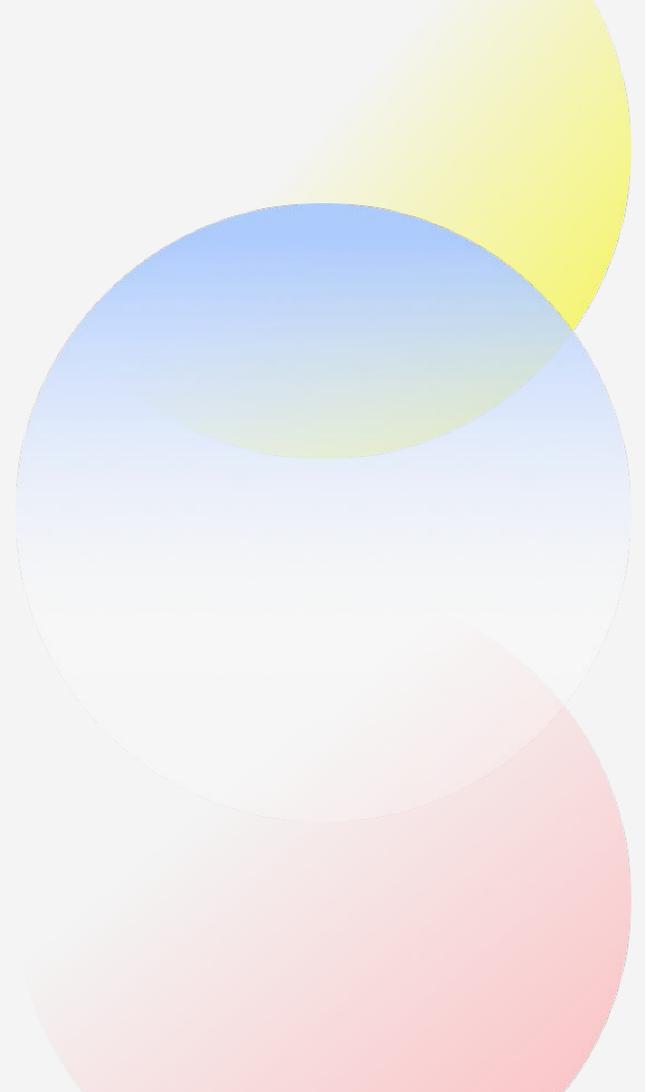


Creative Tools for Everyday Users: Needfinding

Nhu, Emma, Adi, Aanika



MEET THE TEAM



Nhu Pham



Emma Wang



Adi Badlani



Aanika Atluri

Focus: New graduates, creativity, and community

Why this matters:

- *New grads are in a transitional phase — moving from school into work.*
- *It's often hard for them to find community in a new city or workplace.*
- *Without support, their creative passions can fade as career pressures increase. Community helps sustain creativity, belonging, and well-being.*

Interviewees: Bios

Extreme Hobbyist



22 years old

Moved to SF one month ago after graduating university

Full-time operations for a startup

Recruited at Sohn Cafe, SF
Compensation: continued involvement in the project

Consultant



24 years old

Moved to SF >2 years ago after graduating university

Full-time life sciences consultant

Recruited through mutual
Compensation: continued involvement in the project

“Post-grad Life Sucks”
(PLS)



22 years old

Graduated from Stanford in the spring, living in the Bay

Full-time educational coordinator

Recruited through mutuals
Compensation: continued involvement in the project

Interviewees: Rationales

Extreme Hobbyist



- Navigating a **structured major life transition** of building community and balancing work with personal growth
- Offers insight into how young adults explore creativity and enjoyment both within and outside of their jobs
- An **extreme user** that is an outlier compared to an average post-grad, she **throws herself into a multitude of hobbies**

Consultant



- **Typical young professional** with discretionary time and a mix of structured work life
- She **embodies key tensions** (time vs. motivation, casual creativity vs. structured commitment, social entry vs. solo practice)
- Her balanced identity, seeing **creativity as casual enrichment** rather than core identity

