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**Keynote Address:**  
**Challenges and Opportunities**  
**for Women in Academia**

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# Challenges and Opportunities in Academia

*Challenges are vital for success and growth*

“Opportunities are circumstances which propels us to succeed”



# My Journey

“The journey is about turning challenges into opportunities”



# My Journey

- Born into 'bottom' middle class income family
- Hometown: Sekondi, Western Region
- Passion: Singing
- Early education: Little to no interest
- Motivation at early age: Break family poverty cycle through singing



# My Journey

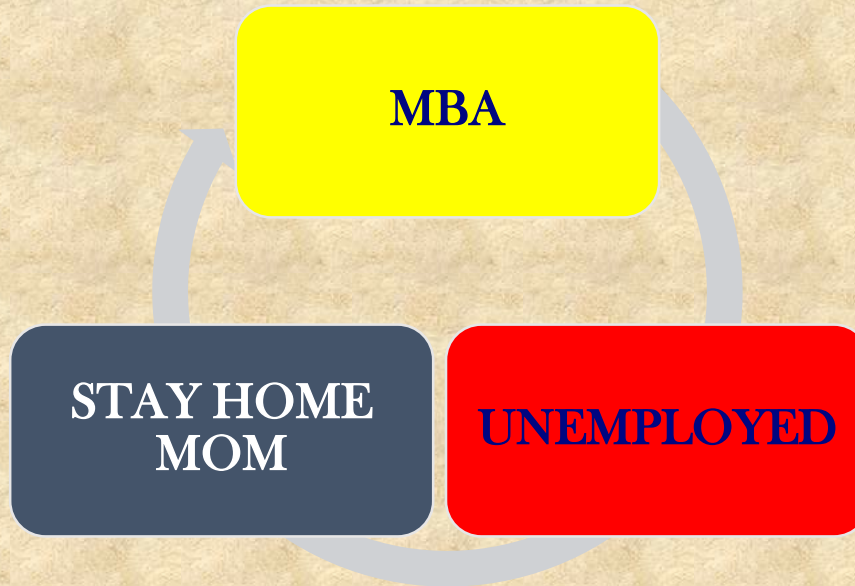
*Relationships impact trajectory*

-Elizabeth Ivy Essamuah-Quansah



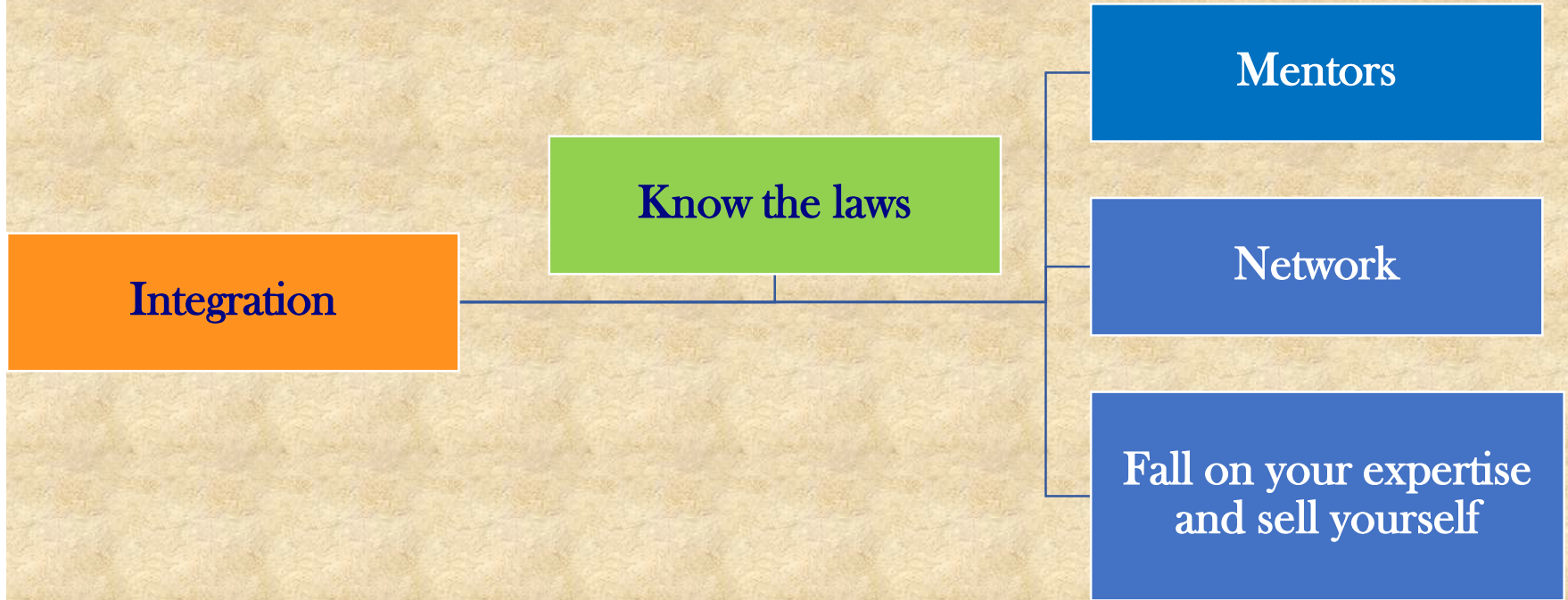
# My American Journey

From stay home wife to MBA graduate to stay-at-home mom



# My Journey

## Integration



# My Journey

From stay-at-home mom to Associate VP to  
Ph.D. holder





# My Journey

- I have arrived



# Challenges in Academia for women

## Some statistics

- “Half of all Ph.Ds are being awarded to women”
- “Between only 20%-33% female get tenured faculty positions”
- “...5% in fields like engineering”

*Source: (Houser, 2019)*

## Key challenges

1. Insufficient academic jobs

"I got a Ph.D. in history because I wanted to be a historian," Bartram wrote. "Now I have to do something else." ..... — "I didn't feel I had the right to grieve"  
— Erin Bartram (2018)

# Challenges in Academia for women

## Key Challenges:

2. Unconscious hiring biases:
