

The Great Discontent

- [About](#)
- [Archive](#)



Jen Schuetz and Naz Hamid

Photo by [William Couch](#)

About Jen & Naz

It began nine years ago with a Craigslist Missed Connection—a story for another time—and since that fateful exchange, Jen Schuetz and Naz Hamid have been intertwined. As two-thirds of Weightshift, a digital design and development studio in San Francisco, they work with some of the best digital companies in the industry: Adobe, Dropbox, Google Ventures, Rdio, Twitter, and more. Naz and Jen collaborate not just in work, but in life as husband and wife, searching for culture, experiences, and positivity in the form of food, travel, and spending time with good people doing good things.

- jenschuetz.com
- [Twitter](#)
- nazhamid.com
- [Twitter](#)
- weightshift.com

Interview date: June 13, 2013

Sponsored by



[Typekit is the easiest way to use web fonts.](#)

Simple to set up, easy to use, and already trusted by some of the biggest names on the web, Typekit's library of high-quality fonts will make your site look great.

Introduction

What a pair! As a husband and wife team, Naz and Jen can match each other stride for stride. Their strengths perfectly compliment one another and they have contributed incredible work to the digital sphere. Their individual paths started far from one another, but crossed in Chicago, where they met and began their journey together. Learn about Naz and Jen's early lives, their pivotal experiences, the big decisions they've made, and what they hope to contribute. We're already inspired by what Naz and Jen have accomplished together and, with their natural inclination for collaboration with each other, we know that whatever the future holds, it's going to be awesome.

Interview

Describe your paths to working together at Weightshift.

Naz: I guess it started with us being romantically involved. When we first met, I was doing design on my own. At the time, Jen was—what were you doing?

Jen: At the time, I was a proofreader at a credit bureau and worked in their marketing department. Before that, I was at another advertising agency; I've always worked in advertising.

Naz: Because there was some overlap in our jobs, we started to think about ways we could work together. We had worked on fun side projects together, like a photo site that we did for a while. Eventually, Jen got sick of her job and left the industry. That was two years ago, and she's been at Weightshift ever since.

Aside from that, because we're husband and wife, there's a natural inclination for us to want to do stuff together. We like to explore where our interests overlap. In addition to Weightshift, we're frequently thinking about other possibilities for projects we can do together. That's my take on it. [To Jen] What's yours?

Jen: We're constantly scheming; well, he's the schemer and I'm the realist. I have to bring him back down to reality a bit, but it's good because we balance each other out and play off each other's strengths very well.

What about your individual paths before you met each other?

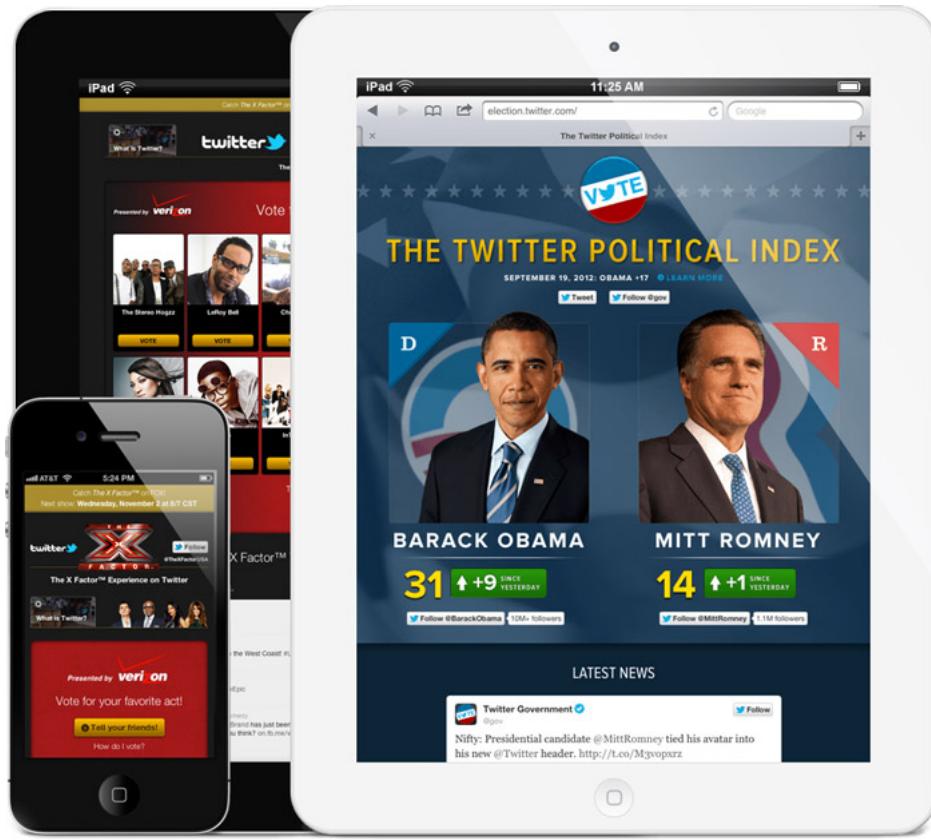
Jen: My path was winding. Straight out of college, I worked as a video producer at a company in St. Louis. After that, I moved to Chicago and ended up at an agency that did nothing but fliers and catalogs, which is totally soul-sucking. Somehow I transitioned from video to print and then into studios that focused on interactive work. I honed my skills as a proofreader/copyeditor, and that's where I landed. I fulfilled a lot of different roles along the way, including account management and content management. My last job prior to coming aboard at Weightshift was as a copyeditor at an advertising agency. When I started, that was my dream job; I was part of a copyediting team, which was a first for me. I do enjoy copyediting, but I didn't want to do it within the confines of advertising anymore because I didn't respect the work that was being done.

