UCL Remarkable Stories

Season 2 episode 4 - Volodymyr and volunteering

Transcript

**Gia Lulic**

We are UCL. And these are our remarkable stories. I'm Gia Lulic and I work in the UCL organisational development team. In each episode, I will be in conversations with the UCL guest as they share with us their remarkable stories, experiences and life lessons. Today, I'm excited to be speaking to Volodymyr Kyselov, a third year student of Mechanical Engineering at UCL and co-president of project impacting and inspiring initiative and focusing on creating technology to assist with not only aiding people with a disability, but also developing their skills in the process. Hi, Vladimir, and thank you so much for taking the time to chat to us today.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

No worries, my pleasure.

**Gia Lulic**

So why don't we start by reflecting back on your journey to where you are now. I'm a UCL student of mechanical engineering and a leading Project impactive.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

So I was born in Crimea, Ukraine, considerably small study of 500,000 people. Then my family moved around, I moved to Kiev, I lived in the capital, I moved to Macedonia, I kind of went to grew up to Georgia, I lived in Kazakhstan, and now I'm finally in the UK. So it's kind of a mix of cultures, even though it's like all in the same geographical region. Every place is absolutely different from the previous one.

**Gia Lulic**

I understand that through all of your all the places that you've been to, you've been, you've always kind of been involved in community work. I wonder what what sort of what is that driving you whether that's like a personality thing, or whether it is also impacted by the journey you've had.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think, a mix of both, because at every place, I had amazing support. So when I lived in Ukraine, my parents, I remember, it's a core memory when I was young, like every Saturday, we not every Saturday, there was like a specific Saturday when we'd go and clean up the parks clean up the forest, and just like get all the trash out of there. And I remember it, I didn't think much of it now. But I see how impactful It was later on. Because then when I moved to Macedonia, I did not know any English when it came to an American school. So and the first, one of the first words that I learned was sustainability. And I was shocked by that word, because I like it was providing a better future for the people who come after us, right. And I constantly just continued saying the word and the school also encouraged, like we had Green Day, and it moved on further when I got older. When I moved back to Ukraine, Kazakhstan, what I could already start my own projects kind of help out in a bigger way. And especially in London, there are so many opportunities that I could not not be involved. So I decided to kind of try everything and help out as much as I can.

**Gia Lulic**

Wow, it sounds like it's kind of been like a theme for you along your whole journey. What would you say has been the most inspiring volunteering project that you've had so far? And why did it kind of stand out from the rest?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think a great volunteering project is what I'm doing right now, Project Impactive, if anyone doesn't know, it's, we're a student led, UCL based project, which is tackling problems that disabled people face every day. So we have 30 engineers, plenty committee members, 10 or 20, committee members. And we're constantly working on one of two things, either outreach, so working with school kids, to kind of promote engineering, working with UCL, and other university students to kind of promote awareness about disability, and especially engineering and disability. So when someone makes a product, it's compatible for all of us, not just a certain category. And the other part is obviously actually building the project. And I think that is the most rewarding thing ever, because you have these people who are facing some kind of issue. And you kind of help them alleviate that in the real world. So it's actually bringing real help to people. But also, I think the absolute top reward that I got one was when in first year I was the engineering tutor at UCL, and what it entails is working with underprivileged schools in East London, and your 12 year 11 year 13 students and working on their a levels, do you see a CDs and kind of their motivation to go further into university. Because those kids were very smart, they're very intelligent, but they just didn't have the same amount of support. So for example, I did or other students did, and they just needed that push. And it was great to see them for example, from the start of the term when they their predicted grades were not great and then kind of working with them. So they're excited by engineering. They're excited by physics. They're excited by math. And by the end of the term when they want to go to university, they want to make a change, and they want to go forward.

**Gia Lulic**

And that's amazing. And just just to touch on that, like, it sounds like you're contributing in a really, really hands on way. What's the part that really energises you about the whole process?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think I'm a very social person. So I think the most what I'm most energised by is meeting other people and actually communicating with the people you're helping communicate with the people that are so with other volunteers that are also helping, it's great to kind of work together. And this kind of helping other end when you finish a project. It's an amazing feeling, obviously, but also the unfortunate opportunity to kind of go further thinking, what's the next step, seeing the breadth of opportunities, because whatever you're finished, you're not really finished, you can always kind of like go an extra mile. And thankfully, UCL and all my previous schools have a lot of great students, passionate people who are willing to spend their time to help others.

