of the company and doing team building exercises, morale events and creating a support network for each person to rely on.

“Amazon wants to normalize career breaks. Generating awareness about Returnships as a concept to look for, through getting the word out and helping people feel good about restarting their careers is where [Returnships.org](#) helps,” says Alex Mooney, program owner of Amazon’s Returnship Program and Principal Diversity Program Manager.

A glass ceiling is being broken when people are gradually being more accepting of non-traditional career paths and realizing how career break journeys can provide immense value, enhancing skill-sets in diverse ways and celebrating unique values, perspectives and skills, caregivers bring to the table and organization.

Work-Life Balance For Stay-At-Home Moms Returning To The Workforce

Who will take care of my house or look after my kids while I am working? How much of my day to day schedule needs to change to accommodate a career? Is work-life balance even a feasible dream for me, despite being passionate about restarting careers? During the pandemic, there isn't an option for day care and in-person school. My kids and home need constant assistance for an additional 3-4 hours. When will I do my work? I wish I could talk to another mom who went back to work after a career gap to hear how she did it.

As a stay-at-home mom thinking about returning to the workforce after a career gap, did these thoughts ever flood your mind and prevent you from taking steps towards returning to the workforce? Not anymore. Nabanita De Foundation, through the Free Returnship [Course](#), incorporates [jobs and opportunities](#), [Forum](#), [Podcast](#), [Cohort](#) and [Book by Nabanita De](#), helping caregivers to navigate through all stages of returning to the workforce after a career gap. This includes identifying crucial conversations and building a roadmap to restart careers and live their dream life. Founder Nabanita De sat down with caregivers who successfully returned to the workforce after a career gap to map out day-to-day schedules that work and important tips on transitioning from being a full time stay-at-home mom to being a mom and career professional. If you are a mom, participate in this conversation and use [#ReturnshipsMomsWFH](#) in your social media posts to tell us how you are keeping up with work-life balance.

Decide pertaining career path and organization - Your work life balance can hugely differ from what you plan to pursue in your professional life. Do you plan to be your own boss and build a startup/business or learn about organization structures, latest technologies and work for a company? Do you

want to wear multiple hats and have a lot of ownership by working for a startup or working on a world famous product in an established big company? Do you want to return to work, just to be financially free and have sources of income or want to work for a particular passion or leverage a certain skill? There are many sources of passive income that can be completely automated like real estate, affiliate marketing or drop shipping, which can be done completely remotely, virtually and at your own convenience without 9-5 structures. Each of these options would have varied work structures and hugely dictate what your work-life balance would look like.

Discuss work time flexibility with your employer: “Working in tech allows for plenty of opportunities for remote work. My employer was flexible on work timings. Life happens and employers understand, it's good to communicate if you need to leave the office at 4:00 PM for carpool pick up or soccer practice,” states Jhansi Reddy, who returned to work as a Principal Technical Program Manager at Microsoft after almost 10 years of career gap. (Listen to her entire interview here). “I had a conversation with my manager about the hours my child would need that I would need to be away. I made sure my deliverables were delivered up to mark and since my employer was in the Central Time Zone, 2 hours ahead of me, I was able to put in early mornings before my daughter woke up and late night hours to complete my work instead of traditional continuous 9-5,” says Karima.

Enlist the help of your family to take turns caregiving: “When starting work after a gap in career, I had a conversation with my husband and kids to figure out a schedule that works for us and my family,” says Ramya, Amazon Returnship Participant. “As the pandemic happened, my child needed constant assistance for online school. My husband, inlaws and I took turns sitting with my daughter to make sure each of us had the opportunity and space to pursue our careers, while caregiving. This was a boon as my husband spending time with my daughter, actually brought them a lot closer in the pandemic,” says Karima Vishram, a Goldman Sachs Returnship Participant.

Optimize your daily schedule: “When I came back to work after being a stay-at-home mom for a few years, I really had to take a look at my schedule and make a few changes. This involved cutting down on my PTA daytime activities, optimizing on my time to plan better for meals and grocery trips and

acknowledging that I don't have that much flexibility with my availability anymore,” says Jhansi. Ramya has also optimized her time by mostly cooking in the evenings and warming up and eating the prepped meal throughout the day.

Define a dedicated work from home space as your office: When Returnships.org’s Founder Nabanita De was working with her family member returning to work, she noticed that creating a dedicated work from home space setup with a desk, chair, laptop and book rack for her family member really helped with mental transformation and motivation. Karima shares a similar experience where she transformed her walk-in closet into an office, with a monitor and webcam. Creating a working spot at home mentally separated her work from living space, and helped her 3 year old daughter identify that space to not disturb her mom when she was working in it and accept her mom’s new working schedules.

Use Returnship Opportunities to dip your toes into returning to the workforce: Returnships are 12-16 week paid working opportunities to work for employers like Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft and more, recruiting people with a significant gap in career. It can lead to a full time offer if you do well in the program. Returnships can be an interesting way to test to see if you would really enjoy going back to the workforce and get a feel of current company and organization structures, despite whatever career trajectory you would take.

We asked Ramya, an Amazon Returnship participant, to share a day in the life of a working mom when pursuing Returnship opportunities: “My day to day schedule after joining work includes: Wake up and help my daughter with getting ready for school and sign her in for distance learning. My husband and I take turns depending on our work schedule. Most days, I have meetings in the morning, so my husband takes care of our daughter. I start my work routine by checking my emails and talking to my team members in India before 9 AM. 9:30 -12 I work on my projects and then break for lunch. I mostly cook in the evenings, so I just warm up food and we eat lunch as a family. Afternoons, most days I have meetings between 1 and 3. After that, I start working on my project deliverables until 5:30 or 6PM. Then I take a

small break and workout for 30 mins and plan for dinner and wind up cooking and cleaning before 7:30- 8PM. We wrap up dinner before 8:30PM and I sync up with the India team again with updates from the day over a 30 mins call. I unwind after wrapping up my work (sending emails, status etc.) between 9:30-10:30 PM.”

