

STAFF SPOTLIGHTS

The U-Crew is full of tenacious individuals who come together to produce outstanding results. And while we work better together, it's every individual's personality and character that helps the whole team succeed and prosper. In an effort for you to get to know each employee better, we asked them a question from Tim Ferriss' book 'Tribe of Mentors'. Some of their answers may surprise you!

Patrick Sullivan

Q: What purchase of \$100 or less has most positively impacted your life in the last six months (or in recent memory)?

A: I would say a weighted blanket. The blanket utilizes the power of weight and the material of it to relax the nervous system. I have trouble sleeping, and using a weighted blanket has really helped a ton with improving my sleep. And of course, it's also super comfy. Anyone who has considered getting one of these but was hesitant if they work, I would say to bite the bullet and get one. There are many styles out there with different materials and weights, so you're sure to find one that suits you.

Rachel Schwindt

Q: How has a failure, or apparent failure, set you up for later success? Do you have a "favorite failure" of yours?

A: I would say my plan of not going to college was probably my favorite failure, or in my case, an avoided failure. It just wasn't something anyone in my family had ever done. I was the first one out of my three older sisters to finish high school, so I honestly figured it just wasn't for me. A few months before I was supposed to graduate, one of my friend's moms actually forced me to fill out an application. I was accepted and ended up just tagging along with her to go to school. By being late to the game, this also meant that I missed all those nice scholarship deadlines. So, I am still paying a pretty penny for my education, which adds to the pain of this failure... ugh, student loans.

All in all, it's taught me a ton about hard work and that if you push yourself, you can do things you never thought you were capable. Here I am, two degrees later, and have my eyes set on my Ph.D. someday. Even though it was a hard failure to endure, and I am literally still paying for it, the experience has brought so much to my life. I cherish my education and the opportunities I've had to absorb knowledge from so many profound people over the years. I'd never take that back.

Lindsay Meyer

Q: If you could have a gigantic billboard anywhere with anything on it — metaphorically speaking, getting a message out to millions or billions — what would it say and why? It could be a few words or a paragraph.

A: If it takes less than five minutes, just do it now. Most of us live in a world full of procrastination, continually putting things off until our to-do list reaches an all-time high, and it doesn't seem like we'll ever get it all done. If something takes less than five minutes (As Nike says), just do it. Once it's done, even if it's something as simple as making the bed, folding the laundry, or putting the dishes away, you'll feel accomplished. I'm a firm believer in the little things; all those little accomplishments add up to something big.

Caitie Cornelius

Q: What purchase of \$100 or less has most positively impacted your life in the last six months (or in recent memory)?

A: I recently got an app called 'Calm', and I use this app every single day because a little self-care can go a long way. It has tons of both lead and not-lead meditations. Some of them are thematic, and some are just generic. Life has been so busy and hectic that I've needed help slowing down and clearing my mind. Each meditation is about 10 minutes, and they even have some specifically for your commute. Taking 10 minutes for myself each day helps me feel refreshed, and I know I have plenty of different meditations for any kind of day I'm having. It also has a feature called sleep stories, where it tells you a story to help you fall asleep. The reader gradually gets slower and softer and lulls you to sleep. To be honest, I don't know how a single story ends.

Matt O'Gorman

Q: What is one of the best or most worthwhile investments you've ever made?

A: One of the best investments I have made is in my hobby of fishing. While being a dad and husband is my first priority, fishing gives me moments of space and relaxation that are needed to slow down from my day to day responsibilities. It's easy to focus on the responsibility you have to others, whether it is at work, with family, or friends - and getting a few hours of my own space each month has had a great impact on me and others. This also feeds my desire to continually learn. I'm currently learning many other ways to fish, such as kayak fishing, fly fishing, river, and lake fishing. I also enjoy the strategy behind it, like understanding the conditions and changing tactics.

Fronia Miller

Q: What is one of the best or most worthwhile investments you've ever made?

A: My greatest investment was when I enrolled in the culinary arts program to improve my cooking skills. It was a little awkward, at first, being the only student enrolled in the program who was not trying to pursue a profession in the culinary world, but that didn't stop me from trying to enhance my skills in the kitchen.

I was only in the program for a couple of semesters, but it was worth every moment. My experience inspired me to continue investing time in perfecting every recipe I make, whether I'm cooking just for myself or making a huge meal for friends and family. Cooking is my passion, and I enjoy every minute of it, but most of all, I love cooking for others and putting a smile on their face.