  - Affinity bias,
  - Confirmation bias, and
  - Availability bias
3. Difficulties in getting promotion and tenure
4. Leadership opportunities: competitive environment
5. Unequal pay
6. Balancing work, life and family



*Picture credit: EQUAL-IST Project Partners (2017)*

# Challenges in Academia for African women

## 7. Immigration/working documents

- Limited H1B Visas
- Green card
- Dual citizenship versus naturalized citizenship opportunities

## 8. Linguistics issues ( Eg. favor vrs. favour, literal translation)

## 9. Complexities of academic culture



# Challenges in Academia for women

## 10. Declined interest :

Expectation for publications, grants, research, teaching, outreach etc.

	Obs.	2010	Change from 2010 to 2013			
		Academic career interest early in PhD	Remain interested	Lose interest	Gain interest	Never interested
<b>Gender</b>						
Men	500	83%	59%	24%	5%	12%
Women	345	75%	50%	25%	6%	19%
<b>Nationality</b>						
U.S. citizens	626	79%	51%	27%	6%	16%
Non-U.S. citizens	219	84%	68%	16%	5%	11%

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0184130.t002>

Source: PLOS ONE(2017)

# Opportunities in Academia for women

- Platform for impactful services
- Cultural immersion
- Change agent
- Give back





# Opportunities in Academia for women

## Community engagement



# Opportunities in Academia for women

- Family time
- Volunteer opportunities
- Community outreach
- Exploration of diverse countries, culture, socio-economic, and political affairs across the globe
- Professional and personal enrichment