Write Your First Lines Of Code Without Any Tech Background

Nabanita De Foundation’s free course, the upcoming cohort and book by Nabanita De, is committed to providing grassroots level skills training to bridge the gap between stay-at-home caregivers and returning to the workforce after a career gap. Learning to code is a basic skill of 2021, with 3.9 million open US tech jobs incorporating starting salaries of 100K with amazing perks like remote work, maternity leave, 401K support, flexible working hours etc., along with no requirement of a college degree. Through writing a few lines of code, you can change the world and make an impact on billions of lives. I built [Project Fib](#), a chrome extension to detect Fake News on the Internet during my grad school at [HackPrinceton](#), which had an organic reach on [1000+ News Articles and 50+ universities worldwide](#) and spearheaded an entire revolution of detection of Fake News Research worldwide.

Most programming languages have the same basic structures (in the form of data structure and algorithms), and vary just in terms of syntaxes, making learning to code in one language, a skill transferable to any coding language.

Thus a thorough understanding of coding basics, ability to code these data structures and apply them to real world problems, form the crux of all coding interviews. Let's jump right in, into coding basics, to jumpstart your career in tech without any tech background.

Coding Basics

1. **Algorithms** - Think of the time you cooked a new recipe. You visualized the dish, curated a list of ingredients, gathered the ingredients/pots/pans in one place and followed step by step procedure to prepare the dish. To delegate this task to a computer, you will need to break down the tasks into granular levels and provide step by step instructions, also known as programs, code or algorithms. The process of writing instructions and delegating to the computer is called coding or programming. Just like in cooking, where you need several items like oil or spices to cook and pots/pans to hold the food, algorithms needs various coding alphabets, grammar and data structures to be written and are as follows:
2. **Data Types** - Data Types are like pots and pans which hold the food (data) being cooked(processed), when you are cooking (writing code). Variable data types are like cups, which can be refilled with different kinds of tea/coffee and cleaned, whereas constant data types are like your birthday - cannot be changed, once declared. Most basic variables in any programming languages may include int (storing numbers without decimals), string (storing letters, words and sentences), char (characters for storing single letter or alphabets), bool (boolean for storing true or false, 0 or 1) and float/double (for storing numbers along with its decimal point). Just like how each baby is named, to be recognized through their lifetime, data types and structures may need to be declared with a name and/or values, to be used later.

3. Data Structures - Data Structures are like living organisms, while data types are like organs of the body, when it comes to storage (of data). Just like a lawyer would be summoned for a legal matter vs a real estate agent for buying a property. Each data structure serves different purposes and choosing the right one is necessary to write efficient code.
4. Methods/Functions - Methods/Functions are like a recipe, which leverages step by step instructions/code to do a task, identified through its name (like potato curry recipe) & may require ingredients, pots & pans (data types and data structures) as input to cook the dish (give an output). After the dish is cooked, it may or may not be served in a bowl (data returned through a data structure or variable). Just like a company has different job functions, data structures may have their set of methods & functions.

Types of Data Structures

1. Arrays - A good parallel to arrays can be hotels. The location of each hotel room (array element), next to each other, stays immovable with overall fixed hotel size, while people in it might change. To visit a person in a hotel room, you will need their room number. Likewise to call an element of an array, you will require where it's stored in the array - its array index. Unlike your hotel room numbers starting from 1, arrays start from 0, thus the last index referenced is $n-1$, n being the size of the array. While cleaning the hotel rooms, the cleaners will sequentially check each room to clean, likewise while iterating through array elements, it can be accessed through indexes 0 to $n-1$.
2. List - Lists are like online shopping carts. You can add/delete items/elements to the cart. There is no upper limit as to how many items can be added to the cart. Lists differ from arrays in the way that list's size can be changed as per convenience.
3. Linked List - Linked Lists are like compartment coaches of a train. Each compartment is linked with one another through a train link (pointer). A compartment (element in a Linked List)

can be moved around by detaching from previous compartments and reattaching to new compartments. Linked List triumphs in ease of shuffling up sequences of elements and easy deletions.

4. Stacks - A good parallel is a stack of plates of the same size, on your kitchen counter, stacked on top of each other. While eating, you pull out the top one first to eat. To get to the bottom plate, you remove each plate from the top to get to it. Stacks operate in last in, first out fashion. They have operations like push (push to the stack), pop (pop top element from stack) and peek (taking a peek at the first element of the stack).
5. Queues - Think of your grocery cashier queue. The first person who gets in the queue is first served, followed by second and third. If you are at the end of the line, you are served last and you wait for your turn. Queue operates in first in, first out fashion and has operations like enqueue to add to the queue and dequeue to remove.
6. Maps/Hashtable - To follow your friend on social media, you need their unique social media handle. Maps/dictionary/hashtable operate the same way by assigning a list of key value pairs, their key can be something that uniquely identifies the value like their instagram handle. The value could also be another data structure.
7. Trees - Think of your family hierarchy tree, your ancestry started from a "root". Each node in a tree is equivalent to a person, who has a "name" (value) and can have one or many children/parents. The youngest kids in your family tree, with no children are called "leaf" in tree data structure. Just like your family hierarchy tree, in a computer tree data structure, each node in a tree is connected through a parent-child relationship link. A binary tree, as name suggests, has at most 2 children - left child and right child. A variant of binary tree is Binary search tree (BST) Data Structure, where the value in the left child is less than equal to the right child, which makes searching for data easier. Level of a tree is similar to the generation count and is the distance from the root to leaves (current generation) of the tree.

8. Graphs - Graphs are similar to social graphs of social media, where each person can have multiple followers, follow multiple people and are interlinked. Unlike trees, each graph node does not necessarily share a parent-child relationship.

