Sa’ed Atshan: Kimberly, what does success mean to you?

Kimberly St. Julian-Varnon: Do you want pre-Swarthmore me or current me?

Atshan: Well we can [inaudible 00:10:18] them.

St. Julian-Varnon: Before Swarthmore, success was making at least six figures, and having a Mercedes. That was the end all, be all for me, because I had watched all these lawyer movies and they all make tons of money and drive really expensive cars. Doing that and being able to make enough money so my parents could retire. Those were my idea for success.

Now, it's less like money plays very little in my idea of success now. It's mostly about helping my community and having a legacy, but it doesn't necessarily have to be personally attached to me. Something I've done, or something I've started has helped so many others that I continues to affect change generationally. That's the big thing that I'm looking at now.

So I think success and our idea of success changes as we get older and get exposed to more things. So when I'm 80 I might have a totally different idea, but right now that's what it is.

Atshan: So how will you know that you have been successful in life as well as in work?

St. Julian-Varnon: I don't know. I think, it's really interesting because an example is that I've come full circle. My department head now at the high school was my AP economics and AP government teacher in high school and I remember just battering him with questions like "What should I major in?" Then when I went to Swarthmore, "What classes should I take?" Then as I was graduation from Swarthmore "Which graduate program should I go to?"

Now I'm getting emails from my students who are in college now who are asking me "Should I go to law school? What classes should I take?" So I think that's kind of success where I've made enough of an impact on them that they seek my help and they trust me. It's a lot of responsibility, and I told my department head "Thank you so much. I did not realize how much stress I put on you with these questions."

I think that's success, having my students achieve the lives that they want to live. I think is a big part of my idea of success.