

Greg

A lot of people ask me what the ideal cofounder looks like. I now have an answer: Greg Brockman.

Every successful startup I know has at least one person who provides the force of will to make the startup happen. I'd thought a lot about this in the abstract while advising YC startups, but until OpenAI I hadn't observed up close someone else drive the formation of a startup.

OpenAI wouldn't have happened without Greg. He commits quickly and fully to things. I organized a group dinner early on to talk about what such an organization might look like, and drove him home afterwards. Greg asked me questions for the first half of the drive back to San Francisco, then declared he was in, and started planning logistics for the rest of the drive.

From then on he was fully in, with an average email response time of about 5 minutes to anything. Elon and I were both busy with day jobs, but Greg kept everything moving forward with imperfect information and a very high-latency connection.

He recruited the founding team. Greg is a world-class recruiter (he plans every detail of interviews, heavily researches candidate's backgrounds, sends thoughtful and persistent followups, and so on), and I now believe even more strongly that someone on the founding team has to be an amazing recruiter.

He's incredibly open to feedback. Large or small, he's always willing to hear it, never gets offended, and processes it very quickly. I once suggested to him that he wasn't communicating a bold enough vision for the organization, and the next time I heard him talk about it (and every time since) it was a

perfectly calibrated explanation of how we were going to succeed at something that really mattered. Even on non-traditional ideas, like when I suggested he co-lead the organization with Ilya, he was always open-minded and thoughtful.

Greg also played the role of 'non-technical cofounder', which is a misnomer because most people who know him will say something like "Greg is the most productive engineer I know". But he took on all the non-technical roles at the beginning, defining the culture, making offers, organizing offsites, letting everyone work out of his apartment, ordering supplies, cleaning up after meals, etc. It's important to have someone great in this role at a small startup—many people gloss over it.

Without someone dedicated to finding a solution to all problems, no matter how difficult, eventually a large problem will come along and kill you while you're still weak. Founding teams need a Chief Optimist to rally everyone to press on despite the difficulties, and it's always hard on that person because they can't really lean on anyone else in the hardest times.

You for sure need great technical talent on a founding team, but make sure you also have someone like Greg. If they're the same person, then you've hit the jackpot.