Participant 29 Interview Transcript

**Interviewer:**

Let me familiarize you with my research and the purpose of this interview. First, I'm currently in the third year of my PhD, as you know what Southampton Business School and I'm researching on entrepreneurial success and I look at it from a slightly philosophical angle. I'm currently writing my second academic paper in which I'm exploring the views, opinions, and beliefs of laypeople to entrepreneurship. So I define lay people as non- entrepreneurs. And thank you for volunteering to participate a bit about the data protection measures I have undertaken. This interview will be video and audio recorded for transcription purposes, after which I will delete the video and I will keep the transcript until I complete my paper. I will be the only one seeing this. The data that you share with me today and it might be requested from my supervisors, Stratos and Mina or Laura, all the data will be for research purposes only and your name will not be affiliated with anything that you say today. Umm. At the outset, let's pin a definition of an entrepreneur as someone who sets up a business or many businesses, taking on financial risk in the hopes of profits. What do you think about this definition?

**Participant 29:**

Yeah, that is my understanding of an entrepreneur as well, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

OK, great. Now, before we begin the main part, uh, can you tell me a little bit about yourself, about your personal and professional life? You can start with age, occupation and educational level.

**Participant 29:**

OK, age is 35 uh occupation is a lecturer at a UK higher education institution. Umm, what was the? The next one was at years of experience. Education level. Yeah, a PhD is the highest level of qualification. And yeah, was that.

**Interviewer:**

Educational level.

**Participant 29:**

That that that's OK.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah. Yeah, that, that that's good. Umm. And if you'd like to share anything about your personal life and your hobbies, what do you like to do?

**Participant 29:**

OK. Interesting. OK, so I like canoeing and kayaking, and stuff. And of course not something that I do all the time, but now is the best time with the the weather, nice weather. Umm, so that's something that is like a yearly thing and also a member of the sailing club. But I'm not trained. I I'm. I still need to get the certification. The training for that, so that's really fun. So that's the outdoorsy sports thing. And other hobbies is, you know, just the regular things like reading. And I haven't played my guitar for a very long time, but I do own a guitar and it's it is something that uh I'm into every now and again. So yeah, so that's hobbies. Ohm. And in terms of my professional life, did did you want a little bit of a?

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Participant 29:**

Summary of OK, so professional life. Uh. So I've been a lecturer for five years now, I think. Yep. So this is my second stint as a lecturer. So my first job was in in Wales, in Swansea, in Swansea University. So that was my very first job right out of my PhD for you. But I've I've had a non traditional career trajectory, I guess because after one year of being a lecturer, I took a two year career break for personal reasons because I had to move to America for for personal reasons. So then I took a two year break and then it was like a sabbatical and then I came back to my job in Swansea, which was in 2017 and then up until 2020, I was at Swansea and then I moved here to Southampton as a Lecturer in 2020.

**Interviewer:**

Great. And have you had any experience with entrepreneurship or do you know anyone who is your friend or family member that has a business?

