

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/learn-to-do-everything>

Garry Tan, president and CEO of Y Combinator, encourages aspiring entrepreneurs to view themselves as people who can learn to do anything, not as specialized parts in a big machine. You don't have to be the best at everything, he says, but knowing the basics will make you more successful.



Transcript

- The other thing that I found very interesting 00:00:05,550 and the people in this room, I think you were, if you're looking for a job, you're working on your resume as I was when I was taking this class 20 years ago, you're gonna find that people and recruiters and companies and basically the world is going to want you to be this little washer, they want you to be a junior backend, Redis engineer or something.. It's like very, very specific.. And then the reality that I've learned over time, especially if you want to start a company, is that you are not a tiny washer in a machine.. You should be everything.. You should not define yourself, just because the machine wants you to be an interchangeable part in the machine does not mean that you should be that, this is a real knife, actually do everything, the whole point of this is do everything, don't box yourself in.. I just bought one of these on eBay for \$4,700.. It's a real knife.. It's called a Wenger Giant knife.. Guess how much a commodity like, Weger pocket knife is? It's literally like you can go to Walmart and buy one for probably \$3.. So, it's like more than a thousand times more valuable to be able to do many, many things..

And that was the thing that was most useful for me, especially if you want to start a company and you don't have to be the best at all of these things.. People who are non-technical always ask me, oh, how do I start, how do I get started? I'm like, oh, you should probably learn to code.. I'm not saying you need to become the person who codes it.. It means that because you could be the super knife, that you are so smart you can learn anything.. Maybe this is all that time in the bookstore that I learned, like you can learn anything and because of that, you will be far better at hiring.. Remember that OODA loop, you'll be able to be, get better, better customers.. You'll be able to speak their language.. The more you know, the more capable you are as a super knife, the more likely you will succeed...