Jake   01:41
Thank you Preethi for coming on. And joining me on the podcast today. It's great to be able to speak with you. You are a entrepreneur and an engineer, a writer and a student, currently founder of DAP camp, which you're running and teaching lots of students do that. And previously started true story after some time working at Coinbase a16z. Before that, and beginning your career at Goldman Sachs. So that's sort of like the high level but it'd be great to hear your story for those who don't know you from his earliest role and to start to where you are today and maybe talking through some of the decisions you made along the way.

Preethi Kasireddy   02:16
Sure. Yeah. Great. Great to be here. Thanks for having me here, Jake. I mean, I don't know where to start. Let's see, I guess I'll kind of go back and start as back as college. And we'll kind of talk about how I've sort of navigated my career and also personal life, because I think they kind of go hand in hand. But um, yeah, so I went to school for something totally outside of software engineering, I was the industrial systems engineering school. Growing up, I always loved like math and physics. So I knew I wanted to do something that involves math and physics and engineering obviously, fits that pretty well. So I did Industrial Systems Engineering, I loved it, I thought I was going to be a systems engineer when I graduate. But at the time, I was also minoring in Business. And so I was hanging out with some of the business kids. Because they just were more fun. And one of my friends who was in the business might meet he was a business major told me to come to an information session that Goldman Sachs is having having at USC. So I went to USC. And so I went, I had no idea what investment banking was, honestly, I didn't even know what Goldman Sachs was like. It was just like, I was just curious about, I just wanted to get a head start on starting my job search because, frankly, most engineers are very smart. And so in my school at USC, they were kind of putting off the job search thing to senior year, they weren't very ambitious about trying to, you know, get a job, or internships or anything like that, because engineers kind of have a little chip on their shoulders where they know if they're good, they're gonna get a job. They're not too worried worried about it, like, engineers are not the ones that are not getting jobs out of college. It's usually some of the other

majors that kind of struggle. So I just I joined this information session, I love the energy that these finance and business people had at this session. And then I just listened to someone at Goldman Sachs talk about why we should apply for Goldman Sachs. And long story short, I ended up applying and sorry, I ended up reaching out to the guy who did the information session, talk to him and he gave me a whole spiel about what investment banking is, and that, you know, I should consider applying, even though I was an engineering major, and so I ended up applying for an internship at Goldman Sachs got interviewed and like I got, I got the offer for an internship and I like had no idea Try out of all people they gave me the offer. You know, there was like 1000s of business students that applied for this internship and from USC, they rarely select students. It's not like one of the ivy League's or was not at the back then it still is an Ivy League. But in terms of rings, it's got a lot higher. But it was me and another student to student they picked two students from USC to do an internship at Goldman. So that was really my entry into the tech world. And at the time, I didn't even know what it meant to be in tech. I didn't know what tech was. I didn't know that there was this whole world of technology that's like exists. But yeah, Goldman Sachs. I had joined the TMT group TMT stands for technology, media telecommunication. And so we, the office that I was in was in San Francisco. So I had to fly up to San Francisco to do the internship. And that's how I got exposed to the tech world. And while I wasn't doing I wasn't doing tech at Goldman Sachs, I was doing banking. And so I was, you know, crunching numbers basically all day, and reading like s ones and 10 ks and things like that. I, I like got exposure to like, what, what it meant to be a tech company and what these tech companies were doing, and stuff like that. And I started to realize that while I liked this whole like idea of being in tech, I just didn't like my job. Like, I didn't like being a banker. I didn't feel like, you know, working in spreadsheets was what I want to be doing. And like 235 years down the line, I didn't really look up to my MDS or even partners at Goldman and say, Okay, this is what I aspire to be. Like, there's nothing about the career path at Goldman that I aspired to be, even though I absolutely loved Goldman, as a firm, I just didn't like the job. And so I knew that I didn't want to go beyond being an analyst. So I didn't, I was an analyst for about a year. And then I started looking elsewhere. And while I was at Goldman, just

