

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/one-path-at-a-time>

It's always hard to know which ideas will work out, says Patreon co-founder and CTO Sam Yam. Because startups require an extraordinary amount of energy, he advises aspiring entrepreneurs to identify an area that sparks deep conviction before going all-in.



Transcript

in terms of like navigating so many different fields and just really keeping your mind open and learning as much as possible.. How do you go about finding that one that ends up being that like passion or your like Picasso over time especially if you're like starting at a younger age? - Yeah, no, right.. How can I repeat that question? Basically what I heard was there are a lot of different paths that you can take and things that you can be passionate about and how do you sort of figure out the path and maybe the focus that you wanna take as you go through life.. And so I think one important distinction here I wanna call out is that I'm not being prescriptive in order to like describe how to be successful.. I actually think there's a lot of luck involved at least through personal experience on like what actually will work out and it's also hard to predict.. What I am trying to describe is like what will make it worth it for you to work on the problems, and that's what I mean by like finding something you deeply care about.. There had been a lot of endeavors that I've worked on that have gone nowhere.. And you look at some of these other founders too and where they started looks very different from where they finished.. And so the thing that will kill you for certain is if you just end up hitting a wall and you don't wanna do it anymore which is also fine I think as a choice, but like ultimately if you're gonna be exerting this much effort on something that has a high likelihood of not working out, I think the only way you get through it is if you have deep conviction and you're passionate about it.. And so then directly to your question like as you're exploring lots of different branches and whatnot, what I found is it doesn't really matter like where your journey takes you..

I've always found it interesting to obsess down like deeply into one path at a time, and if something else takes me to broaden out my experience or my knowledge, then I'll follow it, but I always find it more interesting to just learn as much as I can about a particular field as I'm working on it...