

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/set-uncomfortably-high-goals>

Amy Chang, founder and CEO of Accompany, discusses how raising people's level of ambition pushes them beyond their comfort zone, makes teams to look past everyday hurdles and accelerates professional growth. In conversation with STVP Executive Director Matt Harvey, Chang says employees and entrepreneurs alike should spend most of their time challenging themselves, not on work they've already mastered.



Transcript

When somebody pushes you so far beyond what you thought was possible, and forces you to think at another kind of level of ambition, if you will, than you would have by yourself.. I actually think that's a really good thing to experience.. And it makes you deeply uncomfortable for a little bit, you have no idea how you're going to do it, but that's how you grow, and that's when you experience your most massive jumps and growth, I think.. - [Man] Is that something that you've carried to a company in the way you want to excite your team and excite the leaders as well? Did you get to have the 70%? And I'm sure it annoys the living daylight out of them sometimes, but yes.. - [Man] Do you find folks push back against it, or do they seem confused by it? Like how do you guide leaders, or people you're grooming to really be leaders inside of the firm? How do you get to that? I think you are explicit ahead of time to say, I'm gonna set the expectations at a place where I don't expect you to always meet them.. But I expect them to be high enough to where you push yourself into the yellow, where you're not in the green anymore, where you're completely comfortable.. You're not in the red, where you're so stressed you can barely see straight.. But you're right there in the yellow, where 305 days, you're gonna learn something totally new that you did not know in the morning when you woke up.. And by the end of the week, you will have gotten further than you thought you would've gotten on Monday morning when you first came into work.. That's a good week..

- [Man] That sounds a lot like the description of the life of an entrepreneur in general, kind of living in the yellow.. How do you, is it, do you find people you work with that are constantly in the red, and they're under the gun all the time? And then there's other folks, kind of slow rolling it in the green, if I'm understanding your scale there.. How do you find the right balance for yourself as an individual, as a leader, running the whole group in that way? There are some weeks when things are in the red, so Cisco and Proctor & Gamble had board meetings back to back one week, and it was a little bit of a crazy week, and it'll happen again in December, so those weeks are a little stressful.. But you deal with it, and then yeah.. You keep going, and not every week is red, so that's the good part, right?..