Famous Graph Traversal Algorithms

1. Breadth First Search - If you need to ask for money or a favor. First you think of all your closest friends to see if they can help you out. If that fails, you explore the list of all your second degree connections or acquaintances. Further when no one in your network could be of help, you started looking through a list of all friends of friends and strangers. Breadth First Search works in a similar fashion of exploring all connections in the same depth and then moving on to next & can be implemented with Queues.
2. Depth First Search - Think of all your past relationships. You started with your first partner, got to know them, did events together, and got introduced to friends of friends. When that didn't work out, you moved on and repeated the cycle of getting to know each other with your new partner. Depth First search is all about traversing through each option "in depth" before moving on to the next and can be implemented with Stacks.

Additionally, Time and Space Complexity are two metrics, often used to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the chosen Data Structures and Algorithms. Time complexity refers to how long it will take to run the written code. Space Complexity is the space it would take to store the data in the data structure. Both of them are reported in terms of Big O Notations, in terms of n , where n is the size of the input.

Pick Your Next Career Mentor And Accelerate Your Career

The need for career coaching and mentoring can be recognized as early as high school or undergraduate level. Seniors can be struggling through their college/graduate school applications, aiming to craft the perfect profile to fit the criterion of their dream schools too late in the process. My undergraduate [research paper](#) “*Development of a career mentorship through active alumni-student interaction and collaboration*” was my first step towards providing a step-by-step mentorship guide on how education institutions can implement and enforce career counselling services right from freshman year. Returning to the workforce process is quite similar. At Nabanita De Foundation, we are committed to building an effective game plan for people with a career gap or deciding to take one to maximize their chances of pursuing their dream careers through our [free course](#). It incorporates our [therapy/career/life coach](#) module and [our first returnships book](#), to prep you through rudimentary stages of returning to work after a career gap.

When I first connected a returner who was out of the workforce for 20 years to a career mentor, she hesitated to ask for help. This month, through the our [Podcast with Nabanita De](#), our mission was to simplify the entire process of career mentoring and what to expect. [Listen to the Podcast here](#) and [ask dedicated career questions here](#) to our guest speakers/career coaches on our [Returnships Forum](#). Coupled with my experience mentoring people from MIT, UMass Amherst, Northeastern University, Superposition, Microsoft and more, here is our step by step guide on choosing a career mentor/coach and how to make the most out of the experience.

When should you seek a career mentor?

A common question asked by our participants is “When is the right time to seek a mentor?” Although any time can be a good time to hire a career professional to help accelerate your career progression, mentorship becomes more meaningful when you have a career goal in mind and/or want faster

results to pursue a career challenge or opportunity. Career goals can range from overcoming knowledge, skills, confidence or resource gaps, to gaining clarity on career choices, to identification and application of core strengths, to explaining gaps in resume, to pursuing your dream career, or to having a better work-life balance. A mentor or coach can be your accountability partner who is invested in your career success, especially when you are struggling with how to get started or how to advance in your career. They can help you efficiently arrive at your own internal answers.

Understanding what career coaches and mentors offer

A career mentor helps people go where they want to go in their career. They are your career cheerleaders, with a unique eye to identify your blind spots and a bird eye view to help strategize on what to look for in your next opportunity. They can help you clarify and narrow down your unique strengths and journey. They can help draft a vision on how to communicate your strengths to the world and apply them as your superpower to develop your aspirations and vision.

A career mentor is not a therapist. Their main focus is your professional effectiveness and success. However, mentors do acknowledge that professional and personal lives are interconnected and affect each other interdependently - they can help draw connections between the two to maximize your career efficiency.

Define what you need before seeking mentorship

Set some time aside to answer the questions to the best of your abilities. Some questions from the worksheet include:

1. Career stage? Student? Early/Mid Career/Executive? Sabbatical? Caregiving? Returning to work?
2. What services/support do you need?
3. Mentorship duration/frequency
4. Expectations, outcomes, roles and responsibilities from mentorship
5. Preferred learning and feedback medium/format/approaches
6. Desired Career milestones and timelines

7. If securing a job is your milestone, define: job search status, past/current and desired salary, dream employer: industry, size, values, role, responsibility, exposure and goals. New role timeline: current stressors, lacking skills, education/training or new job
8. Day-to-day career centered discipline
9. Personality, core values, intrinsic/extrinsic rewards
10. Preferred mentor skills, expertise and background

For the next 18 months, focus on what is achievable, ways to maximize impact/make a difference and how to make the outcome more visible/measurable. After filling out this worksheet, head to the [Returnships Forum](#) to introduce yourself and look for mentors, using these pointers:

The right career mentor/coach

When choosing a career mentor, be aware of the types of career mentors and what they offer, as they range on various focus points from different career stages, skill sets and mindsets. An early to mid-career mentor may focus on finding the right role or employer, career transitions, promotions or gaining visibility within your organization while an executive coach may help with creating a narrative/brand to help you stand out as a leader. While common mentorship services include resume/LinkedIn/cover letter/elevator pitch review and drafting, interview preparation and practice, job application strategies, transitioning roles/career/industry and negotiation tips, a mentor can also be needed for more behavioral aspects of your career, like how to be more effective on your role, conflict resolution strategies with difficult coworkers, creating a sustainable strategy to prevent burnout, measures to onboard faster on new roles, explaining gaps in career, crafting examples for your “tell me a time when” questions in your behavioral interviews and helping gain clarity on your true purpose on a dead-end through discovering strengths, interests, fears/insecurities and coming up with a solid plan of action to implement. Feel comfortable to ask for testimonials or results other clients have gotten when choosing a mentor. It's completely normal to navigate through several mentors until you find a mentor who fits your current career goal and repeat.

Where can I find a career coach or mentor?