**Participant 29:**

Fantastic. Yes. Yes, I do. So I have a friend who is now who started this particular business. It's she's really passionate about it. So this is about she's it's it's it's called India Print works and it's still in the process of being developed and stuff. So it's really exciting because she wants to showcase the works of artists from India and the UK so it's Indian and British. And she wants to sort of do things like, you know, have pottery like handmade pottery and have prints, you know, like wallets and things like that. I can even show you. I've got a wallet, and it's very different because a lot of the Indian artists work. That is quite popular. It tends to be very specific type of art, which is Madhubani. But she's interested in bringing other types of works to the fore, you know, to to, to, to the UK and and she also wants to to work with UK artist. So she's got a very, she’s very passionate about it and she's got a very ethical take on this whole venture. It's not about, you know, she's not doing it to just to make money. It's it's something she's very passionate about. She wants small businesses, small art, like artists to thrive and their works to be, you know, promoted and displayed. And the other thing that's really interesting here is because what I appreciate, I mean, of course I I'm. I'm very supportive as a friend, I want her to do well and everything, I like the fact that it's not very, she's not taking too much risk because she's continuing to work part time. So she's not, like, given up her full time, you know, job and she's in the philanthropy sector. So she's still got a part time job, so she has that incomes, the steady income stream, and then this is a like passion project. Uh, so it's it's all very exciting and she's very serious about it. She was even…she also got a grant from the UK government about for this in terms of mentorship and everything. So she's, you know, really full, 100% dedicated. So this is 1. In terms of other personal connections with people who are entrepreneurs, yes. So a couple of people in my in my family, in my extended family, they own, you know, pretty big companies. One is like it's it's very large scale. I think he's pretty. It's it's a hardware company and then it's gotten really big and well. Again, it's a very interesting story. He invented something when he used to live in Singapore and then that became big and he's this. Uh, you know, you know, he's very, very successful. And then my uncle, who's, you know, my dad's brother. He used to have a business. He's retired now, but then again that was a garment manufacturing company. So he had three companies. So that's. My experience in the extended family, but the one with my uncle, I have to say that that's quite. I mean, I I see entrepreneurship and this whole, you know, business of being an entrepreneur kind of negatively because of the risks involved, because I've seen him very, very stressed and I've seen my aunt really stressed all the time because I think it comes with a lot of risk and you're always thinking about it. So I've kind of seen that negative side to it and how his health was, you know, affected by worrying about the company all the time. So that's my experience. Here. So it's it's it's kind of mixed. It's like really positive. But my friend, you know, because there's this balance of. Uh, the job and the and this venture. So it's not very, it's not that risky, but I've also seen this sort of negative side and and nobody in my immediate family is an entrepreneur. So my my dad and my my sister that you know they don't. Nothing to do with with the business and my dad's an industrial psychologist. You know, as a management consultant. So not really. It's quite, quite risk averse, I'd say, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Very interesting. Umm, I think we're gonna touch upon some of the points that you mentioned later on. Uh, when I when we explore your views further on. So now let's explore your views on extremely successful entrepreneurs for the purposes of this interview, let's take extreme economic success to mean having earned a large amount of money out of entrepreneurial activity.

**Participant 29:**

Perfect.

**Interviewer:**

So what or who crosses your mind when you think about an extremely successful entrepreneur?

**Participant 29:**

OK. Because he's been in the news, I'm thinking Elon Musk because he just bought Twitter and for whatever reason, in terms of who's inspiring and also very successful, I'd say Oprah Winfrey. Uh, but yeah, so let's just stick with these two examples. So there are people that come to mind, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

OK. And can you describe a little bit more about them, what you know, what do you think about them?

**Participant 29:**

OK, so uh, Elon Musk. Uh, of course. Really interesting. I mean, it seems to be. Yeah. Is it really interesting sort of volatile character, I suppose. I mean, everybody's, everyone seems to be really nervous with this takeover of Twitter, right? Like, it's Twitter just being so $44 billion in everybody's worried about what's going to happen without any moderation of free speech. I still need to, you know, get a better understanding of it. But there's all this, like, discussion around free speech, and, you know, he claims to be a freedom of speech advocate. So what I see is, is power like this display of power. And that seems to. You know, people feel quite threatened by it. Uh, but in terms of its economic success in terms of what's attributed to that, I mean, I think he seems to have some radical ideas, which kind of follows through with these ideas. That is not necessarily a positive thing. I remember seeing this video of him couple of years ago, he was trying to launch Neurolink. Neurolink is this chip, so he and there was this demo video where where he had, you know, pigs and he'd inserted where where this chip would be surgically inserted into your brain. And then he was claiming that that would help, that’s like a medical breakthrough when, you know, the the chip will monitor your health and things like that. But of course, critics were concerned about privacy issues and you know, how you could have mainstream, you know, digital platforms making, you know, misusing that and getting people's data and everything so. So I suppose again it's it's it's interesting that he's seems to have these, like, big ideas, but it's also a bit worrying in terms of how he perceives them and and he's quite controversial for for various reasons for things that he said in the past. So. So I suppose not don't have the most positive kind of view of this person, although I suppose yes, of course, he’s got this extreme economic success. With Oprah Winfrey, it's really interesting because it's someone that I've been familiar with the growing up, you know, cause Oprah Winfrey Show is just really popular show daytime show, which used to air every day. On I can't remember what channel. Uh. I think her life history is really inspiring because she came from… She didn't have wealthy parents like she came from utter poverty. And of course there were race issues as well. There wasn't as much racial equality in the US at the time when she was really, you know, striving really hard to be, you know, where she is now. So. I think with her it's really interesting because she also used to pick up some, you know, important social issues to discuss and bring awareness of important aspects, whether it's race or, you know, LGBT issues. So she did bring all of that to the four, you know, in the 90s and 2000s talking about them and…and she's done a lot of charity work as well. But again, extremely successful because she, I think, worked nonstop like she'd have that show every day. I think she's to work, like, over 120 hours a week. Uh, you know when she had the show? And then and then she went on to have her own network, the own network. So that's again. So I think she works less hours, but then she owns a network which is quite interesting. There's also this sort of intellectual aspect to the stuff she's done. For instance, she used to have a book club, and she would always have good books in her book club. It wasn't like, you know, trashy best sellers or anything. So for instance, she'd have Tolstoy and, you know, other, you know, good authors and really. You know, classic books and everything. So I think the the book club also contributed to a very high sales of of of the books that were in the book club. So she had, she was extremely powerful and very influential. And you know at one point I think she was the the richest black billionaire. At one point, I don't think she has anymore, but so. So yeah. So that's a little bit about her.