Naz: Nothing I write ever gets published without going through Jen first.

[Ryan] Tina does the same for me.

(all laughing)

"We're constantly scheming; well, he's the schemer and I'm the realist. I have to bring him back down to reality a bit, but it's good because we balance each other out and play off each other's strengths..." / Jen



Custom [websites and applications](#) for Twitter's Media group initiatives.

[Tina to Jen] Did you grow up in St. Louis?

Jen: I grew up and went to high school in Belleville, IL, which is half an hour east of St. Louis, where I attended college. I stayed in St. Louis for five years and then moved to Chicago. I didn't want to be in Chicago long because I didn't like it there. However, my plan to stay for four years turned into almost nine because I met this guy [pointing to Naz].

Naz: But I wanted out, too. I was in Chicago for eleven years, and it was too long, especially with the winters. I grew up all over the place, and the Midwest has a certain vibe. The best way to explain it is that, in moving to San Francisco, Jen and I are allowed to be the people we are. That is important to us. Once I moved to San Francisco, I realized that when I was in Chicago, I was trying to live up to some other version of what I thought I should be.

Jen: San Francisco feels like home to us. We've been here for four years, and whenever we go on a vacation, we *always* get excited about coming home.

Naz, what was your path prior to Weightshift?

Naz: My career started after college at the end of 1999, during the first dot-com boom. It was a weird time to come into the job market because I only had a year of leeway to get established in the industry. During that time, I worked with two dot-coms and was laid off from both. I went to school for computer science, not web design, but out of necessity, I decided to see what I could do with the web. I started learning and teaching myself on the side; I also did work for bands and friends.

I started doing my own thing under the Weightshift moniker. I owned weightshift.net for a long time, but was waiting for the owner of weightshift.com to give it up; he finally did and I bought it. Around 2008, I started thinking about trying to make the studio into more than just myself. I talked with Jen and two other friends about it—[Scott Robbin](#), who I'm grateful to still have with me at Weightshift today, and my other friend, [Andrew Huff](#). We found a client who could support four people, and that's how we started. We have learned a lot along the way, and it's good working with friends who I respect and care about. Finding people you trust innately and can get along with is key.

Did either of you have an "aha" moment when you knew what you wanted to do?

Naz: I think the most important moment for Jen was when she quit her ad job—

Jen: (laughing) Yeah. I had had enough. I was working 40–50 hours a week at my ad job, then coming home and doing stuff for Weightshift, like looking over the books or reviewing copy. Weightshift was doing really well, and after a year and a half, I had to ask myself, "Do I even need this other gig?" I wanted to devote more time to Weightshift. Naz was getting bogged down with administrative stuff that I could take care of because I'm a Type A personality and that stuff comes to me easily. It made more sense to take my skills, which were being wasted at the advertising company, and use them at Weightshift instead. Naz and I talked about it, and that was it. I joined Weightshift full time, and everything came together for me.

