

# careerfluencer

FULL EPISODE TRANSCRIPT - CAREERFLUENCER PODCAST



## **101: Discovering the Opportunity in the Obstacle with Gabby Dionisio**

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Welcome to the Careerfluencer podcast. This is Gabby Dionisio. I'm a high school English teacher and a podcast host currently based out of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Look for the opportunity in the obstacle. What is the invitation here? Because I think everything is a lesson. And if we don't learn from the things that really tear us down, then then we're not doing right by ourselves if we're not finding the good, and so yeah, look for the opportunity and the obstacle.

This, my career journey has been very interesting in the sense that I am incredibly type A, I thought for so long, my life was supposed to be linear. And then I figured out what I wanted to do when I was a teenager, I thought journalism was going to be my path.

And so you know, I wrote for the school newspaper, I went to college with the intention of studying journalism, took, you know, a handful of classes had some internships, the my summer going into my senior year after my second internship in journalism, I knew in my gut that this was not the path that I was supposed to be on.

And so to talk about the feeling, it was absolutely terrifying. Because as somebody who had this plan, right for so long for that plan to totally feel like it had blown up in my face was incredibly overwhelming. And there was a lot of fear at the same time of I had spent years working up to what I thought was going to be my future to then learn what felt like it was really, really late in the game that this was not the future that I really wanted at all.

I wrote like a list of traits that I thought I wanted to use in the workplace, like list of my traits and my qualities that I thought, you know, professionally, I wanted to work those muscles on a daily basis. And as I wrote down my list, I remember just thinking, I was like, all of this points to education.

About halfway through my senior year of college, I reached out to a handful of my my high school English teachers, I put them all on a group chat, and I was like, Hey, guys, um, can I

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come be a fly on the wall in your classroom, can I just hang out and do like a fake student teaching internship, and just see if I could see myself in the classroom. And, you know, they didn't hesitate, which I'm so grateful for.

They let me back in their room, I got to be a fly on the wall. And then eventually, they started to let me teach a little bit and actually try my hand at it. And I remember after the first lesson that I had put together and taught, and I'm sure in retrospect, it was a total disaster, I just remember thinking, like, oh, my goodness, like, this is it, this is what I have wanted this, this is me, this is what makes sense for me.

And it was such a mix of emotions, because it was this thing that I had shut out for so many years, for it to then come back and just like, hit me in the face of like, Nah, girlfriend like, this is at least right now, like this is where you're meant to be. And so it was a little bit of an emotional ride, to say the least.

But it was my story, it was really I felt drawn to the point where I would be able to visualize things really, really clearly. And which is interesting, because I'm not somebody who manifests and visualizes my life, I kind of just fly by the seat of my pants sometimes. But there was this image, I kept coming back to my head that I could see it so clearly down to what I was wearing to what my classroom was like.

And I had this one moment that kept coming into my head of like, one of my students getting into the College of their dreams, like it was these really, really vivid moments. That just, I had never experienced anything like this before. And I think it was just such a sign for me that this was the path but it was when I finally took a seat back and really listen to what I felt the world was telling me that I was able to jump into it and really fully embrace this message that was being sent to me.

And I have not had an experience like that, since this was the first time where I could ever see something. So clearly, and it was just the most bizarre moment, but it was like that turning point

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where I was like, okay, we're doing this, I don't know how we're gonna do it. But we're gonna figure it out. We're gonna do it.

So yeah, it was it was a mix of moments over time that really led to this one big decision. So I heard something a few months ago, and it might have been on social media, but it was something about how teaching, there's a reason they call it a practice, right.

And I think for me, when I think of my career, it's it's a practice, it's something it's a muscle that I'm working every single day and but I'm also trying to be really intentional about seeing myself not just as Gabby the teacher, but more. So teaching is a part of who I am, but it's not the whole picture.

And I think that's something that many of us struggle with is getting our whole identity wrapped up into a thing a job or person. And so I think also giving myself the opportunity to have to be multi passionate and to have these different things I'm interested in all while pursuing this career at the same time, and you know, growing up, I was always taught to be an independent woman, like, I don't know, think probably from when I was five years old, my mom was telling me, you know, make sure you're financially stable on your own, make sure you don't rely on a partner for XYZ.

And so it was like groomed in me to really like focus on the career in order to have a certain life. And that's not measured by money. In my opinion, I think it's more so the quality and wealth I believe comes in many different forms. Obviously, I'm a teacher, I don't make a ton of money,

I'm kind of going off on a little bit of a tangent here. But in terms of that, I go back to this idea of it's a practice, and it's something that I would like to continue doing and getting better at day by day, in my career. So far, I've learned to really be graceful with myself.

And remember that I am, I have a new kid on the block. Still, this is my second year. And I have navigated teaching only in the form of a global pandemic. And so there are a lot of moments

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where I just have to remind myself that I'm not supposed to be the best at this, I am learning and I am growing, and I am supposed to fail. And I think when we think of career, too, we don't account for those failures. And I would argue that the times that I've made mistakes have been the most humbling growth, encouraging moments.

And the first one that comes to my mind is the second semester is my second semester teaching ever, I had a student who made me really nervous in the sense of she was repeating English, she was known to have some behavior issues. And she was a handful. And that was just the reputation that she had gotten. I don't even think this applies to just education.

But if anything, the biggest thing that I learned through this student is that you should never ever judge a kid by what somebody else has said. Because my relationship with her was beautiful. And it was so different than the story that I had heard, we were trying to get her grade pulled up into her and I were corresponding back and forth.

And she sent me this paragraph, just like thanking me for believing in her and cheering her on. And basically saying, like, no adult has really ever done that for me before. And I remember just getting her text message and just crying and being like, I felt, but there was a part of me that felt horrible, because I had judged this girl, before she had even stepped foot into my room for her. And I actually have a really beautiful relationship together.

But also it was just that reminder, for me, it's like, the same way that I needed my teachers in the same way that these guys need me and my peers and my co workers and even if you can't spot it, you know those moments where I was breaking down over my future and felt an overwhelming sense of confusion, had I not had that I wouldn't have felt guided to go into the classroom.

And so had I been very stubborn and kept pushing on and not listened to my guy and looked for the opportunity in the obstacle, there's a good chance that I wouldn't be doing something that I loved. So even on those days where you're ready to pull your hair out, try to find the good in what this can be telling you.