Episode 1- Finding your voice: What makes an ECR?

With Temidayo Eseonu and Ayse Burcin Baskurt

Timestamps:

Transcript

Welcome to Confessions of an Early Career Researcher, the show where we deep dive into the journeys, challenges and successes of ECRs, whether you've just begun navigating the early stages of your research career or you're a seasoned ECR looking to upskill. This is the podcast for you join us as we speak with ECRs at varying stages of their careers to discuss their experiences and unpack their academia survival tips. I'm your host, Leonie Smith, a philosopher and lecturer at Lancaster University. Today's episode is all about the question, what is an ECR?

So welcome to the podcast. I've got two guests with me. I'm going to ask you to introduce yourselves in just a second. I thought I'd start by asking you to say who you are, where you are in your ECR journey, and maybe a bit about how you got there. So maybe Burcin, if we start with you.

Hello. My name is Burcin Baskurt. I'm from Istanbul, Turkey. I've been living in the UK in the past seven years. Now, currently, I'm a senior lecturer at the University of East London in the psychology and human development department. I'm working in the masters program called Applied Positive psychology. And my journey as an ECR, as an early career researcher started when I got my PhD in Istanbul in social and organisational psychology. Then I immediately started working as a lecturer in several higher education institutions in Istanbul. Then my husband got a job offer in London, and then with our little daughter, we moved to London. I thought it's going to be very

easy for me to find a job here in the UK, given that I had my PhD, some sort of teaching experience and research publications. But it didn't happen like that. I spent quite some time trying to understand and navigate through the UK education system and trying to understand what's going on in higher education institutions. I did a lot of job applications, but I never got a response. So, I took a totally different lens to navigate myself in the system. I said, I need to be in this network, but maybe I should do another masters. So why not use this opportunity? A door is shut, but another is just opened. Maybe I can learn new things and improve my skills and everything. So I ended up at the University of East London doing another masters after my PhD. So, yeah, I'll tell about the rest of the story.

So not the traditional idea people have of exactly how smoothly the path from doing a PhD to starting in your career goes with a few twists and turns on the way, which we'll get into in a minute. That's so fascinating. And Dayo, would you like to introduce yourself?

Yes, hi, so I'm going to use a different introduction so you can know a little bit more about me, and this is in line with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. So I am Dayo: I am a wife, a mom, a person of faith. And my identity, I guess, is people who have joy and so like to dance and sing, and as part of that trying to transform the world. And maybe that's connected to what my name means, which means that I bring joy. And my position, then, is that I am a lecturer of politics and policy at Lancaster University. And my journey to an ECR, or my journey as an ECR is one which, after my first masters, second masters degree, I took about eight to nine years working so outside of academia, and then I came back to do a PhD, which is interesting in and of itself. I've got degrees in multiple fields, economics, management, psychology, one of them, and then a PhD in politics. And I self-funded my PhD as well, which is an interesting experience, very hard I will not recommend. And, yeah, I'll stop there for now, but yeah,

So yet again, not this idealized version of, oh, an ECR, goes to university, does an undergrad, a master's PhD, maybe there's a postdoc straight into lecturing. You've had all kinds of little breaks in between. And what I find interesting is you both mentioned doing different master's degrees at different points, so you've had these very different experiences, and maybe interdisciplinary experiences as well. So there's a few things that I thought might be worth pulling out of these journeys, I would say both of them perhaps non-traditional, although maybe increasingly becoming what is the norm for ECR. So for people listening, maybe your journey hasn't been exactly direct either, but Dayo you mentioned a few things, like self-funding a PhD. I know you had family at that time. So on, what were maybe some of the challenges and. And how did you work around that where you're going through?

Gosh, so when I decided to do a PhD, I had, I guess, read a recent report about the levels of inequalities in the city that I live in, Manchester – well, I live in Stockport. So I wanted to explore that a little bit more with my PhD. So I thought, Oh, I'll go do it. I wanted to explore more, I think, about that. And like you do, or maybe not, you go back. I went to do a PhD, but it was self-funded, because obviously I'd been out of academia for so long, I didn't have access to like up-to-date articles to be able to do a proper research proposal with recent articles, or had my hand on what was the most recent discussions on in the topic. So that was a challenge in and of itself. But the supervisor I initially started working with was open, which is also quite useful in the sense that he saw beyond the typical definition of academic excellence and valued my professional experience as well – and my abilities outside of the academia circle. So that was helpful. So I had to do it self-funded, because I wouldn't have made the cut to be what they call a highly competitive or a funded PhD. But obviously I had a family at the time, and I would have been unfair to my husband to fund the whole family, so I had a part time job as well, and my daughter was three years old when I started. So it was the hardest time of my life trying to manage these three things, or all of this at once. It was a full time PhD, part time work, being a mom, being a wife, all of that, but I managed to do it. My write up was actually over covid, when I was homeschooling, and I remember I had to fight (I had lovely supervisors), but I had to really fight my corner in terms of the way that I wrote and submitted my PhD in the end. So I did my PhD through so not publications. They were not all published my application, because that was the only way that I could survive my submission year.

