Doug Binder:

Hi, everybody. Welcome to the InVision Podcast, the Xcast, and here we talk about how to engage with audiences at a deeper level. Today we're actually going to go a little bit broader on that and talk about engaging whole communities on a deeper level. In this case, a company culture, and an InVision mentorship plays a huge part in that. I'm Doug Binder. I'm a Senior Creative Director here at InVision, and I want to introduce Emma Hardy, who I've been in a mentorship relationship with for the last eight months, and we've really had a great experience. And so Emma, welcome to the Xcast.

Emma Hardy:

Wow, thank you. What an intro. Emma Hardy here from New York, Associate Producer, and very curious about the creative world.

Doug Binder:

Well, let's talk about that. InVision started this program beginning of the year, and you joined up. Why did you join and what were you looking for?

Emma Hardy:

Why did I join the mentorship program? I think I'd like to start out with what I think a mentor is, and the what is someone who has far more years of experience in a field, in a profession, in a skillset of something that I'm very interested in or something that just piques my curiosity. And so going back to the why, Doug, I like to lead my life with a beautiful quote from Auntie Mame, and that's a book and a movie for those who don't know. She eloquently said that, "Life is a banquet and most poor suckers are starving to death." And so going off of that, why starve yourself? Get hungry, lead with curiosity, and understand what your interests are. And then take ownership and find someone in that field and befriend them. And that's what I did, and here we are today. So just in summary, I want to learn more in the field of creative, and Doug is InVision Creative. You can't really say InVision Creative without thinking of Doug in my mind, so here we are.

Doug Binder:

Well, I'm glad that I have far, far more years in this role, so thank you for pointing that out. But I think that's actually been a neat part of our relationship is that we are very different in so many ways, but we found so many common areas to work on when it comes to creativity, when it comes to expression, which, when we first started, we were really talking about being confident enough to express yourself in a number of mediums. And I learned quickly that you're passionate about a lot of things. You travel more than anyone I know, except maybe Beyoncé, and you love learning new cultures. You're very curious. All of that has been an inspiration for me. I want to ask, what have you gained from this experience?

Emma Hardy:

Well, first and foremost, this podcast experience is great. I'm a longtime follower and first-time recorder here, so that's a big gain in my bucket. I also have gained a lot of my own professional and personal writing skills with you, and finding my voice throughout that and trying to avoid the cold, corporate jargon that people toss out every now and then, which are [inaudible 00:03:56] for you. But definitely I also have really gained that professional voice and making it my own in an informative and personal way. And for example, the blog that we worked on for Goodr, that was a huge achievement and that was just something that came about. We never even knew that was going to be a published piece, but it came about and it came through this mentorship practice. I can dive in a little bit deeper into what Goodr is if you'd like for the listener.

Doug Binder:

Well, go ahead, because this is definitely one of your passions.

Emma Hardy:

Yeah, a huge passion. Just background, growing up in New York City, I always saw the overfed and the underfed right next door to each other. So finding a liaison in between that to help the underfed with the overfed is a huge passion of mine. I always look out for it. And being a producer on site, you see a lot of food and you see a lot of food going to waste. And so, one day I was listening to a podcast, believe it or not, How I Built This. Hi, Guy Raz, if you're listening. And I was listening to the founder of Goodr, Jasmine Crowe. She is an amazing woman from Atlanta, Georgia, and she was able to be that liaison between huge, huge catering, huge amounts of food wherever it is in the nation, and pick it up and basically deliver it to those in-need communities around that area in a health and safe way.

And I just, no question, got on the phone with a representative there the next day, got on the phone with our lead producer for our internal events, and we were able to integrate it into our own practice internally. And then I was able to write about this experience and that has been sent out to account managers, to clients, just to inspire them and see what we can do when we are onsite in the Las Vegases of the world.

Doug Binder:

Well, yeah, and that was a great exercise, and I know I'm going to call you out here because the first couple of drafts, it was very corporate. It was written by a corporate bot and not Emma, who has a passion for this. And so I hope when we talk about engaging audiences, it's getting through all that business BS and get down to what really matters to you. Whether you're in sales, whether you're in production, whether you're in engineering, is what really touches you. So I got a lot out of that. I wasn't sure I was taking you in the right direction, but I think ultimately it was a really nice piece that you put together.

Emma Hardy:

Thank you. And yeah, that just definitely overall reflects on what I am getting out of this still is weaving my own voice into the work that I do.

Doug Binder:

Cool. And I want to talk about the work that you do and how this plays into it. And this is our question about tips that we've learned, advice that we've talked about together. And I'm going to start by saying that what I learned recently is a mentorship is very different from an apprenticeship. An apprenticeship, you are training, you're trying to get better in your job, whereas I think a mentorship is more about where you are in life and using your job or your day-to-day to get to where you want to go. So I'm curious what kind of tips you would share from this experience.

