

Episode 12: From Engineer to Investor: Owning Your Story

[00:00:00] **Elyse:** Richelle, thank you so much for joining me today. I'm very excited to have you on the podcast and learn more about your career.

Richelle: Absolutely. It's going to be my pleasure. I can't wait.

Elyse: So I feel like I didn't really do justice to like the breadth of your career as a chemical engineer in that introduction. Can you give us just more of an in-depth overview of what attracted you to chemical engineering and what you did during your time in R and D.

Richelle: Absolutely. So I, so I should mention that I am first generation American. So my dad is from the Caribbean. My mother was American and like most Caribbean children, you have very few options in I'll call them viable career prospects. You can be a doctor. You can be a lawyer. You could be a bank manager and an engineer falls amongst one of those reputable career choices.

So my dad was a petroleum engineer and obviously petroleum engineering, you can really just work in oil and gas. So he gave me the wonderful career advice, do chemical engineering because it's more broad. Okay, daddy. [00:01:00] So I did. To the extent of a PhD. So I really listened to him.

I went to Notre Dame for undergrad and then Texas for grad school, UT university of Texas at Austin. And my research while at Texas was on nerve regeneration. So after someone experiences an injury, like in a car accident or something like that or nerve damage from other, some other sources they may experience a sever or severance of their nerves.

So basically two ends of the nerves get cut. And so my research was focused on reconnecting those two nerve ends before one end starts to die off.

So that was one half of my research and the other half was how do I get those nerve cells to grow and make more friends?

So STEM cells essentially. And so that's what I studied in grad school. And so I was on the path of potentially going into faculty or medical research. And I can tell you that, you know, as I was going down, I was very, I'll say disappointed or I, my, my personality is very much, I want to see the results of my work.

And one [00:02:00] of the things about doing more fundamental research is that you're very far removed from actually being able to help people today. And so I felt that that time horizon was a little bit too long for me. I was like, man, someone's going to have to do another three PhDs after mine, before we can go to clinical trials and, and all that.

So long story short, I wanted things that were much more applied. I ended up going into industry after school. And so I went to work in the building materials industry. If people are

familiar, building materials are things like roofing, shingles, dry wall insulation, all of that. So I went to work for one of the largest building materials manufacturers.

I spent five years sitting behind a microscope to help nerves reconnect. And then I got a job sitting behind a microscope, looking at how you could use those same polymers or plastics to help our buildings have more resilient infrastructure.

Elyse: Wow. That's so interesting. You sort of, you ended up kind of getting into policy didn't you a little bit, after that research?

Richelle: I did. So I should mention that while [00:03:00] I was in grad school, I did a Fulbright because again, I was looking for ways to get more to that end, the end result. And so essentially I was like, how can I get more applied?

And so one of the reasons, one of the ways that people can experience nerve damage is through having diabetes. So you may have heard people have neuropathy in their feet, which is that tingling feeling. So my going on the Fulbright, I was able to work with diabetic patients that were experiencing neuropathy.

And so that, that whole experience got me into how do science decisions get made and who plays a role in that? And so that was really a, a clinician meets scientists meets policy. And so I ended up, you know, doing a lot of work in that regard and it did turn out very well because while at that building materials manufacturer, in addition to working in the lab I was able to get experience in sustainability working in policy. Building materials are basically the, housing codes and building codes. So how do you determine how much insulation goes in the wall and which policies from a building codes [00:04:00] perspective would be most advantageous to have buildings be more environmentally resilient from a thermal management standpoint.

Elyse: It's a fascinating career. And it's just interesting to see how your career progressed from almost like neurochemistry, or what, what sounds to a lay person like neurochemistry to not only housing, but the chemical parts of housing construction, and then housing policy. How did your interest in investing in housing and the real estate market become a thing?

Richelle: I'm a materials person. So the beautiful part about it is that the, the materials of doing these things, they're all very, very similar. And so my dad was right. I did have a lot more options by going chemical engineering.

