



Stanford eCorner

Find Co-Founders or Peers

Dharmesh Shah, *HubSpot*

February 10, 2016

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/4033/Find-Co-Founders-or-Peers>

HubSpot CTO Dharmesh Shah describes his solution for finding ways to connect with other entrepreneurs and counter the loneliness of startup life. He suggests entrepreneurs find co-founders or peer groups so they can discuss the challenges and issues that commonly arise in the startup world, as well as socialize.



Transcript

- The one thing I've been doing, I've been doing it for 15 plus years now, I do these informal dinners with people that I know or met online. Some people I know, some people I don't know, every city I travel into I'll do these random adhoc dinners. And I have a couple of hacks as you might expect for these dinners. One is, I never plan them in advance I send an email the day of and say oh, by the way, I'm in town, my schedule's changed, are you open for dinner? Question number two is do you know anyone else that you've been wanting to meet or you think I should meet and we'll have dinners from anywhere to two people to 30 people. And the overall, I don't label it as this, it's what I call semi-officially, the Founder Therapy dinner. And this is super important and as I was going through it, trying to get round tables instead of square tables there's a bunch of weirdness goes into how I pick venues and stuff software acoustics, because we want to have a conversation. And it's funny because what ends up happening, is that the same dynamics that exist in group therapy actually apply here. And 50 percent of the problem that founders go through which is the 50 percent of the problem that any kind of issue you're dealing with is this belief that you're alone. Like I'm the only one living this thing there's something wrong with me and that's why I'm having these problems. If I were a better founder, I would not be having these issues.

And I have found overwhelming evidence that all founders have almost the same issues. Most of them are people issues as it turns out. But they have the issues. Maybe they timeshifted and based on stages they've either lived them but they're living something. I've not met a single founder including ones that are multi-billion dollar companies now, that says oh yeah, it was a really tough ride those first three or four years but boy is it easy now. Like I don't have any no, it doesn't happen, right? So I strongly encourage you, as your going through this because A. Find a co-founder or multiple co-founders because start-up life is super lonely super, super lonely. And if you misguidedly don't get a co-founder find a peer group that you can talk to on a regular basis and vent and share and live the journey at least with someone else.