Our dedicated mentorship cohort provides dedicated mentorship to caregivers returning to the workforce where we match each mentee to an industry mentor based on their profile, interests and needs. Our forum is also a great place to [sign up](#) and [follow several mentors](#) with returning to work expertise. Additionally searching “#CareerCoach” on LinkedIn and social media platforms can help you find a plethora of career resources. If you are a current student or alumni, your university’s dedicated career counselors department could be something to explore. Your local library also most likely contains a career support cell for the local community. If you work for an organization, your mentor could be someone on your same team or someone from senior leadership on a different team. It could also be a subject matter expert within your interested domain in the same or different companies. You could start by asking your manager for a good match for a potential mentor or look into your organization’s mentoring programs to get matched with diverse individuals with skill sets you can really benefit from.

Unconventional questions to ask your mentor

If you are stuck on how to best prepare for this mentorship or career coaching session, here are some out-of-the-box questions to ask your mentor or coach:

1. Visibility, voice and value: How can I be more visible and gain visibility in the right forum and management level? How do I get my voice heard? How can I be taken more seriously early in my career? How can I add more value through leveraging resources and networks?
2. How do I secure a seat at the table and maintain it?
3. How can I effectively expand exposure to other industries, professionals and companies?
4. What is my unique selling point, strengths and expertise, which can maximize impact at the workplace?
5. How can I build and grow a strong network?
6. How do I silence my negative self talk and imposter syndrome which is holding me back?

7. How do I identify my next mentors or sponsors in my organization?
8. What product areas/side projects with a unique value proposition, are most aligned to my true purpose and passions, that can be undertaken with least disruptive ways?
9. How do I find a good work-life balance, especially in a pandemic when the boundaries are blurry?
10. How do I upgrade my performance from good to exceptional? Where should my energy, resources and time be focussed vs wasted currently?
11. Which relationships, expectations, structures and conditions help me excel and fail?

You need to define success for this mentorship for the next 6 months. Have regular retrospectives with yourself and your mentor to measure if you are on track for your goals.

How to add value for your mentor

Mentorship is a two-way street. While mentees gain mentor's expert guidance, saving them time in reaching their career goals, mentors gain leadership and management skills while helping mentees from diverse backgrounds and temperament hit their Key Performance Indicators (KPI) milestones. Often the best mentorship comes much later, initially starting with reaching out and building a solid relationship. Take the initiative to get to know your mentor and their long term goals and be intentional and specific to see how you can help them attain those goals, utilizing skills in areas you are stronger (Reverse Mentoring). If you are unable to identify problems areas for your mentor, simply ask if they have any problems and if you can help. If you see a quality in

your mentor that stands out in your mentorship process, make sure to call it out and help your mentors identify their superpower. Be that mentee who brings in fresh perspectives and unique experiences to discussions, providing mentors with holistic viewpoints on various topics and expanding his/her/their knowledge. Even after the mentorship ends, stay in touch and schedule periodic check-ins monthly or yearly and see how this relationship can continue to add value in both of your lives.

Our advice from career mentors/coaches

1. Don't let others' views and pace slow you or your career progression down.
2. Preserve your inner peace.
3. Continue to self advocate for your work.
4. Be aware of resources around you and implement them into action.
5. Some experience is better than no experience. Don't let any work be beneath you when you need to gain experience. Take that apprenticeship. Invest time and build your passion project.
6. 80% of the opportunities are not posted. Tap into the hidden job market by updating and reaching out to employers through LinkedIn.
7. Do things you are excited about. Be an initiative taker.
8. Apply for jobs you have disqualified yourself for.
9. You don't need to spend an exorbitant amount of money to gain an education. There are many free courses that can get you a high paying job.
10. Build a strong network.

Find Yourself After Years Of Caregiving: Lessons From A Pageant Queen

After spending countless years in the kitchen, putting family first and caregiving, it is very natural for caregivers to undergo an identity crisis, unable to associate with who they are, outside of their relationships. A common question asked by our participants when starting their returning back to work journey is, “Who even am I? I don't know myself anymore.” Our [free course](#) incorporates a [Discover Yourself Module](#), and draws inspiration from diverse domains like pageantry to help these caregivers achieve self mastery and self love as the first step of their transformation process.

Winning Miss India Emerald City Washington (Seattle) and further representing Washington state at the National Stage of Miss India USA Platform, I had the opportunity to interact with various personality coaches and queens from Miss Universe, Miss World and Miss India Worldwide platforms. Transformational journeys are often a common occurrence in pageantry where a shy person, struggling with life hurdles and imposter syndrome, metamorphosizes into a brand new confidently beautiful, philanthropic leader and influencer, overcoming their fears, converting their struggles to superpower and authentically channeling their story as an ambassador for social causes. The magic sauce from the pageantry world can hugely benefit individuals struggling to find themselves, find their calling and become the best version of themselves. Hence, here are some of my learnings from my pageantry journey, in order to help to find yourself and start your transformation journey.

Build a strong impression

The way you walk into the room sets the tone for the rest of the conversation. How confidently you carry yourself reflects your personality. Have good posture, stand tall, show off your bright smile, be welcoming through your

speech and body language with calm/collected/confident composure, slow down while speaking and enjoy the process. Be a hype man and build others up. This will help with setting a magnetic aura.

Update your wardrobe with outfits that celebrate your body type. Pick colors that suit your skin tone: go for warm undertones if you have green veins, and pick cool tones if you have blue veins. Be intentional about your image, pick your outfit based on how you would like to be perceived and dress the part.