**Gia Lulic**

It's such they're both such inspiring projects and so important for our UCL community. Tell us a little bit about how you got involved in both of those.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

So for the engineering tutor project in high school, last year of high school, I decided to kind of find the peer mentoring peer mentoring club. So basically what it was was Sixth Form students helping out students and year six year seven year or eight, who have trouble adjusting to kind of like the big leap from junior school to middle school. And during that I, the school that I was Haileybury Almaty, it gave me a lot of support. And I understood that seeing how the students kind of again transformed, like, their social skills their, you know, grades, it inspired me. So in year one, when I saw that UCL was recruiting kind of engineering tutors, I immediately went on for that. And that was one of the best experience, I met a lot of UCL students who were absolutely amazing. We took part in the Big Bang fair, which was basically 300,000 kids, and Birmingham, and it was a fair, and they don't know what they want to do. And they want to get expired. So a lot of different companies go there to kind of showcase engineering to showcase what they can do in the future. And they brought us kind of to show that, yes, we're engineers and engineering students, and what is there for other people for kind of like young students to explore? What can they do? And it was amazing, because so many different kids, they had 1000 questions, and it was so amazing, kind of to be able to answer them. And just seeing the spark in their eyes after like, they see a project that we worked on, or they see a project that someone else has worked on that I can say something about it was absolutely amazing. So UCL absolutely advertise those opportunities. And I think the main thing that there is like if someone can learn something is go for any opportunity to get you think you like, even if there's a slight chance that you like it, go for it, and you won't regret it. And as part of projects, in fact, it was founded four years ago, and the project impacted leaders that were there, they were amazing. And they were constantly pushing the project forward. And I kind of got to know them and then involved in the project.

**Gia Lulic**

And how, what role do you play in at the moment?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

So I joined as finance and our GS director last academic here. And it was well finance and outreach, kind of allocating the budget to different projects, allocating the budget to our events and outreach, working with our different external partners, which provide us with projects and other partners, for example, schools we want to have outreach with. And this year, I've transitioned into co president with Emily Baker. And so both of us are kind of overseeing the project. So we've restructured the committee so that we have like clear roles. We have the Operations Director of external relations, we have outreach, we have marketing, and kind of bringing them all together. And first of all, with COVID. There's a big transition and work we cannot work in person on the project. So we have to see what we can actually do. So after hosting the hackathon and October this year, one of the groups came out with an amazing project which is predict predictive text for speech impaired people. So basically, if someone has a speech impairment issue, they can look on their phone, they talk and the phone kind of uses AI to predict what the next word is going to be for them to help them. So and this is one of the projects that we're starting this year, we never done a software project. So we're kind of recruiting engineers seeing what it would be like, and absolutely doing more and more outreach events with different schools across London. And the team has been absolutely amazing. Everyone is pushing it 150%. And it's very exciting just to be able to see what every individual person is doing in the team.

**Gia Lulic**

It sounds like such an incredible way to even network and get in touch with some really inspiring and energised people who want to do like amazing work. So even in that way, it just sounds like a really good opportunity. Um, what would you say was some challenges that you've come across so far, in this particular project, or just in any that you've kind of been involved in?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think the biggest challenge for right now is communication. Because what you could do last year, what you can do two years ago was, you set up a room, you have people come in the meeting, everyone kind of focuses brainstorms. And you have like, it's just easier to connect with people face to face. And this year, I think it's harder to keep track of any projects that we're doing to, for people to stay focused on what they're doing. Just because there is no kind of face-to-face experience. So people want to work. But sometimes they do not have the guidance or the direction or they're just caught up in Union work. So I think it's very important to cut like, the biggest challenge is communication. And I think it's very important to kind of have an open channel and kind of a very good flow. So if there's, if it's a project, think about in the beginning, think about how are you going to direct it? How is it going to go in what direction and kind of what can go wrong, will go wrong this year? So just focus on kind of thinking about the mistakes before they happen?

