is there a stereotype for UX designers

that's true everyone pictures the

designer is like the black turtleneck

like I mean I'm wearing black today you

know glasses and just very focused on

things looking aesthetically nice nice

things like nice graph paper nice

pencils like I'm totally guilty how did

he get started as a UX designer so my

first job was at fab comm which at the

time was a darling of the New York

startup community there was this huge

company growing really fast after I

joined they had kind of a series of

layoffs so I think there were two or

three rounds of layoffs and I went from

being a designer on a really big team

with great mentorship to being the only

designer which was a really interesting

experience because I feel like I got a

whole lot of experience in a very

condensed amount of time but I was glad

to have had the experience of mentorship

before then where I could learn a lot on

the job and then come to a point where I

need to use that knowledge and just

start advocating for the users on my own

after that I worked at Rent the Runway

and at c-calm and currently I am on the

cloud AI UX team at Google I knew I

always wanted to work for Google I was a

big fan girl and I applied three times

before finally getting in but I'm really

happy there now what does it mean to be

a grape UX designer so for me a great UX

designer has to be a great collaborator

and a great compromiser and of course a

great advocate for the user design

skills are easier to learn than people

skills and I think a huge part of my job

is just interacting with different

stakeholders product engineering and you

have to know how to kind of speak their

language a compromiser because they say

that good design is invisible but I

think good designers are also invisible

not in a bad way but in a way that you

should be comfortable with you know

sharing your sketch files with other

designers and collaborating on something

and not being too tied to one idea it's

important to be able to always bring

back what's best for the user and

being right is less important than

advocating for the user what is some of

the biggest trends in the UX design

sector right now one trend that I'm

really interested in is designed for

digital well being there's actually now

a digital well-being team at Google and

they work on things like a timer to show

you how much time you've been spending

in an app or reminders to take breaks in

things like YouTube when you've been

watching for so long

companies are starting to realize that

users will respect a product more if it

respects their time and designing for

maximum engagement all the time isn't

always the right way to go

I think tools like these digital

well-being tools are great I'd love to

see designers kind of taking initiative

and designing with well-being principles

in mind from the start so that they

designed for Less addiction and things

like that as for compromise I can think

of one project specifically where this

came up as a good example I was working

at fab and we were trying to create an

AR app for furniture visualization so

you could buy sofa and then view it in

your home actual size

at the time AR had not been fully

developed yet and there was still a lot

of technical constraints on how to do AR

so the engineers told me like the only

way we can do this is if the users print

out a QR code and place it on the ground

and use their phone to understand the

space I kind of thought that was a

little bit too much and that was

confirmed when we brought users in to

test and user said there's no way I'm

gonna spend time printing this out only

are like power users were okay with

doing that I pushed back and told

engineers like there's no way we can get

users to do this and they kind of came

back and said there's no way that you

can do this without the QR codes so we

were at an impasse for a while

until I started reading up about AR and

I found that the the most important

thing was to get a sense of the space

and you can do that if you have an

object that's usually always the same

size so for example a pencil it'll know

that a pencil is usually the same size

so I tried to see if maybe users could

just photograph a pencil and use that as

their baseline and the engineers built a

quick prototype and it worked we were

able to take this really arduous process

and turn it into something simple like

photographing the pencil which users

were able to do

and enjoy the app more quickly what is

some of the biggest challenges that you

face as a UX designer two challenges

come to mind

the first one is evangelizing UX I think

there are still people that I've worked

with that don't understand what UX is

and I always try to use the metaphor of

a house right so a UX designer as

opposed to being the person that's like

just painting the walls of the house

something you can do at the end and it

just gets applied afterwards a UX

designer is more like the architect who

is drawing up the plans to build a house

and making sure that before you go in

and start building things make sure that

incidents like having the toilet in the

kitchen doesn't happen like it's much

more costly to tear that down than it is

to build it correctly in the first place

and then I think that's where people see

the value of UX to build things once as

opposed to have to go back and fix it

