

# Episode 4: Tiff's Story Transcript



**Bree:** Mechanical engineer, beagle dog mother, friend and coffee-lover, there are many ways to describe our storyteller, Tiffany. But today's story focuses on her most recent title as an entrepreneur! In this episode, Tiffany describes how she struggled to find purpose in her old job but at the same time struggled with the question, 'if not this job, then what else should I be doing'? We'll hear how Tiffany overcame her fears, quit her job and set off on her OWN path to build a business that she is passionate about and proud of! We're calling this story, 'Don't Wait, Create'.

Before we begin listening, let's talk about some of the vocabulary and expressions you'll hear Tiff say:

1. Firstly to churn - to churn means to shake or mix something with a lot of force so for example you can churn milk into butter. You'll hear Tiffany refers to her 'churning mind' which describes how she started to think a lot and very quickly.
2. To resign - to resign means to leave a job by choice - dejar un trabajo. Tiffany talks about resigning from her job and "handing in her notice", which is the letter you give to your boss that says you want to quit.
3. To set up - this phrasal verb means to create or organise something. We usually talk about setting up an organisation, a business or an event.
4. STEM - S-T-E-M is an acronym - un acrónimo - that refers to people working in science, technology, engineering or maths. These are all considered STEM careers.
5. A gripe - a gripe is a noun that refers to a complaint - una queja. You'll hear Tiffany describe how many people have gripes about what she had to say but the important thing is to put yourself in that person's shoes - ponte en el lugar de la persona para entender mejor su perspectiva.

Remember for each episode, you can get a full vocabulary list and listening comprehension activities on our website [acingles.com](http://acingles.com), that's la letra a, letra c, ingles punto com. OK let's get into the story...

**Tiff:** I was born in Hong Kong and moved to Australia when I was eight months old. Did school and University there and also worked there and then I moved to London for a few years, moved back to Melbourne and now I'm back in the United Kingdom. So that's where I live now. So I think I have parts of my heart around the world. I actually didn't know what an engineer did as a job until I started applying for jobs in my final year of University and even when I got the job I still didn't really know what I was going to be doing. That was when I took on an engineering role that I was very confident doing. I was good at that role. It was well-paid and from the outside and everything on paper it seemed like a perfect job for me. But for some reason I was really really unhappy in that role. I think I felt that if I was going to spend a third of my waking life at a job I wanted to do something that I am passionate about.

The day I said out loud that I was going to quit was actually during a long weekend away with my husband Danny. We were driving down to a coastal town in the UK.

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We were listening to a podcast about career coaching and I thought that's something that I think I could be really good at. My mind definitely started churning after listening to this podcast, realising that career coaching was something that I could potentially do.

There were probably two sides of my brain talking. There was the positive side that was saying hey yes this is something you could definitely do. Get excited because this is going to be a new path. The second side of my brain was the fear side. It was telling me, 'Are you crazy? Are you really going to be throwing away this great career that you have been work in for the last eight years to start up you're, you're own little business to coach other people working in their great careers?' I guess I also felt scared about what other people would think of me or say.

So the fear part of my brain was firstly very afraid of what my parents would think of me because they had sacrificed so much to put me in a good school and encouraged me to go to university and I knew that they were really proud of me being a professional engineer. I was also afraid of failing at creating my new business because I've never done it before. I didn't know that many people who had their own businesses and I never grew up with any entrepreneurial families, family support around me. So it was a completely new thing for me - very foreign so it was definitely a really scary thing to think about. I was really not enjoying life at that moment in time but I felt really excited by this idea of helping others create careers that they loved and I think that that was the moment that I had been searching for for the last five years knowing that I wanted to leave my job but I just didn't know what it was that I wanted to do.

I waited till the last day that I had to resign as part of my notice period. So the process of resigning to my boss that was, I felt a very awkward conversation, as I'm sure most resignation conversations were. But especially so because my boss was quite a new manager and I don't think he had had someone resign from him, his team before. So I felt nervous for me and for him at the same time. Finally had the room to ourselves and I sat down and I close the door and I was just very honest with him. I said, 'Look, I'm actually really nervous to have this conversation with you'.

Then he said, 'Okay, that's fine no problems. What can I help with?'.

I said, 'I've decided that I'm going to hand in my notice and I would like to finish on this date'.

