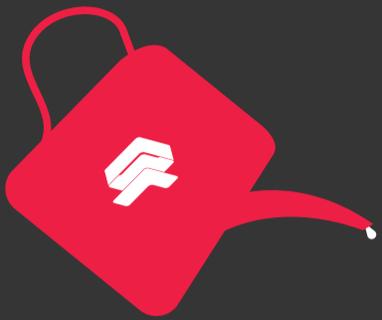
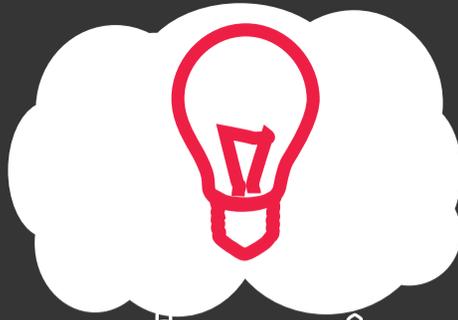


Never stop learning.

Realize that just because you graduated from a design school doesn't mean that you are at the end of your journey.



Have a backbone.

Take a position. No one likes designers that straddle opinions. Draw a dotted line in the sand and understand that your position may, over time, change...but make sure there is good information that is changing your stance.

Question trends.

Question why trends are trending. If everything is leaning towards a specific aesthetic, ask why. Is there something that is driving that aesthetic in a qualitative way or is it something more quantifiable?

Trends are great to lean on for short amounts of time when you are first starting out. After awhile, however, you'll start to avoid innovating because the trend is easier. Use your mind and take the time to set the trends yourself!

Heavy reading helps.

Read Donald Norman, Bruce Nussbaum, Henry Petroski, Victor Papanek and a slew of philosophy books. We recommend reading up on Wabi Sabi, The Unfettered Mind, The Book of the Five Rings among others.

Ideas aren't usually new.

Chances are you are pulling from a catalog of memories of experiences that are informing your solution. With this, embrace your experiences and history. They help shape the amazing person you'll become!

Don't be afraid to look backward for solutions. We use the saying, "well that hasn't worked in the past" and dismiss solutions, but maybe it wasn't the idea that was the issue, maybe it was the timing.

Look for holes.

Test everything that looks like a potential solution when solving a design problem. Poke the holes in the idea before someone else can.

Mistakes happen

Don't freak out if you make an error. Realize that you are a human being with emotional biases. Chances are in five years, the only person that is going to care about your error is you.

Communicate, be honest and be ready to learn from mistakes.

Seek out leadership.

Listen to your senior designers. They have stumbled on the same things that you might not even realize you are stumbling on. They know a lot more than you.

If they don't... find some new senior designers.

Software isn't everything.

Don't get addicted to the software. At the end of the day, it is a tool to communicate. Same with technique. Think about how you're communicating and then think, with empathy, on how those communications are being received. It will inform the processes you employ to communicate with more intent.

Nature is better than you.

Watch what nature does and repeat or emulate. Nature has had a much longer time to figure this stuff out. With enough observation, you can use the solutions nature has to apply to your problem.