Naz: My pivotal moment coincided with the move to San Francisco. A lot of people thought we moved here for a job or the opportunities. While those have been amazing, the move was really about a lifestyle change. As far as work was concerned, I had to decide, "What's the next thing?" I considered taking a creative director position somewhere, but I've inherently always had this DIY spirit and the thought of working for somebody else—I just can't do it.

The other question I asked was, "What can I do that's bigger than myself?" The answer was to include more people in what I was doing, but on a scale that still felt organic and comfortable. Weightshift has now existed in this incarnation for four years, and I don't think we'll ever be more than three or four people.



Michael James Milton: A small in-house collaboration between Naz and Jen to make handkerchiefs and related tangible sundries. Identity, website, and product were all executed by the studio.

"I spent my teenage years in Malaysia, where people were pursuing traditional careers, but from an early age, I decided I wanted to do something creative. I didn't know how that desire would manifest itself, and I think that was key." / *Naz*

Was creativity a part of your lives when you were growing up?

Jen: I guess so. I was an only child until I was 12; then my sister was born, so I had to be creative in entertaining myself. However, I feel like I'm more creative as an adult than I was as a kid. I took a left brain/right brain test in high school and was split right down the center; I'm both practical and intuitive. As I get older, though, I lean more toward creative activities and doing things with my hands.

Naz: I have always been creative. I have Asian parents, and for me, the stereotype is true; they didn't want an artsy kid—they wanted a doctor or lawyer. As a kid, I loved drawing and art, but no one ever really nurtured that. I spent my teenage years in Malaysia, where people were pursuing traditional careers, but from an early age, I decided I wanted to do something creative. I didn't know how that desire would manifest itself, and I think that was key. Later, when I came to the US to study computer science, I discovered web design, which allowed me to merge my creativity with technical skills, like programming. In hindsight, I never knew I was going to be a designer; I just wanted to make pretty things.

So you grew up in Malaysia?

Naz: Yes. I spent the first decade of my life in London. I was in Malaysia from ages 10 to 19, and I've been stateside the last 16 years.

Have either of you had any mentors along the way?

Jen: I've thought about this question before, and I don't think I've had any mentors. It feels terrible to say that I haven't had any inspirational figures in my life, but it's true. I know Naz has, though.

Naz: I have. When I was a teenager growing up in Malaysia, my biggest non-personal mentor was Henry Rollins. I used to listen to a lot of Black Flag and read his books as well. His stuff really resonated with me during my teenage years.

I think my biggest mentor has been [Khoi Vinh](#). I've known him since 2003 and used to do work for Behavior, his old studio before he joined the *New York Times*. We've had a long friendship, and he's been my omnipresent mentor. I've learned a lot from him; I owe so much to him. He's been generous enough to be my friend, and our relationship has been extremely gratifying.

[Tina] Did you reach out to him online?

Naz: In 2003, before [Subtraction](#) was a hugely popular blog, Khoi had a site with a tiny blog on the side, which only took up 20% of the screen. The other 80% of the screen was a collage design—I wish he would post screenshots of his old site online. At that time, I also had a personal site called [Absenter.org](#). This was back when you found people by linking to each other. I liked his blog and linked to it; he then linked to me. Then one of us—most likely me—shot an email to the other to say, "Hi, I like your site,"

and it started from there.

Jen, you mentioned the transition from quitting your ad job to working at Weightshift. Have there been any points where you've taken a big risk to move forward, or would you consider leaving your ad job a risk?

Jen: I actually didn't view transitioning to Weightshift as a risk. As practical as I can be, I also really like change and am not change-averse at all. I really don't like status quo.

Actually, I was the impetus for us moving from Chicago to San Francisco, a decision that was made on a morning in February 2009. I was getting ready to ride my bike to work because there was no snow in the forecast, but then big, fat flakes started to fall. I already had my bike gear on and my iPod in hand; I said, "Fuck this!" and threw my iPod across the room and it hit the wall. Naz asked, "So are we moving?" I replied, "We're fucking moving!" That was it (laughing). We moved three months later when our lease ended in May.