As opposed to petroleum. I should mention my dad and I very close. So he moved to the States from the Caribbean, and unfortunately after he got his first job as an engineer, he got laid off right around the time my mother was pregnant.

And so he ended up spending the majority of his career as a high school [00:05:00] teacher. Love teachers as a profession, but that definitely impacted my psyche and my perspective going into the corporate setting in that yes, you have, you are highly educated, yes you can enter this field. At the same time, you, you need to have something for yourself and have some financial resiliency because life still happens no matter how educated you are.

And so with that in mind, while I was in grad school, I did purchase my very first house, which was a small condo. So I bought my first place at age 21 while I was at UT Austin. And the whole purpose was to rent out the spare bedroom to my department mates for additional income, obviously to get that rental income that everyone hears about.

And it was fantastic because it got me in the game. And all I can say is I got bit by the bug that, wow, this is actually something that's viable. And so I'll kind of fast forward because I'll be honest. I didn't do anything with that money. I bought shoes. I went shopping, you know, I was 21. So sue me, but you know, fast forward when I graduated I went on my Elizabeth Gilbert eat, pray, love trip. And I was like, [00:06:00] I need to have a break. And so I gave that property to a property manager. So imagine me living my best life, like woo graduated and I'm traveling the world.

And I distinctly remember being in Lisbon Portugal in my hostel, cause I was still kind of poor. I was in the hostel checking my email and the property manager notified me that I got in paid rent and I was like, so wait a minute.

I am literally on the other side of the world and I've gotten paid. I think I've won at life. This is amazing. How can I get more of this? And that is really where real estate became more, more than just, this is something I'm doing on the side just to cover my butt cheeks. And that's something I should probably cultivate this more deliberately.

And so that's where real estate really became, I would say a more prominent part of my life and career.

Elyse: I think that there's, there's a few things that I want to pull out of that.

You bought a property at 21 and you started making money on it almost immediately.

And I do want to get [00:07:00] into the financial aspect of all of this. Of course, as a 21 year old, yeah, you spend the money on shoes. But at some point you start to think more about what do you do with that money and how does that money become a thing?

I also want to talk more about how did you then decide to start Housing Joint Venture, and you know, what is it? And then finally I was reading this book yesterday, my, my boyfriend and I were at a bookstore yesterday, and we saw this book on the rentier economy.

And it's really interesting concept. It's this concept that the economy nowadays is really powered by people who can rent things out, whether it's housing, whether it's, any sort of asset, I mean, even NFTs right now are such a huge thing. But it's really this whole idea that like our economy is about owning the assets and being able to rent out those assets and you see everything for rent now. I'm really curious in your perspective on that.

Richelle: I'll start with the first question and then you might have to prompt me as we go.

So I think the first one was, how did you transition from buying shoes to buying more houses and actually being [00:08:00] a responsible human being with money. I started in grad school, I was low income, so I got down payment assistance from the city to help me buy my first house.

That's how I got into the first one, to the first place and, I was able to renovate it and to your point, monetize it or get income fairly quickly.

Cause it was a fixer-upper and so we didn't need to need to fix her up before it was roommate ready. But once it was, yes, you know, it, it was able to pay back itself and again, support my legitimate shoe addiction, which was awesome. But after a while, you're like, okay, how can I be a little bit more strategic about this?

And I, I will be honest. It was not the most profitable investment. It was the first one. So it got me in the game and about that mindset. And I think that mindset is the most important part. Because once you're in that realm, you can start thinking about how, how can I do this again, more efficiently and scale.

I ended up moving to Ohio to work for that building materials manufacturer. And thankfully I was recruited about two years before I graduated. [00:09:00] So I knew what my full-time job was going to be before I actually accepted it. That gave me a lot of time to really understand the market and really hit the ground running .

So I started buying my first property specifically to be rental property within six months of starting full-time big girl job. And at that point, it was much more financially motivated.

