

Paul Graham, Y combinator and his physiology on "How To Do Great Work"

Taking off Wikipedia, Paul Graham is an English computer scientist, essayist, entrepreneur, investor, and author. He is best known for his work on the programming language Lisp, his former startup Viaweb (later renamed Yahoo! Store), co-founding the influential startup accelerator and seed capital firm Y Combinator, his essays, and Hacker News.

But I would say after reading the article he is kind of a mentor who teaches people how things should be done and what path to take, reflecting on his experiences. After reading a bit more about him and his successes, he seems like an influential figure in the technology and startup community. He is also famous for being a co-founder of Y Combinator, which I didn't initially know. For the people who aren't participating in answering the questions and don't know what Y combinator is or what it does; Y combinator is a pioneering startup accelerator.

Taking into consideration the past startups that it has worked with and how the startups are doing it seems it is very successful. It has an impressive track record, it has supported and funded numerous startups that have gone on to become industry leaders. I was personally shocked when I found out it had contributed to the success of companies like Dropbox, Airbnb, Reddit, Stripe, and many other companies like them. Its net worth of \$26 billion helps prove my argument. On top of that looking into the founders, mentors, and investors it seems like Y Combinator has made a strong and wide network of people which is a valuable resource to elevate startups. People can debate on whether Y Combinator made Paul Graham a great influencer and a mentor or if Paul Graham's good leadership and influence made Y Combinator so successful.

In general, this article talks about how to study in school, the dos and don'ts, and the methods to use so that school can be a helpful experience for the outside world after graduating. Let me give the reflection of the article in the same order as the article goes. Paul Grahm first talks about being an active learner and being independent. He talks about treating school as a project and teachers as resources. I think he wants us to embrace independent learning form and not rely on the professor to hand us the answer.

The essay sheds light on the dichotomy between the structured nature of school assignments and the unpredictable, problem-solving realm of professional life. He teaches us the importance of identifying problems as a fundamental skill and wants us to diverge from the predefined problems posed in educational settings. This makes sense most crises we face in the workplace are not something that can be solved with pre-learned traditional algorithms (in the case of software engineers) so if we just memorize that we won't be trained to deal with new unseen problems.

There is a suggestion in the article about avoiding shortcuts. I agree with that; school is a place we came to learn we are working hard right now so that it is easier for us when we go out in the

real world. If we start taking shortcuts we will not learn as much as we should which can work against us in the future. I do believe taking too many shortcuts creates future longer paths.

In reflecting on Paul Graham's article, I found myself deeply resonating with his perspectives on choosing work that aligns with one's natural skills and passions. It's a concept that speaks to me personally, as I believe the absence of curiosity or excitement in our work can lead to a dull, unfulfilling career trajectory. My own interest in technology and its potential to shape our future aligns with this notion. Graham's emphasis on pushing the boundaries of what's known, and his encouragement to explore uncharted territories in our fields, is particularly motivating. It's a reminder of how far we can stretch the limits of innovation within our lifetimes.

His advice on focusing on personal projects, rather than getting swayed by others' achievements, is a vital point. I've always felt that genuine interest is a key driver of sustainable effort and success. This aligns with my belief that true dedication to our work comes from an internal drive rather than external pressures.

Graham also touches upon the importance of stepping out of our comfort zones, a sentiment I wholeheartedly agree with. Embracing risks and failures as stepping stones rather than setbacks is a powerful approach to both personal and professional development. It's a refreshing perspective that challenges the traditional view of failure.

His insights on the power of consistent effort and discipline are particularly striking. They remind me of the principles in "Atomic Habits" and the 1% improvement rule, which emphasize the cumulative impact of small, daily efforts. This approach has always appealed to me, as it breaks down the overwhelming task of achieving big goals into manageable, incremental steps.

Lastly, Graham's point about the influence of our surroundings and associates is a crucial one. It reaffirms a lesson I've learned from my father: the company we keep profoundly influences who we become. Surrounding ourselves with people who share our aspirations and mindset can significantly impact our journey towards achieving our goals.

Overall, Graham's article offers a compelling blend of practical advice and insightful reflections, serving as a valuable guide for anyone looking to make a meaningful impact in their chosen field.

