Twitter Thread by Eric



Eric
@ericbahn

1/ Recently, I learned about the concept of ‘struggle porn’. This refers to the fetish of sacrificing nearly everything (health, relationships, time) for your startup. I fear that this label is creating more harm than good.

2/ @nateliason wrote a fabulous article about this topic, which first introduced me to this concept. Everyone should read it: https://t.co/eyyZkPXlED

3/ @alexisohanian also recently spoke about struggle porn, though referring to it as ‘hustle porn.’ (as the co-founder of @hustlefundvc, obviously I take issue with this pejorative definition of ‘hustle’, but that’s another topic) https://t.co/XnDT8Ly7UK

4/ Struggling in itself isn’t necessarily bad. Let’s be real here--if you’re going to start a startup, you will struggle. Founders should expect to work harder generally than employees. You will be challenged in many ways and also be super rewarded in others. This is normal.

5/ However, if you are over-indexing on hard work without clear purpose and degrading your mental health/relationships in the process--then this is very bad and we obviously should not celebrate this behavior.

6/ But when we start to say that struggling means that you are doing something wrong, or that struggling in itself is shameful--then that is dangerous. It may actually prevent more founders from openly talking about their struggles.

7/ I’m constantly working to earn a deep and authentic relationship with our fund’s founders. When they struggle, we want to know so we can try to help. We don’t want founders to internalize these mental challenges, but instead be open about them.

8/ Instead of discouraging founders from the Struggle, we should just recognize that it’s a natural part of the startup journey. As VCs, our job is to provide support and not judge when our founders need real help.

9/ Final note, getting back to what I think is the heart of struggle porn: If you’re sharing your own ‘struggle journey’ just to brag insincerely about how hard you’re working--then you are an asshole. You are not helping anyone.