Nick Christensen

Q: What is an unusual habit or an absurd thing that you love?

A: A lot of people listen to music to pump themselves up during a workout. I, on the other hand, listen to language learning. Nothing feels better than knocking out a full mental and physical workout. It started as a goal to improve my Spanish speaking before my honeymoon. I had planned to use my workout as an excuse to keep up with my lessons, but after returning from my trip, I instead found myself eager to go to the gym SO THAT I could listen to more lessons. There are some great podcasts out there, with great personalities giving the lessons (s/o to the Coffee Break podcasts). Whenever I get on the treadmill or pick up a dumbbell, and I turn on the next lesson, it feels like I'm hearing from close friends again. I have since expanded my language learning to Spanish, Italian, and German, and although I may not be fluent in all of them yet, I can look forward to a lot of language-filled workouts to come. Que excelente!

Jameon Rush

Q: In the last five years, what new belief, behavior, or habit has most improved your life?

A: I know I'm late to the party, but I just started listening to podcasts within the last couple of years. This has really been a game-changer for my listening habits. I listen to about one or two podcast episodes every day, whether that's driving in the car or working out. There's just so much out there you can be learning about instead of just listening to music.

Scott Claypool

Q: What advice would you give to a smart, driven college student about to enter the “real world”? What advice should they ignore?

A: Be humble, realistic, & hungry

Humble - This is a quality everyone should have. Understand at any job you will be surrounded by people that will inspire you daily. Be approachable and the type that people want to help. Understand those that you work with have forged a path and be respectful of that.

Realistic - We all want to achieve great things, but understand the process takes time. Ask questions, absorb knowledge from those around you. I often get asked how much money will they make. Love what you do, and the money will follow.

Hungry - This is the most important. Never settle! Be a perpetual learner and continue to learn each and every day. Be the first to volunteer for a task, help with a project, develop a new process that benefits the company. Keep your eyes open to new opportunities.

As for what I would ignore? It would be naysayers. There are negative people in this world and do your best to surround yourself with positive and supportive people. Be the type to stand up for your thoughts, but also know when you need to listen. It's an acquired skill.

Kurt Naeve

Q: What are the bad recommendations you hear in your profession or area of expertise?

A: I've heard people say, “I don't go in the ocean because there are sharks in there”. Yet that same person drives a car every day. You are more likely to be killed in a car accident than bit by a shark. Don't let your fear get the best of you. Sometimes you have to just jump in head first, pop, and ride the wave, but keep your knees bent and eyes on the destination.

Trent Wilcox

Q: What are three books that have greatly influenced your life?

A: 1. The Official Boy Scout Handbook - 9th Edition. As a kid, this book taught me about solid values, hunting, fishing, first aid, how to survive in the wilderness, to be prepared, and so much more. When I was younger, this book was definitely a favorite.
2. Zen & the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance - Robert M. Pirsig. I first read this book in high school. It gave me a whole new perspective on life and a new appreciation for art, technology, motorcycles, and made me consider the meaning of "quality".
3. The Bible. One of the oldest texts known to man, it is an extremely complex book that contains what I believe to be the most essential guidelines for living a virtuous life.

Caleb Wiedel

Q: When you feel overwhelmed or unfocused, or have lost your focus temporarily, what do you do?

A: When overwhelmed, the first thing I do is change up my music. Music is hypnotizing in itself; it enforces the mood you're in while engaging what's at hand. Walking away from the screen allows you to physically change spaces, so you're able to process your surroundings differently, which will get your brain working again with the small break you've given yourself. Playing foosball helps get my mind off of what frustrating problem I'm currently handling. Small breaks are important to continue to strive for the best possible product. Constant stress = constant struggles.

Tom Duong

Q: When you feel overwhelmed or unfocused, or have lost your focus temporarily, what do you do?

A: When I feel overwhelmed or unfocused, I will typically turn to my team and get inspired by what they are working on and their projects. We are very supportive of each other's work and always try to improve and develop our talents to stay relevant and motivated. That's important to me, to keep up with design trends and stay motivated. We also have a large variety of mediums to work with. Some days I can jump from web design, to print, to video. It can be overwhelming at times, but it also keeps your brain working and keeps things feeling fresh, which is important.