I’ll synthesize my summer internship experience at Seedfund into a few anecdotes and lessons learned. I had the privilege of having an incredibly exciting summer working alongside a very small team to understand the tech and startup scene in India, and the following are observations I intend on carrying forward with me both personally and professionally:

1) **What does a good pitch look like?** I was able to sit in on dozens of in-person as well as phone pitches with entrepreneurs, and by the end of the summer had a much better understanding of the art of both giving and receiving a startup pitch. I could write an entire essay on this topic alone, but my main takeaways include:
   - Tell a story: it’s more engaging than a perfectly designed presentation or impeccable financial spreadsheets
   - Know your numbers cold: user engagement, customer acquisition, and even funding requirements, it’s always clear which founders live and breathe this data, and which don’t
   - Be prepared for challenging questions and having your business plan broken down, stay calm, humble, focused, and realistic

2) **How does a venture capitalist maintain a pulse on the market?** My big, final project for Seedfund involved a large data analysis project about the firm’s deal flow from the last few years. The deals Seedfund was receiving exactly mirrored the market in terms of industry and technology trends, and in this space, understanding these nuances is what allows a VC to identify the needle in the haystack. I saw how my bosses took meetings simply to learn more about what’s going on in the market and educate themselves, which I learned is very important in the VC realm.

3) **What does a healthy and thriving investor/startup relationship look like?** I was lucky enough to be able to participate in board meetings with a few of Seedfund’s portfolio investments, and I got to see firsthand interactions between investors and investees. I remember a specific instance in which a founder had to make a decision about whether or not to include a particular slide in a presentation for his advisor that was to begin in 15 minutes. The Seedfund investor and startup founder disagreed on whether or not the slide (which held sensitive information) needed to be included, but the investor let the founder make his own decision and stand by it, even though it did not align with his personal choice. I admired this and consider it a model for a relationship built on mutual respect between investors and startups.

4) **What is the best way to get into venture capital?** One of my favorite things about Seedfund was the massively connected tech network that they are a part of in India, as Seedfund has been around for about 15 years. I had the opportunity to be connected for a coffee meeting with a venture capitalist at Lightbox Ventures, and something he said really stuck with me. He said the best way to be hired by a VC would be after you’ve been intimately involved with the growth of an early-stage startup, regardless of whether it was successful or not. If you have that experience and a deep expertise in a specific skill, you can provide real value to portfolio companies, which is what the best VC’s are all about.