That's so interesting. I did the same thing. And also during the covid period I was writing, we were probably in the same space, in our little rooms, doing the same thing.

Yes, because I was like, I can't, because I'd committed so before the covid pandemic happened, I'd committed to writing these articles, and then I had to homeschool and submit. And I was like, I can't. I was like, I physically can't, because look at my daughter's like, I don't know if you saw this in covid people who had timetables for teaching for their kids. I had a similar one. We started with Joe Wicks, I don't know, because the PE teacher for those that might not know, and then, you know, all of those things. But then I had to fit in writing as well. So there was all of those challenges. But what was good? And I think this is, you know, if there was a plus side with a self-funded PhD. Was halfway through when I had now familiarized myself with the different theoretical frameworks, I realized that I needed to do a different PhD, so I switched departments and schools to politics in my second year. I was able to do that because I wasn't funded, so I didn't have the frictions and the pressures and people deciding what it is that I wrote. And that was literally through a conversation at a conference, I met my amazing supervisor. I'm going to shout her out, Professor Liz Richardson, at a conference, and I was just like, you're kind of doing the same things I want to do. Are you okay to have me as a student? And she was like, Yeah, go on. And we did that.

I love that. And once you become an academic, you do realize how much of it is just this kind of like, do you want to do this? Do you mind? Yeah, sure. Let's just do that. Because when you're starting out and this links to what you were saying, you often don't know this perfect technique of how you're supposed to get things like funding or what you're supposed to do. I find that really interesting, because you had this what some would see as an enormous challenge of not being up to date with the literature, and not knowing what to do, and having to do the proposal without that. But then you've also mentioned how, in some ways, that was freeing. And I think we can sometimes worry so much about doing it the perfect way, you kind of forget about maybe the joy of doing it your own way.

So (Burcin), there's something similar in the sense that you also had this route where it turned out not to be as smooth, and you had some challenges. Like you came to the UK, very different culture, I imagine, and had a whole different experience. So when you encountered this, you've given us the bare bones of what you did. But how was that? How did you navigate changing disciplines, all these kinds of things, changing into a different culture?

So changing many things, like you said: changing countries, because we were surrounded with our close family and friends back in Istanbul and coming to UK, London. My husband immediately started his job. We put our daughter to nursery, and I was like, Okay, I've been to museums and everything. London is a beautiful city, but Okay, what I'm going to do now? And, I was not getting any replies from my job applications, I realised there is something going on – that I need to do something, so I try to find different paths. For instance, I continued collaborating with my PhD supervisor and her team. I kept in contact, and I started this master's program, and I really put a magnifying glass on my wellbeing, because this was a positive psychology program mainly focusing on people's wellbeing, how people can be at their best. And this was just during the right time. I was like, how can I become my best while looking after my daughter, adapting to a new culture, learning about coaching psychology, which was part of my masters, and I didn't have any background in that. I had background in sociology, then did a masters in history and society, and did my PhD in organisational psychology. And I said, okay, I really would like to focus on this wellbeing, and want to learn about coaching. So that coaching really helped me, like I said, I put that magnifying glass on my wellbeing. I did lots of reflections. I was in touch with my PhD supervisor, and I just volunteered to collect data from UK for the cross-cultural project. And also, I was collecting my own data while writing my masters, which I found really easy. I need to say that, after a PhD, masters was.....

