

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/being-a-latina-founder-in-tech/>

GLASS founder and CEO Paola Santana explores how her identity as a Latina has impacted her journey as a founder.



## Transcript

- Interestingly enough, I do not see, 00:00:07,790 I do see myself and I do not see myself as a woman, as a Latina, as a minority or as any label you wanna give me.. So it's like, I see myself as a person that is hungry for change.. But then I have to recognize that my heritage comes very handy.. So I have literally how I tell my friends.. I have a PhD in problem solving.. Like, because I come from those places like Stanford.. Unfortunately it's not gonna teach me poverty or how to survive in a slum in the Dominican Republic.. Like I've seen that.. I was born there.. I was raised there..

So I come from that context.. And then I also come from a context where people is super resourceful.. In Spanish, we say that you take your sheet up until you can, like, when you're going to bed, you take your sheet, like, well, if the sheet is up to here, then that's what you have.. So we're super resourceful because we're learned that we need to move forward with what we can.. Which is great thing because you're always gonna find a way to make things work.. But it's a very bad thing when you're raising money.. Why? Because you're super resourceful.. And when you go and look at the numbers of Latinos raising money and raising capital, it even decreased by a three points or something like that.. I think French base say, said the other day.. Why? Because we're so resourceful that we're gonna make our companies and our startups work even if nobody else believes in us..

So while our counterparts are spending and investing time, pitching decks and finding better ways to communicate their vision, because they want external stakeholders to also have a stake in the game, we are figuring out how to do what, what we wanna do, like these big and ambitious visions with our own resources.. So it works both ways.. One interesting thing also about being a Latina and having very few role models, I would say, doing what I was doing like tech, but being a lawyer, going after moonshots, that's how I call these ambitious ideas.. But at the same time being public moonshots, like things that I really care deeply that actually are super profitable because all my companies that are going after solving public problems, they're super profitable too.. So it's like, it's, I'm not a social entrepreneur that is like, that needs Gates Foundation subsidy.. We're fully profitable.. And our platforms are, you know, people need to pay to have access to them.. And then we have a way to give them at a discounted price or for free to, some of our clients that do not have access or do not have the means to pay that.. But not having a role model, again, gave me good things and bad things.. Bad things is that, I really didn't know I was an entrepreneur..

While I was solving all these problems.. So I couldn't position myself and say like, well, you know, I am a tech entrepreneur and I can command this money for my hardware tech startup.. I didn't have that.. So I didn't know I could command that money.. I didn't know I could do that pitch.. I didn't know I could go into a tech stage and not feel the impostor syndrome.. But at the, in the other end, not having that role model allowed me to be myself.. So I don't have to fit into anybody else's mold because how does a Latina leader talk like I talk? How does she raise money like I raise money? Because I don't have any limit or any bad, you know, container of this is how a Latina talking and searching for money and leading a high tech, high growth tech company looks like.. So it has shaped me in good and bad ways.. But I take the positive part and I don't let any of the talk of Latinas cannot raise, Latinas cannot have this..

A woman cannot do any of this.. Like actually, I, this is not part of my script anywhere...