kind of having conversations with people in tech, but doing different things outside of banking, and was utterly lost, like, I had no idea what the hell I want to do with my life. And then I had a friend who was like, hey, maybe you should look into this venture capital thing. It's like, it's basically where you can use your finance skills, but you don't have to do finance. And I had no idea again, what venture capital was, I googled it and started like looking at it. And he actually gave me a couple people's emails, because I think he had tried to apply for these venture capital firms that he didn't get a job offer. So he was like, maybe you'll get something if you try. And so I reached out to the people he gave me and I had like two conversations with the two VCs out of the bunch that I emailed, that actually responded. One worked at DFJ. And the other one worked at Andreessen and the DOJ guy said, you know, he didn't really want to interview me, he just didn't know, there was no interest there and continuing the conversation, but the person I spoke to Andreessen wanted to interview me. So long story short, I got interviewed at a16z. And then they pushed me through the interview process as fast as they could, because they were excited to go through and then two or three months later, and a ton of interviews. Later, I ended up getting an offer Andreessen and I, yeah, like, I think that's so then like, Andreessen was really like some of the I had, like, so much fun being at Andreessen Horowitz and being a venture capitalist, because it just taught me so much about what is a startup? How does the startup run what makes a startup successful? It taught me about, like, all of these industries that exist in tech, what each industry does, what it takes to succeed in these industries, where the problems that each industry has, what type of companies fit these different industries, right, like certain industries require certain type of startup, other industries that require another type of startup. And in that process, I was getting to meet like tons and tons of founders each day because we would have pitch meetings. From morning to evening, every day, we'd be just listening to pitches from entrepreneurs who are trying to get funding from a16z. And then, you know, I was I absolutely had a blast learn a ton. I thought, I think I grew a lot as, as a person as a, I don't know what to say as a techie in those two years. But then I started to get like entrepreneur envy where I wanted to be on the other side of the table. I just thought I thought it was so cool that these people can go out in the world and have an idea and code it and

build it and bring it to the world and potentially You know, make a difference in people's lives through their startup. And so I wanted to be on that side of the table. But I felt like the one missing skill set was that I didn't know how to code. And yeah, there's a lot of entrepreneurs who can build successful startups without knowing how to code. But I felt like if I want to be a technical founder, and like, be able to communicate with my engineering team, even if I'm not coding day to day, which I don't do right now, I want to be able to understand, like, what's happening behind the scenes and like, not just like, take things for granted. And I just like, I also just enjoy really understanding how technology works, and why a piece of technology is built this way versus that way. And so I decided that I'm gonna go and learn how to code. And, you know, I was, it was a very, like, I guess, people said, it was a bold move, because I quit a16z to go teach myself how to code versus staying there and kind of continuing my career path there. But to me, it felt like the right thing to do, because either it was now or never, like, I'm not going to have not going to be able to go back and learn how to code, you know, five years down the line, I think it'd be too late. So I want to just do it now and get it over with. And so I did. And then I taught myself how to code, I went to a coding bootcamp. And then I joined Coinbase as a software engineer. And, again, another really, really amazing growth growth curve for me, but I just learned so much, I was such a newbie engineer. But somehow they took a chance on me, and I'm thankful for Brian and or Fred for doing that. And I learned a ton. I just really, really enjoyed being a coin base at the time, because I joined I think, in 2024 2015, was when I joined Coinbase. So no one was talking about crypto back then. There was only like a few weirdos who were in crypto. And so the the team at Coinbase was less than 100 people when I joined. Now, it's like a couple of 1000, I think. So it was just, it was just an early team. And I was getting to interact with them and work with them. And they were just a quirky little bunch of people who I really, really learned a lot from. And then I was there for a year and then left and decided that it's finally time that I venture out on my own and try to build my own thing. Like you kind of see a pattern where I have been at companies for one or two years, but then I leave because there's just this sense of dissatisfaction. And I think that was always trying to go and do something on my own and, and explore my entrepreneurial cravings. And so yeah, I started

to go out and do my own things. And I started I, I eventually started my own company called True story, we raised $3 million of funding. And we want to build an app. It was based on web three as a web three app where basically, we wanted to use the power of crypto to incentivize people to tell the truth online. And so they'd have anytime they'd say something, it would have skin in the game. And then they'd be a community that would either approve or disapprove of that statement based on factual base or the factual basis. I worked on it for two years ultimately realize that, like the infrastructure to support a consumer app back in 2018, it was just too early. Like, you know, we had to use our app, you had to have a crypto wallet, and no one. No one knew what, like no one knew how to download a crypto wallet how to use a crypto wallet. But if I knew that if I just waited one year that that would have turned around, I probably would have continued working on it for another year. But hindsight bias, you know, so we ended up shutting down a company right before the pandemic, like six, like five or six months before the pandemic started, and then gave the remaining money back to the investors and then went back to the drawing board to figure out what I want to do with my life. Do I want to be in tech? Do I want to leave tech? Do I want to be in crypto? Do I want to leave crypto? So I kind of honestly took a break for almost a year. And I was also just focusing on personal stuff, health stuff that I had like that. I just kind of put on pause for years because I was just so busy working all the time. And then in 2021, I started deaf camp. Honestly, it was by total accident. It was just like a side project that I started. Because I love teaching and I wanted to continue teaching. And I it's that time what we do. Our mission is basically to educate developers make, make make it really easy and streamlined for developers to break into web three. So it's cool cohort where we take you up to developers and train them on web three development. We specifically started with Ethereum as a platform that we want to teach with the goal of expanding to other platforms in the future. And, and we did, we did, we did a cohort. And it went really, really well. And we kept doing more and more cohorts and just loved it. I think the cohort based experience is something that's popped up after the pandemic. And it's a really cool concept, because basically what it you can get people from all around the world who can come to this course during these couple of weeks, and you can curate the best people and they join this cohort. So it's live. And there's a lot of