It was amazing, I just found myself at UEL, like teaching my peers, like collaborating with them, clarifying things. And of course, people realised I already got a PhD. But it was also at a time where we had lots of difficult times during covid, like the time I was

writing my dissertation, some of our family members back in Turkey got sick, some of them passed away, so it was really a tough time, but still, I just persevered. I said, during this time of uncertainty, I want something holding in my hand. It was like a second baby, another dissertation, the third one. And I said, yeah, I will keep doing this. I'm going to produce something. I'm going to touch people's lives. I become so creative. I already knew I was good at connecting people, but during those hard times, I found different ways of connecting to people and finding a job like while doing that masters, I expect to find one in the UK, but during that lockdown, my first job offer came from Turkey, from the university. I got my PhD. They said, okay, everything is online now. Why don't you come and give this lecture? And I was really from my home. I was based in London, giving some lectures back in Turkey in my home university, and just a short time after that, the department also offered me a job at the University of East London just before I graduated. So during those tough times, I had this funny moment during my graduation day, I was there to graduate, but I was on the stage because I started my job before I graduated, so was sitting next to my supervisor. I was a student and a colleague, and they called out my name, and I said, oh, I'm on stage. Thank you. Celebrated. And then I drove a little circle and just came back to my seat, and I was like, wow.

But yeah, finding those alternative ways, like being in touch with my supervisor, keep collecting data, trying to understand UK through the lens of a student. First, I think that was really helpful for me, because then I was able to, okay, what is this module and what's the content? There are three semesters in a year. So these were all new things to me. Might seem small, but they were really big things, big changes for me. So when I started lecturing little bit here, a little bit there, I said, okay, I'm now getting to know people, my passion areas, and I know my values. I want to contribute to people's lives. And how can I do that? And the thing is, I didn't want to do it only through research, but I started volunteering for some NGOs organisations. I volunteered in my daughter's school, gave workshops in kindness week, in wellbeing week. So I think all those led me to have different hats right now, research hats, teaching hats, practitioner hat.

There's definitely something there, and again, there's something I think I picked up in your narrative as well, Dayo. But it's really coming out here that you faced what some would think of as like these enormous obstacles of just not being able to get a foot in the door in any kind of way. But what you turn to is, well, what do I care about? What am I interested in? What's going to enrich my life in some kind of way. And Dayo, in your story, saying this report had just come out, and I was really concerned about these things in my own area. And through doing that, you ended up in a very different path to where it kind of got to. And I think that's really useful for people to hear too often, we might have this idea we have to follow other people's narratives for our careers as an ECR and what we're doing and where we're going, but it seems like you managed to incorporate what interests you and your own values and where you're going into lots of

different parts of your life and doing it. And I can see that that connects. Yeah, okay, and Dayo, you're sort of nodding away. And I had a similar experience from my own path. As well having a non-traditional route as a mature student coming back to things. So we've touched on some of the challenges, and then how you both have turned those into these amazing opportunities through pursuing your own interests, your own values and sticking with them. Do you think there are other skills and maybe strengths that each of you have brought to your career because of these different backgrounds, this interdisciplinarity, these different cultures, this having to juggle multiple things, having work experience, maybe Dayo, I'll ask you, first of all.

So yeah, 100% so when I was outside of academia, and I worked in organisational development, and a lot of what we were talking about in terms of trying to make a better work environment for people. I've always done co-creation; it's always been with colleagues at work who wanted to sort of get their views and opinions. So that was an approach that I was very comfortable with. And so when I came back to do my PhD, it was natural for me to do my research like that, because I didn't know anything else, and I had not been out of academia for like, eight years, or whatever it was, I had not been trained to not do that, if that makes sense. So I didn't have all of those typical 'be neutral', or all this. So I had a different approach, which was very much about co-creating knowledge with people. And so when I was doing my PhD fieldwork, that was very much the approach I took. And which is why I went to work with my supervisor, was because I was like, this feels normal. Like this feels normal to me. And it helped, because I think through the work I did, through my doing my PhD, I was able to get the award for, I think, the PGR Student of the Year, precisely because I did work with communities and policy makers in the area that I was interested in. I think things like being able to manage multiple deadlines. As an academic mom, you might have teaching you might have like a child's play thing in the afternoon, and you have to do funding, you need to do some research. So you have so many different hats you just juggle. Because, I think, and obviously working outside of academia, where the pace is much, much faster, you have to deliver and handling multiple projects. I think that brought that to the way that I work.

Are you good at meeting deadlines? Amazing. So very rare for an academic!

