**26. Career ladder**

**Before you start:**

1. How do you understand the definition of a career ladder?

In my opinion, a career ladder refers to a structured progression path within an organization or industry, representing the hierarchical steps one can take to advance professionally. It typically involves increasing levels of responsibility, authority, and compensation as individuals move up the ladder. The concept emphasizes the idea of vertical growth and advancement, allowing individuals to climb higher in their chosen field or organization based on their skills, experience, and performance.

1. How can an employer motivate you to work more productively?

An employer can motivate employees to work more productively by providing clear goals and expectations, offering meaningful recognition and rewards for achievements, and fostering a positive work environment. Effective communication, regular feedback, and opportunities for growth and development can also be motivating factors. Additionally, providing a fair and competitive compensation package can incentivize employees to perform at their best.

1. What benefits would you like to get from your employer with moving up the career ladder, except raising your salary?

I’d like to get more work fields. It’s mean that I’ll can choose project or product of my work. Also it may be pretty things such as corporate taxi or discounts and gifts.

**Ex. 1 Study the words and word combination:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word | Transcription | Translation |
| authority | /ɔːˈθɒrəti/ | полномочия |
| benefit | /ˈbenɪfɪt/ | пособие |
| external stimulus | /ɪkˈstɜːnl ˈstɪmjələs/ | внешний стимул |
| humble | /ˈhʌmbl/ | смириться |
| incentivize | /ɪnˈsentɪvaɪz/ | стимулировать |
| lieu | /luː/ | место |
| salary | /ˈsæləri/ | зарплата |
| to enhance skills | /ɪnˈhɑːns skɪls/ | повышать квалификацию |
| to invest | /ɪnˈvest/ | инвестировать |
| to reap | /riːp/ | получать |
| upward mobility | /ˈʌpwəd məʊˈbɪləti/ | восходящая мобильность |
| workforce | /ˈwɜːkfɔːs/ | рабочая сила |

**Ex. 2 Read the text and title its parts.**

**The Career Ladder**

Benefits of Career Ladders for Employers

Employers want to do nice things for their employees, but big, expensive things must be weighed with the benefits to the employer in mind. One of those big, expensive things is a career ladder for particular groups of staff.

A career ladder is a formal process within an organization that allows employees to advance their careers to higher levels of salary, responsibility or authority. Once employees meet certain criteria, they are eligible to move into higher level roles.

Career ladders cannot just benefit employees. Employers need to reap some benefits as well. Here are some of the ways career ladders benefit employing organizations.

First of all, it is well-trained workforce. Almost all career ladders include some sort of continuing education or training component. In addition to accumulating years of experience and performing at an acceptable level, employees complete training classes to enhance their skills. Career ladder requirements provide external stimulus for employees to attend job-related training. For the organization, the result is a well-trained workforce.

Moreover, when organizations have career ladders in place, they show employees the organization values them. The career ladder is a formal mechanism whereby employees gain knowledge, skills and abilities that make them more useful to the employer. Employees feel cared for since the organization is investing in them.

Another benefit is motivated workforce. Since job performance is almost always a key factor in career ladder programs, employees are incentivized toward good performance.

And finally,career ladders are a tool managers can use when they make decisions about which employees are assigned which tasks. Obviously, employees higher up the career ladder can be given more complex and difficult assignments than employees at lower levels. Employees at higher levels have the knowledge, skills, abilities and salaries that align with those assignments.

The Benefits of Dual Career Ladders

A dual career ladder is a career development plan that allows upward mobility for employees without requiring that they be placed into supervisory or managerial positions. This type of program typically serves as a way to advance employees who have deep technical skills and/or education but who are not interested or inclined to pursue a management or supervisory track. Dual career ladder programs are most common in scientific, medical, information technology and engineering fields.

One advantage of a dual career ladder is that it gives companies an alternative career path to offer employees in lieu of traditional promotions to supervisory or managerial positions. Some employees have no desire or aptitude for management, so the dual career path provides upward mobility. In addition, a dual career ladder program can potentially reduce turnover among senior staff by providing expanded career opportunities, and it can allow employees to remain in their chosen careers and not be forced to move into managerial jobs just to get a pay increase. If well managed, this type of program can also decrease pressure to create special jobs just to give pay increases to retain and reward talented employees and can encourage employees to continually develop their skills and enhance their value to the organization.

