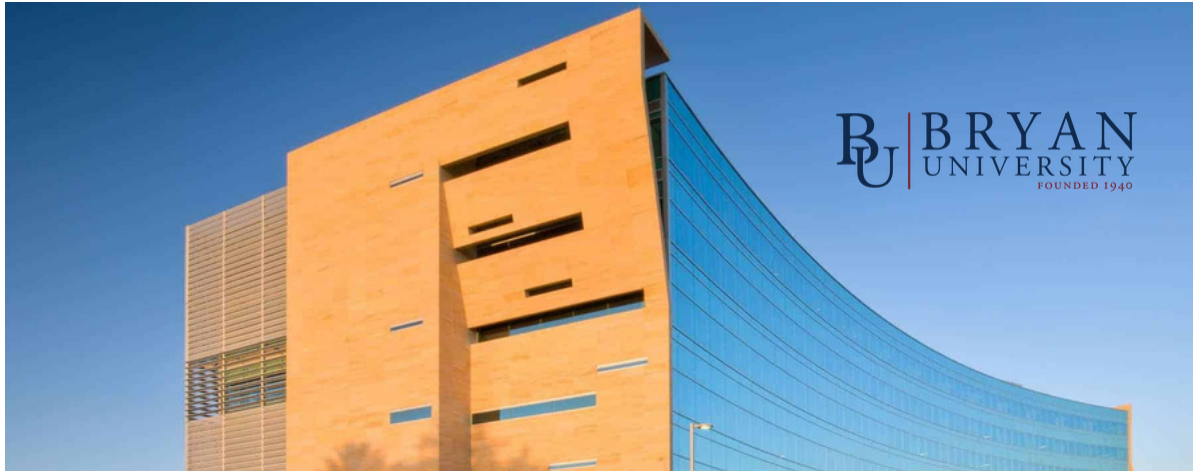


The Searchlight

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April 2026

Career Woman Chronicles

Dr. Makisha Cheeks

The Leader's Mindset Reset: Aligning Your Purpose and Your Leadership

In the early stages of your career, leadership can feel like something reserved for later, after more experience, more titles, or more confidence. But leadership does not begin with a promotion. It begins with mindset. One of the most important shifts you can make is aligning your purpose with how you show up every day. A mindset reset is not about becoming someone new. It is about being more intentional about who you already are. Many women feel pressure to prove themselves quickly, but constantly seeking validation can lead to burnout and self doubt. Instead, focus on purpose. It does not have to be perfectly defined. It can be as simple as supporting others, staying organized, or making a positive impact. When your work reflects what you value, confidence grows naturally and leadership begins to take shape.

Leadership early in your career is not about having a title. It is about taking initiative, communicating clearly, and being dependable. Speaking up, offering solutions, and supporting your team are everyday actions that build credibility and set you apart. It is also important to shift from proving yourself to focusing on growth. Instead of asking if you are good enough, ask what you are learning. This mindset builds resilience and reduces fear, both of which are essential for strong leadership.

Finally, align your actions with your values and give yourself permission to lead now. Confidence comes from action. By showing up with intention and owning your contributions, you begin to grow into the kind of leader you want to become.

Upcoming Events

Professional
Readiness Program

Thursday,
April 9
at 3:00 p.m. MST

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Alumni Corner

Michael Scalice

Be motivated by more than a paycheck

Staying motivated at work and throughout your career can be challenging, especially as the excitement of landing a job fades and daily responsibilities take over. For college alumni, the shift from structured academic life to a more independent professional environment requires a new mindset. Motivation must come from a sense of purpose, personal growth, and a clear vision for the future rather than external deadlines alone, and not from just your paycheck or fear of losing your job.

One of the most effective ways to stay motivated is by setting clear, achievable goals. Short-term goals help you stay focused day to day, while long-term aspirations give you direction and something to work toward. Just as important is finding meaning in your work—whether through helping others, solving problems, or contributing to a team—and continuing to invest in your growth through learning opportunities, certifications, or mentorship.

Building strong professional relationships and prioritizing your well-being are also key to maintaining motivation. Support from colleagues, mentors, and fellow alumni can provide encouragement and fresh perspectives, while a healthy work-life balance helps prevent burnout. By staying connected, taking care of yourself, and recognizing your progress, you can maintain your drive and build a fulfilling, long-term career.

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