**Interviewer:**

And is there anything that you dislike about her or you disagree with?

**Participant 29:**

Yes. So again, I think there's a lot of criticism. So, I think this whole culture of self confession became really popular with her show. You know, where people would talk about their problems, be open about their suffering and everything that they gone through in life. So that is something that actually was popularized by Oprah. Right after that. You had many others who followed. Uh, so in some ways it's I guess it's positive people. You know, people can talk about their issues openly, but at the same time that's also criticized, I think where everything's out in the open. And I suppose that kind of information or sensitive information can also be misused or. Ohh, you know that is seen critically by this whole that you have to tell the whole world about all your problems. And so there's I think controversy and there's criticism for that kind of a culture. And you know, capitalizing on it perhaps because it's being aired and there's like, you know, revenue streams because of… because of, you know, a show where where people are talking about the problem. So, so I suppose you don't know, right? Like you can't see intentions. So there's an element of that and then. Yeah. And then I think politically, she's come into criticism, but then I don't have an issue with it because of my own views. I think there was some…there was a controversy about one of her shoes being anti war. It was after the Iraq war. But then I didn't. I didn't agree with the Iraq war anyway. So again, you know. But then that again got her a little bit of backlash. So the fact that she's being really political, she was she openly supported a candidate, you know, she she campaigned for Obama, I think. And then he apparently he got one million votes through her. So. So there these criticisms. But the the the other one that I remember seeing, I think during the ‘Me Too’ movement, I think again apparently she didn't do enough to sort of raise that issue. She did speak about that but but again I there's this claim of how she might have worked with the people responsible or, I mean, I'm not sure if it was Weinstein directly, but the fact that again she benefited or or you know she was called the hypocrite for, for for some reason. So again, I suppose in terms of the negative stuff there is there is stuff out there about her. But in terms of how I feel, I mean I think at the end of the day she's. You know a a capitalist, right, but but but what I appreciate is is a struggle and the sort of rags to riches story and then making it during a time when there wasn't as much racial equality in the US, you know, it's it was. Umm, but in terms of the fact that I mean, of course she's owns lots of properties, owns businesses. I mean, I think of course there must be that monetary objective that OK, you know, she makes money, but there isn't any. Like, one particular reason that makes me dislike her. But then, yeah, I've just mentioned a few controversies, I suppose. About her.

**Interviewer:**

I'll talk. And how about Elon Musk? You mentioned he is quite controversial as well in the the way he speaks. So would you have any anything that you disagree with or?

**Participant 29:**

Yeah. So I've seen that in terms of the content or interaction of his that I've seen, it's that Neurolink launch that I've watched, but that was pretty straightforward. I think it was just he was really passionate about this chip and then he…that was what the launch was all about, but I I guess I remember thinking the launch video being a little bit cringeworthy as well. It was just a bit strange to just him sitting there and they were like, you know, three pigs and him talking about the, I don't know, but I guess he is. He just has these like ideas and then he just follows through. Sometimes you're wondering, OK, it is a little bit scary because he doesn't seem like the most. He doesn't seem. It doesn't seem like he thinks things through necessarily. He just has this idea and then he just wants to do it and it and and I've read come across maybe tweets and stuff which indicate that he doesn't necessarily listen to advice. About business decisions from people, so he just sort of does things and I think it was in the news that due to investors being scared, I think the this whole Twitter thing has him buying Twitter has led to a decrease in the the share value for Tesla. So I suppose that's not very positive. So that is indication of. So if people are so worried if investors are worried and if Twitter employees and and other people are worried about him buying Twitter, then that tells you that you know that that has hints of like, toxic traits and toxic leadership, I suppose. So based on what I know.