# Opportunities in Academia for women

## Africa women to emulate

Dr. Wangari Maath



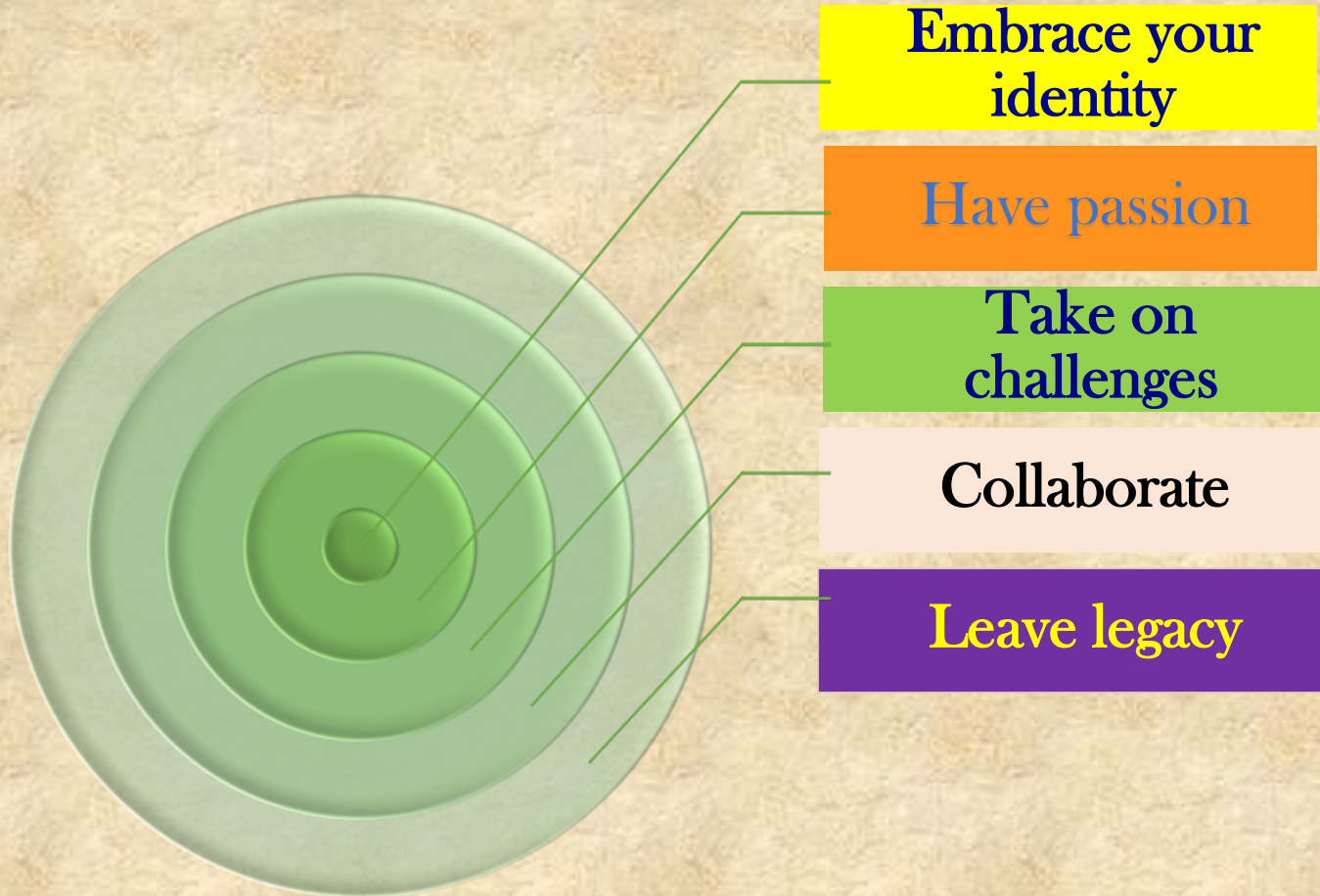
Luise Nghiueuelekwa



Prof. Nana Ama Ata Aidoo



# Conclusion



# Great Words of Motivation



Stand up **straight** and  
realize **who** you are, that you  
**tower** over your circumstances.

- *Maya Angelou*

Goalcast

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*THANK YOU!  
ME D'ASE!  
ASANTE SANA!  
MERCII!  
SHUKRAN!*