engagement and activity and excitement. And it forces developers to learn faster, quicker, have more accountability, and all that good stuff. And I really enjoyed doing it. I really love education. So I've been kind of doing sticking to education ever since. Most recently, I launched something called Z k camp, which does something similar, but for the zero knowledge technology world. So I can talk about zero knowledge tech later. But basically, zero knowledge tech is like the new thing in crypto that's really gaining a lot of popularity. And it's basically the technology that could potentially bring privacy and scalability to blockchain. So it's a big deal. And the problem, though, is that it's a very, very, very complex technology that requires a lot of math and cryptography to make sense of, and most developers get utterly lost if they try to learn it. And so we know that from our experience at DAP camp, and just my experience, previously, having done a lot of blogging and teaching that I believe I'm some of the I'm one of the best educators in tech, who can really take a very complex topic and break it down into something that's understandable. So we wanted to do that with the z k. field. So we started the K camp is a way as an education platform to teach developers how to build z k based applications for the for blockchains. That's kind of where I'm at now. And so I'll stop there.

Jake 17:20
Awesome. Well, I appreciate you sharing the story, it was, you know, it was fun, sort of piecing it together from preparing for this conversation and seems like an interesting path. But getting the full version, and sort of the detailed version, and all sorts of in in sequence was very, you know, interesting to listen to. So appreciate you sharing it, I think, you know, there's a couple things just transparently between you and I that we have a lot in common in terms of our paths. The first is starting our careers in, you know, technology, investment banking, and then second, you know, taking these sort of like, gaps or quitting your job without knowing what's next. I've kind of done this a couple of times myself, and sort of in the middle of one of those periods. Right now. And You've obviously done this a couple of times, and it's surprisingly, not that common, I think, at least, you know, I don't have many peers who I or people who I hear about who sort of do these sorts of things, but I look at your story. And it's like, okay, you know, quitting, Andreessen without,

you know, you had like a goal, which was like to teach yourself how to code, but you didn't have like a job lined up or anything like that. And then, you know, after true story, also sort of taking a more deliberate year to just kind of focus on life priorities. I'm curious, I guess, maybe in both of those instances, as well as any others, how you were able to make that what I think is like, a fairly uncommon decision that, you know, no one in their right minds would like, leave what I'm doing right now. And like the a16z would be like, sort of the critique. And then the second time a true story. It's like, oh, you know, it's already difficult to deal with my startup, you know, I'm shutting it down. But having the confidence sort of, despite that to say, I'm not going to like rush into my next thing now. So I'm just sort of curious, your thoughts, I guess, on on quitting, and having sort of the confidence to take some time and sort of trust your gut, and you know, how you navigated those times and sort of reflect on them?

Preethi Kasireddy 19:21
Yeah, that's a good question. I think it was just honestly being true. It was. There was no, like, question whether that was the right thing or not, in my mind, like, I've always just been like, Okay, this is what I want to do. And I'm going to do it. And in the case of, for example, going back to a16z. Like, in like, being at a16z. Obviously, it's like, I could have had a really great career if I just continued on for the next 235 years. And I don't know, like, who knows what my career would have been if I just continued on But I would have just never had the skill set that I've always wanted to have, which is like being able to code and understand technology. And being able to look at a piece of technology and read documentation and understand it. Something about that is really liberating to me. Like I like to be able to look underneath something and be like, Okay, I understand how that works. And I think that's a skill set that is going to be useful to me throughout my life. Regardless, even if I don't do tech in the future, I think the skill is insanely useful no matter what I do. And so to me, it was just an obvious decision. It's like, I want to I want to learn how to code because the downside benefits of that, I think outweigh the short term gains I could get in my career by just staying in this current path. And plus, you know, I like I was at a16z. For two years. It's not like I left after like, six months or something.

And in those two years, I built really strong relationships. Everyone really liked working with me. And so I know how I had like good referrals if I needed it. And it's not like, it's not like I left without any, any any like, good, good, solid work I put into the firm, like, I strongly believe that I did really good work for the firm. And I was going to reap those benefits in the future if I needed to. And I learned what I needed to learn from that firm. I could have stayed and continued my learning, but it was just not going to be as steep, you know?

