

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/find-co-founders-you-trust>

Ali Ghodsi, CEO and co-founder of Databricks, advises aspiring founders to find co-founders they can fully trust. With trust, he says, large founding teams — like Databricks' seven co-founders — can work.



Transcript

- Can you share any advice for aspiring founders 00:00:05,910 on how they should think about co-founders.. Who's the right person that makes a co-founder? How do you preserve good co-founder relationships? I dunno if you can talk about aligning incentives with your co-founders.. Can you share? - Yeah, I mean this is, we could just discuss this the rest 00:00:20,760 of the time and we'll run out of time.. You know, a lot of building companies ends up being, I mean, initially it's like about the product market fit and what you're building and all that kind of stuff.. But a lot of it is also how do you work with other human beings? And as you scale the business, it's gonna be even more, how do you work with other humans? And one thing that's really, really important that's not emphasized, I think in business books and whatnot, is that it actually boils down to trust.. Do you trust another human being, right? So it's like, just, it's that, that's it.. So do you trust your co-founders? Do they trust you? It's as simple as that.. So, and it has nothing to do with business or anything like that.. Do you trust that human being? Are they gonna stab you in the back? Are they gonna do the right thing? Do you trust that they can do the right thing? Do you trust that they're just gonna be able to handle that if you just delegate that to them? You know, all those kind of things.. So it all comes back to human trust..

So if you can do that well, I think it's amazing to have seven co-founders because we're sort of like best friends.. We trust each other in a way that we can't trust any other human being on the planet.. We've been through, I feel like we've been through war together and survived it.. But also seven co-founders could mean, and we had some of this also in the early days of Databricks, could mean constant in fighting.. And why should I have that? You have that title.. Why don't I have that title? I mean, you're the CEO, but, so I'm not CEO, whatever, what's going on? It could be a lot of stuff like that.. And there's a lot of drama you find out, but you know, so you see a lot of companies where there's a lot of drama in the founding team and it's very, very usual that like, you know, one of the founders bombs out, leaves, start their own competing endeavor.. There's a lot of these stories out there as well.. And it all kinds of comes down to can you build trust? - I love that heuristic, and that's different than 00:01:58,350 the bar for an employee.. - Yeah..

00:02:00,120 - So Trust is the founder bar.. 00:02:01,590 They have to pass that bar of trust.. - Yes...