Get to know yourself better

Feeling unsure of yourself? Here is a thought exercise from [Returnships.org](https://returnships.org) to help you better understand yourself. Take a pen and paper and describe yourself using each of these categories through this Self Reflection Template:

1. Basics: Name, age, past profession
2. Your Passions: What are your interests? What are you passionate about? What are your daily struggles? What problem do you want to solve? What motivates you? What social causes do you support?
3. Your Influences: How would you describe your personality? Who is the most influential person in your life? What is the craziest rumor you've heard about yourself? Who is your role model? Who are your favorite personalities? What are things you hold gratitude for? What are you grateful for? What embarrasses you?
4. Your X Factor: What are your top achievements? Things you are proud of? What is your advice for others? What is your strength? What are your best qualities?
5. Your Resilience: What is your weakness and how have you turned it around? What are the biggest hurdles of your life?
6. Your Inner Self: What do you spend the most time doing? What do you love to do the most? What is the last movie that made you cry? What is your biggest fear? What is love? What is life? What are your favorite quotes? When are you happiest? When are you sad? What is your life outlook? Why do you do what you do? What is your favorite book/movie?

7. Your Preferences: What are things you love, hate, like, dislike, and adore?
8. Your Background: What are some unique things about your city, background, and country? What are you most proud of in your culture? What are things you incorporate in your daily life from your culture? What are daily struggles from your culture?
9. Your Views: What are your views on politics, the world, healthcare and social media?
10. Your Extracurriculars: What are your talents, hobbies and projects?
11. Life Goals: Where do you see yourself in 1 year/2 years/5 years?
12. Describe yourself using 3 words from among the following list: results-oriented, organized, assertive, leader, trustworthy, generous, ambitious, loyal, patient, active, candid, helpful, communicative, logical, self-reliant, well-rounded, perceptive, personable, insightful, ambassador, compassionate
13. Additionally, take the personality tests listed here:
 - [Myers Briggs](#)
 - [Oceans Five](#)
 - [Strengths Finder](#)
 - [Colors Personality Test](#)

Take the time to do this exercise to get a fair understanding of yourself, your life purpose and your future goals.

Tell a story through your 30 second elevator pitch

Using the above information through the above Self Reflection Worksheet, craft a 30-second introduction of your life journey in 3-4 lines by incorporating any of these categories: social causes you advocate for, achievements you are proud of, your passions, roots, hobbies, personality, education etc., through the past (your story), present (what actions you are taking now), and future (tied to a goal/platform). Get personal and connect your story with a purpose and why you do things that you do. Cite examples. That is your elevator pitch. Feel free to incorporate it in your behavioral job interviews or when introducing yourself in social settings.

Tune this authentic story to your audience. Tie your introduction to why you are the best person for whatever goals you are trying to achieve and what actions you would take after having achieved it. Believe in your potential and showcase what you uniquely bring to the table. Don't try to fit in, be comfortable in your own skin and celebrate your unique journey.

Build your legacy

You will often find pageant girls advocating for world issues and starting non-profits. Doing extensive research into what is happening around the world and staying aware of current challenges provides them with important data backing into the “why,” while advocating for causes or influencing through new ventures. Use these metrics to find your passion project which will leave a positive impact on the world and a legacy for the future generations to follow. [United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals](#) can be a possible starting point.

Represent your roots and tie it to your purpose. Your passion project can be creating an inclusive platform to represent your community and bringing into light issues that affect your community. Your platform and voice is powerful, representing a small portion of a problem can mean that representing millions of people. Your legacy project at the end of day will stand out through its uniqueness, brand, problem definition, solution, implementation, impact and well defined next steps. Leverage your strengths, weaknesses and biggest life challenges to arrive at it. Don't forget to network and market your legacy project after you build it.

Before you get started on your project, do this:

A worksheet for goal setting:

1. Why do I want to embark on this goal?
2. What goals will I accomplish as part of this goal?
3. Time needed?
4. Sacrifices I will make?
5. What logistics would I need? Finances, efforts, resources
6. How will my priorities, budget, activities, responsibilities, and personal life change? How do I feel about these changes?

7. All reasons I can achieve this goal?
8. All reasons I cannot achieve this goal? Can I overcome these? Steps needed?
9. Things I can change to optimize, which is in my control.
10. Things I can achieve in the next 24 hours.
11. Visualize how you will feel, succeeding?
12. All the steps needed to succeed in this goal. Write them down along with timelines and schedules needed everyday.

Now that you have this information, write a letter to your past self, knowing everything you know, and a letter from your past self to your current self on what you would want to do knowing all the information you have.

How To Maximize Your Chances Of Getting Hired

Our free course led by Founder Nabanita De, features a one-stop shop career resource, which aids individuals struggling to get started with their job hunting process. This comes with more than 3 million women out of the workforce during the pandemic, driving the women's labor force participation rate down to 57%. This is the lowest mark since 1988, according to the National Women's Law Center ([NWLC](#)).

Our aim is to simplify the job hunt process as applying for jobs online doesn't ensure a call back and explaining the gap in your resume is often a roadblock from getting started. Through this article, we will explore the precise guidelines regarding how to build an online presence, reach out to employers and maximize your chances of getting hired, even with a notable career gap. So, let's get started!

1. Start with building a stellar resume

The first thing needed to build your presence in the industry is to update your professional profile. If you don't have a resume, create one in no more than ten to fifteen minutes using various online services, like [ResumeBuild](#) and [MyPerfectResume](#).

On the contrary, if you believe your resume is stacked with too much information, create a portfolio site instead. You can accomplish this task using websites like [WordPress](#) and [Wix](#). These platforms don't require their users to know coding to use them and you'll be able to use them to present your resume in a way that makes it stand out.

To put things into further context, you can check out the following authentic resources around developing resumes and cover letters, created by MIT, Harvard, and Stanford:

- [MIT – Career Development Handbook](#)
- [Harvard – Resumes, CVs, Cover Letters and Extension School Resource for Resumes and Cover Letters](#)
- [Stanford – Detailed Career-Building Guide and Resumes/Cover Letters Examples](#)

2. Explaining a gap in your resume

A possible way to give the impression in your resume that your career gap hasn't rusted your skills is to show how you have exhibited leadership or initiative in your day-to-day activities. For example, you may think having organized a dance show for your kids can't be something you can put into your profile. However, in actuality, this experience may translate into "the individual was successful in organizing and seamlessly handling logistics for an event with "x" participants with various backgrounds and ages" on your resume.

