

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/focus-on-yourself-not-your-competition>

Avoidable mistakes occur when you're hyper-focused on the competition. Manish Chandra, founder and CEO at Poshmark, advises students to stay focused on product and to not pay too much attention to the external noise. Focus on your own strengths to create your own journey.



## Transcript

- Had I known there were 80 other people working on the idea, what would I have done? And I think that was probably the part where my confidence from the first time played better in the second time.. The first time I was hyper-focused on competition, and actually made a lot of mistakes by adding things in response to competition because even the first year in Kabouli, we had sixty, seventy people who jumped in.. You know, there's a lot of PR that happens depending upon your funding levels, who's starting it, and you get very responsive to that, so you feel like Oh my God, this person is rising.. I have to respond to it.. Yahoo!'s reading product, Google's reading.. So in the second journey, what I realized that most of my mistakes in the first journey came from paying too much attention to the outside.. So, one of the sort of by-products of this value embrace your weirdness is also around that.. If you look at great journeys and sort of great, sort of evolution, re-evolution, you have to focus on your own strengths.. And so, I don't think it would have impacted me, but it didn't impact me.. In fact, later on as competitive products have come, there was pressure from investors even for the team, let's morph in this direction or add their things, and I have been sort of very focused, and so is my team, especially the core team, to focus on our journey..

And so, I would say, especially in a competitive environment, sort of looking around, if you sort of figure out who you are, and pursue that journey.. The thing is there's so much out there that it isn't about, it isn't a zero-sum game.. And particularly in the business we are in, it's an infinite time.. It isn't a zero-sum game.. So by sort of focusing on your own value, you can create a journey of success, which you won't by constantly looking around.. Which is not to say that you shouldn't pay attention to great things that are happening around you.. You should pay attention to the great innovation that's happening around you, but instead of being scared about it, figure out your strength rather than chasing it...