

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/learn-through-experiences/>

Connie Chan, general partner at Andreessen Horowitz, shares the story of her time as a Stanford student and why she tried out multiple careers before going into venture capital. She encourages college students to learn by gathering a variety of experiences, jobs, and relationships.



Transcript

- I don't even think I knew what venture capital was 00:00:05,490 when I was in college and to be honest, I only feel like I finally figured out my career a couple years ago.. Like in between everything was this meandering path and just figuring out where I could learn the most, where my friends were, what my friends were doing.. But I have learned since then how important it is to be intentional about some of these decisions.. But to give you a sense of what I was like as an undergrad, I did economics because it was the easiest, smallest major at the time.. It was like 70 units or something, ridiculously small.. I did MSNE cause a lot of my friends were doing the co-term, but it wasn't something I had intentionally been thinking about enough.. Even my Goldman Sachs interviews and my internship there was largely because my friends were inspiring me to go interview for that.. I think in life though, post-graduation is when I started realizing I need to find something that I truly like, that truly makes me fulfilled, that I'm actually good at, that I find fun.. And that was what led me to this different path of trying out finance, then product management, marketing, business development, and then early stage investing where I finally feel like, okay, I'm doing something really fun that I'm actually good at cause you need both.. You can't just do things that are fun you're not good at and you also can't just do things you're good at, they're not fun..

But long-winded answer of saying, when I was young, I had no clue what I wanted to do when I was older.. I had never even heard the word Goldman Sachs until my junior year in college.. I didn't grow up on the East Coast.. My parents are engineer biochemists and because Goldman Sachs doesn't have like a physical retail bank next to my parents' house where they do banking, I had never heard of it.. I heard of Bank of America, I heard of Citibank, that was it.. Like my understanding of how the world worked, how finance worked, how the economy worked was very, very non-existent back then.. So a lot of this, you learn throughout various jobs and various experiences and the main message I think the story of my career is the more experiences you gather, the more different types of people you meet.. One day when you look back, they will all piece together and make you more capable to do whatever it is that you finally end up deciding to do.. And that's definitely true in my case.. Every single part of my career, previous jobs, previous classes, previous random extracurriculars I did, they have all come back to make me who I am today..

And so the idea that you need to graduate knowing exactly what's the perfect major, what's the perfect job, that job you're very unlikely to do for the next 10 years.. It's not likely to be the job you do for the rest of your career.. You don't have to

worry so much about making these one-way door bets cause they're not one-way door bets and life will take you to many different experiences...