Like this is how much I can spend for it. This is the return. This is what I'm looking for. And it can't be too ugly because as I sit with you right now, I am five foot, almost four and on a good day, 110 pounds. So my petite self, we're not doing much DIY that's the truth, so right.

So they were rental properties that needed a little bit of work, but they weren't that ugly or that bad. I would say very strong paint and carpet is what they needed. And so that just kind of progressed. And as we went, well, I realized the impact that housing can have on people and has on people.

This is where your life happens. This is where, you know, you meet and you, you spend time with your, your dearest loved ones. We bought [00:10:00] three single houses and then an apartment complex, and they were all previously vacant at the time of purchase. And then, obviously renovated, and then allow people to live there for quality housing.

And I remember going to our apartment complex one afternoon. And no one was paying me any attention. I was just minding my business and running an errand. The children were playing in the yard. The moms were scolding them for playing, you know, in the parking lot. The dad's washing cars. Everyone was doing totally normal things, but it just hit me.

If we hadn't taken the risk of purchasing and saying, I'm going to be a member of this community again in a very deliberate way, this community would not exist. This ecosystem, this neighborhood, it wouldn't be here. And if you allow that to land on you, you're like, wow, I am legitimately a member of the community.

Like this is paying it forward. This is actually something that is beneficial. And so at that point, I would say real estate transitioned from solely numbers on a balance sheet to this is a way

that we can legitimately make change and be [00:11:00] a part of something bigger. And so that is really the impetus for how Housing Joint Venture was born.

I, I did end up meeting and marrying a real estate developer and city and regional planner. So my husband's background is in city and regional planning from Ohio State. And so, with his background of much more housing development from a more macro scale, and my background, as a I'll call it landlord engineer, we realized, wow, this is something that is, this isn't something that's only an issue in Ohio. This is an issue that's nationwide. There's an affordable housing crisis. At the same time, there's a need for investors and people to figure out how can I make my money work for me? And if we can really be a liaison between those to help investors figure out how they can make money they feel good about.

And give people quality housing in, I'm going to call them under invested areas that that's, that's a, that's a realm where we'd love to play in.

Elyse: Yeah. And I'm sure so many people will have questions for you, but just like I have questions for you in terms [00:12:00] of how do you identify these places and how do you get that initial investment together and how do you then work it in?

But what I really want to know too is, at what point did you and your husband decide, okay, I'm going to quit my corporate job in R and D and pursue this full-time what was that like?

Richelle: Yeah. And I'll say full disclosure. I, I liked being a scientist, so I still do work as a scientist.

I earn more than the corporate salary pays me. So it's not a financial thing. It's a sunk cost of time thing for me. So that's the mental barrier I have to get over. I spent almost six years getting a PhD. That's a long time. So at this point I am just now in corporate America, the same amount of time it took me to get a PhD.

Elyse: So are you still, so you're still working full time?

Richelle: I still do. I still do work in that sector as well. But my husband does our business full-time so he does that and I, I like being a scientist .

Elyse: What was the point for your husband then, then? How did you guys decide that you were going to pursue this as [00:13:00] a real business?

Richelle: Again, when you realize the scale and the impact that you can have, it's almost, I'm going to call it almost a duty. So for him it was not a huge existential crisis of, you know, who am I, what am I it's, this is what I'm doing.

This is what I want to do. Like, let's go ahead and pursue this with I'll call it almost reckless abandon. I think for me, I had a lot of internal struggle. Like how do I own my own story of how do I make that sound and, and really own the cohesiveness between engineer to investor and make it as cohesive as it actually was, but own that story as my own and not have any insecurities around that.

So that took a lot of time and a lot of growth. There was a lot of times where I hid the work that, I honestly I've been doing since 21. So it's not that I have not been actively in this area and actively been a major, major investor, to be honest, but to own the value that you're already creating. For me, that took a lot of battle.

And I dunno if that's just maybe a lady thing. I think men may be, they may be able to [00:14:00] own that more quickly than, than us. I'm not sure. But I'll be honest. It definitely was a, a internal battle for myself. And how do I, how am I comfortable almost admitting that I want to be more than just a scientist?

