

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/learn-or-earn/>

Garry Tan, president and CEO of Y Combinator, advises young people to recognize that they create value for the companies they work for, but the companies only give a fraction back. However, he says, the opportunity to learn from each workplace is priceless.



Transcript

- I told you I was making \$74,000 a year, 00:00:07,410 but when I look back on it, Microsoft was actually making about \$650,000 in profit per year per employee. And so what I realized at that point was that this is actually sort of the trade that you are making wherever you go to work. And work is actually just this fundamental transaction between you and your company. You, the person, the engineer, the designer, the PM, the person selling, you are the one who's creating the value. And almost any place you go, unless you literally own the place, is just gonna give you a fraction of the value. But it's not valueless. I mean, obviously there's the money, but also there's the stability. But the thing that is very priceless is that you can learn something there. And it's not like I didn't learn anything from Microsoft. So if you remember only one thing, this might be the thing that I recommend, aside from the therapy thing, it's just like, you're gonna be working in all kinds of places, I know I did.

And then at some point, I started realizing, maybe six or seven years into my time working as a software engineer, and designer, and PM, I started rage quitting every job I ever had sort of every couple years. And then in retrospect, I'm like, "Oh, actually, maybe that wasn't so bad." Because in each case, when I rage quit, I actually realized that I had learned everything I wanted to learn, and there was something about that place that was not quite right for me. And you know, I don't think that you have to rage quit, In fact, I recommend that you don't. Burning bridges is bad, but learning or earning, very, very important. It's something that it did turn out to be very valuable for me over and over again...