I know, but I think it makes sense, because how can you working outside of academia to go back to your boss and say, oh, sorry I can't. It's just like, what like, What do you mean? You make it happen. So I think I am, but what I am learning, though, I guess. And what's nice about academia is you can go back now and just be like, 'can we extend this? Please?' I have to say it's first time I've done it this year. I've done it, I know I'm trying to not be that, but I have done it this year. I'm like, 'I don't think I can handle this', but I think so it's things like being able to connect and make connections, but not in a just an instrumental way, but in a relational way, in terms of, actually, yeah, it's very

authentic. It's also something that I've learned outside of academia that I bring into my work. So I don't find it tricky to just email people, or walk up to people and say, 'Hey, I liked your paper, or hey, I liked this.' And so my network just extends, which is a useful thing within academia. So I think all those and the fact, you know, the way different types of knowledge is I'm able to access, because, again, I wasn't trained in politics throughout in terms of my undergraduate economics, for example. So I think he allows me to see the world in different places. I'm also not afraid to look to other disciplines for answers. So I don't think, oh, I'll just look a political journal. I'm just like: 'Who's explaining things in the way that makes sense'. And then I'll use that, and I think that's part of everything that I've done before.

So there's quite a few strengths, and if we were to try and list them all, and I won't go through a complete list of them, but effectively, by not being inculcated in a particular way of doing things, you just did things the way you thought made sense. And that's actually allowed you to flourish and thrive in your academic work. So we've been able to flourish with doing these things, and it just leads you down different pathways. So these things, again, that sometimes can feel like I don't know how it works, I don't know the system. There can be advantages to that. You can carve your path and don't be afraid to do it. Burcin, so the same kind of thing to you do. You think there were some things that you just did or that you brought to your studies, or the second masters, and what came after it, and how you approach things, because of having these differences in cultural background because of a bit of interdisciplinarity.

First of all, I was one of the youngest people in the room when I first went on campus teaching, because all my students are mature students. This is a master's program, and people already start their businesses, have established their careers. They want to learn something new, improve their wellbeing. Also developing of their organisations, other peoples around them in maybe educational institutions. So lots of people are coming from this diverse background, from all walks of life, and they are mature students. So I was maybe the youngest one, and I was like, okay, I'm bringing lots of different background, not only my collectivistic values and experiences from Turkey, but also from these different disciplines like sociology, history and psychology. I think one striking thing when I was answering the questions of my students was that I was able to give examples from different disciplines. Just like Dayo said, I was given an example from a macro perspective in economics, I was giving an example about some of the cycles and trends from an historical point of view. Or I was able to focus on micro level, at the psychological wellbeing area, but also bringing the collective, the non-western way of thinking and values and everything from a sociological point of view. So I think that was one of the positive things I brought to my teaching and my interaction with my students. And I wanted to put a lot of emphasis on critical perspective. I think my cultural background has just prepared me to question things in research, in academia, in our daily lives. So I was asking more questions than my students. I was

asking them, so let's discuss together. And that co creation also resonated a lot with me. I think I was already co creating the module, the content, revising, reminding it to a wide extent with my students, because my students got these amazing, diverse backgrounds. So yeah, co creating brought lots of critical perspective, like, why we do this, why we do that, and all my data collections, or compilation of these lists of readings for my students included these diverse perspectives, not only from different disciplines, but also from different cultures. And the samples that I chose for my data, for instance, reflect that as well. I was trying to find the ones who were under research. So asking those research questions and building up the content with my students improved my critical perspective, and I think my cultural background, trying to compare and contrast and see some similarities, but also differences across these different cultures and backgrounds and experiences, I think helped me find a different path.

There's this idea that actually not feeling constrained by a certain way of doing things, just automatically led you to think in a different way and to just ask questions, maybe that other people weren't asking. And I think that is worth all of us thinking about, because we all bring a distinct, situated perspective to being an ECR. We all have different paths, and we all have different ways that we got here, even people who might look like the so-called traditional route of going through. And I don't know, would it be fair to say with both of you said: listen to yourself a little bit in this journey.

You know, there's something about being an ECR and new to the field or to the topic that you're interested in, and I think you touched on it is keeping your sense of questioning, I think is super important. I think keeping that sense of, okay, I'm being taught all of these things, or I'm reading all of these things, but why to what end? And why am I engaging with this research in this way, or this, like, body of work in this way, or kind of nickel text, you know? So just keep that questioning. I think it's something that we have the privilege of as ECRs, actually, to then decide, okay, how am I going to make my way through this? And, you know, bringing with us that situated knowledge that you refer to?

