

2023-11-05

## Post Conversation Thoughts

So I actually wrote this up yesterday, but I felt so off after talking with you. Like that feeling when you say something that you thought was true but feels like a lie when it actually comes out. And I think what it was is that our talk felt a little too salesmany-ish on my end. We are friends and I don't want you to feel like I'm trying to sell you something that isn't in your best interest. I'm just excited at the prospect of working with you. I thought it would be a lot of fun. And I thought there were a lot of good logical propositions as to why it would be a smart decision – I think this ended up materializing in a way that didn't feel right to me. Although, I do believe someone has to have evangelical excitement.

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I think it could be useful for you to know how I perceived your response to the idea. It felt to me like you weren't that fired up about the idea – which is fine. To me I think this alludes to the idea that you don't feel like I bring that much to the table, like the odds of success for you starting something is almost the same as starting something with me. Again, this may not be true. But this is me thinking through things and trying to be vulnerable about what I'm thinking. No hard feelings of course :)

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*Wouldn't it be better to get a job for a year and work on the business in spare time?* If it was just me or just you starting a business, then that might be true. But with both of us working on the business – thus costs

spilt – I think we could swing having part time jobs to pay rent if we absolutely needed to. So I think if we both are committed to building this thing, then no, it would not be better. I think our time would be better spent wholeheartedly trying to start this company.

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Also here are those **rice chips** lol.

## A Rough Recall of My Side of the Conversation

I think answering the question, "What do you want from life?" is very important. Maybe the most important thing. And my answer is to make great things as many times as I can. Every decision I make is trying to maximize the number of great things I get to work on. And I think we should move to Austin, TX and do a startup. I think that is the best decision to maximize this function; although, I don't know what you want from life. But assuming you want something similar, this is why I think you and I starting a company would work.

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I have never approached anyone I know with this idea of let's start a company for two reasons. First of all, before you, I'd never met anyone that was willing to work hard enough to make a startup successful. I've known you for about a year now, and I really think you've got what it takes in effort and in intelligence. Second of all, and I think this is actually a rarer or harder criteria, is that start-up living is scrappy, uncomfortable, and extremely frugal. I think you probably know what I'm talking about here. Because every dollar is another month of lifetime

for an early company to find product-market-fit ya know. So by us being able to live super cheaply, I think we will have a much longer runway to make and make and make until we find something that works. I mean if we live in the office, rent is nothing with two people contributing. We can make that work ya know, whereas on my own for example, that is a much harder situation. So those two things are why I think this will work. But now I need to talk about why what you were going to do won't maximize making the most great things. Because it won't. And I think we are selling ourselves short by going into a Phd or getting a job given this opportunity I'm talking about here today exists. On our own, not working together, even for me I think getting a job for a couple years might be the better option. But again, compared with the option of starting a company together, both of us are selling ourselves short with jobs or more school.

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So let's play hypotheticals here. You get a phd because the job market is rough right now. 99.999% of research isn't very good, so you spend 5 more years, and you are now 29, basically just getting a piece of paper that says I'm qualified to do a very narrow field of work. So then you probably have so fairly lucrative job offers. Let's say 200k job offers. But keep in mind the function you said you wanted to maximize. Money isn't important to us man. But who can resist a 200k job even if the plan is only do work there a few years. So you that this job, say it is doing more research, but for a big important company. Now you get to create great things right? Nope. Well maybe. But you have to plead and beg just to work on research questions that you think are important. And this never stops. You might luck out once or twice in your life and work on great things. But ultimately you are not in control because you aren't the one cutting checks. That's how I see things anyways.

So what, you save some money and start a company in your early 30s? If that's what you plan to do, why do it earlier anyways? Ya know this first company is not going to be our Tesla. The odds just are against us. But if we making something modestly successful is very doable. And we walk away with a ton of contacts, experience, and a track record that says we can build things that make money. So when we start the next thing smart people can really get on board early because we have done things before.

Backtracking a bit here, I really love research. I do. I love the idea of doing world changing research, but I just don't think the research track maximizes the number of great things made. Because you just aren't in control as a researcher. I don't wanna spend my whole life begging for other people's money. Or even if we take the non-research route, it is the same thing. You'll spend your whole life continually begging to be apart of a great team working on cool things. And you are smart, you probably will be able to find one or two jobs that some years ya know. But when those things are over, and the cool thing shifts, you are back to square one. Because you will have spent your whole life working in cool area X whereas now it has shifted to cool area Y. And there will always be the person who has spent the last decade on cool area Y that you now have to compete with. So we are back to begging for validation. That is what happened to Andy Hertzfeld.

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If this sounds interesting, why don't we start working now? We have 5 months or so left before graduation. So let's work on a project together just to get a feel for if this is actually a good partnership. Maybe there is some personality traits that we don't see that totally blows this thing up ya know. Also, if it does work, then we have some routines for working together kinda lined out before we start something real, something that starts cutting down our startup lifetime. I've got roughly \$15,000 that

I've been saving for a start-up since high school. So like I'm serious about this man. My whole life since the 11<sup>th</sup> grade has been aimed at a starting a company, and by some miracle, I think I've found a co-founder that is equally ambitious.