Jake 21:29
Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

Preethi Kasireddy 21:33
Yeah. And in terms of like, with the startup, that again, it was just a very authentic decision of what I needed for my life at that time. And it was, I knew that, like, I had put a bunch of stuff on the backburner, because I was so focused on working for the past decade, that like, that was the time that I just needed to stop and focus on other things in my life, and just put my career on pause. So that I can slow down and tend to these things, because everything has a timeline. And if I just put put these life things on the backburner forever, then I don't know, I feel like I'd be regretful in the future. And it was absolutely the right thing to do at that time. And it also gave me perspective on you know, how I wanted to how I wanted my day to day to be in the future, I don't think I could ever go to go back to the lifestyle I used to have when I was working at a16z, or Goldman or, or Coinbase, you know, I just, I'm just a different, I just, I feel like I'm a lot more balanced now. And taking that year off between my startup and starting that camp allowed me to recalibrate and figure out what my work life balance is going to be like, and much more. I guess, the about the lifestyle I have now is a lot more sustainable than what I had, when I was working in hardcore tech.

Jake 23:07
Yeah, I really respect the ability to just sort of feel and follow your intuition. I think a lot of people, you know, it's much more difficult than not that it was easy for you, I'm sure, but it sounds

like it was at least a little bit natural, and you tend to sort of like tune out, you know, maybe what others think, to maybe a greater degree than, than most people. And I'm a huge advocate of that. And I think there's this, you know, you talked about Andreessen Horowitz and, and sort of knowing that if you were there for a few more years, you know, you can sort of like project your life forward, Tim, as you did at Goldman, and you saw, you know, this isn't the path that I want that I'm not looking at my Managing Director and like wanting to sort of do what they did to get there and then be there, that's not really like the ladder that I want to climb. And then maybe it wasn't quite the same a16z Maybe it was a little bit closer to like, the sort of thing that you might like to do, but just knowing like, the predictability of it, I guess, I think there's a lot to be said for sort of, you know, you only have one chance to live. And it sort of to me and I think to others, to some others, and maybe to you, it sort of feels like life deserves to have sort of some unpredictability and surprise, and if you just sort of like find a path that you can project out five or 10 years pretty accurately and just know, like, I just do this, and I just get to that. It almost feels just like a little bit of a waste to me not to like, you know, anyone can have their own view and follow their own path. And if you want to, if you have like a 10 year goal that you want to march towards, and get there, that's totally fine, but I definitely respect sort of like taking a step off the beaten path and you sort of are on something that's definitely going to result in sort of what what most would view as I can objectively successful place in life. You know, as you get older and to say you know But I have that but also be practical about the fact that like, I'm not like leaving all of this, like you said, you know, you're not by quitting, you're not leaving the fact that like your your Goldman experience doesn't like get deleted off your resume your a16z doesn't either you have these connections that you've made. And I think people can sort of spin up the worst case scenario to be a lot worse than it actually is. And, you know, maybe if you had sort of changed your mind, you could have maybe gone back to a16z, or at least, like landed with another venture firm somewhere. And the downside is usually like a lot higher, or like the floor is a lot higher than I think people will let their fears sort of suggest. So I think, I don't know. It's just, it's something that I actually, like, just care quite a bit about, in talking with, like young people that I

think it's just important to really think for yourself on these sorts of things. And, you know, I don't know, I guess I'll stop the rant on that.

Preethi Kasireddy 25:51
I totally, I totally agree. I think like people over overanalyze analyze, the downsides are over Yeah, over. I don't know what the right word is, like you said, the floor is a lot higher than people assume. For the downside. And I think you have to have some level of competence, right? Like, you know, I, I believe that. I know that I'm, I have a smart, right. Like, I know that I can learn things I know that I can put if I put my mind to something, I can figure it out. So I have like, the foundational skills, and I felt I wasn't scared that I'm going to be jobless. Like, that fear just doesn't didn't exist in me. And, and so I was like, Okay, so is this, like, it's not like I was taking like this ginormous risk, where like, if it doesn't work out, I won't have a job. Like, in the worst case, let's say I learn how to code. And I suck at it, and I can't get a coding job. Then I go back to Vc, like you said, like, I, I already have those skills, I'll just use those skills again. So like, the upside was higher. And the downside was that I just used to be doing what I was doing anyway. So that's kind of how I saw it. And it was right like, I, I now, you know, I can it also was honestly, I think I've also just been the type of person ever since I was young, where I, I'm, I'm more of a generalist in regard. Like, I don't know if generalist is the right word, but like, I like balance and kind of understand different things. And I feel like if I just do one thing for X number of years, unless I truly, truly know that that's what I really want. But it was like, you know, investment banking, venture capital, none of these felt like these are, this is what I want with my life. Like, I didn't feel that way. So for me, it was like, Okay, let me learn how to code because if I don't, if I know, I don't want to spend my rest of my life in VC, and I don't want to be a banker for the rest of my life, I have to figure out what I want to do, right, like, so I'm just exploring and going, going about and trying to get different skills, so I can kind of put them together and create something that truly represents what I want to do.