**Interviewer:**

Very interesting. Umm. And does your explanation about UM rags to riches stories or hard work…The ones, the factors that you mentioned with Elon Musk and with Oprah, do you think they apply to all extremely successful entrepreneurs?

**Participant 29:**

No, not necessarily. No, no, definitely not. Because again, there's a big difference between Elon Musk and Oprah. I think Elon Musk had. I think he has wealthy parents. I'm not 100% sure about his background, but I think. And yeah, please double check, but I think his parents owned like a diamond mine or something. I don't know if I'm. So so there is a big difference between that and coming from like extreme poverty. And the other thing I'd like to mention is when we think of extremely successful individuals, whether it's financial success or whatever, I think there is a selection bias already. So it's not necessary that only through hard work someone's going to be successful, because there's loads of people we don't know about who's probably had like 10 failed businesses, and even the successful individuals they've had loads of failures, and then they eventually went on to be successful. So there is maybe luck or like factors aligning, networks, connections and things like that. So even with Oprah, of course, she didn't have a wealthy background. So of course there's definite evidence of her working very hard and and and you know, the way she talks and the way she presents a self. That's all amazing. But then I'm sure there's that there are lots of failures as well before that that she'd have to endure. And also there's no guarantee that somebody else would achieve the same level of success as you know Oprah would, because the, I don't know of any like the Tyra Banks show isn't as successfu is it? Like, I can't think of. I mean, there was in terms of interviews and things like that there was Barbara Walters. And who was also really inspirational to Oprah. I think in terms of doing interviews, of course, she didn't have the same type of show but. But other than her, I can't think of anybody else so. So yes, there is but so I don't. I don't believe that it's. It's just hard work. That's sufficient. There's loads of other factors and and of course if someones got generational wealth then. That that makes a big difference. Uh. So of course it's harder for those without the family wealth to kind of make it because they are making everything happen for themselves. But then with Elon Musk, I think I don't think that was the issue that that was an issue.

**Interviewer:**

And we're gonna touch upon this a bit more with the next question. So what differentiates, uh, you think Oprah or Elon Musk from people who don't earn as much from entrepreneurship who don't become that extremely successful?

**Participant 29:**

Ohh, that's a really interesting question. UM. So people in the same line of work or it can be anybody?

**Interviewer:**

It could be any entrepreneur that you can think of. Yeah, we're talking about entrepreneurship in general.

**Participant 29:**

OK, so So what differentiates successful entrepreneur like Oprah from other entrepreneurs who aren't as successful? OK.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, very financially successful. So billionaires from those who don't become billionaires. And and those who don't become billionaires.

**Participant 29:**

Can it just be people that I know with?

**Interviewer:**

Yeah. Yeah, of course. Yeah.

**Participant 29:**

I suppose it's to do with. The risk, the level of risk that people are willing to take, so maybe I'm a again, I haven't necessarily read about the types of risks that Oprah has taken, but I'm sure she's taken huge risks. Well, again, if you think about the network. So she finally decided to stop doing her talk show after like 20 years or over 20 years or over 25 years. I can't remember. And then when she decided decided to, like, have start her own network, that's a big risk. Right. So so I think to be extremely financial, financially successful, one has to be willing to take big risks. So you have to, you can't be risk averse and do that and that's different too. I guess if you look at my friend who's you know passionate about showcasing you know. Ethically sourced made works of artists from, you know, both the UK and India. That's different because the, the the level of risk isn't high at all. It's like she's not. For instance, she's still has a steady income stream coming from her job and she's doing taking her time to get things done and she's not necessarily putting in way too much. You know, money at once. So I guess that's one difference that I can think of.

**Interviewer:**

Very interesting. Now let's go on to explore your thoughts on what stands behind extreme success. So this kind of follows from the previous question again. You mentioned risk and you mentioned hard work and of course other factors. So can you think of what other factors could be there, that stand behind the extreme success of people like Elon Musk and Oprah?

