Rakhee Portune cares for not only her husband Lynn and daughter Rekha, but also many disabled families around Baton Rouge. As the executive director of Community Resource Coordinators, a nonprofit dedicated to helping disabled Baton Rougians and their families, Rakhee helps coordinate care for many individuals in the city. When she's not hard at work, you can find this busy mom at the gym watching her nine-year-old tumbler Rekha.

Favorite part of the job

My clients. Now that I'm the director, I don't work directly with clients, but I still keep in touch with some of my previous ones. There's this one that calls me Mama Rakhee. She called to wish me a happy Valentine's Day. Which I thought was too sweet, because shouldn't I have been the one to call her? It just means so much to me that she remembers me and how I've impacted her life.

Destressors

I love to laugh—especially with my daughter. Laughing is my favorite destressor all the time—even at the office. You can't have happy workers if everyone's stressed out all the time.

We have a game wall for moments like that. You need a break? Go hula hoop in the corner for a little while and then you'll feel better. Taking 10 minutes for yourself won't kill you.

Motherly Changes

Patience and flexibility. I'm pretty obsessive-compulsive, but I've had to learn that not everything works out how you want it. Sometimes you just have to say, "I'm already behind. I'm just going to get there when I get there." Having a child means you have to be able to step back and relax.

One's enough

I decided to only have one child and my daughter really is plenty enough for me. She's just so perfect. As working parents, I think we're already busy enough with one! I want us to enjoy life and I want Rekha to see us happy, not stressed out. It's my one truly selfish decision.

Weird pregnancy cravings

Feta cheese. People told me you couldn't have feta when you are pregnant because it's molded and I was so upset. I wanted feta all day every day. But then an older friend of mine told me, "Who cares about mold? It's just penicillin!" The only other thing I craved was tilapia, but as badly as I wanted it, I couldn't eat it—it made me so sick! It was ridiculous.

Favorite time of the day

Mornings are definitely my favorite time of the day and that's because I spend them with my daughter. She's the first thing I see when I wake up and there's always a big smile on her face. If I'm not up before her she even makes me toast. My whole day matches however she is in the morning—if she's sad or not feeling well, I'll be worrying about her day. Luckily, she's smiling 99 percent of the time. And I mean, come on, what nine-year-old makes toast?

Guilty pleasure

Salt and vinegar chips. Oh, and definitely a glass of red wine. It helps me unwind. I think that's what keeps me feeling young. Well, that and socializing with my girlfriends. I make time for what I want. I know people who had kids and changed their identity. I wasn't going to give up who I was to be a mom. Being a mother and a wife just made me a better person. I need all of those components together to be my best.

Gym moms

Everyone knows the horrors of Dance Moms, but competitive gymnastics is nothing like that. It's very structured and orderly—that's why I like it. You can't even cheer until the awards ceremony. But it's similar to how I raised Rekha, so I'm glad she's getting a parallel experience in her social life. That way I don't seem so nuts!

Motivations

I do the things I do simply because I enjoy them. I love everything I dedicate my time to. I'm happy about what I've done in my life, but I feel like I still have more to give. I want to teach people that you can have more to life than work, work, work. I've been very lucky in that way—not everyone gets opportunities in parenting or even love.

Most proud of

I'm really proud of where I am today. I've had to juggle being a mom and a wife with being the director of this agency and I've actually survived. I feel like I have it all. And I'm so proud of who I have in my life. I didn't get to where I am on my own and I still need help if I'm going to take

this organization where I want it to go. I can’t do it on my own and I don’t think anyone can really do anything on their own. We all need help.

Advice for other parents

Try to see life through your child’s eyes. Life is just so different these days. Rekha had a friend over to dinner the other night who was confused when we were setting the table. She said she’d never had a family dinner before. It’s so sad, but it’s just the way things are these days. Everyone should take the time to enjoy your children. Life goes by too fast. BRPM