

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/building-founder-confidence>

A high profile job at Twitter and connections to venture capital initially gave her confidence when she launched her startup, says Atipica founder and CEO Laura Gomez. But she found that the founder journey has harder than she expected, and things only got more difficult when she was diagnosed with a benign brain tumor. But her experience as a startup CEO, she says, actually gave her the tools to manage that diagnosis with speed and confidence.



Transcript

- [Man] Where did you find confidence in yourself to feel like you could do it and how have you worked through moments where that was tested? - (clears throat) So I had a very high profile job both at, mostly at Twitter just very high profile.. And so knowing a lot of the early employees there ended up as a venture capitalist.. So I thought it would be easy for me.. Little did I know 2014 lord I was very idealistic.. It was, I didn't prepare myself, I didn't understand like cap tables, I didn't understand a lot of things.. I read a lot, I'm a speed reader.. How did I get the confidence? I don't think, I don't know if anyone has talked here about like, the valley of despair that founders go through.. It's like this valley where like, I can't get out of bed, I don't know what's going to happen.. I really believe in this and then you kind of get up.. I believe that valley of despair for underrepresented, founders, fundraising is really hard..

Anyone fundraising, I remember, I was coming back from an event with, a friend of mine who's a founder and he's like, "I hate Sandhill road, I hate coming up here." That's the experience that people just have.. I do believe that it was hard, that there were many tears shed.. That I was telling that Ravi, was one of our investors that actually gave us a bloodline, to try to get more fundraising.. But it always seems like it's towards the end that you're like okay I give up and then something, keeps you going.. I remember a friend of mine emailed me and she has a PhD, has a co-founder who, her CTO and I said, "You're the trifecta of difficulty, like you're solo, female Latina founder." It was hard.. I like to share this because I think it's important and people get shocked, earlier this year I was at a board meeting and I started getting a headache and I was like, "This headache is weird." And I was flying between New York and here and I, the headache didn't go away and during the board meeting it felt really weird and then, by Sunday, my board meeting was Friday, by Friday morning, Sunday I was actually here at the ER.. Here at Stanford.. And I was diagnosed, which we didn't know it then, but with a benign tumor.. And so I, about a couple of months ago I actually wrote, a blog post that says, "I survived Silicon Valley and brain surgery and brain surgery was easier." (laughing) And it was, nothing against, Stanford here but I looked, where were the best neurologists and specialists with what I was given.. All this stuff and I realized that I CEO'd myself out of that situation..

Like very quickly got second opinions, like within I got three opinions with a top neurologist, within two days.. Like I was texting, I was everything, my mom was like, "Why are you on your computer?" Like here at the hospital.. But it honestly, it was able to teach me, that if I hadn't been a founder I don't know if I would have I probably would have gone into despair mode, when you are diagnosed with those things.. I just, so yeah I definitely do believe and that being a CEO and a founder and an entrepreneur has shaped the way I interact with challenges everyday...