**Participant 29:**

I think OK. So that's hard work. Of course, there's connections, you know, family wealth like that that I mentioned with Elon Musk, you know, privilege in terms of a family, the the family background that one comes from, I think that makes things a lot easier. And then luck I think because I don't believe that anyone everyone who has, who works hard would necessarily get success. I I think social capital, yes, that's what I'll mention. I think the social one social capital is really, really important. Because with with any sort of success, not just not just entrepreneurial success. I mean, even if you think about academic success, I think social capitals, everything and and uh and and from my understanding as a non entrepreneur I think for people in who own businesses or who want to increase their sort of revenue and have more businesses. I think social capital is, is is important as well. But but yeah, I I. I I also think it it is a bit of luck, there is. It's not just that these factors are enough. I mean like I said there, there's automatically a selection bias here when I'm only thinking of Oprah and Elon Musk. You know, when we only think of Bill Gates or what's his name, Steve Jobs or, you know, Tata. Because we don't really think of all of those people who we don't know about, who probably failed many times and even these successful individuals have failed maybe several times before then making it. Yeah. So in addition to all of these things, I've, I mean, I just, I know it sounds a little bit vague when I say luck, but I I don't think I. I mean, I don't necessarily think it's there is such a thing as a meritocracy. I don't think you can just attribute one success only to their ability or hard work, because there's no such thing as meritocracy, right? Because we these modern control systems construct standards of what an entrepreneur should be. Or you know who should be successful and why should they? You know, why should they be successful? So, so, so yeah, I'm a little bit critical of of. Of that.

**Interviewer:**

OK, very interesting. Let's go and have a look at each of the factors that you mentioned. So let's start with hard work. What do you mean by hard work in entrepreneurship? How how much does an entrepreneur need to put towards to become extremely successful?

**Participant 29:**

I so I think it it requires a dedication and focus and sort of some level of discipline. If if somebody really wants something to happen. So it could mean something as simple again, thinking at a small scale, right? Like if I'm thinking about my friend who's a part-time entrepreneur. What she does is like she has like 2 day set aside for for that and then she really follows through hazard goals and is disciplined about that. So that is an example of, you know, being hard working to achieve ones goals and then to kind of yeah, to just be disciplined I suppose and how that works for for these billionaires. I mean I don't know because I I mean I'm not sure. Uh, yeah. And then again thinking of my uncle, who is who's very successful businessman, like again, It was just, you know, waking up like, really early in the morning, going into his factory, you know, coming back late. I mean, it's not necessarily a good thing, it's pretty bad for one's work life balance, but then thinking about it constantly, so that's what I that's sort of what I associate with entrepreneurship. So that's like the negative. Think side of entrepreneurship for me because I've seen that you know. Uh, constantly thinking about UM. That the factory, what's happening and you know delivering the the next consignment and, yeah, I think that's that.

**Interviewer:**

And how about how about network?

**Participant 29:**

Yes. So I mentioned social capital, I think I think the networks one has is really important so my my friend is really good with networking. Uh, she's very good with speaking to people and following up all about, you know, whether it's questions and and following through with she's good at making connections. So I think that making, creating network for yourself is extremely important, whether it's at a smaller scale or if it's at a very big scale in terms of my extended family. Again, I think they were very good at. Networks. And again, I think that there's also people other people in the family, so I suppose you can call that privilege where you know there's other successful people in the families that they could speak to them. And then again, what school one went to because one of them, you know, went to a really good school, very good university. And then again had networks through through that. And then as friends with somebody who's like, a really, really big. Uh, you know business person and and things like that. So it's definitely that social capital. Very important, yes.

**Interviewer:**

Great, that's really interesting. UM, let's look at the aspect of control. So to what extent do you think the entrepreneurs you mentioned or any other entrepreneurs were in control over achieving extreme success?

**Participant 29:**

But Oprah, yes, I think she's talked about her success, and I think she was in control to a certain extent. Uh pursuing, you know the the topics that she did even though they were risky, even though she had. Faced a backlash for certain for talking for speaking about certain issues, but she followed through anyway. And then I think those episodes got so many views and then, you know, there's millions of people who follow her. So it was that so to a certain extent, I think that was maybe a conscious decision from her side. Like she was brave and or she took that risk of talking about issues or, you know, political issues, and she did that anyway. But then, like I said again, like I don't think it can be completely attributed just to that one individual. I don't think someone's in absolute control. There's other factors, you know, we talked about social capital, we talked about you know effort as that's just like 1. One sort of one piece of the puzzle there's, there's so many other it could just be as simple as being at the right place at the right time. You know, it could have even been like an on an underexplored area where, you know, someone comes in with something new, like, like I said, like that whole culture of self confession that didn't really exist. So that is path breaking. But also maybe if someone had already, you know, if someone had already done a show on that or or been really successful focusing on this, this, this whole, focusing on safe, the self confession culture, you know, getting people to talk about personal and really sensitive things. If that were already the case then would she have been as successful? Is it's just again, it's a question I suppose you could ask. Uh. So of course. I mean definitely made strategic important decisions that benefited her. But then I wouldn't say one is fully in control of everything that happens, and again her networks would have helped the, you know, the the she produced this show in and again the the network that trusted her. I can't remember the name of the network that the show ran on, but then. All of that right, like that's social capital networking, being at the right place at the right time. Just just luck, yeah.