There was another pivotal moment for me. Though I didn't have any mentors, I did have someone who changed my life—my college advisor. I was an overachiever; I took a lot of summer school classes and was set to graduate a semester early. I went to my advisor, and he asked why I would want to graduate early. I told him that I had all those credits, that I might as well get out. He told me I should go abroad to one of the school's overseas campuses. I thought those were only for foreign relations majors, but he told me to get the hell out of his office and go pick a campus. I chose to study in London, which is another link that Naz and I have. We didn't know each other, but we were both in London around the same time. The leap of faith I took to study abroad opened up so much for me. Had I not done that, I'm pretty sure I'd still be living in St. Louis; I likely wouldn't have gone to Chicago or San Francisco. Now, travel is a huge part of my life, and that experience made it feel so much more accessible.

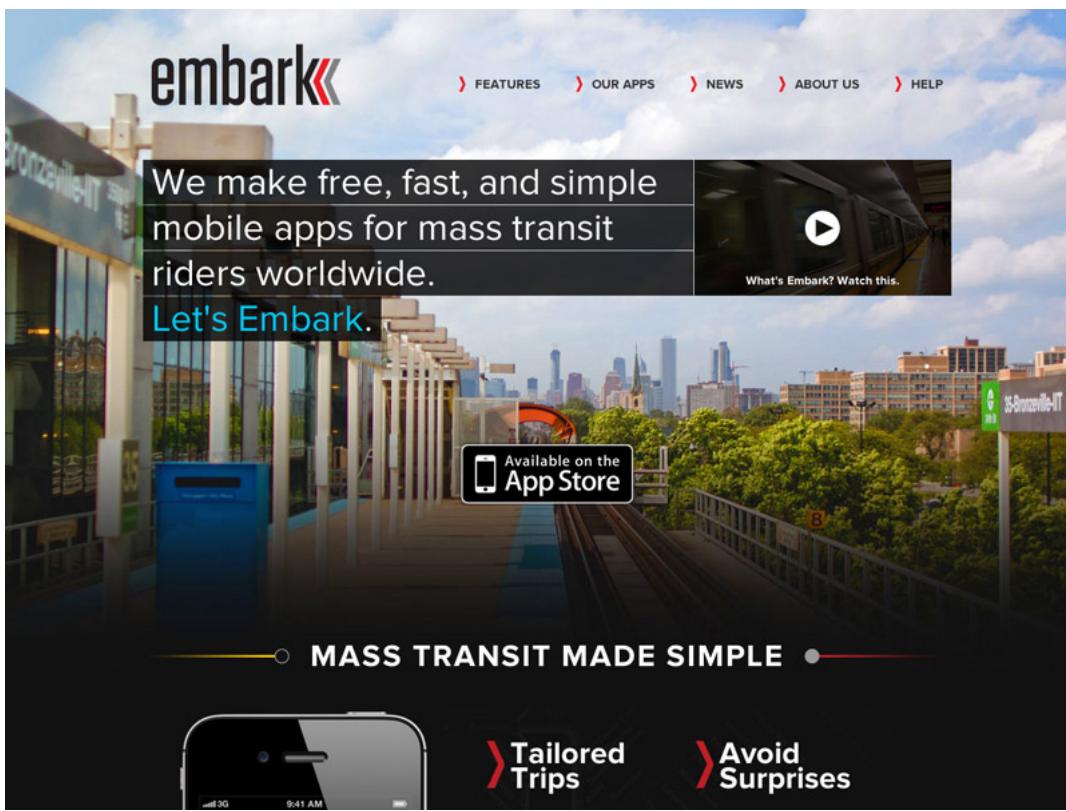
Naz: I think my whole life has been a risk. Growing up, there were times when we had a lot of money and times when we had no money. We experienced ups and downs, and I learned not to depend on anything. The idea of being self-sufficient and responsible for your actions was something I had to learn because I had nothing to fall back on. In that sense, every day was a risk. I kept moving forward because I had to. I'd say that a good chunk of my life so far has been about necessity. I think it's also about having tenacity—I don't want to call it courage because there were many times where it scared the shit out of me to do what I had to do. When you are desperate enough, you forget about your fear, or you do it even though there is fear.

I look at risk more like, "What would happen if I *didn't* do this?" When I was a teenager, I went to a prayer ceremony, and the person leading the religious ceremony spoke about not having regrets in life. That resonated with me and has stuck with me. I think, "If I don't do this, will I regret it?" Asking that question is a driving force behind the decisions I make. The other thing is that if you have a good support system, they won't let you fall flat on your face. Hopefully, you'll have family or friends who will support you. And if worse comes to worse, you can always do something else. I don't think of risk as being risky.

