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The eye of the storm: Balancing my storm of family, career and self

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In knowing that the path I travel is not the usual path traveled by most; this has turned out to be the best path for me and my family. It is very important to prioritize what is important to you and then define the best path for you versus choosing a path and the path chooses your prioritizes. Coming from a loving and supportive middle class upbringing created a deep sense of family and the importance of family. Early in my life I was determined to have children and a career. Over the last ten years there have been several obstacles to overcome in my storm, but with careful planning, due diligence, and a support system to help maintain calm at the center of my storm I have been able to achieve my goals of pursuing my Doctorate. A complete research plan was put into place into choosing the institution that I would further my academic endeavors in the same manner in which my dissertation research topic has been defined. Just as any successful business, all persons involved in my future success were consulted with equal input into the new endeavor with the full understanding of what this new plan entailed. We decided on the University of Alabama for several reasons: location, weather, flexibility, policies, research and my ability to make a change in the face of science. According to my advisor, I will do that in about two and half years at my graduation ceremony when I become the first African American to receive a PhD in Material Science from the University of Alabama.