“Post-grad Life Sucks” (PLS)



- Post-grad in a transitional phase **with minimal structure**
- Highlights how young adults navigate constant change, building stability, and carving out space for creativity and enjoyment
- Adjusting to both a new professional role and new living environments

Interviewees: Our Roles

Extreme Hobbyist



Interviewer: Emma
Notetaker: Aanika

Interview Type: In-Person
Location: Sohn Cafe, SF

Apparatus: Zoom (recording), Voice
Memos (transcript & audio)

Consultant



Interviewer: Nhu
Notetaker: Emma

Interview Type: Virtual
Location: Zoom

Apparatus: Zoom (meeting &
recording)

“Post-grad Life Sucks” (PLS)



Interviewer: Aanika
Notetaker: Adi

Interview Type: In-Person
Location: Sweet Hall

Apparatus: Zoom (recording)

Interview Questions

Identity Questions

- Tell me a little about yourself - what you do, where you are from?
- What does a typical week look like for you?
- What do you usually do outside of work/school for fun?
- What inspires you?

Creative Background

- Do you consider yourself a creative person? Why or why not?
- When do you prefer to be creative alone vs. with others? Why?

Hobbies & Discovery

- Have you explored any hobbies or side projects recently? If so, can you tell me about some of them?
- Do you ever feel pressure (social, financial, or otherwise) to present yourself as more of a hobbyist (or less of one) than you are?

Goals & Aspirations

- How they would like their life to look like in 5 years related to their work, how they spend their time? etc.
- How do you want others to see your creative side (if at all)?

Interview #1: Extreme Hobbyist

- Cooking, event planning, running, hiking, content creation, painting, DJing
- **Sees herself as “not artistic”** but runs a food Instagram, paints, and DJs — creativity expressed through lifestyle and community
- Uses **tools + structure** (Notion, GCal, Instagram, Partiful, Pinterest) to plan, track goals, and balance her creative pursuits
- Enjoys **community + accountability** (run club, event hosting, weekly check-ins with friends) but also pursues personal projects like decorating her apartment and half-marathon training

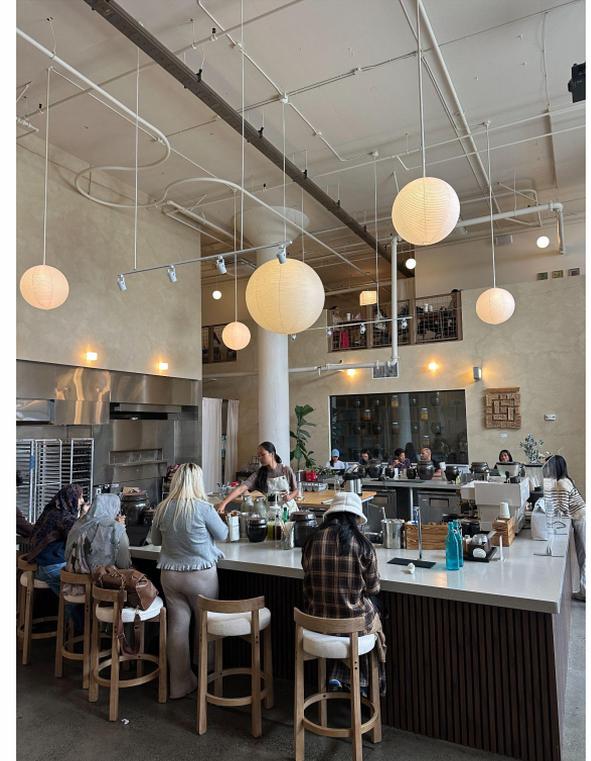
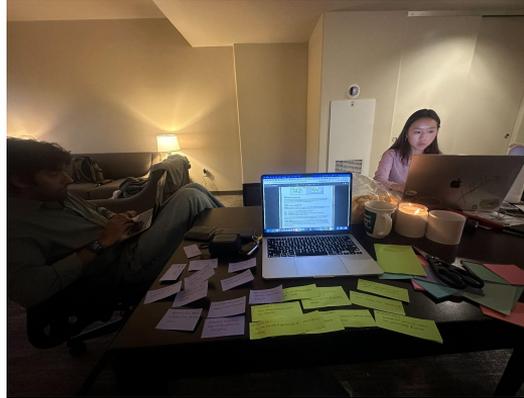
Interview #2: Consultant