"I think it's easy to jump to conclusions and pick up the axe and pitchfork, but how can we be more judicious with our time rather than just add to the noise. If anything, I'd like to contribute *less* to the universe." / *Naz*

The screenshot shows the Intercom homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the Intercom logo, 'USE CASES', 'PRICING', and a 'SIGN IN' button. The main headline reads 'Communicate personally with every single customer.' Below it, a sub-headline says 'Intercom has replaced helpdesk, email marketing, customer relationship management, and marketing automation tools for thousands of web businesses with one, simple product.' A 'START USING INTERCOM' button is visible. The central part of the page features a large image of a smartphone displaying the Intercom software interface, which includes a list of users with their names, last seen times, and session details. Below the phone image, a section titled 'USED AND TRUSTED BY' lists several tech companies: Heroku, GitHub, bitly, buffer, and Chartboost, each with its respective logo.

Website design and development for Intercom, a customer relationship application and service.



[Identity, branding, and responsive website](#) for Embark, a mobile transit company.

You mentioned having a support system. Are your friends and family supportive and, in the case of family, do they understand what you do?

Naz: No. They have no idea (laughing).

Jen: My sister does, but that's because she's twelve years younger than me and is of the Facebook generation. My mom knows to an extent. She gets it more than Naz's parents. That was something that came up when we visited his family in Malaysia. His dad asked him, "So what is it that you do?" Naz was explaining it as simply as possible, but we're still not sure if his dad understood it completely.

Naz: My parents, like most people of that generation, tend to understand bigger companies. For example, if I had said, "I work for Facebook," they would have gotten it. But they don't understand the idea that you can make things for bigger companies or other companies and put it in this thing called the web, where it lives in a browser. My dad uses email, but my mom isn't technologically savvy. They just know that I do "IT stuff," which is what they call it. You couldn't do what Weightshift does over in Malaysia. Over there, you make money by doing something for the government or working in oil and not by yourself in a free market enterprise like we have here.

Jen: There's also this element, too, where I wonder if our families think that what we do is imaginary because we don't go to an office. I think it seems farfetched to some people that we can sit at home and work and make money.

And what about friends? Do you have a community of people where you're at?

Naz: I'll talk about two communities. In Chicago, the community was closer and smaller. At the time that I was coming up, it was Jim Coudal and Coudal Partners—Jen worked at Coudal Partners for a while. There was also Jason Fried and all the guys at 37signals. I also knew Jeffrey Kalmikoff and Jake Nickell and the guys at skinnyCorp. These were the only modern tech companies in Chicago at the time, so we were pretty close-knit. In San Francisco, there's a great community, but it's huge. There are a lot of well-known people here, but there are also people you've never heard about who are making amazing apps. There's a great spectrum of people whom you can spend time with, depending on your interests and what you want to learn. It's amazing here, and you can get whatever you need or want out of it. There are a lot of scenes here, and you can choose which ones you want to be a part of.

I do feel like a big part of my community is online with people who live elsewhere. There are so many cool people doing things in other cities, so a good chunk of my community interaction is on the Internet.

Jen: A lot of the friends we have here are based in the industry, but when we get together, we don't talk shop. It comes up, but we're more rooted in trying to find people who are like us, who are out to have fun and don't take life too seriously.

Naz: I think it's funny because I spend more time in the industry online than off. After 5pm, we don't go to a bar and hang out with industry people or go to a meetup or mixer. Age is one of the factors in that; I'm just too old for that shit now.

(all laughing)

Jen: We're becoming curmudgeons.

Naz: I value personal time because I love cycling, Jen loves knitting, and we both like to travel. Having a work/life balance in how we spend our time is important.

Do you feel a responsibility to contribute to something bigger than yourself?

Naz: The short answer is yes, but I don't think it's a specific contribution. If Jen and I are going to contribute to something bigger, it's going to be more through our outlook on life, which is to be generous and kind. I think the small things you do every day affect the bigger picture. We often have conversations about how we can make things

better. We recently had a discussion about how we need to smile more at people. When you travel and experience other cultures and cities, you notice when people are friendlier or warmer or more abrupt. Our wanting to contribute is more general.