That's what it is to be an ECR, in many ways, to be trying to forge your way through this and hold on to what you bring to the field, and maybe beyond the field, actually, so you might have impacts beyond that as well as it sounds like both of you have had,

I attended a workshop by the British Academy, which was called ‘Finding your Voice’. That helped me quite a lot, because finding your voice as a researcher, as a person, as a mom, as a sibling, as a relative, you know, like finding that voice, hearing your own voice aloud, and talking about your research to a group of strangers. So to say that workshop helped me a lot. And I think trying to find these different paths, connecting

different thoughts, was one of the skills I brought. And being part of these different networks was another path I took, I believe, like becoming a member of this ECRN In the British Academy or joining the community of practice groups of some of the associations in my field, also outside my field, reading the books of Nobel Prize winners, for instance, or finding some poets, Irish poets, and reading their poems. Like doing something completely different, interesting feeds me like it nourishes my. My intellectual knowledge, my academic knowledge, contributing to all my relationship. And I think it's all about creating that identity that we've been talking about, becoming yourself, hearing yourself, but also hearing others and seeing the wider world.

It's interesting, isn't it, because you might not always know exactly what your voice is or where you're going. And there, I wanted to ask you if you could remember the phrase that used. We had a brief chat before, and you said something about weaving a tapestry.

So yeah, I think I was saying that looking back, because we were talking about my route into my PhD, and I was seeing how all my different degrees were. I guess, they were not, not obviously related. So, there was a tapestry of my life, if you like, being woven. And when you look at a tapestry from behind, you can see all the patterns, but it doesn't necessarily make sense. But I'm not saying tapestry of my life is finished, because I'm still living. But you know, I can start to see the pattern and the connections, because when you turn the tapestry around, you can start to figure out what it is the person is trying to do. So with my different things that I've been part of, they're all connected in the way that they make me see how we can work towards racial equity in policy and public services.

That really resonates, might resonate with other people who are listening. And I think the same when I think about class and all the things that I'm interested in. It's this idea you might not know it's going then maybe turn the tapestry, maybe go to a workshop on finding your voice, and think, oh, this is actually who I am. This is where it fits.

One thing I wanted to ask both of you about, and maybe because you've had these non-traditional routes through and had all these different experiences. You've both got quite active LinkedIn presences, social media presences, and I wanted to ask you about that, because I think for a lot of people who are listening to this, the idea of promoting yourself on social media can feel a bit uncomfortable. Maybe some people not. Maybe It's super natural. I know I've struggled with what the role of that is. Do you use your LinkedIn profiles in some way as part of it being an ECR?

I think it's part of creating that identity and connecting people. In my case, like I mentioned, having that student lens first of all, then having that staff lens at the University of East London, LinkedIn was making that bridge between my current students, past students, the staff members, my colleagues. So, it started like that. And

also I started volunteering for a charity in Turkey very recently. And teaching in English in the UK is nice. But also giving some messages, supporting people in my home country, in my native language, was also something very important for me. So through LinkedIn, I was able to now connect my Turkish students with my other network here in the UK, they were able to see what I'm doing in my academic world, but also in my social world, the conference presentations, the data collections, the some of the most up to date research in the field, which might contribute to many people, and also when something harsh happens in the world, I was also giving my voice over there as well, like when earthquakes happened in Turkey and the closed area, I was able to shout out for help and to bring people together through my profile. So I think I'm using that LinkedIn, per se, to establish and improve my connections with people around the world

I think I'm good at bringing people together. I'm really a good connector. So far, I connected lots of people. They initiated businesses, they collaborated, they got married. LinkedIn was one way of like having my relationships, nourishing my relationships, being in touch with people. And also, the other thing, apart from connection, is was like, over time, like, I'm still an ECR, but I'm feeling much more comfortable asking people to do like, let's do this. Let's do that. I want to be part of this. Why don't you come and visit my lecture via guest lecturer, etc. Etc. So I'm really very comfortable at the moment, because I think I improved my muscle of stepping out of my comfort zone quite a lot of times, and now I'm feeling much comfortable. So even if I don't know a person very closely, but having lots of common friends on LinkedIn, I just connect and say hi and introduce myself. I'm interested in your work, so let's do this. Let's do that. So yeah, LinkedIn, I think is a nice opportunity for connections.

Obviously, it's not just LinkedIn we could be using, but it's sort of increasingly one that I'm seeing academics start to take more of an interest. And Dayo, you also use your platform.