Jake 28:08

Yeah, I think it's funny, I'm like, I don't know enough about this to even like, bring it up. But I'll do it anyway. It's like, there's this sort of old. I think like the Greeks, like a lot of like, the very well known ancient Greek people would have like these career arcs, if you'll call it that, or life arcs where like, they would just do completely different, like, fundamentally different occupations over, you know, different chapters of their life. And then, you know, maybe at the end, they're just kind of like a professional philosopher. And that's always been interesting, I think, where, you know, there's, for the last, you know, so many decades, it's been commonplace that, you know, you go and there certain tracks, you become a doctor, you become a lawyer, those are sort of the successful paths that you can do you become a business person, whatever it might be. And now, of course, it's a little different. I think the younger generations, myself included, are like, people like to jump around. And there's all sorts of new specific types of roles. It's not as like, fundamental, maybe as it used to be, or like, there's many more options and specific things. But just the, because there's so many more specific things, maybe people tend to like the jump around, but within like a specific category that they started in, maybe by happenstance out of college, but to sort of appreciate, like, hey, there's like all of these, like very fundamentally different paths out there. And it might be fun to try some different ones. And you can always return to like previous one that you like, better find bits and pieces you'd like to beach, I think, is a very interesting way to go about it. But I want to transition or segue a little bit towards something you mentioned about like, having the fundamentals you have that sort of like is, you know, pins, the confidence that you have in yourself is knowing that you have like the fundamentals to kind of like, learn everything and I know or learn anything rather than that you want and I know you've described yourself as an autodidact, or I hope I'm pronounce To my right is the word that I actually haven't seen very often, but basically means like, you know, to teach yourself stuff. And so I'm curious if you have, you know, you've done this with, with coding, as you've talked about, you know, with crypto with dance and all sorts of things. And I'm curious, do you have any, like, sort of principles or processes are pieces of processes that you've developed over time that you can sort of like, you know, maybe teaching yourself something, the first couple of times, like something big and scary was more difficult

the first time and since then, as you've gone to other things, you can sort of draw up on principles or processes that you've developed over time.

Preethi Kasireddy 30:37

Yeah, I mean, eventually, I hope to like, be able to write all this down, I feel like I'm still living, living and experimenting with all of these processes and principles. But I mean, I think, if I had to, like, simplify it, it really just comes down to consistency and discipline. I think if you just show up every day, and do the thing that you're interested in doing, even if it's just a little bit of time, that you will make progress. And, and in that progress, like, if you just keep going, you're, there's just so many discoveries along the way along, when you're learning something. And you adjust and you make adjustments to your learning, you find new teachers, maybe or you find new peers to learn with, you discover community, you just realized, like, Okay, I'm here in this learning journey. Like, I feel like this is where I'm stuck, like, I need to do this to continue my learning or get better. I think what a lot of people do is they start learning something, and then they, they get kind of far, a little bit ahead, and they get all this like adrenaline from learning something, but then they don't continue it because they kind of reach a plateau and they get discouraged or whatever. And I think I mean, I've done that, too, with certain topics, like where I've tried, I was like, oh, I want I'm really interested in this. And I just, like stop learning it. And, but like, if it's truly, truly something I'm interested in, that's when I show I just show up every day, and I just put in a little bit of work towards it. I just try not to think too much about it, or I try not to think about like, exactly how I'm going to I try to I want I try not to have require perfect conditions to learn, right? Like I say, like dance as an example. Or even crypto as an example, like, I don't require that it doesn't, I don't have to be like next to a dance studio or you know, have a perfect floor or whatever, just to practice. Like if I have an eight foot by eight foot space and this wooded, that's enough for me, and I'll do something in even if it's not a full practice, maybe it's like, I'm just practicing arms, or, or, or maybe doing a little bit more mobility stuff, etc. So like, no matter what, just like having some kind of momentum each day is really the key to success in anything you do. And this is true.

