

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/advice-for-the-young>

Facebook Director of Engineering Jocelyn Goldfein expresses why time spent learning to code is one of the best investments you can make. And since young people are at the time in life to take a lot of risks, says Goldfein, she urges them to, "not worry about what you're going to be when you grow up, just be, and it will come and find you."



Transcript

I think that I would have said, don't - I wouldn't have listened, but I would have said, don't worry about what you are going to be when you grow up, just be and it will come and find you.. I feel like when I was in high school and college, so many people were like follow your passion, follow your dream and I was like, how do I find my passion, how do I find my dream? No one had particularly good advice for what to do to figure out what you're passionate about.. And so I would say it's okay not to know.. Just keep trying things and you will find stuff that you're passionate about and excited about.. I would have told myself not to be afraid of writing code for living, I was afraid of that.. I was afraid that other people would be better at it than me, I was afraid that I would be buried in detail and not get to be strategic and above the fray, and I learned over time that writing code is actually one of the most strategic things you can do.. And every time I meet a college student who wants to skip being a software engineer and go straight into product management, I'm like oh.. It's not that you won't someday want to do those things, want to be a manager or a product manager or a designer, but you learn so much from writing code.. The devil is truly in the details, the what is possible, the what is feasible, the systems thinking; just embrace it, relish it.. You may or may not - you may love it so much that you do it forever..

You may not do it forever, but every minute you spend coding is going to make you 1,000 times better at being a manager or a product manager or anything else.. That is better - your time is better spent, even if your goal is to do something else, your time is better spent writing code as preparation for it, if you want any career in software, any career, even CEO or sales or whatever it is.. So I would not have been so anxious to sort of figure out what was after software engineering.. I would have spent just - I would have lived more in the now, I guess, or I would advise myself to live more in the now, I would have had trouble taking that advice...