Moving Down the Career Ladder: Considerations and Steps

Sometimes, moving down the career ladder, instead of up it, can make sense. It could be by choice. In other cases, especially in a down job market or an industry that is not doing well, it can make sense to look at alternative job options and downsize career.

How do you move down the career ladder instead of up it? First, you need to consider the fact that you may earn less money. On the other hand, you may also have more flexibility, less stress, and more employment options. Then, you need to consider what alternatives are available and how to find and apply for them

* **Make a Decision.** Decide if you can get by on a lower salary. If so, how much less? Are the benefits a lower level job may have worth what you are potentially giving up in a more lucrative position?
* **Consider Job Options.** What are you interested in? What would you like to do?
* **Review career and job options to get ideas.** When you are not sure what you want to do, try it out. Consider a part-time job or volunteer to make sure that it is really something you want to do. Before you give up a high paying job, it makes sense to test the waters, if you can.
* **Job Search.** This part is one of the simpler steps in the process of downsizing your career. The higher the level the position the fewer jobs are available and the more competition there is. The opposite holds true, so you will have more choices and more job listings to consider when you are looking for lower level jobs.
* **Consider it a Transition.** Instead of considering your new job as a step down, consider that you are doing something different. Every job is of value, regardless of what we are doing. It is what you give - and what you get out of your work – that is important.
* **Be Humble.** This is probably the most important advice. When you are moving down the career ladder, by choice or not, you may not be considered as the important person you once thought you were. Be humble, be flexible, and be willing to do what your bosses need you to do.

Career Path vs. Career Ladder: Exploring Professional Progression

Career path is a track of employment with a progression of acquired education, experience, achievement and responsibility, moving through job positions within a professional field or organization. For example, an analytical track career path, a managerial track career path, or a quality management track career path. A Career Path is designed to encourage students to enter a certain field of study (e.g., public health laboratory science) and to demonstrate the possibilities within that field of study. A career path for a field of study in laboratory science can begin with a position as a laboratory aide, then a laboratory technician, followed by a laboratory scientist. This career path then opens up a wealth of interrelated laboratory science tracks, and a professional has the ability to move from one track to another over the course of a career.

Career ladder is a series of steps within a job classification, each with increasing responsibility as expertise is developed, allowing for recognition of professional growth. The steps in the career ladder may require competition for advancement. For example, progressing through the federal GS system\*, or moving from a laboratory scientist I to laboratory scientist II to laboratory scientist III. A Career Ladder is designed to encourage and assist staff to further their professional development and to reward them for their commitment to professional growth and excellence without moving to a new career path.

\* The General Schedule (GS) is the predominant pay scale within the United States civil service.

**Ex. 3 Answer the following questions:**

1. What is a career ladder?

It’s a formal process within an organization that allows employees to advance their careers to higher levels of salary, responsibility, or authority. It is a series of steps within a job classification, with increasing levels of expertise and responsibility, that recognize and reward professional growth. Meeting certain criteria enables employees to move into higher level roles within their chosen career path.

1. How does a career ladder motivate employees?

A career ladder motivates employees by providing them with clear goals and a sense of progression, allowing them to track their advancement and feel a sense of accomplishment. It also offers recognition and rewards as employees move up the ladder, which can incentivize them to work harder and perform better. Additionally, the career ladder helps with employee retention by providing opportunities for growth and development within the organization.

1. What is a dual career ladder?

a dual career ladder is a career development plan that allows upward mobility for employees without requiring them to move into supervisory or managerial positions. It provides an alternative career path for employees who possess deep technical skills or education but do not wish to pursue a management track.

1. What are the advantages of the dual career ladder?

Advantages of a dual career ladder include offering an alternative career path without managerial promotions, reducing turnover among senior staff, allowing employees to stay in their chosen careers, and promoting continuous skill development and value enhancement.

1. What are the reasons to move down the career ladder?

there are several reasons to move down the career ladder. These include earning less money but gaining more flexibility, less stress, and increased employment options. It may also be a choice to explore alternative job options or downsize due to a down job market or an industry that is not doing well.

