



Stanford eCorner

Manage Your Own Psychology

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Asana Co-Founder Justin Rosenstein shares his process for working with the negative, self-doubting voice in his head. Supporting the importance of this process, Rosenstein attributes the following advice to investor Ben Horowitz: "The most important part of being a leader is managing your own psychology."



Transcript

It was around that time that we had our Series A, which Marc Andreessen and Ben Horowitz participated in, and we were out to dinner with them, Dustin and I were out to dinner with them a little while after that. I really respect Ben as a mentor and so I wanted to get his advice on this though I was a little intimidated to be like - I didn't want him to be like - I just gave you all this money and you are telling me that you are scared of doing the job I am paying you to do. But instead he just, very matter of factly, was like, yes, this is actually a good thing for you to know. The most important part of being a leader is managing your own psychology, and proceeded to tell me all these stories of times that he struggled with this. So I just want to finish by telling you a few things I found really helpful in doing this. So the first one is - how many people in the room have experienced maybe every day some sort of voice in your head that sounds like it's your voice, but it's telling you, you are doing things badly? There is a voice that is self-doubting and judging. And it's very easy to confuse this voice for yourself, especially because it speaks in your own voice, but it's not. It's sort of like having an annoying judgmental roommate living in your head. You'll notice this now that I point it out. And every time that you hear that voice - so I - after doing tons of - I don't know, pathways, I've done a ton of meditation work and all sorts of things.

And I still hear this voice. But the difference is that I now have a new relationship to it. I hear the voice, I say thank you, I appreciate that you are trying to be helpful. You can keep hanging out in my head, that's totally fine. Kick your feet up, make yourself comfortable, but that's not me and I make decisions from a different place. And so I continue to act in the face of fear, even when those things keep coming up and telling me, oh, you are screwing this up.