



From Uncertainty to Impact

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Who am I and
Where Am I Now?

- Associate Vice President & CTO, Cal Poly Pomona
- Recently married
- Recent EdD (focus: faculty perspectives on AI)

Poll: How would
you describe
your career path
(or future one)
so far?

- A straight line — I've known the plan for years
- A zigzag — I keep changing lanes
- A scribble — it's chaos, but it's mine
- Still drawing — not sure what it looks like yet

Roots & Early Years

1. Many moves
2. Instability
3. Fear and Anxiety
4. High School Jobs

From Anthropology & Art to Technology

College Years

- Started studying anthropology and art, passion
 - College Years Work: retail, childcare
 - Changed schools, came out, struggled to decide on a major
 - Faculty Support
 - Internships: Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center database
 - Tech is about people, not code
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Facing Uncertainty

Poll: When you face something new or uncertain, what's your default move?

1. Use AI to figure it out
2. Ask for help right away
3. Panic first, then try anyway
4. Wait until I feel 100% ready

Early Career Years

- Job offer 9 months before I graduated
 - Going back into the closet
 - Taking a chance on new technology and not being deterred
 - “You can’t control how people react to you, but you can control whether you show up authentically.”
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Say Yes then
Google it and make
it work, having faith
and taking chances

- UC Berkeley → PeopleSoft → CSU Chancellor's Office → Security Audit
- The Drupal story: “Had to Google Drupal before I implemented Drupal”
- Building trust, protecting the team, scaling up (ITIL, ServiceNow, 24/7 helpdesk)
- Leaning into cultural competency, building relationships
- Back to school - Masters in Public Administration
- Teaching graduate courses on leadership, organizational change management, and IT for public sector

Leadership & Fear

Poll: What's the hardest part about stepping into leadership or responsibility?

- Feeling like an Imposter
 - Managing other people's expectations
 - Not knowing everything
 - Balancing confidence with humility
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Personal & Professional Challenges Resilience in the Face of Adversity

- Divorce from an abusive relationship & starting over
- Doctorate Education
- Pandemic & Interim CIO role: leading through chaos and a \$40 million technology investment
- Imposter Syndrome; Doubting myself in every role
- Leadership under pressure means shielding your team
- New opportunity and experiences & starting over again

Investing in Yourself & Giving Back

- Academic Growth MPA, teaching, graduate advisory board, EdD on AI
 - Lifelong learning, mentoring, volunteering, and research
 - Storytelling: helping others tell their story, particularly how to sell your transferable experience and skills early in your career
 - Life balance, you can't help others if you are too fried
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Career Reflection

Poll: Which of these
feels most important
in your career right
now?

1. Saying yes to new things
2. Showing up authentically
3. Building trust and empathy
4. Learning how to tell your story

Closing Advice and Key Takeaways

1. Careers are not neat or predictable, and that's normal
2. Keep showing up, say yes (then figure it out), build trust, tell your story
3. If all else fails – AI is basically a really fancy bullshitter, if it can get away with it, so can you!

Thank you!