Jen: We're spreading the message of positivity.

Naz: See, this is why she writes everything. I blathered on for five minutes and she summed it up in a nugget of wisdom.

(all laughing)

Jen: This is something I'm personally trying to work on. With regard to the Internet, I've actually removed myself from certain environments online because I don't like the resulting conversations. I'm not on Facebook, and I never will be. I barely check Twitter. There are certain aspects of the industry that I love, but I don't like to totally subject myself to all of it because it affects who I am. I just want to be a happy person and not be embroiled in stuff day in and day out—because it doesn't stop. We are oversaturated. Before I send an email or a tweet, I try to think about how it's going to affect the people I'm sending it to and how *I* will be affected, depending on their reaction.

Naz: I think it's this idea of a considerate approach. How much thought do you put into something before you put it out there? Will you be proud of it at the end of the day? I think it's easy to jump to conclusions and pick up the axe and pitchfork, but how can we be more judicious with our time rather than just add to the noise. If anything, I'd like to contribute *less* to the universe.

[Tina] You're minimizing your digital footprint?

Naz: Yes. There's so much stuff out there.

The image shows the homepage of Google Ventures. At the top left is the "Google ventures" logo with a colorful four-pointed star icon. To the right are links for "Companies / Investing / Hands-on Teams / Blog". The main headline reads "A radically different kind of venture fund". Below the headline is a paragraph describing their approach: "Our **hands-on teams** work with portfolio companies full-time on design, recruiting, marketing, and engineering. **Startup Lab** is a dedicated facility and educational program where companies can meet, learn, work, and share. **We invest** hundreds of millions of dollars each year in **entrepreneurs** with a healthy disregard for the impossible." The page features several sections with images and titles: "RESOURCES FOR STARTUPS" with "Foundation" (Founder interviews with Kevin Rose), "Job Board" (Jobs at our portfolio companies), "Joe Kraus Blog" (Practical advice for startups), "Google Ventures Blog" (News and updates from our team), "Design Blog" (Articles on design at startups), and "Startup Lab" (Workshops, talks, and more). A footer note at the bottom left says "Visual website design and branding" for Google Venture's, Google's investment arm.

[Visual website design and branding](#) for Google Venture's, Google's investment arm.

"There's a common thread that your work is never done or finished, and I'm okay with that. Even if I fail or don't finish it, at least I started—that's half the battle. Trying to see what works and what doesn't is part of life, and it's a good time to be alive." / *Naz*

Are you satisfied creatively?

Naz: The short answer is no. I like tinkering and making stuff. I do enjoy what I'm doing. I'm fortunate to be working with really good people and having great opportunities come our way. In that sense, this is more than I could have asked for. In another sense, from a personal place, I'm always wondering what else I can do or how I can make things better. I think that's an innate drive within a lot of people. I mean, the name of your site says it. There's a common thread that your work is never done or finished, and I'm okay with that. Even if I fail or don't finish it, at least I started—that's half the battle. Trying to see what works and what doesn't is part of life, and it's a good time to be alive.

Jen: That's how I view knitting. Out of all my hobbies, knitting is my favorite. There are different breeds of knitters: the people who actually use what they're making and the people who just enjoy the process of knitting. I've been on both sides of that coin. That's my art form that I'm constantly tinkering with. I'm constantly buying yarn and patterns—

Naz: And swearing.

Jen: I don't swear as much anymore. Knitting is supposed to be relaxing, but it didn't come easy. I tried it a few different times before it stuck. Before knitting, I always wanted to be really good at something. I did photography in college; I also took ceramics classes and did a stint with painting; I write from time to time, but none of those things stuck. Who knows if I'll be knitting in five years, but for now, it's my thing. I like exploring new stuff and have been experimenting with cooking and baking lately, which is also fun.

Do either of you have anything you want to do in the next 5 to 10 years?

Naz: I love cycling and do a lot of that. Years ago, I thought about going to the United Bicycle Institute (UBI) in Oregon to learn how to build bikes. I know how to put a bike together, but not how to build the frame. That's a personal project I might want to do. Together, maybe work on a house.

Jen: We just want to buy a house. This sounds silly, but are you familiar with the show *Gilmore Girls*? It was one of my favorites. I always thought Lauren Graham's character was rad, and she owned a B&B. For some reason, I've had it in my head that I want to be a B&B owner someday, but I have no idea how to go about doing it.