**Gia Lulic**

Do you feel like this situation has kind of like permanently changed the field of volunteering in any way?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Absolutely not, people still want to volunteer, like everyone is, I think this year at actually increased the volunteering capacity, every, every, like, it's a difficult time for most people around the globe. And the people who can help have a bigger impact on everyone. And they want to help even more. So when you reach out to anyone, when you email them, everyone is even more excited, I would say this year to kind of get cracking, get to work and help out in any way they can. So I think when we come out of this, we're going to have additional energy, everyone is going to be re energised, revitalised, and kind of moving forward.

**Gia Lulic**

So you mentioned that your parents have been there played a part in your involvement in volunteering and contributing in this kind of way. Speak to us a bit about that.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Well, I mean, absolutely, I think I've been privileged enough to be raised in a happy family, I got an education. And I can move on. And I owe everything of that to my parents. And I think one important focus that they put from the start in life, that it's important to do something, first of all, that you're passionate about, don't do something just to tick a box. If you want to get involved in something, go to the finish line, but get involved in stuff that you care about. Because if you don't care, you're not going to produce a good work, good work anyways. And I think my mom especially she cares very much about sustainability. And like kind of this push from a young age, they kind of focused me on sustainability, like focusing on the problems that we maybe won't face but the people who come after us will definitely face. So kind of that forward thinking. And my dad, he is an athlete, he was an athlete, so he always kind of push for the sport for the Healthy Mind, healthy body kind of agenda. And I think that's more of like where I'm just very active, like, just want to do something constantly energised and pushing forward and forward and forward.

**Gia Lulic**

And what do you have some long-term ambitions in regards to your work? Or are you kind of just taking it day by day at this time?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I definitely have ambitions but those ambitions are more like vague because I, I don't think I can commit to just like one sector one field and that's it. So previously, if you take a look at just what I've done before, so I'm in mechanical engineering with business finance students, so it's both mechanical engineering and finance than I did previously internships in the past. elements of Ukraine, which was heavily government-based role, then first year I did a research internship at Imperial. And where I kind of, modelled the mechanical properties and viscoelastic properties of the brain, which is something I've never done before, then I kind of helped out, obviously, with volunteering. And then I got into public audit with Deloitte, which was finance, again, something I've never done before. So I really enjoyed having those, like snapshots of opportunities, and kind of extracting the maximum I can get from that. And then I think as soon as I finished my degree, I'll have a much clearer picture of what I want to do, and where I can do it best.

**Gia Lulic**

I wonder if there was anyone along your journey that really influenced you or really impacted you or kind of made you want to aspire? For more?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

That's a good question. Because I think if we're talking about school time, I was extremely lucky with my teachers, because even when I started, so I went to Ukrainian school in grade one, I did not know Ukrainian. I knew Russian. So the teacher kind of like taught me Ukrainian in one year was amazing. Then I went to an English school, I did not know English, the teacher taught me English. And so then, every, every time I switched schools, there was something new. So I don't know what the teacher saw something in me and they kind of wanted to foster it. I think that's the most important thing anyone can do is kind of foster the ambition or foster any thing you see that can grow out of the person, which is I'm very grateful for that. And in terms of any particular person, I'm not actually sure, because my family has been a great influence. Literally, everyone in my family has been so supportive, my grandma, my aunts, my brother, who was constantly pushing forward, but I don't think I can like pinpoint on just one person to say that's been the biggest influence. I think, if we're talking about just like general people in the world, one of my favourite books is “The Undoing Project” by Michael Lewis, it's a friendship that changed the world. It's about Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, Daniel Kahneman is the Nobel Prize winner. So they have this book “Thinking Fast and Slow”, but it's a Nobel Prize winning book about how we make our choices. So basically, what makes you tick, what makes you choose Pepsi or coke? It's amazing. But the book that I love is “The Friendship which Changed the World” which is their story. So I think almost Amos Tversky, he always was with Daniel Kahneman until he died. And yeah, but I find him very inspiring. He fled France during World War Two, he was Jewish, he went to Israel, he kind of looked helped to set up the country there and moved shifted to behavioural economics and psychology. And just the story is so amazing of how first of all these two scientists met each other, and how they literally change the world around us.

