

Molly: Hi everyone, and welcome to our next episode of All Careers Considered. I'm Molly McCurdy, Assistant Director of Strategic Alumni Engagement for the Walter Center for Career Achievement and podcast host for this episode. As you all probably know, times are tough in the world right now for many reasons, one of them being that economy is not in a great spot and it's likely that there are fewer jobs than there were at one point. Today we're going to talk a little bit about what that's like and how to overcome those challenges, and to do that I have an amazing guest with me today named Rishika Murthy. Rishika graduated with her Master's in Journalism in 2009 from IU Bloomington. Thanks for being here Rishika!

Rishika: Yeah, thanks for having me!

Molly: To get started, I'd love for you to just tell us a little bit about you, where you're from and what kind of work you do.

Rishika: Sure, so I grew up in Peoria Illinois and graduated from Bradley University with a degree in English and Journalism and I started working at the print newspaper here in Peoria. I always liked reading and writing so I figured I'd go into journalism. I also wanted to get into a bigger city and bigger market so I thought that grad school was the right call for achieving those opportunities, so then I went to IU and graduated in 2009, and the economy crashed in 2008. I've gone on to do a lot of other stuff which I guess we'll get to soon. But yeah, and this is the second time the economy has crashed since I've graduated. So today we'll talking about that and how you can turn lemons into lemonade.

Molly: Yeah, I love that. So Rishika you were in your graduate program at IU when the Big Recession of 2008 hit, what was that like for you? What steps did you take after that?

Rishika: After my first year of grad school I went to South Korea. I had a friend who was a photojournalist there, and I was always into traveling and things like that so I thought this would be a great time to see South Korea. We worked at a summer camp together and that was a great experience. Then on my flight back was when I heard the news about the economy crashing and things going bad, so I thought okay I'll finish up my last year of grad school and then move back to South Korea and find a full-time job teaching and take on some freelance projects on the side.

Charlie Rose had come to talk to the Media School, or the Journalism School at the time and just IU in general, and he was telling us about how in his day, news companies had a lot more money and they would pay for him to fly all over the world and they had money for overseas news bureaus. But now, with everything changing from print to digital, and that shift was happening at the time aside from the recession he said you're better off just moving somewhere and trying to make connections and start a career in freelance and kind of carve out your career that way. That appealed to me and also just the idea of moving back to South Korea, I always liked the idea of living in a foreign country and had never really done study abroad or anything. It seemed like a good opportunity to explore that and maybe explore some freelance opportunities. It seemed adventurous to me.

Molly: Yeah, that's awesome. When you kind of made that move to South Korea and decided to kind of take on some freelance projects, how was that for you? Was that nerve-wracking, exciting, maybe a little bit of both? How did you kind of deal with that?

Rishika: It was a little bit nerve-wracking because I had met some people at a conference, a literary journalism conference in grad school. I had gone with some classmates, so I had met some people who worked overseas so I just kind of contacted them and just got to know people that way. It was a little bit

nerve-wracking but also in in hind sight I'm really glad I did that because I had some really cool experiences and opportunities through that. So yeah, it was pretty adventurous I'd say.

Molly: Very Cool. So obviously you're not still in South Korea so maybe you could talk a little bit about your experience there and then your decision to move back to the states and kind of start your career.

Rishika: Yeah, so I was in South Korea for 2 years and then you know, it's a bit far for me from friends and family so I wanted to get back home, so I came home and took some classes. I also decided while I was overseas, you know I don't know if the journalist life is for me it seems pretty stressful and you know at all hours of the day, and I wanted something a little more 9 to 5, something a little more steady and a little more regular.

I started working in corporate communications and I took classes at the community college in HTML and coding classes because as everything was switching to digital, you know all of the job openings I saw were requiring these HTML skills, or coding skills or digital skills and so I wanted to be part of that change. So I took those classes and then I got a job in Chicago in E-commerce like the marketing space, so day job wise I continued to move on that path, and also just knowing how quickly things can shift and just knowing that on this digital frontier was going to work out.

I was like I better continue to develop my skills after work in other ways just in case things change or just to open myself up to other opportunities, so for fun I started doing stand up comedy with some friends and that kind of turned into a side hustle I guess. When I moved to Chicago I co-founded this collective. At the time it was a lot of straight, white males in comedy, so we carved out our niche and focused on underrepresented voices like women of color and women in general and LGBT community and people from various communities. So that did really well we did social media and PR and produced sold-out shows and it was very cool and a very exciting opportunity. It helped me develop other skills like that.

I ended up moving to Southern California, my day job had relocated me, so I continued working in that marketing space during the day and stand up comedy at night. So now that I made the shift to LA I feel like all these different experiences are kind of coming together in a way that I feel like would lead to opportunities that I would enjoy.

Molly: Awesome, thanks for sharing. It sounds like you've had a really awesome well-rounded experience, so many different types of experiences with traveling and doing the comedy and all of that. I guess just moving forward, what kind of advice would you give students who are just trying to figure out what to do with all of this uncertainty. Maybe they know what industry they want to be in but they're just trying to figure out what their next steps are. What kind of advice would you give?

Rishika: I would say just be open to learning new skills whatever that may be. There are a lot of online resources that are free, you can pick up other skills like business skills are really important to learn. Making your own opportunities is kind of key and just having that sense of curiosity and determination to just make your own job. Like when I was going through school it was like if the opportunity doesn't exist just make your own opportunity.

And so just with this change and everything, like with this current economic situation, the old models may be dead but this is also an opportunity to start new opportunity or new things that could work. Don't be afraid to try new things. They may not work out but you can learn valuable lessons from them and you could build on that the next things you try. So just keep trying things. You never know what

will work out, what will hit, and no matter what you try you will learn valuable lessons from them and that can determine the next direction that you pick to go.

Molly: Yeah, that's amazing advice, thank you for sharing that. For those of you listening right now I'd definitely recommend if you have more questions or would like to connect with Rishika, she's on the Walter Center Success Network or the WCSN which is the Walter Center's student to alumni networking platform. If you don't already have a profile it's really easy, you just go to wcsn.indiana.edu and make a free profile.

Thank you so much for sharing Rishika, it was great to have you. Thanks so much for listening everyone and have a great day, talk to you soon!