Does that make sense?

Elyse: It does. It totally makes sense. And I think I understand what you're saying, which is, it's almost like an imposter syndrome of feeling like you have this identity that you've worked so hard to create for so long and you're sort of doing something else or owning something else. It's not that it feels like a betrayal of your identity, but more that it feels like, like, what am I doing?

Am I qualified to be doing something that I haven't made my identity?

Richelle: And I don't know if I felt the qualifications part because again, you know, even in a corporate setting, very much active in building materials. So I didn't have that. Just more of a I'm going to call it imposter syndrome of is it okay for me to reinvent myself because it's obviously people can [00:15:00] not see me. I'm a lady of color. And so there's also a lot of I'll call it ongoing pressure to show up and be literally the one in all of these different areas. So there aren't very many people that have gone through chemical engineering, to a PhD level, then able to work in an R and D corporate setting.

And then now entrepreneurship. So when you are, I'm going to call it almost a spokesperson, you know, like the numbers are just small. And so you're like, wow, I've worked so hard to be a role model for others. And am I, I guess, to your point, disowning them and saying, no, I'm going to go and pursue something else that may give me additional fulfillment.

But I think real estate as an industry is so broad that allows me to still tap into those scientific aspects. Even if it's not in a corporate setting, so totally separate from, what I do at building materials, I give lectures literally around the world about sustainability, about retrofitting properties, [00:16:00] water management, sustaining, like all of the things.

And so I'm able to capture all of my interests in this one industry, which is so wonderful.

Elyse: Yeah. There's, there's two things that I want, I want to not add to it, but at least explore a little bit deeper with what you were just saying. One is, chemical engineering is a very male dominated field. I imagine that corporate R and D is a very male dominated field. And I also imagine that real estate is a very male dominated field. Right. And to be a woman, not to mention a woman of color in all of those industries had to be an experience for lack of a better way to put it.

How did you navigate that and, and what were some of the challenges or, or obstacles that you had to go overcome? Not only in terms of like externally, but internally.

Richelle: Yeah. I would say that's where the imposter syndrome would come out the most because you have the gender, so as a woman, I'm [00:17:00] also a young woman, right?

Not only are your colleagues male, but they tend to be older males baby boomer, you know, age bracket. Just because, there's just not as many people in generation X. So you have, you have so many dynamics at play at once where your colleagues see you, I want to say as their daughter, so I got very good at, I call it the meeting before the meeting, which is, I need to get, I'm gonna hold an ally ship on on decisions or anything that I'm going to try to sell or convince . This is the point that I'm trying to make or a decision I'm trying to drive. How can I get Bob for lack of a better word, how can I get Bob on my team so that it's not, this is Richelle's idea. And now she's driving forward. It's, Bob and I were talking before this and we think that so-and-so and so on. So now it, it I'm going to say popularizes, softens, and it makes it more palatable, whatever it is that I'm, the agenda that I'm trying to push.

Because again, it's not just me who may be inexperienced, who has a [00:18:00] softer voice. It's no, this is Bob and I, and we all trust, and know Bob. So obviously he wouldn't lead us astray and she comes along for the ride. So be it. And really leveraging, understanding relationships and dynamics and figuring out how you can leverage those for your benefit. And ladies listening, you know, we do this it's just a matter of how you can do it strategically for, you know, even on a corporate setting.

Elyse: It's popularizing an idea it's using somebody else's credibility to boost your own.

You know, and I mean, I think that it's frustrating. I mean, at least for me having to do that sometimes. So I, I imagine it must be for you and for any, any of the listening too.

Richelle: Yeah, it was. But I can tell you the, and not to make this about real estate, but having something else where you're not reliant on that income, it makes you, for me, it allows me to show up much more authentically and have less I don't wanna say less skin in the game, but you're, you're able to speak your mind more authentically and it's not [00:19:00] like, Oh, there's a risk. If I tell the truth, I'm okay. So if, if, if there's a stage left, that's, that's perfectly fine. You know, I'm here for the fun of it. I'm here for the test tubes.

