



Stanford eCorner

Fair-weather Peers Won't Cut It

Ron Gutman, *HealthTap*

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3506/Fair-weather-Peers-Wont-Cut-It>

HealthTap Founder and CEO Ron Gutman urges entrepreneurs to be sure the people they work with won't falter when times get tough. He recommends meeting potential hires outside of the traditional interview setting and asking more in-depth questions to assess their true character.



Transcript

I listened to Vinod Khosla, who is an entrepreneur and now an investor and when - and he talked about really how to bring the right people around you, someone in the audience asked him a question, so how do you choose the right people, how do you choose the people to bring with you to the journey. And the way he answered it was I try to bring with me people that I wouldn't mind getting in trouble with, which was sort of an interesting insight, right? So not only people that you enjoy partying with which is important, you want to have fun with people because when you go on a journey, you really want to enjoy the way, but you're going to conquer challenges together, you're going to tackle things that were - you've never tackled before. And certain people behave in a certain way when things are going really well when they party and everything is fine, right, and you are enjoying yourself and then when the challenges happen, right, maybe they behave a little bit differently. And you need to make sure that you are compatible with these people when things go great and you celebrate and everything is awesome and that's important because you want to have fun all the time, or most of the time, but you also want to make sure that the people that you are with are compatible with you when things are not going that great, right? And how do you check that? I mean you can do stuff with people, go out with them, go in nature. When I interview people, when I talk with people, I don't just do particularly people in important positions in the company, I don't just sit down in an office to do like a frontal (10:42) interview. I'll take them out, right? Let's go for a hike, right? Let's change the environment a little bit. Some people are really great in interviewing. I am sure that nobody here ever prepares interviews because Stanford but no, elsewhere around the world, people prepare interviews. So some people become really, really good in interviewing, right? And they try to convince you they are the best in the world and they are the best match which is great. I mean I think all of us are trying to prove that what we are doing is great and good.

But if you want to figure out if the fit is great, take them out of the comfort zone, take them out of the office, and start spending some time with them, the best thing in my mind is spending some time with them in nature, right? Go for a hike. Go outside, talk, walk, right? Have a conversation, try to talk about scenarios and don't just ask questions that are interview questions, right? Try to talk about scenarios, you know. Tell me about a time that you did this and that and let's have a conversation about it, how did it unpack, what did you think about that and that when you did that, not just give me a set of actions of what you did but hey, try to unpack for me how you think a little bit, right? Particularly if you're thinking about co-founders or people that you are in the core team that you want to spend many, many years with, you want to take the time. You want to surround yourself with a bunch of people that you will enjoy working with, but we can also conquer challenges with especially if you have a very important, very lofty mission that you want to accomplish because that's not going to happen in like two months. It's not going to happen in two years either, right? There is a long journey that you're going to go with together and to be - to make sure that you enjoy it and make sure that you actually conquer it together, make sure that it's a good fit, right? So a lot of you will spend a lot more time with your co-founders or with people in your core team than you spend with your spouses, right? So think about it, right? So it's an important decision and it's an important decision to keep on an ongoing

basis.