1. How to make a decision to move down the career ladder?

To make a decision to move down the career ladder, consider if you can manage a lower salary and weigh the benefits of a lower-level job. Assess your interests and explore career options through part-time or volunteer work. Approach the transition with an open mindset, valuing personal fulfillment and growth in your chosen path.

1. What troubles can you get through when moving down the career ladder?

When moving down the career ladder, you may encounter challenges such as adjusting to a lower salary, facing a potential loss of status or prestige, and dealing with the perception of being less important or valuable in your role. Additionally, you might need to adapt to new job responsibilities, potentially work with a different team or supervisor, and navigate any emotional or psychological impact associated with the career shift.

1. Name some advice for moving through career ladder.

Invest in training and education.

Demonstrate commitment to professional growth and excellence.

Focus on good job performance.

Take on challenging assignments.

Maintain a humble and flexible attitude.

Explore job options aligned with your interests.

Embrace career transitions as valuable opportunities.

1. What fields mostly use a dual career ladder? Why?

the fields that mostly use a dual career ladder are scientific, medical, information technology, and engineering fields. This is because these fields often have employees with deep technical skills and education who may not be interested in pursuing managerial or supervisory roles. A dual career ladder provides a way for these employees to advance their careers without having to move into traditional management positions.

1. What is the difference between career path and career ladder?

Career path refers to the progression of a person's employment within a field or organization, moving through different job positions and acquiring education, experience, and responsibility. It encompasses a broader scope of professional growth and opportunities. Career ladder, on the other hand, focuses on the series of steps within a specific job classification, allowing employees to advance their careers by gaining expertise and taking on higher levels of responsibility within that classification. It emphasizes vertical advancement within a particular job track.

**Ex. 4 Complete the following sentences with words and word combinations from the text.**

1. Employees complete training classes to enhance their skills and provide the organization with a **well-trained workforce**.
2. Job performance is a key factor in career ladder programs, employees are **incentivized** toward good performance.
3. Career ladder requires enhancing employee's skills, this provides **external stimulus** to attend job-related training.
4. The knowledge, skills, abilities and salaries of employees align with **job assignments**.
5. **Upward mobility** refers to the ability for employees to "climb a ladder" of jobs with more responsibility.
6. Dual career ladder serves as a way to advance employees who have deep technical skills but who are not inclined to pursue a management or **supervisory** track.
7. The dual career path provides upward mobility for those who have no desire or **aptitude** for management.
8. A dual career ladder program can potentially reduce **turnover** among senior staff by providing expanded career opportunities.
9. Moving down the career ladder can make sense in a down **job market** or an industry that is not doing well.
10. A series of steps within a job classification, each with increasing responsibility as **expertise** is developed, allowing for recognition of **professional growth** is called a career ladder.

Keys:

well-trained workforce, incentivized, external stimulus, job assignments, upward mobility, supervisory, aptitude, turnover, job market, expertise, professional growth

**Ex. 5 Mark these statements as true or false:**

1. Employees often take refresher courses to improve their skills. T
2. Dual career ladder programs are most common in beauty, managing, musical and acting fields. F
3. Job performance is a key factor in career ladder programs. T
4. A dual career ladder is a perfect way for you if you don’t want to be placed into supervisory or managerial positions. T
5. You do not have the opportunity to try a new field if you decide to go down the career ladder. F
6. Moving down the career ladder does not make any sense. F
7. “Career path” and “career ladder” are synonymous terms. F
8. A dual career ladder program increases turnover among senior staff. F
9. Career path is designed to encourage students to enter a certain field of and to demonstrate the possibilities within that field of study. T
10. A dual ladder program decreases pressure to create special jobs just to give pay increases to retain and reward talented employees. T

Keys:

