



JANE O'CONNELL

10



ABOUT

Pursued an entirely different career path as a nutrition specialist as soon as she realised that the business world doesn't bring her nearly as much fulfilment.



WHAT SHE DID

After completing a four-year undergraduate degree in Commerce, with no spark of intense interest, Jane decided it was time to make a change.

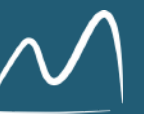
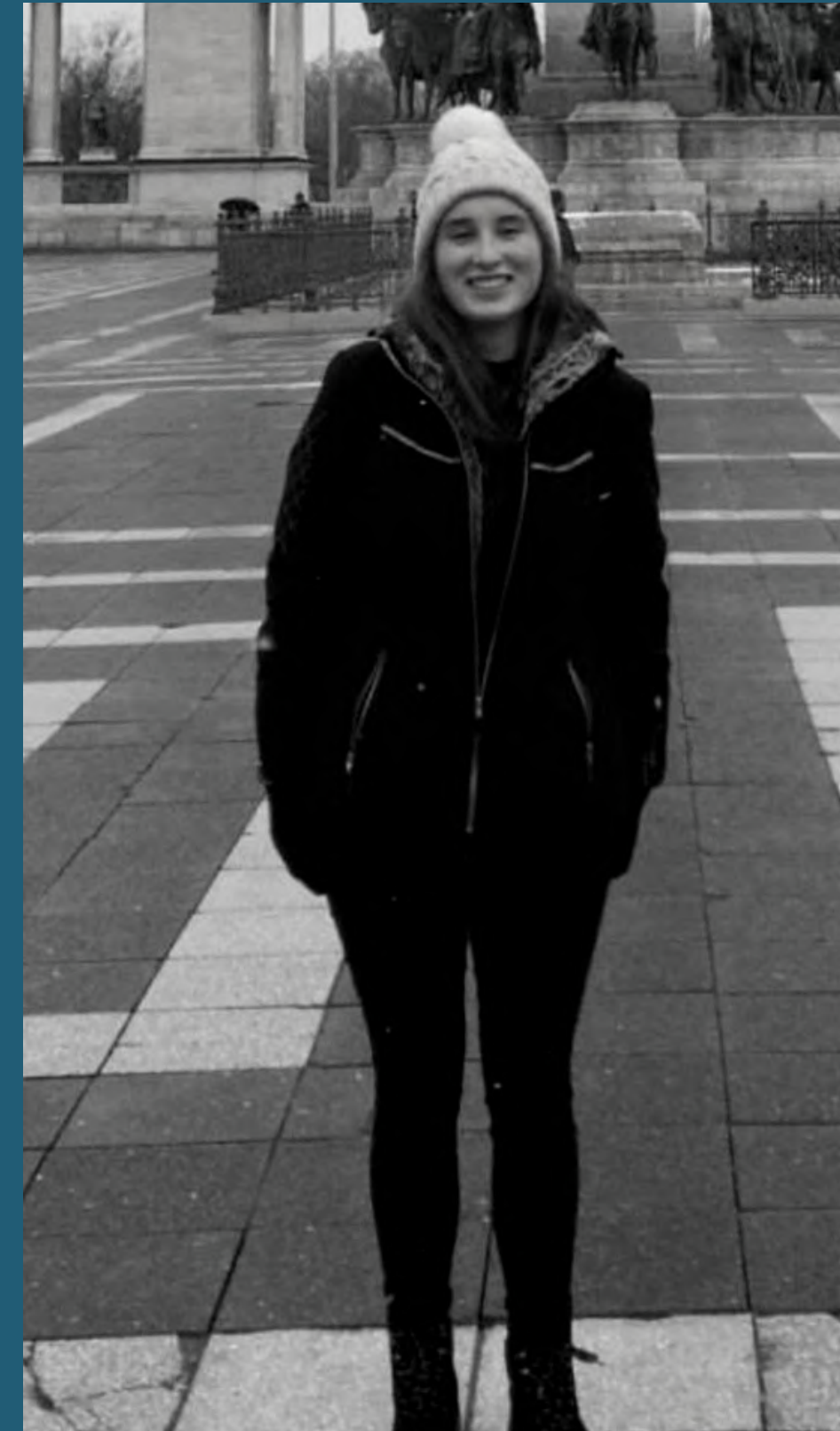
As she started to have doubts about her future career, her 6-months internship in a large multinational consulting firm came in handy. It allowed her to experiment and validate some of her hypotheses.

The outcome was - she did not find her corporate job fulfilling. But what she did learn is that she would much rather be helping the individuals, rather than big corporates.

Experimental approach to life has always been in Jane's DNA. To see what she might like to do instead, she volunteered with several organisations, including one in which she worked with kids from disadvantaged schools in Ireland.

The work involved teaching them basic life skills, while also assisting them with school work. Many of the kids came from disadvantaged families with little or no nutritional knowledge, so teaching basic nutrition was involved in the programme.

Jane found this incredibly rewarding. Her love for nutrition, food and human anatomy prevailed and she is currently fulfilling her passion completing a masters in Nutrition and Dietetics.



WHY SHE DID IT

Flexibility and happiness were the ultimate motivators in her decision.

With work playing such a big part in life, Jane wanted to build a career that allowed to pursue other passions - for travelling, water-sports, health, fitness and exploration.

■ Although she lives by the quote “work to live, don’t live to work”, she still wanted to enjoy both parts of the equation.

While receiving a lucrative offer a consulting firm, she knew that working there long term would suck the soul from me.





HOW SHE DID IT

After completing countless psychometric tests, meetings programme directors and interviewing current dieticians, she knew this was the job for her.

While current dieticians recalled memories of their job highlights, she felt a sense of excitement about a job for the first time accompanied with a sense of purpose.

Once she settled on her North Star, she started brainstorming potential ways for moving towards it right away. She landed on providing the meals for elderly relatives who lived alone.

Jane spent an enormous time applying to different universities that were wary of her lack of science background.

Nevertheless, she worked tirelessly on personal statements and interviews and was finally accepted to a course in University College Dublin.





WHAT SHE REALIZED

After making a hard decision to start over, Jane struggled with constantly comparing herself to her friends who would be earning money in their graduate jobs while she would be back to her student life.

She was overwhelmed with all the hard work she would have to put into her new path. Her new career path required an in-depth understanding of chemistry, biochemistry, physiology and anatomy – a far cry from business.

After much deliberation during many sleepless nights, she realised that everyone has two paths in life. The path that they know and the path that they can grow into.

She was aware of the time and effort required to change path but began to think long term and would rather regret not having tried something different than taking the safe route. Things worth doing don't always come easy. ■



ADVICE TO TRAILBLAZERS

People tend to fear change. But your fear of regret should be greater than the fear of change. When you are old, would you rather have tried everything and failed at some things or taken the safe route and lived life full of regrets?

Do not succumb to societal pressure. There are no timelines to reach certain milestones. You are not late, you are exactly where you should be.

