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Advice for ambitious college students, how to change the world, & doing great work

1 message

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The Z Fellows logo, featuring a large, bold, blue 'Z' followed by the word 'Fellows' in a bold, sans-serif font.

Your Fast-Track Into Silicon Valley

Advice for ambitious college students, how to change the world, & doing great work

The Z Fellows Newsletter - June 3rd, 2024



Welcome back to the Z Fellows newsletter! Every Monday we share 3 ideas - to help you build companies, ship products, and create your life's work.

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1: Advice for Ambitious College Students

"Undergrads tend to have tunnel vision about their classes. They want to get good grades, etc. The crucial fact to realize is that no one will care about your grades unless they are bad. For example, I

always used to say that the smartest student would get 85% in all of his courses. This way, you end up with somewhere around a 4.0 score, but you did not over-study, and you did not under-study.

Your time is a precious, limited resource. Get to a point where you don't screw up on a test and then switch your attention to much more important endeavors. What are they?

Getting actual, real-world experience, working on real code bases, projects, or problems, outside of silly course exercises is extremely important.

Get out there and create (or help create) something cool. Document it well. Blog about it. These are the things people will care about a few years down the road. Your grades? They are an annoyance you have to deal with along the way. Use your time well and good luck." – Andrej Karpathy

Source: [Guides by Andrej Karpathy](#)



2: Patrick Collision on How to Change The World

"Go deep on things. Become an expert. **Aim to read a lot.**

To the extent that you enjoy working hard, do. Subject to that constraint, it's not clear that the returns to effort ever diminish substantially. If you're lucky enough to enjoy it a lot, be grateful and take full advantage!

Make friends over the internet with people who are great at things you're interested in. The internet is one of the biggest advantages you have over prior generations. Leverage it.

Make things. Operating in a space with a lot of uncertainty is a very different experience to learning something.

Find vivid examples of success in the domains you care about. If you want to become a great scientist, try to **find ways to spend time with good (or, ideally, great) scientists in person.** Watch YouTube videos of interviews. Follow some on Twitter.

People who did great things often did so at very surprisingly young ages. (They were grayhaired when they became famous... not when they did the work). **So, hurry up! You can do great things.**" – Patrick Collision

Source: [Advice](#)



3: Paul Graham on Doing Great Work

“Great work usually entails spending what would seem to most people an unreasonable amount of time on a problem. **You can’t think of this time as a cost, or it will seem too high.** You have to find the work sufficiently engaging as it’s happening.

There may be some jobs where you have to work diligently for years at things you hate before you get to the good part, but this is how most great work happens. **Great work happens by focusing consistently on something you’re genuinely interested in.** When you pause to take stock, you’re surprised how far you’ve come.

The reason we’re surprised is that we underestimate the cumulative effect of work. **Writing a page a day doesn’t sound like much, but if you do it every day you’ll write a book a year.** That’s the key: consistency. People who do great things don’t get a lot done every day. They get something done, rather than nothing.” – Paul Graham

Source: [How to Do Great Work](#)



Best of The Week



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[the cost of not surrounding yourself with ambitious people is too high](#)

"Ambitious people are rare, so if everyone is mixed together randomly, as they tend to be early in people's lives, then the ambitious ones won't have many ambitious peers. When you take people like this and put them together with other ambitious people, they bloom like dying plants given water. Probably most ambitious people are starved for the sort of encouragement they'd get from ambitious peers, whatever their age." - Paul Graham

[May 30, 2024](#)

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[every ambitious person needs to watch this](#)



[May 31, 2024](#)

943 Likes **197 Retweets** **10 Replies**

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[Sam Altman on why you should work hard at the beginning of your career:](#)

One more thought about working hard: do it at the beginning of your career. Hard work compounds like interest, and the earlier you do it, the more time you have for the benefits to pay off. It's also easier to work hard when you have fewer other responsibilities, which is frequently but not always the case when you're young.

[May 29, 2024](#)

809 Likes **111 Retweets** **10 Replies**

See you next Monday,

- [Jay](#) + The Z Fellows Team

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