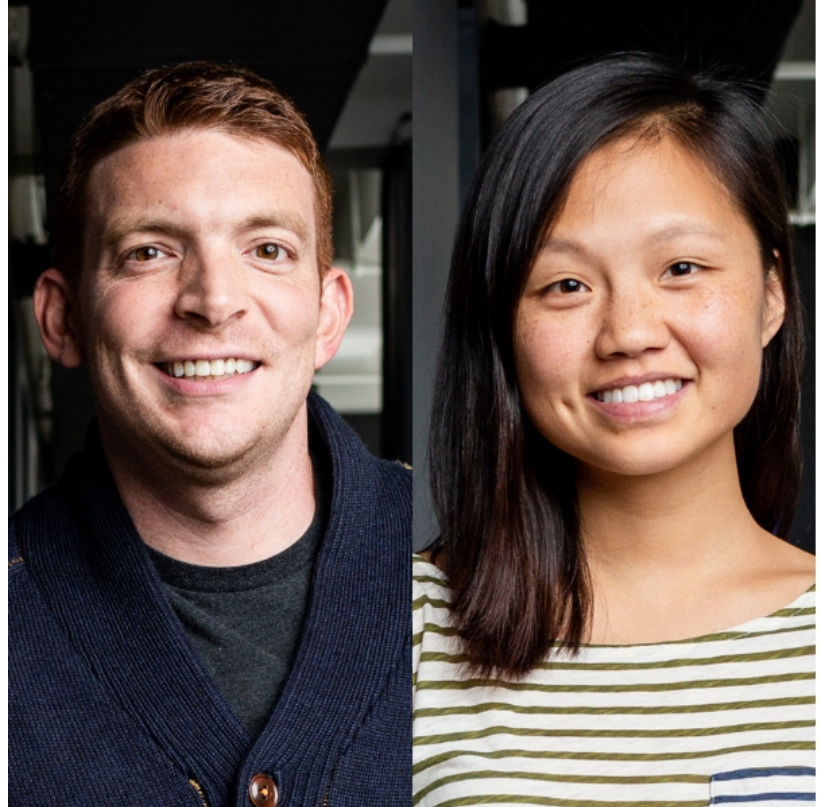


URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/start-with-shared-values/>

Jenny Xia Spradling, co-founder and co-CEO of FreeWill, explains how she and co-founder Patrick Schmitt established values at the beginning of forming their startup, and how they've integrated those values into every aspect of the company in the years since.



Transcript

- I was very fortunate to meet Patrick 00:00:06,820 within a week of stepping onto Stanford Campus.. And the very first time we met, I still remember it was a 15 minute walk, it was gorgeous out.. We were just talking about each other, each other's backgrounds.. And the first signal of, oh, we might have something here, is we both talk really quickly and we get very excitable.. So instantly that energy was just there, almost that chemistry that you're looking for.. And so 15 minutes in, he pitches me the idea for Free Will.. And having done some impact in busting before I thought, wow, this is a combination of three incredibly unsexy industries, but that together are incredibly innovative.. I could really be a win, win, win across the board.. And so our first meeting after that, I'm a math person, growing up I did math competition.. So I would think, okay, we're going to business model, we're gonna size the total addressable market, but it was really Patrick's plus to say like, actually let's just get in a room and talk about values..

Like, are we even close? And so we spent an hour and a half in a small classroom with whiteboard, just writing down, hey, what is the way in which we would like to interact with each other, with our customers, with our employees, like with the world, what do we wanna represent? And that ended up being one of the most important meetings that we've had in our five years at Free Will.. And it continues to be today the reason why people join, the reason why people buy from us and the way that we operate with each other.. So we ended up with four values, kindness, joy, courage, and focus.. And one thing I tell folks is, yes, you can have pretty values on your website, but unless it is a day to day lived experience, they are real values.. And I think we've done a lot of work setting up the traditions and just the experience, as soon as you reach us, whether it's as an employee or as a customer to really feel those values...