Honestly, for example, even if you want to go grow a social media account, right? That's what it takes. Like, my husband is a social media influencer. And his, he's just really good at that, like I I'm not, I just I think they just don't care about social media growth that much. It's just like, I don't like being on social media that much. So I don't really want to like, be there every day necessarily. But my husband, his his whole career is based on growing on social media. So I see what he does, right? It's just like you show up every day you create content that's hopefully somewhat interesting. And then you compound that over the course of, you know, 1235 years, and then you have an audience that you know, that you can monetize or use for whatever purpose that you want to use it for. And so that's kind of just been my simple, simple dumbed down strategy. And then, the other thing is, like, like I said, like, I've had so many times in my learning journey for whatever skill I'm learning where I've had plateaus, or I feel like I'm literally going backwards. And that's like, completely, completely normal. And sometimes I noticed that a lot of people will get discouraged or drop off at those points. And it's super critical that you like double down during those times. Because when you're plateauing or almost feeling like you're going backwards sometimes that's when you're going to make a big leap. And sometimes that's when you have to maybe figure out, okay, like I'm plateauing, like what's the missing ingredient here that's not letting me go forward in this specific area, and then you figure out that missing ingredient and then you just make a giant leap. So I think being very cognizant of how you're progressing and of what you're doing day to day and making sure that you're tracking it is also useful. What else? How else do you learn and honestly just like, just pursue things that you are genuinely interested in, like, if, and the other, and this is this is a, this is one that's a little bit as a double edged sword, because like, sometimes when you learn something new, like you're super interested in it, so you're really into it and then you get bored of it. And a lot of people also drop off at that point. But I think you have to recognize that boredom is a part of, of just the learning journeys, not You're not going to be always super excited to learn something, some days, you just have to show up and recognize that it's going to be a grind. And it's going to be boring. And you have to get through that boredom. And this is where also I've noticed a lot that people fail, where they start getting bored of it.

And they drop off. And I think this is there's like a fine balance here. Because there's a difference between getting bored, but intrinsically, actually still being very interested in it. But being bored of it and truly done with it. Like there's a distinction there. And I think bored and being truly done with it. That doesn't really happen. For most people that I've met, like most people get bored just because they've lost the novelty aspect of whatever they're learning and they quit. Like the, there's been very few people I've known that got bored and are done with it. That's usually people who have like, done it for their whole careers or something 10 or 20 years later, they're like, Okay, I learned enough about this, that like I am done, and I'm moving on to the next field kind of thing. But most people sit in the former, where they're bored, because it's not enough novelty, and then they have to move on. I don't I think that's I would describe this, discredit your feelings in that regard, just like and just go keep doing it. Because you might find that you get re energized by, by by by it maybe a week or two weeks or a month later, if you just keep going. I'm just rambling. But those are some of the things that come to my experience, like learning different skills.

Jake   37:16
Yeah, that's great. I think there's a lot of sort of fundamental principles in there. And I'll just sort of like summarize, the few that I took away from it. Because maybe a part of learning is like repeating something back, it's useful for me, at least so are like summarizing. So one thing obviously is, you know, pick something that you're genuinely interested in to learn about, if you don't, you might sort of not have the motivation required to keep going. Second is, you know, the consistency and discipline of it just showing up every day, focusing more on like, that you're learning than, you know, what you're learning, like, it doesn't need to be the most optimized process or anything like that, just show up and put some time in every day or every so often, however, whatever the cadence is, and that's really useful, and it sort of compounds. And then you know, in those moments where it's like, you feel down or plateaued, sort of recognizing it's, you know, it's going to be two steps forward, one step back. And, you know, sometimes it might be one step forward, three steps back, but just to sort of double down in those back steps rather than, you know, think about quitting. And then maybe

inevitably, sort of find yourself ahead of where you were, after some amount of time. And then the last thing that was, was interesting to me, I have a sort of draft that I want to write of a blog about this, actually, but I thought it was really interesting what you said about, you know, not needing like a dance studio next to your house to learn how to dance, or not needing to be, for example, like, in Silicon Valley to start a tech company. That's like a very common one these days, people are like, oh, you know, there's this big debate, like, do you have to be in SF or whatever it's like to build an AI company. And it's like, well, you know, I'm the, you know, the draft version of this blog that I have is basically like, he's kind of a silly example. But, you know, so you really want to learn how to like surf, but you live in Nashville, you know, landlocked, like, obviously, you know, really, you know, you're not gonna be able to surf. But you can learn like so much like you can put yourself like, it's basically just an excuse, I think if you really, really want to learn something, or do something, and you say that, you know, I'm all for like, doing things that your environment is accommodating for, because it's just easier. But if there's something that like you really want to do, I think pretending that or you know, believing when people say that like you need to be in some other situation to do that. It's just basically a BS excuse because like, if you're in Nashville, for example, with the surfing you look at like a ton of YouTube videos on surfing and all these you know, people teaching it people doing it, whatever you read these books, you go and you get in like better shape that's not going to hurt you. You go and like you start you know, you save up some money so that you can eventually move to California or Hawaii or whatever you want. You go and you do like some skateboarding which probably We're gonna help a lot like there's all these things that you can do so that when it comes time that you actually are in the ocean with some waves, like the learning curve is going to just be like so much easier based on what you've done to prepare for that. So I'm a big believer in sort of not needing the, the dance studio next door, like you said, and I think that's, you know, hopefully there's, there's a few principles that people pulled out of that I certainly did of what you said on sort of, you know, your experience learning, obviously, that huge success, doing so on a variety of topics in the past. And now you're teaching, you know, some of what you've learned, and sort of realized, like, Okay, I taught myself how to code tell

