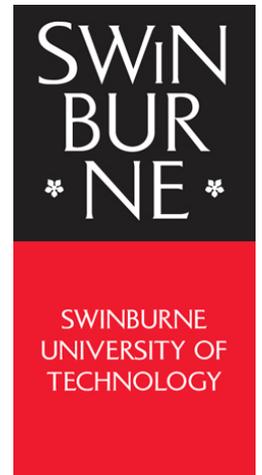


Swinburne Commons Transcript



Title: You'll know

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Maria-Jose Sanchez:

My name's MJ. I'm a telecommunications adviser at Swinburne.

Darren Croton:

My name is Darren. I'm a professor of astrophysics, and I work in the Centre for Astronomy and Supercomputing at Swinburne.

Kim Tairi:

My name is Kim, and I'm the University Librarian.

Alastair De Rozario:

My name is Al, and I work for Admissions at Swinburne University.

John Grundy:

Hi, I'm John. Currently I'm Dean of the School of Software and Electrical Engineering here at Swinburne.

Josie Arnold:

My name is Josie, and I am a writer, and I teach writing.

Alastair De Rozario:

As a teenager, as I was growing up, I really wanted to be a movie director or a scriptwriter or something along the lines of movies.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

I was always very creative.

Darren Croton:

I was always good at maths and some science.

Kim Tairi:

At 17, I was a punk, a vegetarian, friends in the Animal Liberation Front.

John Grundy:

We grew up in what was then a really poor area of the city, and my father worked in a factory all his life.

Josie Arnold:

I came from great poverty in my childhood. I thought of myself as born into death. My father had died when I was three months old. He was shot in Tobruk.

John Grundy:

In primary school, I struggled a lot. So I didn't see myself as academically able at all. Planned to leave school at fifteen and go get a job kind of thing.

Josie Arnold:

He had left Australia two months before I was born. I never saw my father, he never saw me. There was this very deep wound in our family about a dead father, a lost father.

Alastair De Rozario:

When I finished high school and it was time to decide on a career path or university. I had no idea what I wanted to do.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

I did graphics and art at school and I also happened to be good at maths as well. I did advanced maths at school. I kind of put two and two together and we decided I should be an architect.

Alastair De Rozario:

I decided to undertake a Bachelor of Business and Tourism.

Kim Tairi:

Really, I just wanted to hang out with my friends who were all in bands. It was more about being a cool kid, not really thinking about what I wanted to do past school.

Josie Arnold:

The number of roles that a girl could undertake were very few. You either became a shop assistant, a nurse, the teacher, a librarian, or you went into a factory. And my mother would say to me, Josie, if you don't study and you don't practice the piano-- I'm not sure how they were related-- you'll finish

up sticking labels on the vinegar in the vinegar factory. I think I decided fairly early to be a teacher because it looked like a good bossy thing to do, to be at the front and tell everyone what to do instead of being bossed around by your brothers and sisters and mother.

John Grundy:

It wasn't until high school that I really started to perform better academically and start to see there might be something beyond school. And my most favourite subject was chemistry, so I envisaged myself becoming a chemistry teacher.

Darren Croton:

I wasn't that stereotypical kid who knew what they wanted to do and had a dream and then pursued that. I just floated along as I was growing up, going from one interest to another. I started learning guitar, and I realized I was pretty good at it-- or at least good enough to start playing songs and things like that. So at 16 I joined a band.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

Well, what happened next is actually really interesting because I had this future planned for myself, and then when it actually came to enrolling for university, I got a surprise. So what I hadn't realized all along is that I was actually an overseas students, so what that meant for me was that I could not actually afford to go to university.

Kim Tairi:

When I was 17, my mother told me she was going to move to Australia. Oh, it makes me cry. Sorry, I get emotional when I think about it.

Alastair De Rozario:

So my academic grades were suffering a lot during university, and I just realised that I was in a course which I wasn't really interested in doing. And because I wasn't attending, it wasn't really fitting in.

Kim Tairi:

At the time, I was madly in love with a musician, and I just refused to go. So, I had my university entrance, so I had a place in uni and I was all ready to go. And my family left without me.

