



Stanford eCorner

Passion: The Driving Force Behind an Entrepreneurial Career

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February 14, 2007

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1694/Passion-The-Driving-Force-Behind-an-Entrepreneurial-Career>

It takes time to find the right career. You should not work on something you are not passionate about, says Waldorf. Instead, he emphasizes that people should work on a cause that they really care about.



Transcript

I think the fourth point in having an entrepreneurial career is really loving what you do. I'm incredibly fortunate to work at eHarmony. I absolutely love what I do. I sometimes describe eHarmony as an addictive business and it's addictive as a professional because you really think to yourself, "How could I be involved with something that's less meaningful in people's lives once you've done this." We estimate that by the end of next year, a hundred thousand babies will have been born to the people who have met on eHarmony. I've been involved in a lot of other companies, enterprise software, audience measurement systems, the kind of things where you tell people what you do or what you've invested in and you get kind of a big yawn. You tell people you work at eHarmony and they're definitely interested. And it's not that it's so important for all of you to come and work at eHarmony although if you're interested pick up one of my cards. What's really important is find out what you're passionate about. It will take time to find yourself in the right career space. It's not too soon now to start thinking about work.

I like to say never work on something that you're not passionate about. Life is basically just too short. You will spend more time at the office than just about any other thing in your life throughout your professional career, in fact in your whole life for many of you. So you might as well work on something that you cared deeply about. I learned this lesson a little bit the hard way. I have the distinction of being I think the only Stanford University graduate to start a smoothie company and an Internet company in the same year. When I was between my first and second year here at Town and Country Shopping Center next to Hobe's where I would frequently eat, Juice Club opened. It was then called Juice Club, it's now called Jamba Juice. And this was only their second or third location that they ever had. And no matter if you went on a nice summer day or in the coldest winter night, there was a line out the door around the block literally in Town and Country.

And like a lot of my business school classmates, we're completely fascinated by this business. And so, I actually with a business partner, launched a competitor to Jamba Juice and a little unknown fact is that more people in my graduating class started smoothie companies than Internet companies, probably not through the engineering school. But, I opened this business and we have this plan to open our store in Houston, Texas for reasons that I won't go into just before the summer of 1995, and due to construction delays and a whole bunch of other things that went completely wrong. Go back to my point about staying adaptable, a store opened after the summer of 1995 which then lead into the coldest winter in a hundred years in Houston, Texas. Everybody kept saying to me, "There's never a frost in Houston, Texas." I sat there in that smoothie store staring at that

blender and if you ever really want to get serious about figuring out what you're passionate about try sitting in a smoothie store through the coldest winter in a hundred years. What I learned about myself was that I'm incredibly passionate about business in general and I love talking to people about whatever business they have. But for me, I really want to be involved with technology companies, technology-enabled growth companies. There were a lot of reasons behind it but I in a way learned through a hard entrepreneurial experience. Fortunately, it had also helped to start an Internet company. What it was that would really make me go? This is a hard life to pick.

If you want to be an entrepreneur and you want to think like one. So it's really important to work on what you care about.