the second challenge I often face is

just also dealing with my own biases I

think it's easy for you to think that

you are the user and certainly when I

worked at Rent the Runway and Etsy I was

kind of the user I overlap with the user

in some sense but it was harder for me

to deal with my own assumptions about

how the user might act because I'm very

different from someone else using the

app in another country or any number of

ways so I think it has been easier at

Google now that our users our enterprise

customers and I'm certainly not an

enterprise AI customer so I'm it's

easier for me to separate off the two

but I think regardless is important for

you to realize the differences between

you and the user what's the difference

between UX design and UI design the

example I like to use is there's this

image of two paths one is very nicely

paved and you know leading straight

ahead the other is like cutting through

the grass and it's just dirt

but people like to take this other path

because it's the shortest way to

wherever you have to go so that really

nice paved path that's kind of not

really used wasn't very thought-out

is kind of like UI and the dirt road

path that's well-worn you know everyone

wants to use it that's UX at the same

time I don't really buy into the thought

that UX and UI are that separate I mean

if you're designing let's say for voice

or designing an 8

P I of course and there's going to be no

interface no UI but it's always

important to as a UX designer think

about those elements that users are

going to be interacting with if you are

designing an interface for example at

Google we have a very big Design Systems

team so those are the folks that have

already fleshed out you know what this

button is gonna look like what the

corner radius what the pixels and colors

are like completely optimized so I have

to think about that a little less

day-to-day but there are cases that come

up where we're building on top of this

design library but we may find use cases

that come up that either changed the

design library or their reasons to make

tweaks to that so it's kind of always in

the back of my mind even though I'm not

focused on the UI

what's one skill that he learned on the

job that he wished he would have learned

in here York's design education in my UX

education we focused a lot on process

what I wasn't prepared for was that the

process always changes depending on what

you know what company you're working for

the people you're working with the size

of the project everything so while it's

important to learn the basics of a

process I think it's also important to

realize that UX is just one small thread

in a larger tapestry of things and

you're able to adjust as needed based on

the situation also that the process can

sort of vary widely depending on the

company you're working for and even

within one company so I know at Google

some of my friends who are designers are

more far-reaching because they're on a

smaller team so their role includes like

direction design like UI design even

branding sometimes which wasn't part of

the job description because it's such a

small team they wear many hats for

myself I'm mostly focused on wire

framing prototyping thinking about

interactions learning the full spectrum

of the process is helpful it's also

helpful to know which parts you're most

interested in or excited by to build

upon those skills could you describe

your design process and what methods you

follow as far as process goes

fortunately at Google we have a lot of

emphasis on the design discovery face so

researchers will talk to potential

customers and domain experts and others

in the field to just kind of learn about

the space before jumping in and

buildings

and depending on what we find in that

research that may mean that PM's need to

either reduce scope or increase scope or

change the project by being brought in

at this stage we really have a

foundational role and then after we get

a sense of the people we're designing

for which is often you know multiple

different types of users we start coming

up with Cu J's or core user journeys so

that's what does a user need to

accomplish what is their main goal and

which goals are the most important all

of this so far has been in collaboration

with PM's and edge so that we can get on

the same page about the users we're

designing for which user journeys are

absolutely critical which ones we want

to maybe you know are necessary for

version one and which ones we may want

to push out later to version two or

three sort of prioritizing things not

just from a UX standpoint but also from

is this easy for engineers to build is

it feasible within the time period and

of course how valuable are they to the

business and of course we try to get

feedback on our designs as much as

possible throughout this process so I'll

be creating prototypes for usability

tests the fidelity varying depending on

what we're trying to find out and just

collecting that feedback from users and

exposing it to stakeholders throughout

the process

can you name what design note that you

look up to she's not a UX designer but I

really love Jessica ish she does amazing

lettering and typography and just

graphic design I think it's always great

to look to others outside of our field

for inspiration and inspiration can come

from anywhere