



Stanford eCorner

Taking Risks

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Launching a start-up is not a rational act. And Vinod Khosla, a partner in Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers and former Sun Microsystems CEO, believes that success only comes from those who are foolish enough to think unreasonably. Entrepreneurs need to stretch themselves beyond convention and constraint to reach something extraordinary.



Transcript

How old were you, 27? Yes, 27. And how old was Bill and Andy and Scott? We were all about the same age, all within a year of each other. Yeah, okay. So it's says, "We had big dreams." When I was hang gliding, I remember seeing this motto "Success comes to those that dare to dream dreams and are foolish enough to try and make them come true." You have to try to do something extraordinary because unless you try something extraordinary, you won't ever do anything extraordinary. Did you really say that or is that... Absolutely. Yeah. No, no... Do you still believe in that philosophy or... I absolutely still believe in that. All of that by the way is, I don't hang glide anymore...

Let's just say you still hang glide. I don't hang glide anymore though I am going to pick it back again this summer or at least pick up sky diving if not, the hang gliding. My wife, I'd make a mistake of taking my wife skydiving and she forbid me from ever going skydiving again. I just like to see the Kleiner Perkins partners faces when you tell them that. Well, I have a stronger reason. My daughter just going 12 now, who's just going 12 wanted to learn skydiving and 12 is the minimum age so I promised her I'd take her. My wife can't say no. You always want a good excuse to do what you really want to do but that quote is really important because you really need to stretch, you know, like I said, entrepreneurs don't have the right to do what they get. It's not a right. It's not even reasonable and so trying something extraordinary is really important.

And then what's equally important is this level of foolishness that that quote talks about. That's not my word. It was at the end of this movie on hang gliding because if you sort of do the rational thing, you won't doing a start up as 4 or 27 year old trying take on IBM and that. It's just not reasonable. You just have to have that belief in yourself in a level of naivete because, you don't really need to know what you can't do because once you become within the reasonable domain you will be constrained by your belief about what's reasonable. It's really important.