**Gia Lulic**

Mm hmm. How do you think that? In having travelled the world and having been in so many different places? How do you feel like that's been an advantage for you?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Well, I think a lot of people when they come into work, when they come to university projects, whatever they come in, and they think that they're What idea is the best idea, and no one else can come up with this. But in fact, I think in Russian, there was a saying, and the dis in a dispute, the truth is born and a dispute doesn't have to be a fist fight, right? It has, it can be like a civilised discussion. And I think that is absolutely true. I've never been a part of a project where some person came up and this like, this is my idea. We're doing this End of story. And that was a great idea. No, always you come in. And I think the best thing to do is everyone shares their ideas. And what you will come up with the ideal project, so to say, will always be a mix of not two, but three or four different ideas. So I think what it has taught me is that look at different points of view, kind of look, trust other people that they also have experience in the field that you're working with, and work with them work with other people and learn from them.

**Gia Lulic**

It's so interesting, because there was a famous person that said, like a real mark of intelligence is being able to like hold two conflicting ideas and you know, and not not kind of Judge either one. So I guess, you know, having worked with so many different people in so many different countries on so many different things. Expand your mind in a way that you're able to, like hold conflicting ideas and perspectives and not look at that as like a disadvantage or an obstacle, which I think, you know, it sounds like that's that's made it really easy for you to get involved in these kinds of projects and really thrive. So Volodymyr, I understand that you did an internship in the Ukrainian Parliament and the department, it was an anti-corruption, division of anti-corruption. Tell us a bit about that. And what you learned in that very interesting sounding role.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Yeah, so it basically I was the intern assistant to the head of the anti-corruption Committee, which was basically everyone in Parliament is divided into committees. And those committees focus on dealing with complaints, any citizen requests, any kind of new legislation, old legislation regarding? Well, in my case, the fight against corruption, and Ukraine is a very bureaucratic country with a decent amount of corruption. So it was it was a lot of work. And I think what impacted me the most was seeing the letters from actual people. So you'd have like these cases where people taste corruption, the anti-corruption organs, authority, sorry, national authorities, where the police did nothing, so they would complain to well, directly to the head of anti-corruption committee. So it was insane. Because you would see this, these people who are saying one of the letters that I had is from an Army veteran who said, I'm gonna light myself on fire in front of the city hall, because I don't have any pension, I don't have my money, because somehow it's funnelled through the system, I can get to it. And you read this letter, which is incredibly detailed, you understand the story, and you go talk to the other Assistants, and they're like, okay, just like, throw it out, whatever. Get a give it to the police, and they're going to do something, and they're not going to do anything, because it's just a load. So I tried to kind of make as big of an impact as I could. So and I think that people did not expect that, because I looked at the legislation, I looked at what we can do what we cannot do, and kind of redirected it to a different authorities, but then also checked up. So I actually called the people who wrote, they were not expecting a call they thought that the system was broken inherently. And no one was ever going to touch that letter, or, and no one is ever going to work on that letter. But if you want to, you can. And I think after a couple of calls, after a couple of calls to the police, the cases were going through faster and faster. Everyone was kind of working. And the people after that they, they were so thankful, so incredibly thankful, although I just did my job. Like it wasn't that much. It was the bare minimum that government authorities should do. And I think what's the most important thing about this is that government isn't bureaucracy, any governments, the UK, Ukraine, all around the world. But if you push it, and works, if you kind of directed on the right track, it will go, it takes time to heat up, but it will.

**Gia Lulic**

It's so fascinating because I've worked for the federal government in Australia. And I feel like one of the issues with working for a bureaucracy is that everything's very rigid, and like really heavily regulated. And I myself felt like I couldn't really make too much of an impact. I was kind of only doing what was required of me, but it's really, really interesting to hear that actually, you can take initiative, and I you know, it's not it's not maybe as rigid as it first comes across.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Oh, absolutely. I think if you want to make an impact, especially in Ukraine, and Ukraine has a lot of momentum right now for government reforms for change, and for moving forward. And I think it's an incredible opportunity in time to do that change. To not just say, Yes, okay, let's cut down the tariffs. Let's help the population and say popular slogans. But if you want to do the work, you absolutely can. And every step of the way, there will be people who say no, we don't want this. This is way too much extra work for us. Why would we do this, but in the government's in work in volunteering, I think people want to do good inherently. They want to help you out. So I think it's about finding those people and kind of sticking with them all the way.

