



Stanford eCorner

Your Company Reflects You

Sukhinder Singh Cassidy, *JOYUS*

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Entrepreneur Sukhinder Singh Cassidy challenges the audience to identify their "trademark strengths." Knowing these is crucial, says Singh Cassidy, as the company you create will eventually come to reflect who you are for good and bad. She shares a personal story of learning from colleagues how these strengths are often different than you might think.



Transcript

Your company most of all reflects you, right? Not reflects on you, reflects you, right? Like you will look in the mirror one day at the company you created and you will see yourself, right? For good and for bad. You will see every - especially if you are the founder. You are going to see reflected back to you everything that you are. So, the question is who are you? I mean, really who are you, right? I often say to undergrad classes what is your trademark strength? Everybody here know what your trademark strength is? If you know your trademark strength is, put up your hand. Six people in the room know what their trademark strength is, interesting, right? You have to go build an entire company around yourself. What is your role to play in that? It's - the most interesting thing to me about trademark strength is and I say to every single person is as we grow up, we have the sense of who we are and as we go to school and we think of what we're good at, but often without anybody to reflect it back to us, you know, it's not a precise picture, right? And it's so interesting to me that when I was, I don't know I think I was probably 16, 17, I was in my final two years of high school, and we had a television studio and I thought I might want to become a television director because we could film videos and documentaries and it's something that I loved. And I had, I think I was applying to school and I had a scholarship application and my television art teacher wrote - referenced for me. And I got to read the reference, I was sending it in and I was like what is Sukhinder's best quality? And he was like empathy. Totally didn't expect that answer. Like what, empathy? What? Like he didn't say intelligent, he didn't say smart, he didn't say quick-witted, he didn't say anything, he said empathy, right? It was like such an odd reflection to me of myself, right? You know, 20 years later or whatever it is maybe more, if I - like I said, I can't even calculate my age, I sit back and I'm like, I get it, you know because now having been a leader for 20 years, it is amazing to me even though I am a very difficult person to work for, right, and very tough, how emphatic people who work with me think I am.

I know a freaking clue. It would not be the first word I use to describe myself, right, but I will tell you that now when I look back, it was like yes, he was absolutely right, it would define me as a leader, who know, who knew that people will work for me again and again and again because they think I'm invested in who they are. No clue, right. But it is part of what helps me build the company, it's part of what lets me be an entrepreneur again, right. It's part of what, you know, help them bring - build the team rapidly because people want to work for me, right, great. You know, but it wasn't that it was architected, it was just - it was a reflection back to me of who I am, right. And so, I think one of the things in your journey to whatever you do, whether it's being an entrepreneur, whether it's being an executive, whether it's joining a startup, whatever it is, is understanding who you are because your trademark strength has a great deal to do with the company you're going to build.