**Interviewer:**

Very interesting. UM, the next question is important for me to fully capture your thoughts on extreme success. UM, what do you think is Elon Musks or Oprah's contribution to our society?

**Participant 29:**

With Oprah's contribution, uh, I would say she. Of course, I think she's done. She's been involved in a lot of philanthropic initiatives. I think she's got this built a school and in South Africa and and somewhere else for for women, for girls and women. So we've done a lot for gender equality and also in terms of the intersectional approaches, you know women of colors initiatives and in other parts of the world like developing parts of the world and and and the other thing was to bringing to the four some really sensitive and important issues talking about. So, so, so sort of being ahead of her time in that sense, right, like talking about important issues, whether it's a social justice issues. And there there's so many shows that touch on on this, and then she did this like, I still remember this show that she did on AIDS and AIDS awareness. And then this they were like eclipse from South Africa as well. And then so things like that, I mean that really brings awareness and and because she had millions of viewers. In terms of spreading that social message, I think that's that's a pretty big contribution, of course, In addition to her philanthropic initiatives. So that's big, Elon Musk. OK, so electric cars I suppose, but again I I think. But but again, OK, so maybe I'm a little bit critical about I'm a little bit cynical about Elon Musk, right, because now there's more accessible Tesla cars. In terms of how much they cost, I think they they don't not as expensive anymore. But then years ago, I think a Tesla used to be an upward of like $100,000, right? Like people couldn't really afford Tesla. So even though it was this breakthrough thing, OK, electric cars good for the environment. Uh, it wasn't really accessible at the time. So now I suppose it's a bit you see more Tesla cars on the road. And like I guess. There's this contribution to the environment, but having said that, if you think about the whole process of manufacturing electric cars. I I'm not sure if it's if you could, once you've considered that, I think we need to see whether it's actually more beneficial for the environment to be driving electric cars because the process of manufacturing production that itself is that damages the environment in many ways, right. Uh, I mean, of course you've got less emissions, you've got zero emissions and things like that, but then that doesn't mean that the damage hasn't been done in the in the process of manufacturing. So. So I'm a little bit cynical about that, but I guess this is the only thing I'm aware of in terms of the contribution to society. Electric cars are seen as being good for the environment, so that's the only thing I can think of.

**Interviewer:**

And if you could change any of their contributions, what would you like to see happening more?

**Participant 29:**

That's a good one. I haven't really followed Oprah in a long time now, because, I mean, she still has that network, but she hasn't had that Oprah Winfrey show in in many, many years because that was like, really, really successful. Don't. So what she's done now? What? What can I change? I don't know. That's a tough one because I haven't been following what she's up to now, so I don't want to say. I mean, again, I think the other thing, I mean going back to the contributions, I think her book club, I would say that as a positive contribution because the book sales went up as a result of the book club and obviously and that promotes reading, right, like reading good books. And that's that's a positive thing. That's like a positive intellectual contribution, I'd say. Yeah, I yeah, I I don't know what in terms of what else I I change.

**Interviewer:**

Yeah, yeah, that's OK. We can come back later tonight.

**Participant 29:**

Yeah, and Elon Musk. And I'm not sure how, if he's been asked this before in and if he's, like, talked about this before, but I think it would be nice to see a more accurate assessment of to what extent electric cars are are. Beneficial considering are are more beneficial than you know petrol cars. Taking into account the environmental cost of, you know, the production and manufacturing and all of that. So I think a more honest conversation about that.

And and I suppose in terms of his brand image and like the the persona, the, you know the view people have of him, it seems to make a big difference. It seems to affect. You know the. The shareholder, like no share values of our company right because investors get scared and things like that. So maybe a little bit more. I wish that he'd pay a little bit more attention to how what he comes across as, because so I think that PR. He does need to think a little bit about that. Maybe again, I know that I realized that that maybe seems a bit inauthentic and but then who doesn't have pre? I mean, we do live in a society, so you do have to think about the things that you tweet and be a little bit more responsible. About the things that you say, perhaps I mean because you're such an extremely successful individual. And you could be a role model to a lot of people. Uh and and again you have come across, you know, have seen these hardcore mask fans, right. So you don't want to kind of embody like that sort of rash behavior and things that you do. So maybe be a a more. Be a positive role model I I suppose.