**Gia Lulic**

And where do you think it's easier to make an impact through sort of government bodies or through the private sector,

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think it should be a mix of both. So the government should obviously help out. But if the people don't want change, no one's going to accept it. So the company should really approach their company development, with a look at social responsibility, corporate responsibility. So when someone is making a new factory, think about, obviously, you're creating 500 jobs. But think about the effects on the environment, long term health effects of everyone else. So I think a very good example, as, for example, is, for example, Ukraine has a very large coal industry, mining coal, burning coal for heat, which is horrible for the environment, horrible for health, but it's cheap. And right now, I think there's a great momentum for change into renewable energy sources, or even gas natural gas, because it's way less carbon emissions. And I think it's a great example, where the government promotes the green tyres for electricity, where the government subsidises some of the costs for the citizens. So even though it has a higher initial cost, the citizens don't pay it. And the companies in turn, they have to invest in this, they have to create jobs. So what even though a lot of jobs from coal mining are lost 1000s and 1000s of jobs are being redirected into this renewable energy. And it's a cycle that's gonna go forward. So when one industry kind of shuts down, we see that it's bad, the government should promote the companies to invest in that. And, yeah, I think it's obviously the government cannot do anything on its own companies cannot do anything on their own, it should be a mix.

**Gia Lulic**

So if there was one impact that you could have on your peers, what would it be at this stage? And why and how you kind of working towards that right now?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Obviously, they impact that the ideal impact is that everyone does everything for the benefit of society as a whole. So no one is being egocentric. But that's impossible. And I think if someone listens to the podcast, and there's one thing that they come out from is try everything. If you like something, try it out. If you think you can make a change, why not try, like it literally hurt does, it does not hurt, but it can provide a huge benefit to people around you. And it may lead to a future and something that you've never thought of working.

**Gia Lulic**

What would you say, out of all your achievements this far, what is the thing you're most proud of? It could be anything it could be to do with the project, or it could be something to do with your personal life, anything.

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think it's very airy, and to like, judge my achievements are anything because they change throughout life. So, for example, and Ukraine, when I was in grade nine, I was very proud of working with Academy of Sciences in Ukraine on projects regarding again, sustainability, we're talking about the future of nuclear energy. And it was amazing because I worked with Professor and at that age, what could anyone else ask for, if you wanted to kind of work on that? So then, and high school, I was very proud to be head boy and kind of help students all around the school with like their own cultural identity. We worked on establishing speaking clubs, cultural events, working on develop, because a lot of people international schools, they're kind of third, international kids, they do not associate with any card, culture or nation in particular. So it is very important to kind of foster that. Yeah, you're from somewhere you have people you can relate to. And that's your history. And I think, to this day, the most important like, Great thing I've worked on was at Imperial College, because it was working on an EU supported project Eden 2020 which battles cancer, brain tumours, and any other traumatic brain injury. I think that is going to have the most impact on the world. And I'm genuinely proud of it. It was an exciting project to work on. And everyone around me was incredibly supportive. My supervisor Andrea Bernardini, he was genuinely amazing. Any problem that I had, he would come explain it to me, not do it for me, just explain. And then I could kind of move on. And I know like two years later that it had an impact on the project and it will have an impact on people's life in the future.

**Gia Lulic**

That's amazing. It sounds like you still have really strong ties with Ukraine. And it also sounds like, as you said, there's a lot of momentum there about kind of forward-thinking kind of ideas and implementing things that haven't been done before. Do you think adversity plays a role in driving people forward?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Absolutely. I think that if any crisis events in the history of humankind, there are people who come out better, and there are people who come out worse, I'm not talking just economically, maybe it's personal development, whatever it is for a person, but also for our country. So if there is like a crisis and adverse events, as you said, The country has two ways to go, they can either, well, we're done and kind of stay on the track of that they're going continuously losing population, losing economy, or they can understand, yes, what we can do now, what do we have now is bad, but we can create something positive out of it. So if we invest, if we work, we're gonna exit, we're at a better place than we started at.