Right?

Elyse: Right. You're here because you love it. And I think that's so that's, that's a great point because it demonstrates, and I've been seeing this too, even with this podcast because I also work full time. I love having a side hustle.

And I advocate for it with everybody I talk to you because not only is it a way for you to explore passion or pursue something that you really love, but it's a great distraction, and it really helps take a lot of the pressure off. And I've experienced this too at work, I don't have the same michigas that I would have otherwise. That's the power and beauty of side hustles, for sure.

Richelle: I think we all know those people that are too hesitant with someone, who's going to think of whether they're going to say, and he said, all right. And it's like, no, this is the truth. And I can feel confident in delivering that truth, you know, my truth or, you know, whatever it is without risk of repercussion, because if there's repercussion, so be it.
[00:20:00]

Elyse: I also want to go back to this idea of what you were talking about before, where you were saying that there is a through line between your time as an engineer and your, and your real estate work because you were working in housing, you've developed this whole skill set and sort of building materials and housing and it made me really think about this idea of transferable skills, which I talk about a lot on this podcast, because I think that having a good understanding of what your transferable skills are, whether it's writing, whether it's understanding, building materials, whether it's understanding as I'm sure you do processes and the relationships between how things work together, whether it's chemicals or whether it's building materials or, you know, whatever it happens to be.

It is, is what makes people successful in changing careers or starting a side hustle or really doing anything that's kind of outside of their initial line of work.

Richelle: Right. I totally agree. And I think communication, particularly if you can communicate complicated ideas in [00:21:00] a way that is palatable to, I'm going to call it the lay person that is so, so powerful. And that was something that I honed skills that I've honed from a very hard technical background, all the way through real estate investing, because it doesn't really matter what it is you're doing or what profession you're in. If you can communicate it in a way where another person can resonate with it and they can see the value in it, that's where you're able to be powerful.

Regardless if you're working for yourself or someone else.

Elyse: Yeah. That's exactly right. So understanding your transferable skills and being able to communicate them.

Richelle: And proactively cultivating them. Right. So I, you know, as I mentioned, I proactively seek out speaking engagement. I proactively seek out ways where I can communicate on a regular basis.

I'm an engineer. We are typically shy pocket protector. You know, we're not trying to engage, but this is a muscle and I'm going to build it. Public speaking is like, what more feared than death? And so if you can say, this is something that I think this is a skill that I can [00:22:00] leverage and in many facets of my life and that's something I should probably invest a lot of time and energy into.

I'm not saying I'm the absolute best public speaker. But I've definitely cultivated a lot of effort and energy into getting better at it, communicating as clearly as possible. And I think that's served quite well and is certainly a transferable skill. Probably one of the more underrated ones.

But I think written and oral communication is extremely powerful. In addition to negotiation and persuasion.

Elyse: As you're cultivating these skills and you say, okay, this is a skill that I really want to develop. I hate public speaking. I really want to practice it. You know, even as you guys have developed Housing Joint Venture, what help did you get? What helped to teach you about the real estate market, about public speaking about any of these things.

Did you have a coach? Do you have mentors?

Richelle: Yes to everything. I am a big fan of the quote "as the student is ready, the teacher appears" and at different stages of the business and whatever it is you're pursuing, you will, you will gain awareness of [00:23:00] services and help and mentors so forth and so on. One thing that I'll mention, I think when it comes to entrepreneurship and growing a business, I think the name of the game is to stay in business long enough for you to realize what it is you actually do, because you're going, I think they like to say the word pivot and all that, and that's true to a certain extent, but it's really recognizing what the market wants.

And then how can you package your services in a way that it's amenable and desirable to that target audience. So Housing Joint Venture, you know, when we started is totally different than Housing Joint Venture today because we realized what people needed and what they wanted. Here's what I mean. In the beginning it was much more, I'm kind of going to call it bespoke consulting.

