URL: https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/learning-to-disagree-and-commit

Meirav Oren, CEO and co-founder of Versatile, explains "disagree and commit," a strategy for addressing decision-making challenges that can help teams of co-founders as well as experienced leaders.

Transcript

- Are you able or willing to share any stories about 00:00:05,040 the difficulties with co-founder relationships and how you can still have good fights as co-founders and stay connected? - Oh, just take it into a room and fight it out 00:00:15,630 and walk out with a good disagree and commit sometimes would be, would be it really.. - Disagree and commit means we agree to disagree, 00:00:22,050 but we commit to the decision.. - Disagree and commit, it means eventually 00:00:27,840 a decision has to be made, and if we couldn't agree, then yes, there's got to be one decision maker.. Even in a founding team, there's got to be one decision maker, mainly a CEO, and then you walk out of the room as if you agreed.. Whatever happened in that room, stayed in that room and everyone else perceives that decision as, and it's true for leadership, regardless of founding teams.. The minute the decision has been made, it's final and you have to stand behind it.. So think of a leader that goes back to their team and says, "I didn't agree.. Like, I don't actually believe in this decision.. Now let's go execute on it." I don't know, probably not going to work very well.. But if you say, "This is the decision, this is why we have to do this." And sometimes it involves like tough decisions, like stop providing a service..

You know, kill a feature.. It's, people have worked really hard on something and you might make a decision to stop it all together.. You have to have that alignment.. So yes, disagree and commit would be one of the challenges.. Not just in a founding team, but in any kind of like leadership relationship.. And it's hard.. I'm not sure I have the code on that one.. I can break the code on many things.. Probably this one not yet.. - But it sounds like one of your principles 00:01:46,320 is just that there is respect, that each co-founder probably owns their own domain and they get to make decisions in that domain..

But when there's conflict, everybody agrees that you, or the CEO, will make the decision, even if they disagree, they'll commit.. - Yes.. 00:02:00,780 - And you had that understanding from the beginning.. 00:02:03,030 - Yes.. And if you ever lose that, 00:02:03,990 then it's time to separate.. - Then it's time to separate.. 00:02:07,290 - It definitely time.. If you lose that, just separate it.. 00:02:10,140 You cannot continue without that trust and without that domain and without that disagree and commit...