

## **The Placement Diaries: Week 39 - The End**

*9th June 2022*

This is it. This is the bittersweet end which I've been anticipating for quite a while, though it's a lot more emotional than I expected, since I now have to acknowledge that my placement year is over now, whether I want it to be over or not. It feels hard to come to terms with this, especially since it's essentially dominated the past year for me, so now I have to kiss a bittersweet goodbye to a part of me that was so invested in trying to start a business, and to make things work.

I guess this is normal, and I guess this is what happens at the end of anything, where you have to say goodbye to an old version of yourself in order to move on to the next thing. I know that recently, I was eager for this placement year to be over, just so that I can move on with my life, but now, the nostalgia, and all the messy emotions which come with it, have come into play, with these emotions (mainly sadness, with a hint of emptiness) being ones which I can't control, no matter how hard I try. I have to accept that my emotions are like the weather; I can't control them, they come as they please, and the only thing I can do is let them do their thing, until they're finished.

Maybe I'm not used to change, although I was expecting this change, but then again, I find it hard to adapt and cope to these changes (whether they're expected or unexpected), although other people probably seem fine with change, but I need to realise that I'm not other people. I am who I am, and if I could tell myself this before starting my placement year, this would have been a completely different experience, since spending a majority of this year comparing myself to others (mainly those on the cohort, and those on my course who chose to go straight into their final year instead) probably wasn't a good look.

Coming to terms with this at this moment in time is hard, and perhaps, after having explored freelancing and self employment for a year, that it isn't for me, since it involves a lot of uncertainty, no routine or structure, no stability, and lots of marketing as well as networking, to the point where it's constant. Additionally, I've realised that there's hardly a work life balance when it comes to freelancing in particular, since your work ends up consuming your life, to the point where it's hard to differentiate between the two, no matter how disciplined you are.

I realise that I have zero desire to become a content creator, which is a job that freelancers inevitably have to become, whether they want to or not, but doing it so that they stay relevant, and so that people actually know that they exist, which to me, feels

exhausting, especially knowing that you have to become a slave to the algorithms to do so, which makes this doubly hard. Maybe I'm feeling the way I am because I've spent so much time on this, that it feels a bit strange to let go of a version of me which wasn't really meant to be.

However, with that said, I've done everything I can with this placement year, and that's the most I can do. If nothing else, it has given me the time and opportunity to try out self employment and freelancing which I wouldn't have otherwise got if I tried to do this on my own. I think more than anything, I'm upset that I have to leave a wonderful cohort and a wonderful team of business advisors who have helped me through this year, because after spending the year inadvertently becoming emotionally attached to them, mainly by developing an emotional bond with them, it feels hard to let go of that, as well as letting them slowly start to become strangers again, which is what I don't want, since they're now a part of my network, as much as I am a part of theirs.

This seems like a strange old ride, as I work through these emotions which I never would have anticipated, but then again, they come as they are, and hopefully, they gradually start to fade as I start to accept a different iteration of myself, trying to get used to academia again, even if it's only for a year. I guess this is just a temporary goodbye to the wonderful Enterprise Team, since I know that they'll be there for me, and that I'll be there for them when September rolls around, still attending anything that they've got going on, so that it doesn't feel like I've just left them as quickly as I came into their lives.

With that said, I'm slowly starting to feel glad that I don't have to pitch or write a business plan again, since those feel too salesy for me, and I realise that I don't enjoy marketing at all, since it works against my personality, rather than with it. My final pitch consisted of empty words, and when I delivered it to the panel yesterday afternoon, it felt as though I was doing it for the sake of doing it, and I think this is where this emotional reaction stems from, since it genuinely felt like I was selling myself against my will. Perhaps that was the breaking point for me. At least now, I can be happily introverted, and not have to worry about it as much, because I think that was my limit, and if I went beyond that, I'd feel even more stressed.

So, this is it. This is the end of a fairly interesting year, to say the least. It feels hard to let go, but at the same time, I know that I have to move on. The alarm has gone off, and now I have to wake up, leaving the comfort of my bed in order to face the day, because if I stay in bed for too long, my body will start to ache, and I'll only end up feeling worse because of this. So, this is me waking up from a strange and vivid dream, whilst also trying to go back into an academic slumber. I've done what I can, and that's it.