So before I started my business, I would think that a typical entrepreneur is someone who wakes up at 4:30 in the morning, goes for a 10 mile run, comes back, meditates for 20 minutes then drinks a bulletproof coffee and starts work at 6 in the morning. I knew I was never going to be that person. I'm a little bit lazy if I'm honest. Lazy and I am also really protective of my work life balance. So my first day, I didn't necessarily know what to do. I felt at first, that I would just do whatever I felt was right at the time.

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I felt incredibly free because I had no one telling me what to do for the first time in eight years and that I could just work on whatever I wanted to do. That didn't work at all because I got distracted I had lots of ideas and I kept jumping from one thing to the other.

My first main task, that I should have been focusing on, was getting my website up and running. I worked on that for a few days while getting distracted a lot. When I realised that that wasn't necessarily working I decided to announce on all of my social media channels that my website would be up and running in seven days time and I made this promise to people who might have looked at my social media posts. I wasn't stressed out about that but I felt excited so I wanted to work on it late into the night. At that point in time I was still living with a couple of friends and my husband and the other couple were all into watching Love Island at the time and that was a show I couldn't, I couldn't get myself to watch I'd I couldn't do it. So while they were watching Love Island, I was building a business!

I had to very quickly learn that I did in fact need a schedule... needed to. So first of all I had to set up my own little time table it was like I was back in school. I had my mornings where I did this and my afternoons when I did that. I also realized that I was the only one around so I really had to trust my instinct. In engineering, there's a lot of checking of work so when you did a piece of work, you would give it to one of your colleagues to check then that would go to their manager to check then that would go to someone else to sign off. When I was left to my own devices, I didn't have anyone to check my work. I had to really trust myself and I think probably the quality of what I was writing was a lot better than what I did when I was working full-time for someone else. If I didn't know the answer to something it's actually okay. No one really knows the answer to everything. But as long as I did what I thought was right at the time, then that's the best that I can do. Sometimes I still got things wrong and that was annoying but at least I put something out there, realized it was wrong and I could learn from my mistakes. I went to do a talk about gender equality at a local meet-up. I talked about a time when my university friend told me that was very thankful that when he was on a team where he was designing a car, it was a family car, that there was a woman in the design team because she was the only one who had experience of having children. So she was an invaluable source of information when it came to designing a family car because she would be the one to question, 'But what if there's a nappy explosion in the backseat? What will happen then?' Or she's had cars before where kids had broken off cup holders because they were too flimsy. So I gave that example in my talk and afterwards a lady came up to me to say she felt really offended that I had given the example where I highlighted that women were only useful because they knew about having children. So that was a mistake I had to learn from that even though I meant well by giving this example of educating people about why you need women in a team, I needed to also think in the shoes of someone else. I guess a part of me felt a bit hurt that I was trying to do the right thing but in a different way I'd kind of offended someone while doing it. That feedback definitely did sting.

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I am now a bit more cautious of the types of examples I gave when I'm doing my outreach speaking. If I'm not sure, I speak to my friends who are mothers or who have seen through those experiences before and I'm also more wary that everyone has their gripes in the world. So it's not necessarily my fault if someone feels hurt by something but I should still be, I guess sensitive, to what they might be feeling. I had another person come up to me after a talk saying, 'oh your talk was great but it doesn't include women who have gone through menopause!' So there are going to be people with all different sorts of experiences that I can relate to but my business is going to be aimed at people who I can help directly. I'm sure there are some amazing career coaches out there who deal with people who've been through menopause and the difficulties that that brings. There are other coaches who has been through childbirth and having to raise a family while working full-time and they're the ones who are suitable for those people and I guess that's why there are different people in the same businesses because we all have our own points of you to bring to the world.

If I look at how I felt before I handed in my notice at my previous company. I've come such a long way. I have started my business. I have grown my network. I am starting to get known for what I do in this field and people come to me for questions about gender equality in STEM. Being successful is a really interesting question because I feel like to be successful you just need to feel like you're always growing. So success is not really a destination. I feel like I still have a lot to give and a lot more that I want to achieve so I hope that in continuing to do that I can continue feeling successful in that way.

**Bree:** That's all for today! Si te ha gustado este podcast y quieres seguir escuchando, puedes visitar nuestra pagina web, [acingles.com](http://acingles.com) donde tendrás todos los episodios de Into the Story. También encontrarás algunas actividades y materiales de cada episodio para ayudarte mejorar tu inglés. Thank you for listening, we hope you have a good time, or at least, a good story to tell.