1T, 2F, 3T, 4T, 5F, 6F, 7F, 8F, 9T, 10T

**Ex. 6 Translate from Russian into English.**

1. Неотъемлемой частью движения по карьерной лестнице является непрерывное обучение и повышение квалификации.
2. Чем выше сотрудник расположен на карьерной лестнице, тем сложнее задания он выполняет.
3. Двойная карьерная лестница предоставляет широкие возможности карьерного роста без перехода на управленческую должность.
4. Программы двойной карьерной лестницы поощряют талантливых сотрудников к постоянному развитию своих навыков.
5. Иногда движение вниз по карьерной лестнице позволяет быть более гибким, уменьшает стресс и предоставляет больше возможностей для трудоустройства.
6. Желание продвинуться по карьерной лестнице является внешним стимулом для постоянного обучения.
7. Чем выше уровень работы, тем меньше вакансий доступно и тем сильнее конкуренция среди соискателей.
8. Наиболее часто программы двойной карьерной лестницы встречается в научной, медицинской, инженерной и научно информационной сферах.
9. В условиях спада в индустрии иногда имеет смысл рассмотреть альтернативные варианты работы, в том числе понижение должности.
10. Даже если вы чувствуете, что движетесь вниз по карьерной лестнице, вы никогда не знаете, как эта работа может обернуться, и вы можете получить работу, которая вам понравится намного больше, чем ваша последняя.
11. Continuous learning and professional development are an integral part of moving up the career ladder.
12. The higher an employee is positioned on the career ladder, the more challenging tasks they perform.
13. A dual career ladder provides ample opportunities for career growth without transitioning to a managerial position.
14. Dual career ladder programs encourage talented employees to continuously develop their skills.
15. Sometimes, moving down the career ladder allows for more flexibility, reduces stress, and provides more job opportunities.
16. The desire to advance on the career ladder serves as an external stimulus for ongoing learning.
17. The higher the job level, the fewer available vacancies and the stronger the competition among applicants.
18. Dual career ladder programs are most commonly found in scientific, medical, engineering, and information technology fields.
19. In times of industry downturn, it can be worthwhile to consider alternative job options, including a demotion.
20. Even if you feel like you're moving down the career ladder, you never know how a job can turn out, and you may find a job that you like much more than your previous one.

Keys:

1. An essential part of moving up the career ladder is continuous training and continuing education.
2. The higher the employee is located on the career ladder, the more difficult the task he performs.
3. The double career ladder provides wide career opportunities without moving to a managerial position.
4. Double career ladder programs encourage talented employees to constantly develop their skills.
5. Sometimes moving down the career ladder allows you to be more flexible, reduces stress and provides more employment opportunities.
6. The desire to move up the career ladder is an external stimulus for continuous learning.
7. The higher the level the position the fewer jobs are available and the more competition there is.
8. Dual career ladder programs are most common in scientific, medical, information technology and engineering fields.
9. In a recession in the industry, sometimes it makes sense to consider alternative job options, including demotion.
10. Even if you feel like you're moving down the career ladder, you never know how the job might work out and you could end up with a job you like much more than your last one.

**Ex. 7 Learn the meanings of the following words and phrases. Divide them into three columns: which of them belong to the salary, work process. The words are not related to first two columns place into the “other”.**

To decline, hesitation, diligence, bridge skills gap, to retrieve and store data, to be well acquainted, additional pay, to devise a convincing rationale, postponing, willingness, revenue, to convey, to tweak, to revamp, wage stagnation, income, a decent salary, bolster productivity, mitigate risk.

Отказаться, нерешительность, усердие, преодоление разрыва в навыках, получение и хранение данных, быть хорошо знакомыми, дополнительная оплата, разработать убедительное обоснование, отложить, готовность, доход, передать, настроить, обновить, застой в заработной плате, доход, достойная зарплата, повышение производительности, снизить риск.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Salary | Work process | Other |
| **Additional pay**  **Revenue**  **Income**  **A decent salary**  **Wage stagnation** | **Mitigate risk**  **Bolster productivity**  **To revamp**  **To tweak**  **To decline**  **Diligence**  **Bridge skills gap**  **To retrieve and store data**  **To devise a convincing rationale**  **Postponing**  **Willingness**  **To convey** | **Hesitation**  **To be well acquainted** |

Key:

Отказаться, нерешительность, усердие, преодоление разрыва в навыках, получение и хранение данных, быть хорошо знакомыми, дополнительная оплата, разработать убедительное обоснование, отложить, готовность, доход, передать, настроить, обновить, застой в заработной плате, доход, достойная зарплата, повышение производительности, снизить риск.

