Twitter Thread by Eric



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1/ There is so much idol worship in Silicon Valley re: successful founders and investors. But there is a common denominator for success which is rarely addressed: Privilege

I want to confess my own journey of success, as it relates to Privilege.

2/ My Korean parents were poor when they arrived to the US, seeking opportunities for their future kids. Upon immigrating, my father Germanized the spelling of our last name (B-A-H-N), with the rational that a white-sounding last name would open up opportunities. I think it has.

3/ By the time I was born, my parents were doing very well. I never suffered their trauma of poverty. I lived in a big house and went to the best public schools. As a kid, I never felt like I was missing any resources.

4/ Partly because of my abundant resources, I was able to attend Stanford. Mom and Dad paid for that too, and I graduated with no debt. They even bought me a Honda after completing grad school! (I know, spoiled brat)

5/ With my family safety net, great education, zero debt, economy car, and abundance mindset--I went forth into the world ready to take huge risks. Taking risks was easy and natural, because I COULD AFFORD IT. Success followed.

6/ I'm not saying that I didn't work hard throughout my journey; but Privilege was like a tailwind that seemed to accelerate my career.

So why raise the issue of Privilege?

7/ In Silicon Valley, Privilege seems more normal/common than not. It feels like so many founders/investors here aren't running the same race as regular people. If this were a 100-meter dash, we got a 40-meter head start while everyone else waits at the starting line.

8/ Our team @HustleFundVC believes great founders look like anyone and come from anywhere--privileged or not. I'm starting to realize that Privilege should be an important factor in the assessment of founders.

9/ By better understanding a founder's personal journey, we should use that knowledge to tare how far along privileged/unprivileged founders should perform across an equal timeline.

10/ Founders with a lot of resources will naturally report more progress than founders who have very little resources, over the same period of time. Both still could be equally great in outcome over the long term.

11/ I'm still thinking a lot about how to approach Privilege in Silicon Valley. As a starting point, I wish more people here would recognize it when discussing their 'self-made' success.

PS: big props to those founders/investors who have made it without Privilege.