myself about crypto. And obviously, crypto, you know, there's huge demand for developers, it's extremely well paid position, a lot of people are interested in doing it. And with DAP camp, you know, the the latest focus that you're working on, you're teaching cohorts, like you mentioned, to, you know, web two developers to become web three developers. And I'm curious, you know, it sounds like I even saw like, earlier in your story, you didn't mention it. But I think you've taught like theater and acting to kids while you're at school, or something like that. And seems like teaching obviously, learning has been a huge part of your story since a very young age, but seems like teaching has always sort of been a passion that you've paid more or less attention to over time, whether it's blogging, or whatever it might be. And now it's sort of like your main thing. So I'm curious, you know, how that's been. And also, if your ambition for DAP camp is like, obviously, the more you sort of, like grow something, the more unless you like hire a CEO or something, the more you have to kind of do business stuff versus actually teaching. And I'm curious, like, do you want to grow it? Do you want to keep teaching? Not quite sure. I'm just curious sort of how it's been.

Preethi Kasireddy 41:46
I absolutely love. I love teaching. And it's especially fun when you have we have the team at that camp, it's me and two other people. And it's really fun, just, you know, coming together, coming up with curriculum, and then teaching students and, you know, the teachers draw as much energy from the students, as the students draw energy from the teachers is sort of like a bi directional communication of energy. And I really do enjoy it. Because that not only is it fun, but it also forces me to be on like, it forces me to sharpen my skills, right? Because when students ask questions, it's like, if I don't know the answer, then I have to figure out the answer and make sure that I can provide the student that answer. And when you do it enough times, they ask you enough questions that it forces you to really, really understand a topic deeply because you've kind of gone and answered all of these questions that you'd never thought of if you weren't teaching. So I like that it forces me to, to go deeper into a particular area. And then And then in terms of whether I want to continue doing it, and yeah, like as, as we've done the cohorts, I've definitely delegated some of the teaching to my co founders slash co

instructor, just so that I can focus a little bit more on things like marketing and partnerships. And I don't, I don't mind that at all. Like I enjoy, I enjoy all parts of the business. And if I need to take us back step from like, day to day teaching and curriculum building to doing some of the other business stuff, I enjoy that as well. So yeah, just it's fun. It's like, I really like building an education platform. But the other thing that we're now for example, thinking about is, like right now, it's it's definitely a great business. But in terms of, like, do we want to turn it potentially into a VC backed business is something that we're thinking about, because right now, it's, it's completely bootstrapped. And it's profitable from day one. But like, we're figuring out is that, is that what we want to keep it? And I'm totally fine with that, if that's, that ends up being our answer to? Or do we want to kind of think about it turning into something bigger and more scalable, and potentially VC backed? Because that requires a whole different game plan of what we want to build with this platform, because it can't just be cohorts. That's just not. That's not a VC back business. You know what I mean? So, yeah, it's fun. It's fun thinking about these questions and figuring out what our future entails. But for now, yeah, this is what we're doing.

Jake   44:42
I'm curious, well asked two questions, because we only have 10 minutes and you know, you can pick which question you aren't. The one is, on the decision you were just talking about. It's something that I'd be interested in hearing how you're thinking about that like the pros and cons of country. Anything along the path that you're on are sort of becoming a VC backed business. So that's one. And you can take both of these if you want. But the second one is, I understand you're making the program a lot more web three native, and you're doing some interesting things such as like, I think people's, you know, identities or like, their email addresses or DNS names or something like that. And you've got hefty badges for certain accomplishments. So speaking to sort of how you guys are going about making this a web three native thing, and how web three might be able to impact education at large. That would be like the second thing. So one is like VC backed versus Bootstrap. The other is web three and education.

