



## Stanford eCorner

### Trials and Blessings are the Same Thing

Tristan Walker, *Walker and Company*

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Tristan Walker, founder and CEO of Walker and Company Brands, recalls advice that filmmaker Tyler Perry once shared: that the challenges people encounter are actually “blessings.” In conversation with Stanford Professor of the Practice Tina Seelig, Walker said realizing that lesson can be liberating for entrepreneurs and calming in the face of adversity.



#### Transcript

What sort of advice would you give to people who were sitting in your seat? Yes. So, one bit of advice that I've gotten from someone which I think is the best piece of advice that I've ever gotten, and I'll kind of give that to you in a second. And then I have this post-it note on my laptop that really kind of - that I refer to every single day and has kind of three points on it that are super important as I think through like leading my life, but specifically like for the company. The first bit of advice came from Tyler Perry, the famous director kind of movie producer, that sort of thing. About two years ago, I had the good fortune to interview him one-on-one in three different cities around the country where he got to speak about this entrepreneurial story to a bunch of small business owners around the country. Tyler Perry is a key - did this thing, he was homeless for a while, right now he's like the highest-paid dude in Hollywood, really fascinating story. So I'm interviewing him one-on-one, I start the Q&A one woman raises her hand, stands up, she says Mr. Perry we have to always go through these different trials and tribulations as entrepreneurs, like what keeps you going? How do you get back up and just go? He said the most profound thing that I had ever heard. He said the minute he realized that the trials that you go through and the blessings you receive are the exact same thing like that freed him as an entrepreneur. Like just think about that for a second.

I kind of stopped the interview because I had to soak that up for a little bit. Like every single kind of trial, tribulation and all that stuff that you go through is just a lesson. And that lesson is just an inherent blessing. So as entrepreneurs, like this entrepreneur thing is hard, like at times it's amazing, at times it sucks. And I've been very blessed and fortunate to have really good opportunities but it is very, very hard. And you don't want to stress yourself out unnecessarily and what that lesson taught me was that I didn't have to be as stressed out. Like I'm going to go through these issues, they're just lessons, let me treat that as a blessing, we're going to move. And a lot of folks look at me when I started this company and they're like Tristan you're way more calm than you should be. And it's like, yes because I fundamentally understand this lesson that I learned.