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Early focus, environment, and perspective

1 message

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Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 10:02 AM

April 08, 2024 | [Read Online](#)



Early focus, environment, and perspective

The Z Fellows Newsletter - April 8th, 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.



1: On Early Focus

"In the first few weeks of a startup's life, the founders really need to figure out what they're doing and why. Then they need to build a product some users really love. Only after that, they should focus on growth above all else."

A startup that prematurely targets a growth goal often ends up making a nebulous product that some users sort of like and papering over this with 'growth hacking'. That sort of works—at least, it will fool investors for awhile until they start digging into retention numbers—but eventually the music stops.

I think the right initial metric is “Do any users love our product so much they spontaneously tell other people to use it?” Until that’s a “yes”, founders are generally better off focusing on this instead of a growth target.” — Sam Altman

Source: [Before Growth](#)



2: On Environment

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

Source: [The Anatomy of Determination](#)



3: On Perspective

Steve Jobs sent this email to himself in 2010:

From: Steve Jobs, sjobs@apple.com
To: Steve Jobs, sjobs@apple.com
Date: Thursday, September 2, 2010 at 11:08PM

I grow little of the food I eat, and of the little I do grow
I did not breed or perfect the seeds.

I do not make any of my own clothing.

I speak a language I did not invent or refine.

I did not discover the mathematics I use.

I am protected by freedoms and laws I did not conceive
of or legislate, and do not enforce or adjudicate.

I am moved by music I did not create myself.

When I needed medical attention, I was helpless
to help myself survive.

I did not invent the transistor, the microprocessor,
object oriented programming, or most of the technology
I work with.

I love and admire my species, living and dead, and am
totally dependent on them for my life and well being.

Sent from my iPad

Source: [Internal Tech Emails](#)



Best of The Week

ZF Z Fellows
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"Action produces information. Just keep doing stuff."



Apr 5, 2024

1.61K Likes 326 Retweets 10 Replies

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"It is hard to be wildly successful at anything you aren't obsessed with."

-- Sam Altman



Apr 3, 2024

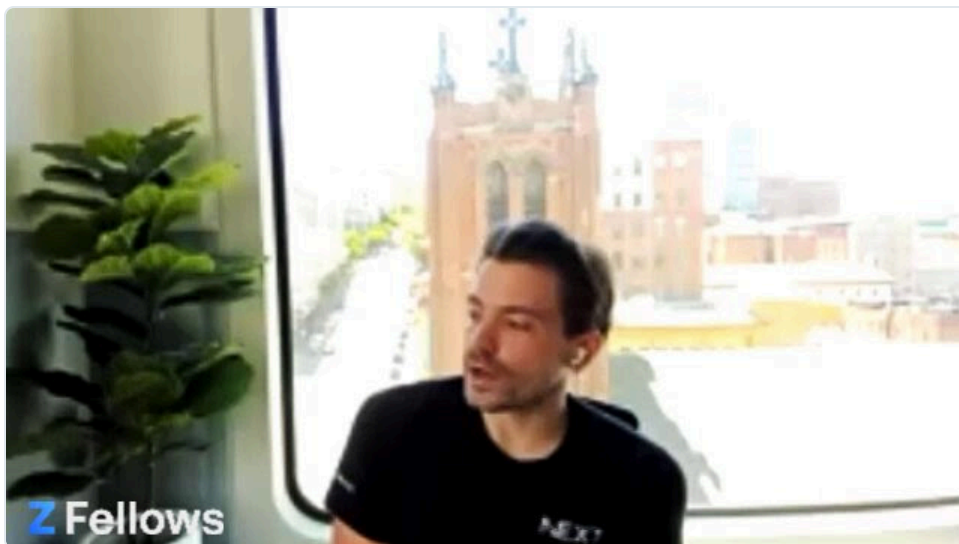
723 Likes 119 Retweets 7 Replies



Z Fellows
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.@rauchg on the importance of early focus as a founder.



Apr 3, 2024

118 Likes 17 Retweets 1 Reply

See you next Monday,

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

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