Preethi Kasireddy   45:40

Yeah. So in terms of web three, education, there's been like, it's something that we've, we've been brainstorming ourselves. And not just web three, education, but web three AI and education, I have a hunch that these three are gonna merge in some way and create something interesting. Like, we already know that AI and education, for example, is going to be a game changer, because everyone basically uses chat TPT for homework and share right now, like my brother doesn't know any of its homework. It's insane. And, and like, you know, for tutoring and stuff, check. GPT is like a perfect tutor if you just slightly train it on your specific material, as shown by Khan Academy, and some other platforms that are experimenting with this. So we know AI and education is going to be big. And so I believe that crypto is also going to play a role in, in this mix. And I don't know what yet though, like, I know, it's going to come together, I just haven't put much brain space into figuring out like, how they're going to come together. But I have a feeling they will. That's all I can say, you know, I think maybe you know, crypto will enhance the incentives for education in some way. But I don't know how. And that's something that we want to we've been also wanting to explore ourselves, but haven't had the chance to do that yet. In terms of how we're thinking about VC and versus not. I think there's a few factors at play here. One is like what kind of lifestyle? Do I want to lead personally, like, you know, I'm a mom now. And so, can I can I? Do I? Do I have the will to do a VC back business. At this stage in life? Is this the right season for me to do? That is a question I'm thinking about? And, and it's not like I don't have I have help and stuff like that is more a personal choice, right? Like, how much time do I want to spend away from my child? And then secondly, I think, also it comes down to can we think of a wait, because like I said, like I said, I really love education, and I want to stay in the education space, I want to do education. So can we think of some way to do education, but also build a tool that scalable? That, if that makes sense. So like, maybe I don't know, I don't we don't know what it is yet. But it's like maybe come for the tools day for the network or some something that like that we maybe the education is what serves as marketing for this tool. And so we're exploring that avenue and trying to figure out like what we could potentially do, but still very early days in that regard. And it's like, I think it's a question I'm seeing more people answer for themselves. Because back in the day, like 2015 2016 2017, saying, We

raising VC funding was like the only way to build a startup. But now, there's so many ways to build a startup, you don't necessarily always need VC funding, it's totally fine. If your startup doesn't have VC funding, you know?

Jake   49:03
Yeah, I think on the VC funding bit, like there's examples, like, you know, Shopify, that was bootstrapped for quite a long time, and then eventually, you know, raise some money, and now they're Shopify. So I think it's like, you don't need to, it sounds like you're sort of thinking through things very deliberately. And I'm sure that if and when, or you know, not necessarily when but if the time comes that you do want to go the VC route, it'll be available and, and, you know, I'm sure it'll go great. And if you decide, you know, if that feeling of going that route fades away, or, you know, you don't want to go that direction. It seems like basically, at all the big points in your life, you've had a lot of confidence and, you know, strong feeling and intuition of a certain route and so until that appears, I guess probably staying the course might make sense. And I think it sounds like there's kind of no rush and you can always flip the switch and go the VC mode and try to scale it to something bigger. If When the time comes, but and then on the web three bit, I thought, I also have no idea how those things are going to combine in terms of crypto AI and education. But I don't disagree with your hunch. And I wonder if this is like very general. And you know, I couldn't be pressed for specifics. But basically, I think education, we think of it as like, it's all about like the learning, right. But it's, it's also sort of like the credentialing and the social aspects of school. And so maybe to your point, you know, on incentives and things like that, like maybe crypto is more on like the social side of things, whether it's a credential or building a network of people and things like that. And then the AI is the more valuable piece on the actual learning of it. And I don't know how all that comes together. But it'll be interesting to see, for sure. But anyway, I want to give you the last word, but I appreciate you taking the time and coming on the show. It's been great talking with you. And you know, if you could just also end with telling people where they can go to, you know, learn more about you and what you're doing and maybe apply to DAP camp or wherever you want to send people.

Preethi Kasireddy   51:10
Yeah, sure. Thanks for having me on. And I appreciate all the thoughtful questions and being able to summarize what I said as well. And so if anyone wants to find me, they can find me on Twitter at I am underscore pretty, or my blog, which is pretty customer id.com. And if you want to learn more about Deb camp, or z k camp, it's that camp, that XYZ or z k camp dot XYZ. But yeah, I look forward to hearing from you. And especially if you're a developer, and you're web three curious, definitely reach out I'd love to help you and help you break into this space because of three definitely needs more developers. And the more smart web two people that we can get into web three, the more chances you have three has of making a difference in the world. Like right now, the biggest criticism of web three is that there's no use cases no one uses this. What's the point of all this? And so we definitely need a lot more experimentation and people building potential use cases. And that's why I think I started that camp in the first place because we just needed more developers so definitely hit me up if you're interested in getting into this space.

Jake   52:21
Awesome. Thank you and yeah, definitely encourage people to go check out DAP camp, also DK camp that you mentioned and hopefully get some students but you know from this podcast, but thanks again and great talking and have a great rest of the day.

Preethi Kasireddy   52:36
Thank you. You too. Bye.