Josie Arnold:

I had no idea what university was, what it meant. I walked into the University of Melbourne wondering, what was going to happen?

John Grundy:

But while I actually did quite well academically in the subjects, I didn't like the labs. I didn't like the style of learning. I didn't like that as a discipline, as an area to study in anymore. So I was going to have to abandon that and do something different.

Kim Tairi:

So I went to university and I started a nursing degree to become a registered nurse. And I completed my first year, then fell pregnant.

Darren Croton:

I started thinking a lot about what I was going to do. The years started to go past, and I didn't want to be ancient and not have any real direction or career or anything underneath me that was supporting me.

Alastair De Rozario:

It was very tough for me, yes, to stop university, mainly because my parents had high expectations in terms of me going out and getting my degree. And I also felt like I was letting them down to an extent because that's what they wanted to do and I wanted to make them proud.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

I got a job. That's all I could really do at the time.

Kim Tairi:

I soon discovered that without my family there, there wasn't a safety net. It was lonely.

My daughter actually inspired me to make changes to my life, and when I came to Australia to join my family, I went to a type of course and did a return to study course just to get my skills back and did a course to become a library technician.

Alastair De Rozario:

Funnily enough, I got a job at the university where I was studying. It did make me feel good about myself. I was lucky to have still remained very close to the university environment even though I wasn't studying there anymore.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

Eventually things change. And that happened for me as well. My circumstances changed. So I'd earned money. I could afford to go to university.

Darren Croton:

I started reading a lot of books at the time, and the books that I tended to gravitate towards were popular science books where they would talk about time travel and worm holes, general relativity, quantum mechanics, teleportation-- very sci-fi concepts, which were things that I loved as a kid, but they were real. I mean, these books were talking about things that researchers were doing now.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

Throughout those five years, even though I'd had this plan about what I was going to study, I actually changed along the way. So I worked in a finances firm for all that time. I learned a lot about business.

I learned a lot about numbers and accounting and marketing and human resources and all kinds of other things I'd never really thought about because it didn't fall into the little box of "creative." But I found that I actually really liked all that stuff. So rather than doing architecture, I actually enrolled into a Bachelor of Psychology and Marketing because I was really interested in the way people think and the way that you can actually use creativity in business.

Darren Croton:

I just started to think, why not? Why couldn't I do that? And so I was reading these books and that led me to start looking at courses at universities.

John Grundy:

I happened to take computer science as my final elective subject in my first year at university and discovered I loved computer science. I loved programming. I loved developing software.

Josie Arnold:

I think probably the most rewarding moment in university was boys because we didn't have boys at school. We only had girls. So it was wonderful to have boyfriends at university.

I think I felt like I'd found a direction. It was a path for me to follow, and it was very clear.

Kim Tairi:

My story is about a lot of false starts, but they weren't really false starts or failures. All of those things actually led to the pathway, and I think you shouldn't be afraid to take risks and try things because eventually you'll find the path that you're meant to be on. And for me, it was very much that case with libraries.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

I actually really love my job now, so if I change anything in the past, I change where I am today.

John Grundy:

So while the pathway was certainly not straight-- it was several winds in the road-- I'm certainly happy with what I do now.

Josie Arnold:

Being rich is better than being poor, but having been poor, I know that it doesn't kill you. You don't die from not having the latest things. If you're financially struggling at the moment, that might be a great strength in the future, where you feel you're doing very well, but if you don't have it, you'll still survive.

Darren Croton:

You want to do well in school and you want to have a direction and all this. It is important, but you don't have to have it together. You don't have to know what you want to do with your life when

you're 15, when you're 20-- when you're 25, even. Maybe even if you're 35. It doesn't have to work out that way. You have opportunities, and you can create those opportunities as you go and as you learn.

Maria-Jose Sanchez:

It's going to take years to get to where you want, but that's OK because those years are worth every minute.

Alastair De Rozario:

The way I feel about the future is really good. Knowing that I like something that I'm into and I'm passionate about, I think I'm going to do well. I think that's the key to anything that you do in life-- having that passion. So I think one day I will make a good manager, and hopefully I can stay within Swinburne because that's where I'm studying and working at the moment. So it would be good to invest back into the place where I get the opportunities to move forward.