



Stanford eCorner

The Dark Phase

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1708/The-Dark-Phase>

Jung talks about the dark phase in a startup where entrepreneurs begin to question everything, including themselves. This is an important phase as it tests you, your own sense of perseverance and loyalty to yourself, he says. An entrepreneur has to be prepared for this phase as every company will eventually experience it, he cautions.



Transcript

It really becomes a test of your own personal faith, your own internal compass. And there a couple of questions I think you have to ask yourself in that process. Why do you still believe in yourself and in the company's faith? Look at yourself in the mirror, and you're going to ask yourself: What do I see? And why am I maintaining my sense of attitude and positive approach? You're going to ask yourself: what does failure mean? What defines failure to yourself and what can you learn from it? And how are you coping with it in the moment? You'll ask yourself: how much of this carnage could have been avoided? And how much responsibility or blame should I take for this? Was this in my control, out of my control? Because everyone else seems to blame me. But it's something that you really have to look inside and think about. And perhaps one of the most difficult questions you'll ask yourself is: What do we do now, going forward for the employees who are still with us? Am I in denial? Am I prolonging the inevitable for them and therefore, frankly, I'm doing them a disservice? Or is there a future? Because it can get really dark when it gets dark. And during the dot-com crash, it was as dark as you can possibly imagine. Okay. With my discussion of this phase, I will say this much on what I call the dark phase of a setback: there are no answers. There are no answers to help you, mentors, supporters could help, shoulders to cry on, but frankly there are no answers. These are tests for yourself and your own sense of perseverance and loyalty to yourself.

It's a very personal situation. But I think you need to be prepared for this phase, because I can tell you, every company goes through this.