So I remember, when I finished my PhD, or at least during my PhD, we were told specifically, as part of preparing for afterlife, but after PhD, that we needed to have a social media presence, right? So I went on Twitter, as it was called at the time, and I absolutely loved it. Followed so many really interesting, engaging black academics and also black activists. It was a great space. And then Mr. Musk took over, and so I'm not as active anymore on X, but I was able to get lots of use from X. So I'd always had LinkedIn because of my professional things. Actually, sometimes I wonder what my professional contacts think about my current ongoings. But anyways, they're still there. I don't think they've unfriended me or whatever the word is on LinkedIn, but LinkedIn actually has been interesting, because I've always had it, but I never used it as a scholarly intervention, until, like, I guess, the mass exodus from X, and then lots of academics have moved on there as well. So I think it's really interesting for me anyway, because I span community policy and academia. So all three of those communities are on my

LinkedIn. And what's really useful with that on like X, when you have to have multiple threads, I can just do a post like a long post, long reflection. So I don't tend to do I mean, I will say I have this paper out and things like that, but I hopefully tend to do more around amplifying work other people's work, amplifying conversations, doing a lot of reflective posts, so connecting it to real world events of what's happening, what I'm seeing in the world. I did try and start a group on LinkedIn, because I run the racial equity and policy network, which is for policy makers interested in racial justice and racial equity. So I did try to create a group on LinkedIn for that population. I have to say I failed massively at that, and I think that's just because I'm not a content producer.

Because I, you know, I wanted it to be engaging. I wanted people to engage with each other, but it ended up with me just posting, posting, posting. And I just thought, actually, rather than stressing myself out with like, I had reminders to post things on it was just so stressful. And I thought, actually, that's not my way of engaging with social media, so I just moved to more reflective posts. So whoever wanted to engage would engage. But yeah, that's my experience.

That's super interesting, because actually, again, I'm getting a commonality from both of you. But what's coming out is, yeah, you maybe try to do what people might think of as the correct way to network on social media, I will create a group, and we will do things and that didn't really work out. But what you had success in, in this very broad sense, is using it authentically to connect people, to amplify voices and to again, stay true to this. Why am I doing this kind of thing rather than just everybody? I have posted a paper, which I think for many people in academia, it can feel a little bit inauthentic, maybe, and maybe not what you got into the research to do, but for both of you, it feels like just an extension of your natural professional identities to be doing it, which I think is really, really useful to hear, and I will be considering what you've said for myself, yeah, and making more use for myself.

So I think we're about ready to wrap this up, but I wanted to ask you both, before we finished, if there was one thing that you could say to people from your vast experience and just one thing, what advice would you give to early career research in terms of maybe understanding their identity as an ECR and maybe pursuing that path. So I'll start with you, Burcin, if that's okay.

Yeah, I think doing reflections, like thinking about, what am I doing, what I'd like to do, what's going on in the world, like those little pockets of time to do your reflections is key. To set your goals, to revise your goals or just do nothing, just give a break and just stand still. So I think those reflections were so important for me, and also the thing I just said about stepping out of your comfort zone, see it as a muscle. You will get nice muscles when you practice that, and believe me, it's going to be really easier next time you step out of your comfort zone, because you'll just get used to that. Because we are all doing this on a daily basis

So basically, create these pockets of time for reflection and develop the muscles, and the things will become easier and more natural.

Yeah, don't hesitate to connect to people, get support, ask for help. I think I was a bit uncomfortable at first shouting out for help, like saying somebody, oh, I can't find a job. I don't even get a response of No. Like seeing that would have made me feel much better. But over time, I was able to ask for help, tell about these challenges and everything openly. So yeah, maybe you shouldn't hesitate to ask for help.

Good bits of advice there from Burcin. Dayo, what's your piece of advice?

So, I mean, really interesting, like, we didn't plan, but I would have talked about some of the things that she talked about. So I think in addition, I would say is, don't be afraid to carve your own past. I think that is, if there's one thing from my own experience, I think that's the big thing. I think, reflect on what kind of academic do I want to be? Be relational and be human, connect authentically. So the things that Burcin said, and then just don't be afraid, like, yeah, you might fail. Like my LinkedIn group, you might be unsuccessful. I mean, I left academia for a bit before I came back. But be very clear on what kind of academic do I want to be, and then just carve your path. Be open to failure, learn from it and keep going, because that's what's going to keep you going through the journey, isn't it, staying true to your own power in some ways, friends. We didn't mention friends, but have some friends. I think that will come up on other episodes of the podcast as well.

So thank you so much both for a wonderful conversation. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you for listening to this episode of Confessions of an Early Career Researcher I've been your host. Leonie Smith. This podcast was brought to you by the British Academy in collaboration with the Leverhulme Trust, produced by Content is Queen, music sourced by Epidemic Sound.