

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/you-can-do-it-too>

Nikil Viswanathan, co-founder and CEO of Alchemy, explains how he learned through student internships at companies like Facebook and Microsoft that successful CEOs are hard workers and incredible people, but they're also normal humans, and anyone can aspire to their success.



Transcript

- During my summers, I knew I wanted to go work at startups, never thought I would work at big companies ever, but ended up doing product management at Microsoft, Facebook, Google, and it was really a funny story how I like ended up there.. Literally didn't want to go there.. Like, one of them was like, I was going to play ultimate Frisbee at the Oval and I went to like Ikes to get a sandwich, but then it was closed and they had a career fair and I went to Facebook to grab the protein bar, but I felt bad.. So they were like, do you have a resume? I was like, no, I'm in like tank top and cleats.. Like, I don't have a resume.. And then they emailed me afterwards and I was like, all right, fine.. The really interesting thing here was I said, you know, one day I'm gonna have a company like this, so maybe I'll go and try to see how it's run.. And actually the thing I took away was really the people.. It's was just like a really weird thing where somehow in all the companies, I ended up hanging out with the execs.. At Microsoft there's 100 buildings..

It's massive.. It's like a whole campus, right? But all the executives are in building 42 on the fourth floor.. I'm this random intern.. I happened to be on building 42 on the third floor, right, and ended up hanging out with Steve Ballmer, who's CEO at the time.. And, you know, spent time with him.. At Google there was, you know, had meetings with Larry and would hang out with Serge and at Facebook there was one desk next to Mark Zuckerberg and like, that was my desk, right? And it was just like so random.. And, you know, again, I don't say this to try to impress you, but to impress upon you, I had this like really powerful lesson and that lesson was that these people are so driven and work super hard still flashbacks to when I was like bringing my girlfriend at the time on Sunday to like visit the office.. And Mark was like walking in to do work and I'm just like screwing around.. And I was like, "Oh, hi.. How's it going?" But basically the big takeaway here was they're incredible people, but they're just normal humans, right? And I really kind of reinforce this belief that if they can do it, like I can do it too...