

Introduction: My name is Shubhangi and I graduated from Goizueta Business School in 2018. And my current job is I'm a loose diamond specialist at an Atlanta-based wholesale loose diamond and diamond jewelry manufacturer.

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 graduated from Goizueta Business School in 2018 and I concentrated in marketing and consulting. My degree has nothing to do with my current role. I ended up working in my family business. We are a wholesale loose diamond dealer and jewelry manufacturer based in Atlanta, and I currently head the loose diamond department. So while I was at Goizueta, I also went to an educational institution and lab called the Gemological Institute of America and I completed my graduate diamond program while I was simultaneously at Goizueta. So that degree actually goes towards what I do in my current role. So the way that I transitioned from Emory to my current role was that I actually didn't know that I was going to end up back here. I applied for jobs, but it just kind of made the most sense because between my junior and senior year, I went to India and I did an entire internship there working at a manufacturing company, and I basically was grading diamonds in their lab. After that, and spending three months there, it just made the most sense to go and directly start working into the industry. So that's where I am right now.

Question 2: Reflecting on your journey from graduation to now, what were things that were unplanned/unexpected but meaningful to your growth?

Response: Things that were unplanned during my time at Goizueta...something completely outside of school and not in terms of career or anything, but was just a personal hobby-slash-newfound-fascination with the skincare world. So I had really bad skin up until my teens, like high school, even college. And it was this long story, but somehow I stumbled upon Korean skincare. I didn't want to have to go to a dermatologist so I was like, *Okay, let me see if this works.* I started that. And for me, it was like a personal transformation just like personally, like my skin transformed. But I think I just became so fascinated with it. And also I fell in love with it. Because of the way it changed me as a person, my own self confidence, the way that I realized that I could leave the house without having to worry. For the first time, not worrying about the way my face looks, the way my skin looks. What kind of catapulted into something bigger was when I had a friend who was getting married. And so she had personally reached out to me and said, *Oh, I'm trying to get some new skincare before my wedding. So could you help me with that? Could you recommend some stuff?* And so it was just like a normal text message. And what was weird was that I was starting to write the text, but I had so much to say that it turned into a full blown email. I was like, *Oh, I need my laptop for this.* So I wrote her this entire word doc. Step by step, I gave her explanations for why you should use the product based on what I had learned through my experience and my education. And it kind of catapulted into this. So she used it and she loved it. And so, because of all our friends, she would recommend them, to tell her friends like, *Oh, my friend gave me this routine.* And so without me even knowing, so many people started reaching out to me just being like, *Hey, I know that you helped our mutual friend, could you help me and give*

me something as well? And so I was like, Oh, of course. Like, I found so much enjoyment in giving other people this kind of new thing that I didn't even think twice about. I was like, Oh, this is totally normal. And I had been doing it so much. And I want to say around 15 people I had given it to and it kind of catapulted into not even just my friends, but my mom's friends, they were reaching out to me. And I was like, Oh, this is like a whole new demographic that I wasn't even expecting. And so that turned into my friends asking, Why don't you turn this into an actual business or a side business or anything? For me, that was like No, that's ridiculous. I have no experience. And this is just a personal hobby of mine. That doesn't make any sense. But the more I thought about it, and the more that people were reaching out to me, and another thing is that I had a really good friend of mine who told me that 'You have to market yourself. It's not wrong to market yourself. And it's not wrong for you to try to do something that we do as a hobby'. I always felt, Oh, I'm just helping out friends. It's not like a real thing or anything like that. They said, 'No, you are spending time and your effort and your energy towards something. And that should not deter you from having people recognize that compensate you for that. That's totally fair'. That kind of transformed me into being more driven to think, Oh, maybe I should go to esthetician school. And I had friends saying, Oh, you should start a YouTube channel. You should start an Instagram. You should do this. And those are all very valid things and I think going back to the question, that was just such an unusual/unplanned thing that I did not expect to be such a huge part of my life. Even today after this started in college, I'm still doing it. Even to this day, I want to do something with this in the future and have this be part of my career.

Question 3: What advice do you have for your younger self?

Response: In terms of my skincare, I wish I knew that I could do this back in college. I feel like if I started earlier, I would have been more confident and more sure of myself that I could do this as a career. In terms of my gem career, I only did my graduate diamonds program. So the Gemological Institute of America, they are the premier leading institute for gemology. So precious gems, diamonds, pearls, everything. And so because my business is only focused on diamonds, I was more concerned about doing my diamond course, which I did. But now I'm currently pursuing my graduate gemologist. That's essentially kind of getting like your PhD in gemology. And I wish that I had started looking into it more seriously while I was in college. Because now as a full time, it's kind of hard to be studying and also doing that at the same time.

Another thing that I wish I had learned about was the jobs that you can do in corporate America with this degree. My experience in the diamond industry is very independent. People think of Tiffany's and stuff like that, but that was actually not my experience at all. I was literally used to dealers and then independent retail stores because that's kind of where our niche industry is. But someone had told me that a lot of auction houses look out for people like us with our degrees. And so you can work in an auction house because they're always looking for gem appraisers, that's always a huge thing that they need and just people who are knowledgeable of the industry. You can work in a marketing department with Harry Winston, David Yurman, all of these and use that degree. So having both the best of both worlds using your marketing degree with your gemology degree.

Another thing with this industry specific and jewelry industry is that there's a high barrier of entry. So not a lot of people know about it, but that's not the only problem there is. You have to know someone, honestly, to get in the industry. Like it's kind of plain and simple like that because there's not a lot of educational institutions, there's not a lot of mentorships, there's not a lot of teaching under your wing. But if you can find someone who's willing to teach you and willing to let you see the industry firsthand, I would say you should definitely use that to your advantage. I was lucky enough to have a family who's in the business. And I think the jewelry industry is very much a familial thing. They're very passed down. It's not like you get a job and get promoted. There's a lot of nepotism in there, unfortunately. But I think that if you're truly interested and you really want to enter this industry, it's worth it. And if you can find the right mentor, then that's like your best way of finding your path.

Things that I learned after graduation were probably just what's available to me, what as a career path I can do. The fact that I took my hobby into something that could essentially become like an entire business, an entire consulting thing. I think, because I was just so concerned about *Oh, I have a marketing degree or this degree that this is what I could do*, and that everything else just has to become a hobby just because it wasn't directly related to what I had graduated with. But because what I'm doing even in my current role has very little to do with my formal education from Emory—not that it wasn't important enough or that it gave me a lot—but I think: Do not limit yourself to what you have on paper and that you can learn so much and do so much with what your personal interests are. There's so much self learning after college. I never stopped learning about skin care. I'm still learning every day. I educate myself every day and with gemology, me pursuing an entire other degree besides what I'm currently doing. I'm not limiting myself just to diamonds. I'm one to go into precious gems and gemstones. For me, the most important thing is just because you finish your education/your undergrad, or even graduate school, you're never going to stop learning and that will always push you into your other creative fields. So yeah, that's what I would say.