



Stanford eCorner

Entrepreneurship is Not Synonymous With Founder

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"Entrepreneurship is not synonymous with being a founder," says Roelof Botha, a partner at Sequoia Capital. Using examples from his colleagues at PayPal, Botha urges individuals with an entrepreneurial drive to join other small companies first to learn a lot and live out the entrepreneurial spirit before founding a company.



Transcript

So what advice do you have for students in terms of what is the value of entrepreneurship education whether or not you're going to be an entrepreneur and how should you go about navigating what you think you ought to be doing? Roelof? I'll have a first stab at that, because it's something we've thought about a lot at Sequoia it's just - the number of - entrepreneurship is not synonymous with being a founder. And there's a pioneering spirit, an entrepreneurship spirit that pervades Stanford and I think a lot of the people who have that entrepreneurial drive go be employee number 5 or 50 at a great company and live out that entrepreneurship spirit, that willingness to take on challenges to question the conventional wisdom and then confuse that with necessarily starting your own company. Because if you don't have that right idea, then you shouldn't start it. If you're asking people for permission whether or not you should start a company, then you don't have the right idea yet. So be patient and join another company first. And to me at least if you look at the people that have spun out of PayPal over the years, many of them have subsequently become founders, but they weren't founders of PayPal. So the LinkedIn founders, the Yelp founders, the YouTube founders, they were all - Yammer founders they were all at PayPal, but none of them were the founders of PayPal. But they learned a lot, they clearly had entrepreneurial spirit and they took that to subsequently start companies.