**Gia Lulic**

And what, just to keep it in the present times? How do you think the whole health pandemic? What are some of the advantages that we're going to gain from this situation? What has been your experience,

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Everyone, I, the best thing that comes out of this horrible pandemic is that people are finally focusing on health. I think, well, when you go through life, you're going through different stages of life. And I cannot say for all of them, but it's first education, work, family, those are very important. Absolutely. But ever, like it's missing health. So people get to even 4050 years old, and they have real bad health, they cannot exercise, they cannot move forward in their lives. And they're like life threatening conditions. But with the pandemic, everyone is ultra-focused on health, ultra-focused on fitness, because we know that diabetes, or overweight, being overweight, can kind of call severe COVID. So people are focusing on staying fit, staying in shape, and governments around the world are promoting it. So I think one thing that was going to come out more money to the NHS, as we have seen, and that's going to happen all across the world, because every government is going to be like, we weren't prepared, let's be prepared, and how get more doctors get more nurses put more attention to social care. And I think that's the best thing that can happen, people are going to be more active. And people being more active means less stress, more life expectancy. And I just hope that everyone kind of focuses on health after this, even after COVID is all over.

**Gia Lulic**

Again, very interesting perspective, I think we've all talked to so many people about this situation and tried to make sense of it. And again, that's a really fresh perspective on that I haven't actually heard before. So thanks for sharing that I think that's going to be a new one for a lot of people. Because it's so easy to focus on all the stuff that we can't do and all the stuff that's negative. Um, what is the vision for Project impactive?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I think for this year, it's focusing on finishing our current projects and making sure that we still stay in touch with our partners, but for the future is branching out. First of all, we've done a lot of outreach work. And I think it's important to keep it going. Just next week, we're doing an accessibility challenge for sixth forms, because they're on half term. So we're getting like three days for them to work on engineering projects. We're going to give them mentors, we're going to give them software. And we're going to see what comes out of that because I think that's one of the things that inspires people is work. So they're going to have a project to work on, they're going to have the support. And I think it's going to be very interesting to see what happens afterwards. So I in the future, what I think project impact will be is, first of all kind of branching out not only UCL because currently we can only work with the UCL students who can only work with students from London. And that is kind of like a constraint. But everyone wants to get involved, because it's an exciting project. So every week we have people coming to us saying, Oh, can we collaborate with you? Can we work on this with you? We'd love to help. And I think kind of getting all of that experience from different sides and putting into Project Impactive will immerse the project even further. Not only outreach not only engineering programmes, but kind of software, like day-to-day problems of disabled people.

**Gia Lulic**

Wow. And have you had any feedback about the impact it's had so far?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Yeah, absolutely, every single project that we have, you can look at our website projectimpactive.co.uk, shameless plug. But you can see like every project that we've done with the people who are using it now, and the projects, we're updating the projects that we're doing right now. And it's so wide array of people, because not all disabilities are visible, obviously. So you would never expect that project. In fact, it deals with all of these problems, problems. I was talking to my grandma about it earlier. And she was just talking about the problems, for example, for elderly people that they have, with everyday problems that they have. And she was talking about one engineering solution in particular, I was like, Yeah, we did that, check out our website. And she was like, Oh, really? And so you would never expect the breadth of work that we do. But the engineers are absolutely amazing. They're putting in so much hard work. So yeah.

**Gia Lulic**

Wow, that's so inspiring. And for our students who are listening to this podcast, they're probably wondering how, as a student of mechanical engineering, you're managing to kind of fit in all of this, like, how do you manage your time, your priorities? How do you keep it all going?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

I mean, actually, with COVID, it's pretty flexible. Because you can watch lectures at your own time, you only have to go to the seminars. So you kind of have these, like fixed blocks that you follow. And then you just look at what the priority is. So if you have a deadline on Friday, obviously to it, like you could do the work on Monday, and then you have like a stress free week. And you can kind of build your time around that. But also, I think it's important to spend the time on what you're enjoying doing what you enjoy doing. So for example, if you start to work, and it just doesn't flow, okay, do something else and come back to it later. But don't push yourself to doing something that you don't want to do. Obviously, you have to do some things in the reader that you don't like, but kind of get the most of the time that you have.

