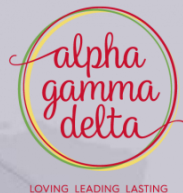




REDIRECTION

When the Path Changes, but the Purpose Doesn't

Presented by: Olivia Wright



Home (Summer 2018)



Redirection is when the map changes, but the compass — your values — keeps pointing north.

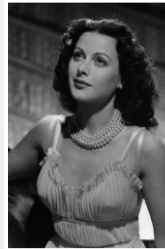
SETBACKS TO SUCCESS



What if the moments you feared were setbacks were actually the moments shaping you into the engineer you're becoming?



Dr. Mae Jemison was repeatedly discouraged from pursuing engineering — even by teachers told her to *“become a nurse instead.”*



Hedy Lamarr was dismissed as *“just a Hollywood actress,”* constantly underestimated and taken less seriously because of her beauty.



Mary Barra didn't enter GM as a rising star — she began by inspecting fenders at age 18. Many saw it as a small role.



Dr. Maryam Mirzakhani failed her first math entrance exam. She was discouraged, defeated, and nearly quit math entirely.



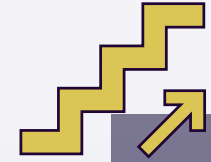
Katherine Johnson was assigned to *“women's work”* computing tasks and was excluded from meetings because of her race and gender.



Ellen Ochoa faced repeated rejections while applying to the astronaut program at NASA.

Their Detours Became Their Direction

THE DETOUR STORY STRUCTURE



INTRODUCTION

- We grow up believing engineering careers are straight lines.



CONFLICT

- Plans collapse. Opportunities shift. Rejection hits.



RESOLUTION

- Redirection uncovers capability, confidence, & clarity.

THE REDIRECTION BLUEPRINT



RECOGNIZE THE SIGNAL

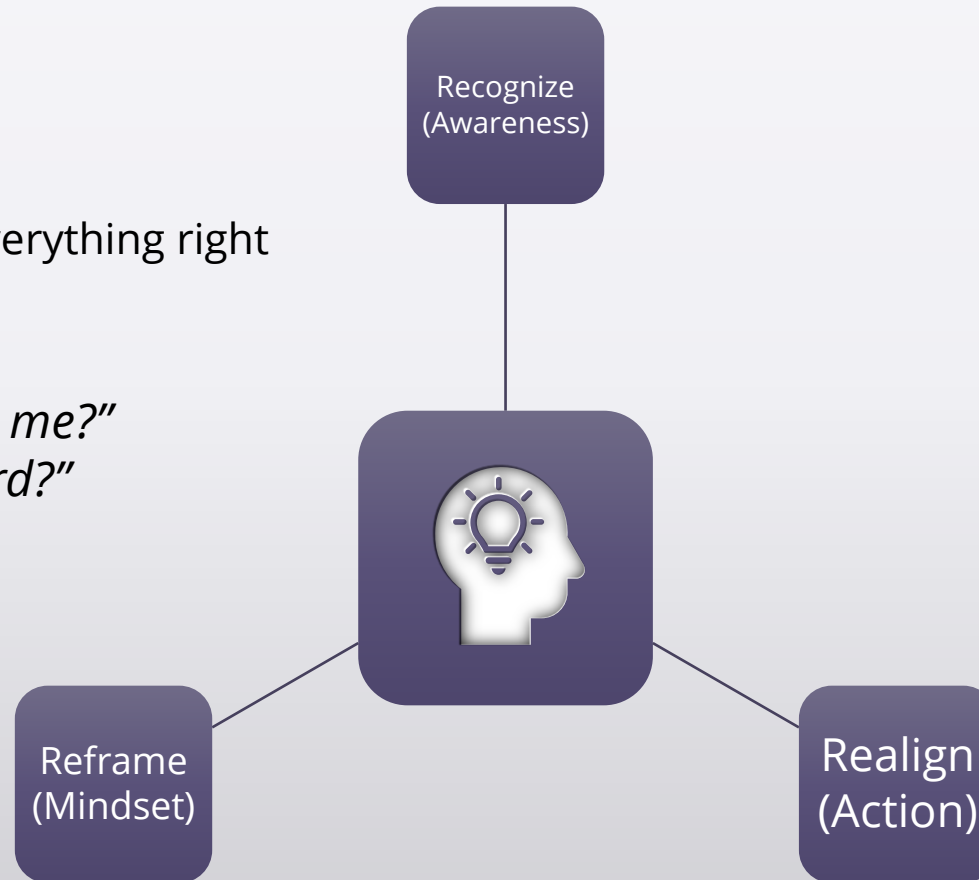
- Persistent burnout
- Loss of curiosity
- Constant friction or dread
- Feeling “*out of place*” even when doing everything right

REFRAME THE STORY

- **Instead of:** “*Why is this happening to me?*”
- **Try:** “*What is this redirecting me toward?*”

REALIGN THE NEXT STEP

- One conversation
- One experiment
- One application
- One honest choice
- One boundary



ENGINEERING BREAKTHROUGHS



Invented *accipiter* when a weak *accipiter* "failed" its original purpose.



...from a failed experiment that expectedly ... heart-pace- ... pulses.



a
n.



MY FIRST DEFINING REJECTION



Dance Team Rejection → Robotics Obsession





MYTH

*Successful engineers
always knew their path.*



REALITY

*Most successful engineers
pivot constantly.*

60%

of engineering students
switch concentrations

41%

of graduates never
work in their major

72%

of young professionals
feel lost in their 20s

TURN SETBACKS INTO SETUPS



Before reacting, breathe. Setbacks trigger emotion, urgency, and fear — pausing prevents spiraling.

Name the Lesson

Ask: *"What is this teaching me?"*
Every detour carries data — a skill gap, a value shift, a needed boundary.



Shift the Narrative

Move from self-blame to self-awareness.
Instead of "I failed," try
"This experience is redirecting me toward alignment."



Ask for Support

You don't have to navigate redirection alone.
Mentors, peers, professors, coworkers — people want to help when asked.



Take 1 Small Step

No 5-year plan required — just the next honest step.
Send the email. Apply anyway.
Explore the curiosity.

CALIBRATING YOUR COMPASS



YOUR COMPASS = YOUR VALUES.

No matter how your path shifts, these are the anchors that help you choose your next step.

How to Define Your Values:

- What matters most to you as a future engineer?
- What energizes you?
- What do you want your work to stand for?
- What do you refuse to compromise on?
- What type of impact do you want to create?





Thank You!

What questions do you have?



The future belongs to those who stay curious when the path changes.