You should also cite any training sessions or courses you took in between the gap, especially highlighting your side projects. These courses could be on different topics and skills, anything from working on home-based and other freelancing assignments to posting social media blogs for awareness. Moreover, you can even add podcasts that resonated with you or a volunteer

activity that you participated in, where you showed initiative or helped someone in the community.

Listing activities in your resume reflects your learning temperament, while your personal growth achievements convey your strengths and perseverance. You should never be afraid to be candid about your journey as employers specifically look for authentic personalities to hire in their company.

Plus, you should keep up with the industry trends and continue to learn and upskill yourself by applying the new expertise you mastered on your side projects. Since [YouTube](#) has a plethora of videos for almost any field you want to get into, you can feel free to leverage it at your convenience.

3. Treat LinkedIn as your strongest ally

In today's age, applying online for jobs and hoping for the best is just not enough. To make a promising stand, pop the bubble that's limiting your abilities and get socially connected. One way of doing this is by creating your LinkedIn profile and keeping it updated with your latest career updates. As a bonus, LinkedIn allows you to enable the "[Open to Work](#)" option, which lets recruiters know that you're currently available for hiring when in search of new opportunities.

Below are a few tips you can leverage to make the most out of your LinkedIn profile:

- Build an [All-Star LinkedIn Profile](#) - Add your experiences, education, certifications, projects, awards, skills, and recommendations to your LinkedIn profile. If you don't have any recommendations yet, you can feel free to ask your former coworkers to endorse your existing skills. Adding a LinkedIn summary to encapsulate your work and achievements can catch the attention of potential recruiters and hiring managers. Additionally taking a LinkedIn skills assessment test can also provide better credibility of your proficiency in the skills that you've listed on the profile.
- Show impact - The primary purpose why recruiters analyze your profile is to see how you have added value to the companies

you've previously worked with. Therefore, it's crucial to lead by different examples.

- Lead with action-oriented verbs while incorporating numbers and key achievements in your experiences. Examples - “built, installed, computed, programmed, programmed, restored, fabricated, converted, specialized, replaced, studied, debugged, assembled, regulated, rectified, restored, formulated, analyzed, evaluated, diagnosed, inspected, clarified, located, and summarized.”
- Key achievements could include productivity improvements and positive impacts on a company's revenue. For example, instead of “working on developing something”, lead with delivering to “x” number of customers or that increased the company's productivity by “x” percentage. On referencing collaborations, mention the number of teammates you worked with.
- Get referred - Broaden your network with your alumni from your school, workplaces you have been part of, and other groups with which you have been associated, especially those working in companies you want to be hired for. Send them a connection request and attach a two-to-three sentence introduction in that request, explaining why this person should connect with you. You should put this tactic into practice frequently since individuals receive several requests per day, and you would want to stand out when looking for jobs.

Connecting with employees in your dream companies can reap huge benefits as they could refer you, potentially advancing your job application to interviews. However, before asking for a referral, it's best to make it a point to acquaint them with your current work achievements. This way, if they do end up referring you, they can add those pointers to give your application an extra edge. Shoot an InMail like, *“Hey, I am [Name], and we used to work/study together at <abc> organization. I see we have “XYZ” skills in common, and since I'm interested in your company for this “particular” position, I was wondering if we could chat more about the company culture and opportunities for this role. If this isn't your forte and you think someone else*

could be a great fit to help me out, I would be extremely glad if you could connect them with me.”

One of two things will happen this way. Either you will learn a bit more about the company, or you will get an introduction. Often, these introductions and informationals can lead to interviews and get you hired directly through LinkedIn since many open positions never make it to the online portal because someone gets hired beforehand.

Talk to as many people as possible from companies of all sizes and get to know those companies’ cultures while looking for jobs to find the right fit. Seek mentors through LinkedIn and build a long-term professional relationship. Such mentors can turn into sponsors when job opportunities do open up in the future.

- Look for the keyword “hiring” on LinkedIn - When job hunting, search for the keywords *“Hiring <whatever position or company you are looking for> on LinkedIn.”* Often, managers or recruiters who are open to hiring add these keywords to their bio and posts. When that’s the case, you can send them an InMail saying, *“Hey, I saw you are hiring for the “XYZ” position for the “ABC” company. I have relevant skills and am very interested to learn about the designated role. I would love to connect and hear more from you.”* Showing interest in getting to know the role and gaining more information about the company can sometimes be the deciding factor in your interviews.

So, identify potential employers, reach out to them, and don’t be discouraged if you don’t hear back. Remember, it is a numbers game, and ultimately, all you need is one positive response to get a job. Utilize the LinkedIn filter feature to look for jobs by selecting experience level and remote options. Certain job postings are linked with the profiles of associated recruiters or hiring managers, so you can directly reach out to them.

4. Tailor your experience and conversation

- Tailor your resume to the role - Find job-specific keywords from the job description and incorporate in your relevant experience, to your resume. Often companies use Artificial Intelligence algorithms to scan resumes and this can help boost your application. [Cultivated Culture](#) can help provide a matching percentage between the resume and the job you are applying for, to optimize your resume better.
- Research the role - [Levels](#) and [Glassdoor](#) can be great resources to determine the average compensation for your role. Acquaint yourself with the company, its products and what you are interested in working on, before hopping on a call with the recruiter.
- Talking to the recruiter - In the compulsory “Tell me about yourself” question, highlight the most relevant skill set to the job you are applying for. Be prepared to ask follow up questions, especially targeting the company products you are interested in working for. Take notes throughout the conversation to evaluate your options afterward.