**Ex. 8 Read the text and outline its main idea.**

## Good Reasons for Turning Down a Promotion

If you're not sure whether you want to accept a promotion, consider whether any of the following common reasons for declining apply to your situation:

* **The timing isn’t right**. The timing of the opportunity may present a challenge for you or your family. Perhaps you are finishing a degree, have a child about to graduate from high school, or care for aging parents. Or maybe your spouse has a great job they don't want to leave, and the promotion would require a move to another location. All of these factors can mean that a promotion—however exciting out of context—doesn’t fit into your present life plans.
* **You don’t think you’re ready**. You may not think that you are ready for a promotion and would prefer to strengthen some key skill areas before taking on new challenges and responsibilities. If this is a possibility, consider whether your hesitation is well-founded or based on fear. Sometimes, the best way to get ready for a new role is to start working in it. If you would enjoy the work and can bridge your skills gap with diligence and hard work, consider whether you’d be better off taking the role now.
* **You don’t want to step up the career ladder**. It could also be that a promotion would move you into a management position, taking you away from the part of the job that you enjoy the most. In that case, think about your career path. Will your employer allow you to stay in your current position indefinitely, or is there an expectation that you’ll advance or go elsewhere?
* **You’re not comfortable with the team**. The promotion may mean that you will be working with a different team. You may prefer to stay in your current role, working with those with which you are well acquainted.
* **The promotion doesn’t pay**. It could be that you’re going to be given more responsibility without more compensation. While this is a sound reason for declining a promotion, know that some tact will be required when you speak with your manager. You’ll need to make it clear that you’re not trying to avoid more responsibilities generally, and that you’re willing to pitch in to help the team make its goals, even as you avoid taking on an entirely new role for no additional pay.

**How to Turn Down a Promotion**

If you are sure that declining a promotion is the right option for your personal situation, then devise a convincing rationale for why you should remain in your current role.

* Mention areas you would like to strengthen first, or reasons for postponing the promotion.
* Point out the skills that you enjoy using in your current job.
* Emphasize how you add value and help your team to achieve its goals.
* Convey your strong commitment to the organization and willingness to work hard in your role.
* Share your plans for professional development and how you will continue to upgrade your performance.
* Leave your employer with the impression that you are very passionate about your current role and devoted to your work.

## Another Option Is toTry Out the New Job

An alternative to just saying no is to try out the new position. You could offer to take on the role temporarily or help with some of the responsibilities associated with the higher-level job if your employer is in need.

If you are sure that you want to return to your current job, it’s best to agree on an end date for the larger role ahead of time. It’s also possible that once you take on the higher-level job, you’ll find it’s a good fit and will decide to take the promotion permanently.

Do you feel stuck in your job? The most obvious solution is to seek out a new one. Sometimes, though, you won't have immediate luck landing a new position. You could find yourself sending out application after application without even getting an interview, let alone a job offer.

Don't let yourself get discouraged. To fire up your job search, you may need to tweak your job-hunting strategy. That can mean expanding your network, revamping your resume, looking outside your preferred field, or seeking out help from coaches and other professionals.

Have you been feeling bored or frustrated at work lately? Or do you work in an industry with falling job opportunities or wage stagnation? If you’re a mid-career worker considering switching careers for whatever reason, here’s good news:

Transitioning to a new career and industry doesn’t mean that you will need to begin from the bottom. Even if it’s not in the same field, your experience still counts and can help you skip over entry-level positions.

If you’re considering making a change to your career path, start by evaluating what you want to be doing, and what job would make you happy.

At every step of your career transition, think of your years of experience as an advantage, and not an impediment. Your experience is still meaningful and can inform your future career, even if it’s a departure from what you were working on previously.

**Ex. 9 Discuss with your partner the following questions:**

1. What do you think is the most common reason for declining a promotion?

the most common reason for declining a promotion is when the timing isn't right. This could be due to personal circumstances such as family commitments, ongoing education, or reluctance to relocate.

1. Why is it important to leave your employer with a good impression about your declining?

it is important to leave your employer with a good impression when declining a promotion because it shows professionalism, commitment, and a positive attitude towards your current role. By emphasizing your dedication to the organization and expressing your willingness to continue contributing in your current position, you maintain a positive relationship and leave the door open for future opportunities.

1. What options do you have while saying “no” to the proposal of promotion?

When saying "no" to a promotion proposal, options include mentioning personal or family circumstances, lack of readiness, preference for current position or team, or lack of additional pay. It is important to express commitment to the organization, plans for professional development, and emphasize current job skills to leave a positive impression. If feeling stuck or considering a career switch, job search strategies can be tweaked and experience leveraged to transition to a new field.

