

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/listen-to-gain-insight/>

Jessica Jackley, founder of Kiva and founder and general partner of Untapped Capital, reflects on sources of strength and insight that can back up an entrepreneur's conviction. For her, she says, the people she wants to serve are the best source, especially when they give surprising answers.



Transcript

- When we pursue these what ifs, what I wanna ask about is, 00:00:06,780 is there a rigorous or systemic way to source a well of strength to actually have conviction that this actually is something that you should pursue in an analogous way that you could have data to, you know, justify a rational decision, especially if entrepreneurship is this pursuit where it's not based on expertise, it's not based on, you know, necessarily anything that at Stanford you would sort of put faith in, how can you source your validation that you should push forward with a what if? - Sure.. You know, it all does work together.. 00:00:43,050 The data-based decisions and the heart-led direction and I can speak for myself, for me, the best source of strength and also information and insights comes from deep understanding of the people that I wanna serve or the person that I wanna serve and it always comes down to like actual, real, flesh-and-blood humans and, you know, I did the d.school stuff, as well.. I had an amazing experience working with teams there during my time at Stanford and the sort of like user-centered design process, for me, is not just smart and I think well-informed and works well for a lot of those beginnings, as you start to ask the what if questions, but it sort of like bakes in that humility that you can have all sorts of ideas, but you have to test and learn and that testing and learning and listening is always going to be about the person that you're designing for, so I don't think you can spend too much time listening really, really carefully and in fact, I would say, you should get really excited when you hear things that kind of make you feel bad, meaning they're surprising and they threaten something else.. Some assumption that you had in your paradigm and might throw the whole thing off.. Like, yes, those could be anomalies and outliers, but when you start to hear surprising answers, answers that you didn't expect, that's a wonderful thing 'cause those are the moments when you can recalibrate or even fully reset and design around those new insights that maybe have arisen just because other things in the world are changing or maybe you didn't, maybe, you know, when you first started to do that listening, the questions weren't quite the right questions and so when you find things that are surprising, that's the really good stuff, even if it makes you question what you've done up to that point and what you need to do next...