Emma Hardy:

Yeah, definitely, just going back to my favorite quote, don't starve yourself from the banquet of life. So listen to yourself. I encourage you even just to pause this right now and write down three to five things that you are interested in, you're curious about. And then think about the people within those fields or think about the people that might know someone in those fields. Just take ownership of your own curiosity, and you'll be amazed where that will go. So that's my one piece of advice, just to do your own homework. And then when you do meet that person and they have the time, hopefully, and they have the willingness, hopefully, I think that it's really important to set ground rules. And this is what Doug and I did. Non-negotiables, have commitment, meet once or twice every week or biweekly, and even respect it as if it's your own client. Come to the meeting with an agenda, leave the meeting with some homework, actually respect that work. And even though it is voluntary, it will really benefit you in the long run.

Doug Binder:

Yeah, beautifully said. And I think when we came to that pact that we made was, "Yeah, we're going to commit to this, but we're going to be honest." And so this is a safe place, and I think we've been really candid with each other, and that's helped a lot. Trust is so important, and that's the foundation of this. All right. Aha moments.

Emma Hardy:

Aha moments. So many. I think that definitely the quote, "A gift that keeps on giving," is the aha moment for me right now. We have a good, solid foundation that we've been working on and things that we've achieved or myself have achieved have not even been written in the script. We've just trusted the process along the way, was able to make a blog, was able to have this podcast, was able to find my voice throughout things that I'm doing, and it just keeps giving back to me. And even just recently, it's a two-way street here, everyone. So I gave Doug a little bit of homework and he went off to Cleveland, Ohio on a fun little trip with his friends, and I asked him to give me a little writeup about how that went.

He came back with a really cool infographic and I even now want to bring it to my own client experience. In the next month I'm going to be doing a world tour, and I feel like an infographic will be pretty interesting to see the top findings of each country and city. And that is just an internal project that I'll do, but who knows where that could go.

Doug Binder:

Yeah, I can't wait to find out.

Emma Hardy:

What about you?

Doug Binder:

[inaudible 00:10:36] was seeing in you things that I went through a while back when I was your age. And it was a different time. Obviously we have different backgrounds and we're completely different, but we have so much in common when it comes to just navigating everything in the world, whether it's career, whether it's professional, whether it's personal. And I hope that some of my advice, maybe 20% was useful because, again, this seems to be a universal condition and I'm glad that we were able to meet on that. I definitely learned a lot. And again, I appreciate that, Emma. Emma, before we go, I'd love to hear more about one of your latest passions that you'd shared with the company, Alex's Lemonade Stand.

Emma Hardy:

Yes, thank you for this plug. I like to put my hands in a little bit of everything at InVision, so on behalf of the Culture Club, I am partnering us with Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. They are all over the nation. They're an amazing foundation raising money for childhood cancer. We actually have partnered with them 12 years ago, but that was only in New York. So now we're involving our three offices, one in San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. And also those folks who are remote, online, can participate wherever they are. The business model is beautifully simple and it is a lemonade stand. You don't even charge for the lemonade. You just gently nudge towards the donation page and it's already kicking off, and it's not even September yet. And this was made by Alex herself. So unfortunately she was diagnosed at four years old. She fought a huge fight for four more years, and throughout that time, she really wanted to just spread the word, get support for the doctors and the research. And all she did was a lemonade stand, and here we are. It's been amazing.

Doug Binder:

Well, that's fantastic. Thank you for bringing it to the company and to the communities. At the risk of unraveling all of this, did you know that Culture Club was a band? Every time you're going to hear Karma Chameleon from now on, you're going to think of this.

Emma Hardy:

That's not the song that's like, (singing)-

Doug Binder:

You know that.

Rob:

She does know that.

Emma Hardy:

Okay. We need to record this because that-

Doug Binder:

Are we still recording? We're still recording, right, Rob?

Rob:

We're still recording.

Emma Hardy:

Can we please get this? Because I love that song and I put that song on all the time. We could put the song in the background too. We should dance to it.

Doug Binder:

Anything else you want to add as we close out?

Emma Hardy:

Don't starve to death, everyone. Don't let your life's banquet... Don't starve. Get curious. Listen to what you want to learn, whatever it is. The world is your oyster if you can make it. That's it. That's all.

Doug Binder:

Well said. Well, everyone, thank you for joining us for this Xcast. I know that there'll be more episodes to come, so stay tuned for that. Mentee Emma, great to see you, and look forward to talking to you again soon.

Emma Hardy:

Thank you, Doug. Thank you. Doug's the best. Shout out.