**Ex. 10 Remember your experience in declining some promising and forward-looking proposal. It can be something from career or study. Maybe, you have declined taking part in a big conference, team-building party with colleagues or groupmates, promotion or something else. What was your reason of saying “no”? Do you have any regrets about that decision now? Write a short essay about it.**

**Ex. 11 Choose one of the possible careers in your field. Name steps in career ladder of this position.**

Data engineering is an exciting field with a lot of opportunities for growth and development. As a data engineer, you can expect to have a career ladder that has multiple levels of advancement. Here are the steps that you can expect to take as a data engineer in your career ladder:

1. Junior Data Engineer: This is your starting point in your career as a data engineer. You will be responsible for developing, testing, and maintaining data pipelines. You will also work with the data science team to ensure that the data is clean and accurate.
2. Data Engineer: As you gain more experience and knowledge, you will advance to the role of a data engineer. In this role, you will have greater responsibilities like designing, implementing, and maintaining data architectures. You will also work on optimizing data pipelines for scalability and reliability.
3. Senior Data Engineer: The next step in your career ladder is the role of a senior data engineer. You will be responsible for leading data engineering projects, mentoring junior data engineers, and collaborating with other teams like product and software engineering teams.
4. Data Engineering Manager: At this level, you will be responsible for leading a team of data engineers and overseeing data engineering projects end-to-end. You will be responsible for hiring and developing talent within the team, and also developing and executing the data engineering strategy for the organization.
5. Chief Data Officer: At the peak of your data engineering career ladder, you may aspire to be the Chief Data Officer. As CDO, you will be responsible for developing and executing the overall data strategy for the organization. You will also be responsible for ensuring data security and privacy, managing data governance, and driving innovation in the data engineering field.

In conclusion, the data engineering career ladder is a progressive and rewarding career path that offers a lot of growth opportunities. With the right skills, knowledge, and experience, you can climb the ladder and achieve success in this exciting field.

**Watching the video**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaSZoMWhHrI>

**How to change careers when you’re lost Felicia Ricci TEDxYale HD.**

**Part 1 (00:00 -05:39)**

**Before you watch**

**Ex. 1. What does the revision in case of changing your career mean? Give your opinion.**

**Ex. 2. Do you what the words in bold mean? Look them up if necessary**

1. It was the **fulfillment** of literally a lifelong dream.
2. I actually **majored** in English.
3. There is no final **draft**.
4. Life sends you so many **curve balls**.
5. My goal is to **encourage** you and **empower** you to be able to **embrace** this process of change

**While you watch**

**Ex. 1. Tick the items Felicia Ricci mentions in her speech**

1. Her lifegoal was to become a restaurant owner.
2. The first Broadway show that sha has seen was The Phantom Of The Opera.
3. She visited an acting camp.
4. Her best and hardest role in theatre was Elphaba in “Wicked”.
5. She has never been to Canada before.
6. Her agent wife’s name is Sara.
7. Nasty red ink on the page is the best way of comparing your speech with real life.
8. She hates giving a speech in front of the audience.

Key:

2, 3, 4, 7

**Part 2 (05:39 - 11:12)**

**Before you watch**

**Ex. 1. Discuss with your partner questions and quotes.**

1. Why it was hard for Felicia to stop her acting career?
2. Was it right decision for her to leave her dream job and start something new?
3. If you are innovative, the odds would never be in your favor.
4. You can’t decide by thinking, you can only decide by doing.

**Ex. 2. Give an English equivalents for following words and word combinations from the video:**

Игнорируй препятствия, заглушить звук, созерцая изменение направления, прислушайся к интуиции, различные степени, стальные нервы, управлять собственной компанией.

Key:

Ignore the odds, drowning out the sound, contemplating a change of direction, listen to your gut, varying degrees, nerves of steel, to run your own company.

**While you watch**

**Ex. 1. How do you understand following sentences and word combinations from Felicia’s speech? Comment on them.**

1. Listen to your gut
2. If you go against the grain, you’ll be going against the odds
3. To channel anxiety and fear
4. You can’t decide by thinking, you can only decide by doing
5. An ongoing process of revision

TRANSCRIPTS

00:00

Hi, everyone. I’m Felicia, that says there. This is really exciting. I actually took Professor Chun’s class when I was at Yale. He is awesome. So, it’s honored to be here. The past three years of my life have been a whirlwind.

