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Keisha Edwards is a creative soul. Her husband, Aaron, is a high-tech wizard. Their professional worlds don't often intersect. "We're both musicians and world travelers," Keisha explained. "But I'm a writer, speaker and dancer. He's a software developer." That might not sound like fertile ground for collaborations, but enter AI, and that picture changes.

"Keisha was always making up stories and poems and songs for our kids. I told her, 'You need to write these down for the kids.'"

Keisha smiled. "Writing a children's book was a lifelong dream for me. I care about inspiring young people and literacy and sparking imagination. I wrote this book all in rhyme. I'm really proud of that." The book is all about the real, and fanciful, job choices open to children. Scientist, astronaut, ballerina and doctor are joined by more fanciful career options like princess, prince and superhero.

"The book is called *Wild Dream Adventure* and personalized with your child's name in the title." So a finished book would be *Mary's Wild Dream Adventure* or *Paul's Wild Dream Adventure* (or Rashonda's or Oluwole's or Svetlana's or Mei Chien's). "I'm a wordsmith. Illustration is not in my wheelhouse. So we used new AI technology and Photoshop to design the backgrounds for each of the possible careers. It allows whatever is in your mind's eye to end up on the page. AI allows us to insert your child into the illustrations. It literally gives your child the opportunity to imagine themselves in different careers and develop a sense of ambition."

The custom images were where Aaron's skill with AI came in. "I'm a software developer. I've worked from home for the last 13 years, and more recently, I have started coding, building and



Not Your Grandma's PICTURE



THE BOOK

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launching AI-centered products. For the book, we used AI to design the background illustrations. People think AI does all of the work for you, but it's really just a tool more like Photoshop. It takes guidance and a lot of work to generate good images. Using text to generate images is really impressive at first, but AI lacks creativity. It's missing the human element." That's the part Aaron had to work hard to supply. "When we generate the images of your child in the different careers, to insert them in the pages, the quality somewhat depends on the photos the customer supplies. They send us 20 to 30 images of their child, and I use those to train the AI. It takes about an hour to train the AI to recognize that child's face. Then it takes about half an hour to generate 200 images of the child."

"Then I choose the 30 best images," Keisha explained. "I have to be careful not to choose weird ones, because AI does strange things sometimes. Getting good images for the dancer is very difficult, because AI is not good with hands and legs."

"With the other careers, some creative cropping can get rid of any oddities, but you have to have a whole body that turns out good for the dancer," Aaron agreed. AI is currently notorious for placing arms and legs in impossible positions and for adding or subtracting fingers and other appendages. It's powerful, but there are a lot of simple things it still doesn't understand. So generating the images is only a first step before weeding out useless images and fixing the rest.

"This project was a great way to combine our gifts," Aaron confided. "I

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did the technical work to write the code to transform the child into images for the book. She did the writing. People are always asking if AI created the whole thing. No. Keisha wrote it, and it was a lot of work. We didn't sleep for weeks! Actually, it's still a lot of work, since each book is custom made for each child."

"We've been married for 21 years, and this was our first time to combine our skill sets like this," Keisha emphasized. "Each book is unique to the individual child. It's really validating. There is no more literal way for a child to see themselves in various careers, because the images are literally them. They can expand their ambition to pursue a career. We didn't have anything like this when I was a child. When I was a kid, I could never find my name on knickknacks or souvenirs, so my mom would special order stationery and name plaques for me. This is the ultimate in representation. It's not just a child who is *like* you. It is you. The reaction videos that some parents and grandparents have sent us of kids opening these books are incredible. And it's cool that we're using AI. There's been a lot of negative press about AI, but we use it to make a child the star of their own book." **NOW**



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