5. Tips for Informationals

Informational is the first meeting scheduled to follow up on your inquiry about a certain position, which takes place between the candidate and the potential recruiter or hiring manager. Before going into the Informational, go through the job posting and look through the qualifications and responsibilities section, create notes of your relevant experiences in the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) and make sure to highlight those experiences to show why you would be a great fit for the open post. Also, you need to highlight the particular skills on your resume that the company is searching for, considering you have the expertise.

6. Take time to prepare for the interviews

Take time and prepare for your interviews thoroughly. For instance, if you are preparing for technical interviews for Software Engineers, [LeetCode](#), its [YouTube channel](#), and the book – [Cracking the Coding Interview](#) could be

some of the best resources you can lean toward to get ready. Moreover, practice your interviewing skills with industry professionals through platforms like [InterviewBit](#) and [Pramp](#). On the other hand, if you are in program management, looking into the resources from [WIP](#) can help magnificently.

How To Take A Successful Career Break

We as a society have come so far since the days of our grandmothers, we've made so many strides and shattered those glass ceilings again and again. Yet even in this day and age, taking a career break is still stigmatized. Whether it's for a dependent's caregiving or even more personal reasons, taking a career break is still looked down upon in lots of industries. We are working to spread awareness on how to orchestrate a successful career break with a return to the workforce that is seamless and pleasant for all involved. It's important to learn from those who have taken a break, overcome adversities, and successfully returned to work. Take a breath and repeat- "You're not alone, this is an achievable dream, now let's get started." You'll be surprised by how much a little bit of inspiration can go towards getting you mentally ready to return to work.

This is exactly what the Returnships podcast is all about! We've spent the last few episodes sitting down with several successful returners who've navigated major life hurdles including divorce or even a complete change in career path with some gaps stretching more than 7 years! They gave us some pretty powerful advice on how they were successful in ending their career break and we've selected some of the most common and impactful tips to highlight

below. Learn from their struggles, pitfalls, and triumphs and use their guidance to help you fight through the challenges that life throws at you. Let us demystify returnships and provide a clear direction to get you on your way to a career done your way! Check out the podcast [here](#) and keep reading for our top 9 tips for taking a successful career break.

1. Keep your friends close and your colleagues closer

Your biggest champions and a secret weapon in your back pocket are the opinions of your past coworkers who can vouch for your work ethic, leadership skills, and professionalism. All the time and effort you put into your work and your colleagues created valuable connections you don't want to lose. Whether it's a tip on a job opening, an internal referral, or sending you to the right hiring managers, they can make a big difference in your transition back into the workplace. So if you haven't already, reconnect with your former coworkers and see where they lead you.

2. A career break doesn't mean a growth break

You are living in the age of the internet, so take advantage! Be ready for that tough question about your gap with an informative response. You may not have been working, but you didn't stop learning! Working on your skills and expanding your knowledge base can be as easy as taking certified courses

online, keeping an ear out for the next big thing in your field, having your google scholar notifications on for when relevant papers drop, listening to podcasts while doing chores, or even watching social media videos. Once you're comfortable with your preferred learning process, you can set aside a little time every day to work on your side projects and expand your knowledge.

If you are in tech, you might consider contributing to [opensource](#), or participating in [Hackathons](#) which you can then publish on github.com and have proof of your expertise to show hiring managers.

Don't have a tech background? No worries! Hackathons are product competitions that can last anywhere from few hours to a few days. You can join a team and contribute to projects without necessarily having any tech background, or go with your own idea, pitch it, and start a team to build your idea for free at the Hackathon. (You might even end up with a startup on your hands).

To learn more about Hackathons, visit [this website](#).

3. Build your support system

Who is your biggest cheerleader? When you're trying to turn your life around and return to work it's important to find the people that will stand by you and

encourage your ambitions. This can be your parents, your friends, your spouse, or someone you know. Actively seek out your accountability partner, the person that will keep you motivated in the most difficult of times and help you keep moving forward. Try to connect with other working parents to seek tips on balancing work and family life. If you don't have someone who is cheering you on, seek out mentors, life coaches, or therapists who can be your rock on those rainy days. Surround yourself with your role models.

One way to connect with potential mentors is through LinkedIn. Sometimes something as simple as sending an InMail can get you connected and on the road to encouragement. Try something like this- “Hi, I am XYZ <Insert Introduction>. I am struggling through so and so. I am inspired by your journey and would love to connect with you whenever you are available to learn more about your journey.”

Don't be afraid to ask questions during each part of your journey or for help when you need it. Asking for help shows strength, not weakness.

4. Don't be afraid of a new start

As you restart your job search, you might not land your dream job immediately. Start on a lower rung of the ladder towards your ideal job and gain experience. For example: If during your gap you started volunteering to

teach computer science for an NGO, you can use that to land a job in academia over time. Volunteering for local community events, taking charge of organizing things for your school or church, or creating a social media presence to share your experiences and story are all ways to utilize your break to your advantage. This might even lead you to discover other opportunities, like a new career path.

5. Translate your caregiving skills into corporate skills

What you did during your break produced many indirect positive results that you might not always consider. You have spent a lot of time and effort becoming an amazing caretaker and that wasn't wasted. Those same skills make you an asset in the workplace. Running a home, teaching, and helping others during your career gap was no easy feat and required extensive planning, organization, and leadership skills. Don't even get us started on how you dealt with all the different temperaments of your family and friends which has helped you to become a better and more robust leader, one that is prepared to deal with all kinds of mindsets at work. When we asked our podcast guests if having a resource like www.returnships.org would have helped in their journey to a new career, Susan said, "I think having Returnships would have helped tremendously. I know so many stay-at-home mothers hoping to get back to work but not sure where to start. Some people

wonder if their skillsets and experience are adequate anymore or if they need to return to school to get a job. I feel that stay at home parents are probably better at most jobs since they know how to prioritize and multi-task.” You are already a leader, you just need to channelize that energy at the workplace and you will be successful.