I moved three times, I wrote two books, I published one of them, and I actually started my own business. Three years ago, my life looked incredibly different. I was living in New York City, and I was working full time as an actor. I had an agent, I was a member of the Actors Union, and I have just come off being in one of the biggest musicals of all time, which was “Wicked.” Any of you have seen Wicked? Yeap! So, it’s a really big musical.

And on the outside, you know, everything was going great. If I kept going in this direction, maybe I could do a lot in theater. And sort of all seemed to be pointing in that one direction. But on the inside, I was wracked with doubt, and I was incredibly scared. The reason being, you know, theater and acting was what I have thought to be my life dream.

Ever since I was two, I went to see my first Broadway show, which was “The phantom of the opera”; claps for “The phantom of the opera.” I don’t know why I was obsessed with theater. I went to theater camp. I would sing in the shower, my parents heard me.

I would sing soundtracks all the time, so I was obsessed. And then, in college, even though I did have a lot of interest, and I actually majored in English, I decided, when I graduated, that I had to go for it, I had to go for the theater because if I didn’t, I would regret it. So, I did.

And the relative success I had early on with “Wicked” was very complicated for me. Because on one hand, you know, it was amazing. It was the fulfillment of literally a lifelong dream. But on the other hand, it made me see pretty quickly that what I have thought was my lifelong dream might not actually be what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. When I was researching this experience, I thought this is like a footnote in life, right? So, you start one place and you end up another, but what we don’t know is talk about that process.

And I wanted to get in the mindset of what that felt like because I am an actor, and I wanted to access those emotions. I pulled up a bunch of the emails. I’ve been writing at that time, I found the one I wrote to my agent when I finally had made the decision and said something like: “Hi David, please cancel all my auditions. I need to take a long break from acting. I don’t know whether or not this will be permanent. I’m sorry, but my heart is not in the business. And it doesn’t fulfill me in the way I thought it would. Please know that it is not impulsive but comes after many months of trying to figure out what to do with my life. Sorry if I wasted your time, but this is my truth.” So, phew!, even in saying it back now, I kind of like, relieve the feelings of being there. And it’s a horrible place, right? To not know what you’re going to be doing with your life.

And that horrible thing, my friends, is what I want to talk to you about today. And that is the process of revision. So, the official title of this talk is: “There is no final draft: keep revising your life to create your reality.” So, maybe some of you can relate to what I have just described that feeling of going in one direction or maybe trying to figure out where to go next? Or maybe some of you are lucky enough to never have been confronted by those feelings of doubt yet. But, just so we are all on the same page, I want to delve into what I mean by revision.

So, the first thing that I think of when I think of revision I try to make clear by this visual aid, which is the process of submitting a paper or an essay to a teacher and I know we can all relate to that, and getting it back and then seeing all the nasty red ink on the page, and Xs, and underlines, and the question marks. And it’s just like the worst feeling to think that you’re completely done with something, but then to read the margins that say, “Not quite,” or “Go deeper,” or “Think again.” So, this experience is a microcosm of what I’m talking about on a grander-scale which is a life revision.

So, I wanted to define what I meant by that. And a revision in this case means any change that meaningfully alters your day-to-day life in the long term, right? So, a revision can be something that is planned – in the case of taking a break from acting, I thought about it for many months – or can be unplanned. Life sends you so many curve balls, and a lot of times, a revision can be a reaction to that. Revision can also be at varying degrees. It can be a 180 degree change; that’s very drastic, but I’m not necessarily talking about starting over or completely leveling your life.

There can be varying degrees. There can be a recalibration or a refocusing. So, that’s what I mean by revision. And then when I was thinking about giving this talk, I knew that this topic meant a lot to me, but then I thought to myself: “OK, so I am talking to everybody as like this expert in revision?” and the answer is, “Absolutely not.” I’m not speaking to you as an expert, but I realized that I’m speaking to you as a revision advocate or a revision agent.

And, hopefully, my goal is to encourage you and empower you to be able to embrace this process of change as opposed to be totally freaked out by it. So, that’s where I am coming from and in order to do that, I figured out I would give you my top three tips for making a revision. And that’s actually a photo of me because it was royalty for it, so I put that photo of me right there.

