



Dr. Dawn Pearcy
Eastern Michigan University
Ph.D. Florida State University, Marketing

Dawn Pearcy, contemplating an exit from corporate life after several years at a major automaker, sat in the audience as a video program opened the 1997 PhD Project conference. Huge images of the then-small handful of newly minted minority professors loomed over the crowded auditorium.

“Oh my God,” she whispered as one face flickered on the giant screen. “That woman looks like Gail.”

The woman on the screen was indeed Gail Ayala Taylor—Dawn Pearcy’s first childhood friend, whom she had not seen in more than a decade. Dr. Taylor had just become a business professor.

Dawn Pearcy had walked into the conference planning to leave her job and become a business professor. But when she saw that the girl who had been her best friend and neighbor at age five had chosen exactly the same career path, she knew it was a done deal.

On that extraordinary day in 1997, Dr. Taylor was also in the audience. Dawn Pearcy located her in the first break.

The two women renewed their friendship on the spot, but something equally significant occurred—from that moment on, Dr. Taylor became her childhood buddy’s unofficial and ever-present guide and mentor through the daunting process of getting accepted to a doctoral program.

“Her guidance was instrumental throughout the entire program,” says Dr. Pearcy. “When I needed help, she basically cleared her schedule for me.”

In time, the girls who once played with dolls in preschool together would end up getting their business doctorates at the same institution—Florida State University.

Dr. Pearcy is now on faculty at Eastern Michigan University, where she has begun to fulfill her goal of “being more impactful.”

In addition to teaching, she has already been published three times, and has presented eight conference papers.

The dream continues...

Dr. Pearcy was granted tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in 2007. Her research has been published in numerous journals and conference proceedings. Recently, she started a new stream of research on environmental sustainability and fair trade, an area that not only excites her but has enabled her to co-author a paper with her sister Michelle. It was presented at an international conference in Botswana. Dr. Pearcy says, “I remain grateful to my first friend, Dr. Gail Ayala Taylor, for all her support during my career journey in academe. I am most grateful for her friendship, which has endured time, distance, and busy schedules. We’ll remain friends forever.”