Naz: At some point, I'd like to exit this industry. I still want to be creative and do design, but I'm not sure I'll want to do it for the screen forever. We may not even be designing for computers and phones in five years, so who knows. For Jen and I, there's this idea to take it offline and get to know people on a personal level. The B&B or some kind of hospitality thing is interesting. I love to cook, but I would never want to open a restaurant.

The question is, how do we make what we do more personal? Instead of making an app for 500 people, how do we get to know a smaller group of people on a deeper level, over a longer period of time? We want to talk to people like we used to instead of putting out a tweet or status message. In some respects, communicating is becoming a lost art form.

[Ryan] It's interesting how that seems to be a thread within the web and tech industry. A lot of people are wanting to do that or are considering working a regular job. In some ways, the industry can be wearisome. It's also incredible, but it seems to wear people out quicker than other professions. I don't know if it's because of the pace, or what.

Naz: I definitely think it's the pace and the turnover. At the rate that we get information, we can experience so many things faster than our parents ever did. I think that leads to the natural conclusion that people only work at a job for one or two years; it's not uncommon, whereas our parents were lifers.

Jen: Even if they hated it, there was a sense of devotion and loyalty.

Naz: What would you guys do? Have you ever thought about leaving the industry?

[Tina] We have no solid plans to leave. No matter what you do, though, I think it's easy to get disillusioned from time to time and wonder what it would be like to do something else.

[Ryan] Our recurring joke is that we'd open up a bar or a small restaurant or coffee shop. It's one of those things we imagine from time to time when hanging out with friends, usually when we need a vacation.



[Branding for Rdio](#), Naz and Jen's favorite music service in the whole wide world.

"The question is, how do we make what we do more personal?... We want to talk to people like we used to instead of putting out a tweet or status message. In some respects, communicating is becoming a lost art form." / *Naz*

If you could give a piece of advice to a young person starting out what, would you say?

Naz: I have to think about this for a second. I need to sound smart.

Jen: My advice would be not to be afraid. At the end of the day, things always work out, no matter what happens. I've seen some really shitty days and some great ones. When you're in the trenches mentally or emotionally, somehow you always come out of it as a better person who has learned along the way. I think it's important to embrace that because life has a way of throwing crap at you, but then it redeems itself in the end.

Naz: I'm going to concisely sum up what you just said, and that will be my piece of advice.

Jen: Okay.

Naz: Be open to the world and smile more.

Jen: There you go.

That's good. You've both talked about moving from the Midwest to the West Coast. How does living there impact your creativity?

Naz: Place is hugely important. I've always thought that place and culture play a huge role in how open your mind can be. Whatever ideas you have in your head, whatever belief systems you have, whatever you hold near to your heart—it's important to be in a place and around people who support those things. It's much harder and it gets the spirit down when you're in a place that's against those things, a place where you can't be you.

Jen: San Francisco is a town where anything goes and you can't be shocked by it, although we see things on a daily basis that make us say, "What the hell!?" But you have to laugh about it. We love to walk, and the first few months we lived here, we went on urban expeditions, walking from one end of the city to the other. At any time, we would run into festivals, parades, and people wearing weird outfits. That's just San Francisco, and I love that. When you see that every day, you feel like you can do anything you want.

Naz: I think the beauty of San Francisco is the idea of potential. You can be someone one day and someone else the next, and no one will bat an eye. I love that about this place.

What does a typical day look like for you?

Jen: Well, it starts with the animals walking on our heads. I walk our dog in the morning and then go to the gym. After, I come home and go through emails and get caught up on financial stuff.

Naz: I get up around 5:30am and feed the animals. Then I'm off either to go bouldering or cycling. I'll get back around 9:30am and work until 4:30pm. Then our dog gets walked again. If it's a light day, then that's the end of our workday. It's not an eight-hour day, but that's the perk of being your own boss. If it's a heavy day, then maybe I'm working into the night. Generally, at 4:30pm we start thinking about dinner. We'll cook, which I think is super important in terms of having that sort of communal feel.

Sometimes we have people over and cook for them. The rest of the night is mellowed out, reading a book, getting back online, watching TV. We go to bed at 10pm. We're old farts now.

(all laughing)



Identity design for Virb, the easiest way to make a website.

