

URL: <https://stvp.stanford.edu/clips/solve-your-own-problem>

Building an enduring startup, observes Zūm founder and CEO Ritu Narayan, requires years of unwavering commitment. So how do you find the passion to push through obstacles and fundraising droughts? One powerful starting point, she observes, is to solve a problem that directly impacts you and those around you.



Transcript

- So your passion for something is, when your love for something is greater than the fear of failure.. You love something so much that you really want to do it because you're not afraid to fail.. What I have come to learn is that, one should only do a startup when one is very very passionate about the problem they are trying to solve.. Because building a startup is, and especially building an enduring start-up, is seven to eight years of commitment.. For example, take example of Jeff Bezos.. It took him almost more than two decades to build Amazon into a company from just selling a box to selling everything or anything and delivering to your doorstep in less than an hour.. Same, if you take an example of Elon Musk, who wants to change every car on this earth, from gas car to an electric car.. These are hard problems to solve and they take years and years of enduring your failures.. That's why it's so important to be passionate about the problem you're trying to solve.. So that you can sustain and be a winner..

In 2013, actually I was working at Ebay.. I was leading a platform where four million sellers used to sell anything and everything to 250 million customers.. This technology based platform actually worked like magic.. You could sell anything in a few minutes.. But in my personal life, I could not solve a very simple challenge of parenting.. How to take my kids from one place to another.. I wanted to do well in my career and grow in it, and at the same time be present for my kids.. And every day I was challenged.. How do I drop my kids in the morning and yet be there for the meetings, morning meetings, with executives? And how to pick my kids at 3:30 p.m.. in the afternoon, take them to extracurriculars, when I'm supposed to be at work at 5 p.m..

When I looked around, I found that it's not just me.. Every single parent in the eBay was facing the same challenge.. And upon reflection I realized, 30 years back my mother had faced the same challenge, in a small town in India.. And eventually, she left her job to take care of her four kids.. What I realized was, nothing had changed.. This problem spanned geographies.. It spanned generations.. The same disconnect had been solved in other areas, with the platforms like Amazon and eBay, but when it comes to parenting, this had not changed.. It felt like I was failing as a mother and also as a business leader.. So I started Zūm to solve this problem..

With Zūm, what we are trying to do is provide parents with freedom, choice and opportunity.. What we feel is that no parent should have to make choice between their career and caring for their children.. This is a problem I'm so passionate about, that I'm willing to do anything and everything to solve it in an enduring way...