



Stanford eCorner

Value Your Own Strengths

Jennifer Carolan, *New Schools Seed Fund*

November 05, 2014

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/3419/Value-Your-Own-Strengths>

Jennifer Carolan, co-founder and managing director of the NewSchools Seed Fund, describes how her path from teacher to ed-tech investor was a steep and long learning curve. She says the path seemed tougher because of personal insecurities and so warns against undervaluing one's own experiences when comparing them to others' strengths.



Transcript

This path may sound like it's been oh, easy, I kind of - I was a teacher that I popped into see Kim Smith and then I went to NewSchools and now I am investing in education and - but it's been a steep and long learning curve for me. And when I came into NewSchools, I was a researcher and I didn't have an MBA and I was surrounded by these Harvard and Stanford MBAs who would talk about leverage and value proposition and Level 5 leadership and all of this fancy MBA talk and I was so intimidated by it. They didn't know what it meant either so don't worry. But now I use that. Now, you use those words. Now, I use that. I'll drop leverage a couple times a day now. A couple more times this talk. So I think that I was and I did feel when I first started at NewSchools, so this is my ninth year, like very intimidated by that. And I guess like if I could give as you guys don't need advice, but if I could offer something that I took away from this experience is that to value what you bring to the table and value your skills and what your experience and what you have done, because I feel like I undervalued my education experience.

I was the only teacher at NewSchools at the time that had taught more than two years that was a non-TFA teacher. And I didn't - I feel like I didn't value that enough in myself.