"When you're in the trenches mentally or emotionally, somehow you always come out of it as a better person who has learned along the way. I think it's important to embrace that because life has a way of throwing crap at you, but then it redeems itself in the end." / Jen

What music are you listening to right now?

Jen: I listen to whatever he has on Rdio.

Naz: It's usually some kind of hardcore metal. I was listening to an album called *Sunbather* by Deafheaven.

Jen: [To Naz] Is there screaming in that one?

Naz: Yeah, but you can't make it out.

Jen: I just tune it out.

Naz: The National and Daft Punk have been on heavy rotation. I call a lot of the other bands "jingle-jangle" music (laughing). Like Mumford & Sons, The Lumineers, and Of Monsters and Men. It's sort of jingly and has a jangle.

[Ryan] You've invented a new music genre.

(all laughing)

Do you have any favorite movies or TV shows?

Naz: [To Jen] What are we watching on TV these days?

Jen: I don't know. Jacques Pépin on PBS?

Naz: Actually, we just finished watching *Justified* on FX, and it was amazing. I also like to watch *MasterChef* or anything that has to do with cooking.

Movies...I just watched *Inception* again.

Jen: We saw *Iron Man 3*, which was good.

Naz: [To Jen] What movie do we love?

Jen: I don't know. I could watch *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* 8,000 times.

Naz: [To Jen] You love *Love Actually*.

Jen: I do like that and *About a Boy*.

Naz: [To Jen] And *Crazy, Stupid, Love.*—you love that, too. It's got "The Gosling" in it.

(all laughing)

Jen: The show that he watches, though, that I really can't stand is *The Walking Dead* because all I hear is [Jen makes her best zombie impression].

Naz: I love any sci-fi, which I was reminded of because I watched *Looper* on the plane coming back from Malaysia. That movie combines everything I like. It's a realistic future where nothing is super modern, but there are futuristic characteristics in the devices they use, and then there's time travel, which I love.

Do you each have a favorite book?

Jen: For a long time, mine was *Flowers for Algernon* by Daniel Keyes.

Naz: I have two: *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Haruki Murakami is one of my favorite books. The other is *Microserfs* by Douglas Coupland, which was probably the most pivotal for me. It's set in the 1990s at Microsoft, and it's funny now because when I read it, it was a foreshadowing of what I was going to do in life.

What is your favorite food?

Naz: Anything ethnic. That's usually what we go out for.

Jen: Ethiopian is one of my favorite cuisines.

Naz: Ethiopian, Burmese, Indian, Vietnamese, Thai, and Japanese. It leans Asian.

Jen: But Naz is a really good cook, so we don't have to go out a lot. I do the menu planning, and he executes it. I like veggies a lot, too.

[Tina] Are either of you vegetarian?

Naz: No, but we were when we met.

Jen: Our first date was at a raw food place.

Naz: Yeah, I used to hang around some straight-edge vegan kids back in the day (laughing).

What kind of legacy do you hope to leave?

Naz: I think it comes back to the question of what we want to put out into the universe. I think it's to be there for the people who matter the most to us, to support them, and to be a positive force in their lives. I don't necessarily care about leaving a mark on the lives of people I didn't know. The legacy I care about is for the people I hold near and dear.

Jen: I want people to see the way we live our lives—we try to be good people, not to take things too seriously, experiment, and travel—and think, "That's cool. That's a good approach." That's really it.

Naz: To lead by example.

Jen: Yes. 

"Whatever ideas you have in your head, whatever belief systems you have, whatever you hold near to your heart—it's important to be in a place and around people who support those things...it gets the spirit down when you're in a place that's against those things, a place where you can't be you." / *Naz*

Published

Tuesday, June 25, 2013

[Tweet](#)

Credits

- Interview by Ryan & Tina Essmaker
- Cover photo by [William Couch](#)
- Layout/design by Ryan Essmaker

TGD News

- We're everywhere you are. Find us on [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), and [Facebook](#). Subscribe via [RSS](#) or [email newsletter](#) to keep up on all things TGD.

[Keith "Keef" Ehrlich](#) [Cameron Russell](#)

© 2011-2013 The Great Discontent, all rights reserved. A [No Little Plans](#) project. | [About](#) | [Archive](#) | [Sponsorship](#)

- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [Newsletter](#)

[Web hosting by Media Temple](#)

[Fonts from Typekit](#)