If you ask Jennifer Adams what brought her to OPM, she will tell you a funny story. “A random gentleman on an airplane who was shopping for extraordinarily expensive vacation homes motivated me to do it,” she says. It’s fitting, as Jennifer’s successful career trajectory—she’s the CEO and founder of Jennifer Adams Brands in Scottsdale, Arizona, and the author of *Love Coming Home* and *How High Can You Soar*—can be attributed to her humble personality, incessant curiosity, a series of wise mentors, and a little bit of serendipity.

Growing up in rural Oregon, Jennifer had few resources and an even smaller network. Her innate ambition is what helped her succeed in finding work at a young age, starting as a housekeeper, a job she maintained throughout high school. Looking back today, she sees some parallels between her days of making beds to the time she now spends designing them. She also knows what it feels like to be driven by passion rather than by a fear of returning to her cleaning days.

Another serendipitous moment in her life came when she found a flyer for a design trade school where she ultimately learned the basics of decorating and marketing. From there, Jennifer started a small interior design business and eventually assembled a team, but soon realized she was operating on trial and error rather than on well-rounded business knowledge. She already had the curiosity and motivation, but needed the mentors to help show her the way.

Just as her foray into design came about by happening upon a flyer, the opportunity to attend OPM came from sitting next to that gentleman on the airplane—a program graduate. He’d started a business from the ground up, so she asked him if there was a pivotal moment he could point to. The answer? “I went to OPM.”

Jennifer’s list of life lessons she’s learned over the years as a self-made business leader and during her time in executive education is a long and inspiring one. She has learned life is not a straight path and you have to accept that with highs come lows, that it is important to accept guidance from others who are more experienced, and that you should always be passionate about your work.

“Ask yourself: ‘If all I had was pure potential, what would I want?’ When I do that, I see a path to my most fulfilling life. Ultimately, and gratefully, asking myself this question led me to taking the leap into OPM.”

During OPM, Jennifer was able to remove herself from the “trenches” of her business and see her business from a bird’s-eye view to gain perspective and find new solutions. Most important, she found confidence in herself. In the past, being a business leader without a college degree made her feel insecure, but with OPM under her belt she is now living by her own advice: “Never limit yourself out of fear.”