

Question 1: Can you tell us a little bit about your journey (and where your headspace was at) from your Emory graduation to your current role?

Response: I grew up in Austin, went to high school, and went to Emory like many people watching this. And had a great time there and graduated in 2001. At that time, it was shortly after 9/11, and there weren't too many job opportunities. So I came out to Austin working for Habitat for Humanity and quickly realized that the summer heat was not for me in construction, so I got into sales and business in real estate. And the rest is history.

Question 2: What were things that were unplanned/unexpected but meaningful to your growth?

Response: When I first graduated, and I was working for Habitat, I thought I would be in a nonprofit for a long time. And as it turned out, I was on an all-female construction crew and I just caught a lot of flack from the managers. So I quit doing that and then answered an ad in the paper that was kind of fortuitous. And it led me into a sales career, and I learned a lot about professional development and personal growth and myself and what I wanted to do. I backed into real estate after having read *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*, and just really fell in love with that aspect of business. You know, there were definitely some different breaks and different opportunities that were interesting. For me, it's just kind of following every lead and seeing where that takes me.

Question 3: What does creativity/creative exploration/living a creative life mean to you?

Response: So the creative side of my life played a part in high school and also in college. I was really interested in pottery, and I also became interested in glassblowing. And so outside of my major, I did those things as hobbies, and I continued that into my professional life, just on the side. And I think being creative and learning about how to express my ideas in various media has helped me with real estate. Being creative in financing and finding different deals and trying to work out a win-win solution for everyone involved.

Question 4: What advice do you have for your younger self?

Response: Well, I think back then, I was so focused on getting good grades and getting a job and either going to the corporate world or nonprofit or doing something to sort of appease my parents and appease everyone. And I think knowing what I know now, I think it's great to just explore different aspects of professional life and really find out what you want to do because there's so much more out there than just what a major is or what opportunities you see just coming out of college. So I think I would tell myself to keep an open mind and try different things.

Yeah, I think the advice I would give to students who are uncertain about the pathways they're going to pursue is just, have faith and just do something, you know. Do anything. And action is always better

than inaction. So just take a chance and go out there and make mistakes. And it's always good to learn by failing, and you don't have to be ashamed of that. You don't have to be afraid of that. That's the way we evolve and advance. So I think you can make progress just by sort of stepping out on a limb and doing something different from other people. And if you have that creative mind, I think that no matter what comes before you, you'll always be able to save yourself. Being creative, being able to think about process and taking an idea and bringing it to life is something that I do every day in real estate and being able to recognize when a property is sort of a blank slate and has room for molding and making into something better and changing people's lives and really serving the community that way, and that's really been helpful.