So it's, you come to me, like, what do you, what are you offering? We're like, well, what do you need? And, you know, we'll package something together and try to figure out what is the best way for us to work together. You're an investor and you're looking to get a certain return.

Okay. Then let's kind of shop around and see what properties would be most appropriate for you [00:24:00] type of thing. But one that makes it difficult to grow. And it makes it difficult for someone who is as an investor who may be a beginner investor. They're looking to be guided through the process. If I'm going to a restaurant I don't actually want the chef to tell me, you know, what do you want? I'll make anything. No, I actually want to know what is your specialty? And, I will just order that and if I'm allergic to cheese then I'll just take cheese off. That's much easier. It makes it easier for the decision making.

And it makes me easier for me to determine, is this a restaurant I want to eat it versus not.

Elyse: I also think that a lot of times people don't know what they want. And so you're right. It's, it's easier to basically give people a menu and say, choose from this.

Pick one right than it is to say, what do you want? And have people be like, Oh, I don't know.

Richelle: Exactly, exactly. And so, as we've productized our services it's made it easier for people to, to say, Hey, this is a company I want to work with partner with, you know, as a client or customer versus not.

And so it makes that decision making easier on both sides and allows you to grow and scale [00:25:00] and really refine your offerings in ways that are much more palatable on both sides. So today we're, you know, the investor side, we have a menu, this is who this is qualified for. You need to be an accredited investor, which means you need to have a net worth over a million dollars or income over \$200,000 per year.

At that point, you can now invest in these fund offerings. These are the, the fund offerings. Is this something that will meet your standards, if not, you know, so be it that's okay, but these are what we can offer you that way. If you don't yet meet those standards or want to do it on your own, then we can teach you how to do it.

And we do this via six month coaching packages where we walk you through step-by-step. This is, these are all the areas where people falter and we have addressed each of these areas in this coaching program so that you can start from idea through investor.

Elyse: You said a few things that I thought were really, really interesting.

First of all, I love the quote "when the student is ready, the teacher appears", I've never heard that before. I think that that is, yeah, I think that's awesome. I know, but it's awesome. [00:26:00] And I just wanted to reiterate it so that people listening to this will hear it. It's a really interesting balance between staying in business long enough and realizing when you need to pivot, you know what I mean?

Richelle: Or any combination thereof and then not being afraid to invest in yourself.

You know? So in addition to that, as we've grown, we've invested in ourselves to higher and higher levels to higher and higher degrees. And it gives additional clarity because someone on the outside can say, Oh, this is what you're struggling with. Oh, that's how you do that. And they can identify areas of opportunity that you may have downplayed or just haven't fully expressed to the level they should. And so, yes. Do we have mentors? Yes, absolutely many of them. you invest in yourself, you have that mentor, then you outgrow them and you go to the next level, so forth and so on.

Elyse: Yeah. And I think the key to all of it really is to just do it and just get started. As long as you take some form of action, you start to talk to people, you do informational interviews, anything like that, that's really, when you start to meet all these people and you start [00:27:00] to learn things that you didn't even- hadn't even occurred to you.

Richelle: I liken it to, you know, imagine if you're staring at a set of stairs and you're standing on the landing and as you're staring, you can see rungs number one through four, as you progress to that first rung now you can see two through five, so forth and so on.

It's okay if at the beginning you can only see up to rung number four and rung number four may not be your ultimate destination. But as you progress, let me tell you rung number eight, it's phenomenal. And now you're the top of the landing and you can say, Oh wow, there are three other, you know, elevators that I can take.

In addition to the stairway that you would not have had access to when the height of your potential or the height of your vision was only rung of the stairway number four. And so just taking the first step to your point is absolutely imperative.

Elyse: Yeah. Yeah. As you were talking, I was thinking of like World of Warcraft, right?

It's like, it's like a video game where like the further you get into it, the more assets you unlock, the more people you meet like it's. Yeah.

Have a strong action bias. That's been the [00:28:00] biggest thing that I've learned. And I think the biggest key to the success we've experienced to date is just having a very strong action bias.