**Interviewer:**

Great. And what are your thoughts on money and wealth being an indicator for how much an entrepreneur has contributed to our society?

**Participant 29:**

OK, that's a really interesting one. I I'd say that maybe they're inversely proportional. To certain extent. Because of course you have, you know, Bill Gates’ philanthropic initiatives. You've, you know, the foundation and everything, and there's news about how, you know, a large percentage of what he earns is like goes to charity and all of that. But then. But but again, that's because there's so much wealth already. So I see like an inverse relationship between the two. I mean, even I'm I'm aware of the foundation, but I'm I'm still a bit cynical about the contribution to society, and again I don't know enough about, I guess there is awareness that of course the foundation has done some great work, but then in terms of the macro level picture of the contribution and and whether it's had a negative impact on on some other aspects, I'm not really sure so. I'm a little bit cynical about that. Because at the end of the day, I think everybody's individualist, uh, in that sense. And they think about themselves 1st and and that's not to say that they've not tried and they've not engaged themselves in philanthropic initiatives. But then again, that becomes a really good PR exercise as well. But again, having said that, I'm not saying that. They don't do it because they want to help people. I mean at that could be a part of it, but you can't see intentions. But when you're that successful, you can't not contribute to society because you have to think about your, your brand and how you come across. So so for instance, you know with Bill Gates, everybody knows about the foundation. That means they've successfully spread the message. Everyone's aware of the fact that, oh, they, there's this Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. They do amazing charity work. We all know about it because that's they wanted everybody to know about this. I'm sure that I'm sure that there are some successful individuals or or maybe not as successful individuals who do philanthropic work, but then we don't really know about it. So maybe that's that sort of contribution to society is more genuine because you're not doing it as a PR exercise, but then you're doing it because you genuinely want to help people.

**Interviewer:**

And how about in terms of the product that they have developed as a contribution? Umm, let's take the following example. So Bill Gates is a billionaire, therefore his contribution to our society is bigger than your friend, for example, who I assume is not a billionaire. Therefore, your friend's contribution to our society is less. What do you think about this?

**Participant 29:**

But that's just a scale comparison, isn't it? So Bill Gates, of course, we know everybody uses Microsoft products and I I I I guess it's become part of our daily kind of work life. Uh. Maybe not for you because you said you you're a Mac user now, but uh. But again, I suppose I remember in the 90s it was. It was just. Of course it's a huge contribution, but at the same time, there's also concerns. And there's also criticism about monopolies in it, the fact that he didn't let any other providers kind of come in and compete. So I guess he was a bit ruthless in the beginning to make sure that there was this monopoly of, you know, because we only know Microsoft and then we know. Like Mac stuff, right? We so that's. That's interesting. So yeah, of course. That's a big contribution. I use it every day. But in terms of the comparison, I don't really think that comparisons uh necessarily fair because you're you're looking at two completely different scales. And in terms of the contribution to society with what my friend's doing, again, it started as this, you know passion project because she wanted to find a more ethical way of showcasing, you know, products and art and make make sure that this was done in a fair. We were, people were paid fairly. And because what happens is with with a lot of these large uh outlets, they get they source products from, you know, different parts of the world and they don't necessarily always pay them fairly, but then they sell it for a big profit. So the so the ethics and the the values based approach it to what she's doing is it does make a difference. But of even though it's it's in a smaller scale even if it's only helping people. At a smaller scale, because it's obviously a a smaller, much smaller initiative.

**Interviewer:**

Great. That was very interesting. Thank you for sharing your thoughts about this. So the next question may sound a bit controversial, but you did mention the role of luck a few times. So I wanted to go a bit more in depth into your thoughts about luck. So some people would say that luck plays a very important role in extreme entrepreneurial success and they would go on to hold the view that people like Elon Musk or Oprah are just lucky and don't deserve their profits. So what are your thoughts on that?

**Participant 29:**

So I wouldn't say that they don't deserve their profits. I wouldn't have an extreme view about that, but I definitely do believe that luck does have a big role to play, much more so in Elon Musks case, I think because if you're born into a wealthy family, like if you, if you have, if you are born with a certain level of privilege, then. Life is a lot easier, and of course everybody is privileged that their own way, and I think it's important for people to acknowledge their privilege, especially when when there's discussion about, like, extreme success with Oprah that definitely wasn't the case. She had a very hard childhood and then, you know, she there was child abuse, there was, you know, sexual abuse and all of that, that she's talked about later. So I think it was later on that she worked. Really hard and. You know, made that happen, but of course I'm not saying it was just that, as I said, it was also perhaps being at the right place at the at the right time, so. Yes, I I don't know if I answered the the question. What was the question?

