

WONDER WOMEN: ENTREPRENEURSHIP, EDUCATION, AND NEW FRONTIERS

CHM



DISCUSSION GUIDE

It takes hard work, hard science, and hard-core commitment to change the world. But Coursera cofounder Daphne Koller and GoldieBlox CEO and cofounder Debra Sterling are doing it. These technologists turned entrepreneurs have created building blocks for empowering people to meet their potential. Coursera revolutionizes global education through universal online access. GoldieBlox is a children's multimedia company that challenges gender stereotypes with the world's first girl engineer character.

Koller and Sterling were both named Presidential Ambassadors for Global Entrepreneurship by President Obama for their entrepreneurial leadership in education. In this conversation with CHM Exponential's Marguerite Gong Hancock, they share their stories and offer insights into what the future holds for all of us.

About This Guide

This guide introduces provocative questions for reflection and conversation to enhance and extend what you learn through watching the video. It is suitable for mature high school students and college and adult learners in an educational, professional, or social setting. It may be particularly interesting for people who are curious about innovation, entrepreneurship, and the start-up ecosystem of Silicon Valley.

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvLhHGVIN3A&feature=youtu.be>

For Discussion

Discovering STEM (2:54)

Both Daphne Koller and Debra Sterling became interested in STEM topics when they were young.

1. What similarities do you see in the women's educational experiences? Differences?
2. Do you think opportunities for girls in STEM are better, worse, or the same as when you were a student?

Measuring Impact (7:42)

Daphne Koller believes her online courses reaching 100,000 learners worldwide in a matter of weeks made a more significant impact than her years of research and work mentoring PhD students.

3. Is there a risk of sacrificing quality of education for quantity of students? What metrics can we use to determine the significance of a company or organization's impact? How might this vary depending on the goal or mission?

**Exponential
Center @CHM**

-
4. Why did Daphne feel that she had no choice but to start Coursera? What might prevent you from taking action on something you think is important?
-

Taking the Leap (9:18)

Debra Sterling speaks about her career path and initial hesitation to quit her job and run Goldieblox full time.

5. Why did Debbie hesitate to quit her day job? Can you relate to her feelings?
 6. What do you think might prevent women in particular from starting a business? How might opportunity be expanded to more diverse founders?
-

Experientially Learning (12:13)

Daphne Koller and Debra Sterling speak frankly about the challenges they faced starting and growing their companies.

7. What is one problem that you can relate to? What might you have done differently to solve it?
-

Not Doing a Good Job (31:45)

Early on, Debra Sterling's executive team told her that she was "not doing a good job" as CEO. She responded by seeking out executive training.

8. Do you think things would have happened differently with a male CEO?
 9. Do you find it difficult to acknowledge your own professional weaknesses? How can you do so without putting yourself down or becoming discouraged?
-

Cultivating Culture (33:35)

In the early days of Coursera, Daphne Koller says she did not understand the importance of company culture. But over time, she came to believe that the right culture will not just emerge on its own and that it is important to be "thoughtful and proactive" about developing it.

10. In what kind of work culture do you thrive?
 11. What are some markers of a toxic work culture? What steps can company leaders and team members take to cultivate a positive culture?
-

The Best of Both Worlds (37:04)

Daphne Koller believes education should incorporate a balance of technology and social connection.

12. Do you agree that "education is fundamentally a social interaction"? How do you think technology can enhance or hinder interactions in the physical or online education space?
 13. Have you ever taken an online class? What are the advantages or disadvantages of online courses?
-

Rebranding Engineering (38:56)

Debra Sterling says her negative experiences as one of the few women in her engineering classes fueled her initial desire to found GoldieBlox as well as learning that girls start losing confidence and interest in math and science as young as age eight.

14. Why do you think many girls lose interest in math and science as early as age eight? Do you agree that engineering needs to be "rebranded" to interest girls?
-

The Not-So-Little Things (41:59)

Daphne Koller and Debra Sterling discuss the sexism they have experienced in tech-centric environments and the ways they have coped.

15. Are you surprised by Daphne and Debbie's stories? Can you relate to them?
 16. What does Daphne do when a male colleague takes credit for her idea? Is her approach effective for other women to model? Why or why not?
-

It's Also On Men (49:56)

Daphne Koller encourages men to proactively change the culture of the workplace, and Debra Sterling urges investors to be more open to funding women entrepreneurs.

17. What does Daphne believe men should do to combat sexism in the workplace? Do you think that would work?
 18. What do venture capital investors mean by "pattern matching"? How does it reduce the opportunity for women founders to receive funding?
-