05:39

OK. So, my top three tips for making a revision. The first has to do with ignoring the odds. And that is, if you are innovative, the odds would never be in your favor. My path in particular has led me to the arts. I’ve always been really into theater, and now, writing. The chances and the statistics of someone actually making a living doing these things were horrible. So, I had to get used to ignoring the odds, and completely drowning out the sound of people telling me whether or not this looks like a good prospect for my life.

And similarly, if you’re contemplating a change of direction, a change in gear that is unorthodox or innovative, the same is going to be absolutely true for you. You are by definition going against the odds. So, my point is that it’s a sort of an irrelevant data point to think about: “Well, you know, let me consult the statistics on this.” And the thing is that people who care about you the most are going to be the ones who are telling you that they’re going to want a more secure life path for you, so they are going to point these things out to you, but I would encourage you to really listen to your gut; and when you really consider what step to take next, to just ignore the odds. Because if you go against the grain, you’ll be going against the odds by definition. That’s my first tip.

My second tip is that revisions can be terrifying and stressful, and you will freak out. I thought of a little visual humor for you. OK. So, basically I want to tell you guys to embrace the fear aspect. And I feel like that this part could lead to 100 TED talks, the aspect of fear when you are going through any life revision. But I didn’t want to bring this up because I feel like it’s such an universal experience and it’s almost so obvious, right? That change is scary.

But when I was at first writing the speech, I didn’t think to mention it. Because we have a tendency when we’re being, like, polished and talking about a topic and I want to be academic about it, like: “I can talk about how scary it was.” When in actuality it was incredibly scary, making this huge change. You would think that since I’ve been on stage and I like acting, that I have these nerves of steel; but that’s absolutely not true. I’m very nervous right now.

I’ve encountered a lot of anxiety in my life, and particularly involving huge revision. So, I just want to put that out there that everybody freaks out, you freak out, I freak out, we all freak out. The most successful people do; but it’s not something that’s really talked about. There are a bunch of resources out there that can help you if you are currently going through a scary time or if you do in the future I actually want to invite you to email me, felicia@feliciaricci.com. I have a bunch of resources that have helped me to channel my anxiety and my fear. And I’d be happy to share those with you, so, I want to put that out there.

So, my final tip for you is probably the most important tip. And it is that you can’t decide by thinking, you can only decide by doing. And this one is a really annoying truth because if you’re like me, you like to think things through, you just want to analyze every possible outcome, and that’s great. Researching what you want to do with your life or where you want to go is very valuable. Making pro and cons charts. I did that as well. But the fact is, when it actually comes to making a decision, you’re never going to know how it’s going to turn out until you actually do that thing, till you actually follow through. And that’s just true.

I have two examples of this. And one is when I wrote my first book I really wanted to make sure that I would be really good at writing a book before I wrote the book. So, I read all these books on books. And I read, you know, how to write books. But it wasn’t until I actually sat down and I wrote the damn book that I realized that I could do this. This is actually something that fit me but it was in the doing. On the flip side, after I wrote my first book which was actually a non-fiction book, I thought to myself: “OK, my next goal is I want to write a young adult novel.” So, a similar thing. I read books on young adult novels, I read young adult novels, I watched the Twilight series. Twice, no, just once. And so, you know, I was like: “You kind of think it through.” And then it wasn’t till it took about eight months, and I wrote 200,000 words that I realized that I actually hate young adult novels.

No, I don’t hate all the young adult novels, but me, personally, it was not the right fit for me as a writer, and I didn’t know till I actually did it. So, this is, I think, where you combine the embracing of the fear and ignoring the odds; is just putting that all behind you, and actually doing it. I mean, it sounds simple, but it’s a process. And it’s one that I hope I can demystify for you all, and encourage you to do.

So, this is my final slide: “Go forth and revise!” Today, I live in Pennsylvania, and I spend a lot of my time writing. I teach voice lessons, I run my own company, I help my fiancé run his company; I do a lot of stuff. And it suits me for now. So, it’s an ongoing process of revision. But it’s such a crucial element of life. I just want you all to go boldly forth, and create positive change for yourself and also for the world.

It’s a tall order, but I think we can do it, my friends. Thank you so much for having me.

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