

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/receiving-advice-as-a-new-founder>

Meirav Oren, CEO and co-founder of Versatile, encourages aspiring founders to listen to advice—but remember that they ultimately get to decide what to do. She gives examples from her early days at Versatile, when she received advice from co-founders and first investors, filtered it, and found her own path.



## Transcript

- I'll start by saying, always listen to advice.. 00:00:06,510 The part that I, I kinda like, have a slightly different approach towards is, do you follow advice and is that just doing what you're told? So I'll say, "Listen to advice and never do what you're told" and think that the, the best stories, I guess I can share around that would be, to your point, construction isn't the most kinda like, attractive industry or it doesn't perceive to be a very attractive.. I was told it's impossible.. I was told that I couldn't raise money for, for a venture like this.. And I think probably, probably the best stories.. We, we just got our precede funding and I was getting a lot of advice from really smart people.. These would be our first investors and they would constantly tell me what they think should be done.. Now, probably being in Israeli as well, my tendency was to listen and filter and find my own path.. And my own path is never do what they say.. I'll, I'll say more than that..

There were three partners and the beauty was to actually connect what they were saying and they, they never agreed.. I don't think I ever heard the same advice from, from all three of them.. So I would take that and, and I would find a fourth way, which would be the versatile way, which would be my way.. And I'm probably on the streets of San Francisco and I get a call from one of those partners.. I was like, Wow, you, you don't listen.. You just don't listen.. I was like, on a contrary, I, I do, but I don't do what you tell me to do by the way, you guys never agree, just so you know.. And it, it was a, a defining moment I think in understanding that when people give you advice, they, they seem to think that you should just do what they told you to do.. That is not advice.. Advice is knowing to, to be in the back seat, to, to support, to tell you what I think, but always know that you know best and that's how I give advice today..

If, if I mentor anyone, I was like, I'm not in your shoes and I'm not at the driver's seat so, I'm only gonna tell you what worked for me or or what I think.. But that's it.. A good advisor or a good mentor doesn't tell you what to do..