How to Have Ideas

(An excerpt of **How To Start A Startup - CS183B - Lecture 3: Counterintuitive Parts of Startups, How to Have Ideas)**

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*These are my personal notes. It's **not** a full transcript of the essay/article. It's **not** an official summary.*
If you like these notes I strongly encourage you to read the original source in the link(s) above.

The way to get start up ideas is <u>not to try to think of startup ideas</u>.

If you make a conscious effort to try to think of startup ideas, you will think of ideas that <u>are not only bad but bad and plausible sounding</u>.

The way to come up with good startup ideas is to take a step back. Instead of trying to make a conscious effort to think of startup ideas, turn your brain into the type that has startup ideas unconsciously.

In fact, so unconsciously that you don't even realize at first that they're startup ideas. This is not only possible: Yahoo, Google, Facebook, Apple all got started this way. <u>None of these companies were supposed to be companies at first</u>, they were all just <u>side projects</u>. The very best ideas almost always have to start as side projects because they're always such outliers that your conscious mind would reject them as ideas for companies.

How do you turn your mind into the kind that has startup ideas unconsciously?
      # One, learn about a lot of things that matter.
      # Two, work on problems that interest you.
      # Three, with people you like and or respect.

Y Combinator itself is something I only did because it seemed interesting.

Strangely enough the optimal thing to do in college if you want to be a successful startup founder is not some sort of new vocational version of college focused on entrepreneurship.

If you want to start your own startup what you should do in college is learn powerful things and if you have <u>genuine intellectual curiosity</u> that's what you'll naturally tend to do if you just follow your own inclinations. What really matters is <u>domain expertise</u>.

At its best, starting a startup is merely an ulterior motive for curiosity and you'll do it best if you introduce the ulterior motive at the end of the process. So here is ultimate advice for young would be startup founders reduced to two words: just learn.