**Gia Lulic**

Such an important message. And I think, again, one we all need to hear that when something's not going, don't push up, maybe just take a break and come back, come back to it. How important is focus when you're trying to get a lot of different things done?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

Absolutely. I think focus is one of the most important things because if you're unfocused, like everyone has read a book, when they're zoned out, five minutes later, they don't understand what they read, and kind of apply that to real worlds, apply that to educational life that's work, you don't want to work for five minutes, and then not understand what you did for five minutes. So I think it's important to always remember why you're doing what you're doing. And also to take breaks, it's impossible to work 20 hours a day. So if you need a break, take a break, and then go back with new energy, new thoughts, new ideas on work, work, work.

**Gia Lulic**

Amazing. And what's the thing that's most exciting to you now, at this moment?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

The future, the uncertainty I think is like amazing, at some point, because we don't know what's gonna come in April, we don't know what's gonna come in May. And that's horrible for many people. But I think it can also be an opportunity, it's an opportunity to create something new, it's an opportunity to try something, and I'm graduating soon. So it's an opportunity to kind of build start building a career, which will have a big impact on, there's actually, I'm going to deal with it, there's like a theory that every person has two worlds, the small worlds and a big world, a small world is their family, their friends, their local community. And the big world is the society as a whole the world and history. And there's a theory that you can only delegates kind of your work into one of those worlds, if you focus on your small world, you're going to have an amazing family, you're going to have this society around you. But if you focus on the big world, you're kind of brushing off the smaller worlds and focusing on the big things. And I think it's going to be exciting personally for me in the future to see kind of which worlds I go and do I stay with the small worlds or do I go for the big world? It has its own drawbacks. And I think that's exciting to see that more and more we can now mix those worlds and kind of not lose out on our personal life while also help going for a bigger cause.

**Gia Lulic**

Well, I was just gonna say which, do you think it's not possible to have both?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

It used to not be, it like, I just- I don't know anything. I'm just a student. But like, what I have seen is that people obviously around me who are successful, they had to, in some form, kind of substitute one for the other. But now as we're spending more time with our loved ones, with family, with friends at home while we're working, and we can work with them, I think more and more, we can achieve better things together and kind of mix those worlds. So hopefully, in the end, it's going to be one, one big world.

**Gia Lulic**

Do you have any kind of like self-care rituals that you’re applying at the moment? Like, meditation, or, that are really helping you along?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

So, I do two things. One thing that I did like years now since high school, every day before sleep I have a piece of paper with a pen next to my bed and I write down all the things I wanna do tomorrow. It’s, like, they’re general but very specific at the same time. If I wanna work out, just work out, if there’s this particular thing I need to spend time on, I have all these thoughts before going to sleep, I just put them on a piece of paper so there’s no stress, there’s no anxiety, and I wake up and I understand what I need to do. And the other thing is sport and exercise, I think, I cannot overstress enough how much running is good for your mental health. If you’re exhausted from work, if you’re tired, go for a run. If you’re physically tired, go for a walk. It’s just so refreshing and when you come back, you like feel the energy where you feel the ideas go through your brain, and just as kind of an opportunity to like, okay, chill out half an hour forty minutes, then go back.

**Gia Lulic**

Wow, I’m very inspired by your story and also your wisdom. There’s a lot of things I’d wanna dwell into but, we’ve kinda run out of time. So, my final question is um, you know, at this stage looking back, what would you have perhaps told a younger version of yourself back when you were in Ukraine just sort of like starting out?

**Volodymyr Kyselov**

That’s uh, with hard work- I mean I don’t wanna be like cliché but, with hard work, you study, you work, you enjoy yourself, there’s not much more to it. Just don’t stress. I think stress is the worst thing ever and because, everyone has like first day of school, first day of work, like this kind of pre-examined anxiety. And if you remove that anxiety, it becomes so much better. And there’s like of moments for stress and, because in everyone’s life, if you kinda focus on the bigger picture, that low-term anxiety goes away. So I’d just say, chill out for a second. You’re gonna work, you’re gonna do well in your education, you’re gonna have nice things ahead of you. Don’t stress so much about it. Find what you love doing, and do it. Stay in touch with the people you enjoy spending time with, and don’t stress too much. It’s gonna be fine.