Is there anything you wish that you had done differently as you started Housing Joint Venture?

Richelle: Yes. Be less stubborn. I wish I was less stubborn. I, I am a quintessential engineer, which means my favorite saying in the world is, and I quote, I'm an engineer, which means I know everything.

And you know, don't tell me how to do this. Cause I can do it myself. That is limiting. Because we feel we could do it all because we feel we are intelligent and we are other engineers. We know we're smart. What that means is sometimes just because we can do it, doesn't mean we should do it. It doesn't mean it's the best, highest, and best use of our time.

And so empowering others in the form of, receiving their mentorship and developing a team, both of those things have accelerated our progress so much more. And really crowdsourcing ideas is so beautiful. And I know I [00:29:00] personally have almost like a control freak type of tendency.

And so just relinquishing control enough to allow other people to contribute to that idea has been so, so powerful. So that's what I would do. Absolutely. And getting over my education. I think for me, it was like, Oh my goodness, I have a PhD. I don't want to start over. And starting a business is starting over.

The barriers that I overcome today are much more of a wow, I totally own my story completely. And it's just a matter of, wow. Okay. Just going forward and continuing to take no, this is my story, is perfectly fine. Honestly, it makes me even more believable, legitimate, everything that I, you know, I'm not just some schmo off the street.

No, I actually know this intimately from a variety of different aspects and allowing myself to own my story. Totally.

Elyse: I think that that point is very, very important about having to sort of relinquish the sunk cost, you [00:30:00] know, and I don't want to call it the identity because it is an identity, but it's part of an identity. It's not your full identity having a PhD, but I think it's a mental block for so many people. I mean, it's been a mental block for me. In the, in the same way of trying to start businesses or, you know, whatever it happens to be you're going into different career paths.

And I think people think about this a lot. Like I've spent 25 years in IT but man, I really want to go into fashion, which I just had a podcast interview a few weeks ago with someone who was working in IT and started a fashion boutique. I mean, she had a 40 year career in IT and it just, it's one of those things where you really have to say intentionally, this is who I want to be.

Richelle: Yes. And owning that story and not allowing it. It's almost like the I'm going to call it the smart professionals version of the Joneses, like are keeping up with the Joneses is keeping up with our status quo of what we think our career colleagues are going to think.

It's like, [00:31:00] this is, you're like, no, this is not your only identity. You could have multiple identities and you can transform and bloom into anything that you want to be, if you decide this is who I want to be.

Elyse: So we've talked about so much, we have given so much advice to people, but is there any other advice that you would have for anybody who's looking to make a major career change?

Richelle: Yeah, lean into it. Lean into it, the longer you delay and tarry, the more difficult it will be. So it doesn't, you don't have to, totally quit everything and, and, you know, cut off all your connections.

But what is the immediate next step that I can take to get me one step closer to that identity that I want to receive?

Elyse: I love that. And my last question for you is what is your definition of success?

Richelle: I would say being able to spend time with the people you love, as much as you want, whenever you want, however you want.

I think that's ultimate freedom of mobility, of mental [00:32:00] space and clarity. That is the most powerful thing ever. So just, you know, before we started recording, I shared that, you know, unfortunately my, my dad had a health event this week and thankfully, you know, I was able to literally drop everything, get a one-way flight, to be there at his side.

And to me, that is a definition of success that I have the ability to do that. And I am so incredibly grateful to have it.

Elyse: Well, Richelle, it has been such a pleasure having you on the podcast. Where can people find you?

Richelle: Absolutely. The pleasure has been mine.

It's been so wonderful chatting with you, Elyse. You can always reach out to me on LinkedIn. I'm fairly active there. And then if you're interested in learning more about HousingJV and what it is, we do, obviously you can go to our website, theinvestingbootcamp.com is where you can learn more about working with us specifically on the real estate coaching and consulting services.

Awesome. Thanks Richelle.

Thank you so much. Have a great rest of your day.