**Interviewer:**

What do you think about people who hold these extreme views, and what would you answer to that view?

**Participant 29:**

Yeah, so, so I don't. Uh, what do I think about the people who have these extreme views?

**Interviewer:**

And no, no, sorry. What would your response be to that kind of view?

**Participant 29:**

Yeah, I I don't think it's as straightforward is that, but I think there's aspects of it that I agree with that. I mean, I don't think that they don't deserve their profits because I think everybody's lucky in some way or the other. It's about being at the right place at the right time. But but at the same time, I think it's important to acknowledge that it's not just. It's not merit based or it's not just effort.

**Interviewer:**

So uh is that how you define luck being at the right place at the right time?

**Participant 29:**

That's a really interesting question. Yeah. So that's one way to look at it. That's like one example to look at it, for example. I mean, again, if you think of like a job interview situation. Right. Like there could be, you know, five amazing candidates, but the and of course. I mean there are processes there to make sure that you hire the person who fits the the you know the person's specification and meets the criteria and everything, but then. But then I that is also an element of of luck, right? Or even if you look at the shortlisting process, maybe something didn't come across. Ohh for whatever reason. Umm. So yeah, I think that's one way of looking at it. I'd say being at the right place at the right time and also other factors. Or or, you know be. Yeah, because I didn't encompasses everything right like that. Even encompasses the fact that you…you're born into a wealthy family or you have networks.

**Interviewer:**

Umm. And how do you assess how much luck has involved? Has involvement in extreme success? Do you think it's, you know, not not a very big factor? Or do you think it has a huge role?

**Participant 29:**

I think it definitely has a role to play, but of course that's not enough. I mean, it's not enough to just have luck. I mean, of course it goes without saying that one has to put in the work in order to achieve something like you have to be passionate about achieving X, say. But then when there's if you're looking at entrepreneurship, I mean when there's so much risk involved in terms of taking steps in taking action, taking, you know, getting behind initiatives that you really do have to be, you have to be willing to take that risk and you have to be really passionate about it. And I'm sure there's lots of failures like people have failed many times and we only think about the successes. We only look at the success stories. Uh, but people fail so many times and that could be due to loads of other factors. Sometimes everything else works like you've put in the work you've done everything. And and you've been really kind of committed to a particular project, but it may still not pan out, still not work out and that and how how do you explain that so? So it could be other factors, right? Like if for example, if you look at external events, right? Like if you look at the. The the pandemic or if you have other external crisis situations. So if you're doing something and you're affected by that, that's just plain unlucky, isn't it? Because you didn't foresee that coming so. So it does have a big role to play, I think in addition to other factors.

**Interviewer:**

That's very interesting. I really appreciate your willingness to share your views on this UM and one last question. Is there anything else about extreme entrepreneurial success that you would still like to share? But I didn't ask.

**Participant 29:**

Yeah, I think. Uh, the definition of success would vary. I think when I, when we talked about extreme entrepreneurial success in the context of this interview, I think we're talking about people who are, like, really famous who were well known or, you know, who have that financial success. And of course, it was nice to also be talked to talk to you about people. I think who I know personally who have other kind of goals and everything. But I think the the way in which we view success would vary. So individuals definition of success wouldn't necessarily be the same. Because for some for you know, for someone it could be they view work life balance. As success, I mean, I know it doesn't necessarily translate to entrepreneurial success, maybe, but. But maybe that's what, maybe that balance between them being able to kind of focus on their entrepreneurial venture and then also have. You know, time to do other things. Maybe that's for you to success. And and also again, even in the context of extreme entrepreneurial success, maybe there's. There's different views and so I think that that's interesting that that would be interesting.

**Interviewer:**

Great. Umm, thank you a lot for participating in this. I would really like to go in depth into exploring this topic. So if you have anyone that you know that has similar views to yours or absolutely different views, feel free to share their contact with me. And if you're willing to participate of course.

**Participant 29:**

Sure. Sure, no worries. I hope it was helpful and not like. Be I wasn't like way off to what you were sort of looking for.

**Interviewer:**

Oh yes, it was that definitely helpful.

**Participant 29:**

OK. Thank you.