- Defines creativity as **remixing inspiration** rather than original invention
- **Structured commitments feel like chores** — dropped ceramics after work got busy; sometimes lacks drive despite having time
- Enjoys **low-barrier**, solo crafting (needlepoint, DIY nails) over structured classes
- Makes friends through multiple channels. Joined a needlepoint club through a friend but prefers solo crafting at home
- Weekdays filled with cooking, walking, gym, shows; weekends at low-key bars/lounges. Finds new places via TikTok, Google, and exploring

Interview #3: Post-grad Life Sucks (PLS)

- Recent grad, now program coordinator for adjusting to 9–5 office life
- Loves creative outlets like junk journaling and watercolor, but **struggles to sustain them without the right space and routine**
- **Perfectionism + environment are barriers**, hobbies feel hard to start/maintain, and she wants intrinsic motivation.
- **Doesn't self-identify as creative** (*“not in the first 20 adjectives”*), yet creates programming, journals, paints, and curates TV/media as social connection
- Navigates tension between productivity guilt vs. restorative downtime, often feeling she “rots,” but realizes creative pursuits could be energizing

Interview Artifacts



Key Quotes

“I like to create things, not come up with ideas. I like to see inspo and do it my own way.”

“People define relationships in economic terms sometimes. Not everything is transactional, but creating a platform for something firms it as transactional and feels less organic.”

“I’m learning to adopt a growth mindset and free myself of my own definition of myself.”

Surprises

Has time and energy, sees themselves as creative but not an idea generator

Authenticity is tied to spontaneity and emotional connection, and tools that formalize or commodify social or creative exchanges may feel stifling

Perfectionism can hold people back from starting or enjoying hobbies, and reframing activities as growth-oriented rather than performance-oriented can ease fear of failure

Empathy Map Deep Dive – Highlights

SAY: “I feel like a failure or a bum,” “Post-grad life sucks,” “I never thought of myself as a creative person”

DO: Laughs self-deprecatingly, sighs when describing postgrad struggles, smiles when recalling creative wins, fidgets when talking about overwhelm

THINK: Believes environment shapes hobbies, equates productivity with self-worth, values growth mindset but struggles with perfectionism

FEEL: Burnt out, guilty when “rotting,” inspired in structured creative spaces, overwhelmed by digital feeds, proud when sharing hobbies with friends

Empathy Map Deep Dive – Key Insights

Insight	Observation/Description	Inference/Takeaway
Rest vs. Guilt	Enjoys downtime but feels shame	Needs reframing of rest as restorative
Creative Identity vs. Behavior	Actively paints/journals but rejects “creative” label	Opportunity to broaden her self-definition
Productivity vs. Play	Wants hobbies for joy yet justifies them only through utility	Tension between fun and “usefulness”
Growth Mindset vs. Perfectionism	Champions flexibility but freezes in solo creative work	Design can scaffold “messy creativity”
Digital Inspiration vs. Overwhelm	TikTok sparks ideas but causes paralysis	Curated, low-noise inspiration could empower her
Environment Dependence	Thrives with stable routines and accessible tools	Portable/low-friction hobby supports could help

Key Learnings

- *Perfectionism is a barrier.* Many people hesitate to start **new skills or hobbies** if they don't feel instantly good at them.
- *Narrow view of "creativity".* People **often don't consider themselves creative**, even when engaging in creative tasks, because they lack depth or mastery
- *Community matters.* Starting a new skill is easier and **more enjoyable with friends**, providing both encouragement and accountability

What's Next?

01

Gender diversity

02

Additional extreme
user

03

Unpack findings

Thank you!

