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I must have been one of very few accountants to take a day off during tax season. I actually took three – three Fridays.

I had been in public accounting for eight years, and I knew it wasn't for me. A former supervisor suggested that I get a doctorate and I said, "But accountants don't get Ph.D's." After she explained what a doctorate would do for me, I tried teaching at a community college. I enjoyed teaching, so I decided to go for it. So, on those three Fridays, I was visiting colleges.

One reason some people don't make this career switch is simply fear of the unknown. People experience apprehension any time they jump into something new. I decided to take a leap of faith.

I want to be there for my students, the way people were there for me. Even back in high school, I had a mentor – an assistant principal. A lot of people didn't want someone with brown skin to get ahead. She encouraged me to strive for excellence: she found summer programs for me to attend so that I could make a good career choice, and she got me a scholarship. Following her example, I endeavor to make sure that students of color are aware of the opportunities available to them.

I feel that I am starting to make a difference. A former student recently told one of my colleagues that she'd finally understood an accounting concept for the first time, after I'd explained it. It means a lot to me that someone had the light bulb go on in my class.