Do you use social media to interact with your kids or to recommend products you love to your friends? Look at you! A budding influencer who can use affiliate marketing to launch a whole new brand platform. Are you the go-to mediator for your friends in times of conflict or the girl who always knows someone you’ve just got to meet? You might be great at Human Resources, recruiting candidates, and keeping the peace during workplace drama. Are you constantly innovating, coming up with small home projects and DIYs? Creating exciting new versions of your favorite cooking recipes? Love the thrill of experimenting? Then you might just have what it takes to be a product manager! Find the drawbacks of the existing lineup, fortify them and help create a new and exciting generation of products.

6. True confidence comes from owning your story

A key point to remember is that success rarely comes easy and the ones that do seldom last. You know this, you put in the effort to build a career before

your break. Do not forget what you have already achieved! There will be days when you're at your lowest, where you feel that things will never work out. This is the point that differentiates the successful from the failures, it's finding the drive to push forward when you're at your worst. Remind yourself that your confidence is earned and own your journey! You have done this at least once before and you will do this again! This confidence will let you shine in your interviews. Susan, one of our podcast speakers said "I started every interview with, "I'm currently a stay at home mom looking to get back into the industry." and I think it worked to my advantage and showed that I'm driven." A combination of self-confidence and positive drive is what you need to unlock your dreams!

7. Time management saves time

Never underestimate the importance of managing the time you've been given. It's one of your most important resources! Try to reduce the time spent on daily routines that aren't essential, this will automatically free up your schedule towards career-related activities. A good way to begin your day is by jotting down all your daily goals and the time you will need to complete them. See if you can stick to this schedule and make changes as needed! As you progress along, you will find ways to become more efficient with your time. It

will give you a much-deserved sense of accomplishment and you will end up with a very sought-after career skill.

8. Trade in your mental yoga pants for a suit

While it is important to detach from constantly thinking of work during your break, it is equally important to not lose your professional identity. Learn to visualize who you are as a working individual, outside of your role as a primary member of the family. Rediscover your passions, your strengths, and your weaknesses. This will help you in choosing the right career path. Maybe you have changed as a professional over your time away and you can finally pursue that job you had been eyeing! Take those first steps towards achieving your dreams!

9. Focus on the future

As hard as it is not to focus on the sacrifices you made when you put your career on the back burner in order to care for others, focusing on the past will only steal your present.

"The narrative you tell yourself will determine the kind of life you will lead.

Any dream is achievable as long as you have a plan A and then a Plan B." -

Nabanita De

It's time to move forward and utilize your current time to make a difference in your world. It doesn't matter how old you are, you can change your life at 60, 70, 80, or even 90 if you make up your mind to alter your situation. I believe in you. You've got this.

Coaching A Family Member Through Her Return To Work

As the pandemic started, I had the opportunity to work closely with a family member in her journey of returning to work. She had been out of the workforce for 20 years. Though there were a lot of job sites for her to visit and online job listings to consider, where to start was a struggle. We found that there was no site to bridge the gap.

What we needed was a guide for women returning to the workforce, who were asking questions such as: "Am I relevant in the industry? What skills do I need? As a non-native English speaker, do I need to learn how to speak English to operate? What do I do if I don't know anything about computers?" These very same questions have been echoed by many other women I've worked with since then.

Together we began by first discovering who she was as a professional. We started with identifying her style and buying her a laptop. We purchased a work desk as well as helpful resource books, and looked into various courses on the Internet. She worked hard to grasp the nuances, and slowly I could see her change. Her mentality and personality had transformed from that of a stay-at-home parent to someone ready for the workforce.

I realized that when figuring out what to do next, people need each step to be laid out for them. This led to the blooming of the idea of the Returnships.org website. My website is designed to empower and educate women who have long been out of the workforce, transforming them into work-ready professionals step by step. Out of work for 20 years? No problem. Log onto the website with zero experience. Users can begin with basic skills like building an online presence and posting on social media and navigate their way all the way back to a professional setting.

Returnships.org is built in a course-like fashion and is currently free to use. For ease of use, the resources required for the various stages are organized in a systematic manner, so that the user can work herself through the various stages one at a time, just as I did with my family member. Below are the stages I've identified that help to ready a women for her return to work.

Discovery

The process starts with exposing women to stories of others like themselves who have managed to go back to work. This empowers them to know they are not alone, and often proves to be highly motivating. Returnships.org also offers various videos to help users find their unique personal style and voice select a work-from-home setup and computer that will work for them, and it also serves as a resource for connecting with other women in various stages along their journeys back to work.

Training

The next stage involves training. While the industry-specific training varies significantly by context and background, there are some common elements that are universal. These include something as basic as English and computer science training, and is followed by courses for getting to know the internet, social media and search engine and software suites better. It also offers resources for earning free online degrees, and provides the user with information about the training materials necessary for various paths.

Marketing

Once the user has a better sense of what she wants to do, she will embark on the next stage, which deals with learning how to market herself. How do you tell your story and build an online presence and a professional resume? The typical marketing practices involve showcasing experience, rather than skills. And this can be challenging for women returning back to work.

Resources

At this point in her journey, the user is typically ready to return to work. She has everything set up and is ready to march ahead. For her, Returnships.org offers a repository of returnship opportunities from renowned companies that are exclusively hiring women returning to work after a long break from their career. For those who still may be feeling a bit stuck, Returnships.org also offers therapy and life/career coach resources to further boost and motivate users.

Collaboration

This in a very simplified view, outlines the typical journey of a woman navigating her return to the workforce with the help of Returnships.org. However, this is not an initiative that can succeed in a silo. Returnships.org is constantly collaborating with new organizations that work in the fields of mentorship, life and career coaching, therapy, recruiting and more, and is highly motivated to keep that network growing. For more information on joining us in helping Returnships.org empower women in their journeys back to work, visit us [here](#).

And, for any woman wondering where to start in her journey back to the workforce, encourages you to take the first step [here](#).