

Helping others to find their voice

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March 25, 2021



The Ismaili | 25 March 2021 | Global

Aga Khan Academy Mombasa graduate Danish and his university roommates co-founded Orai, a mobile app that uses artificial intelligence to coach people to practice and enhance their speaking skills.

This week, on our fifth episode of Trailblazers, we are joined by Danish Dhamani, the co-founder of Orai, and one of 2021's Forbes 30 under 30.

Now a successful entrepreneur, Danish Dhamani didn't even know the meaning of the word entrepreneurship until his second year of college. Cited as the most common phobia amongst humans, Danish struggled with public speaking, especially since English was a second language for him. His journey as the co-founder of Orai was motivated by his own personal experiences and his drive to improve the quality of life of people across the globe.

Realising that public speaking can be a learned skill, Aga Khan Academy Mombasa graduate Danish and his university roommates co-founded Orai, a mobile app that uses artificial intelligence to coach people to practice and enhance their speaking skills. Orai is now used by major corporations across the globe and has helped reach over 300,000 people.

Engaging in discussion with Tahira Nizari on the grounds of the beautiful Serena Hotel Dar es Salaam, Danish talks about what drives him as an entrepreneur. Off to the side are his parents, beaming with pride as they watch their son in action for the first time. The pandemic has allowed Danish to slow down, spend more time with his family in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and focus on his mental health and well-being.

Speaking about his desire to help improve the quality of life of people from around the world, Danish says: “If I start something today or tomorrow, I don’t only think of ‘hey let’s just make money, let’s just build an app,’ it’s not like that. It’s more about, what is the problem I’m trying to solve and how can I improve the quality of life of other people by solving their problem? To me, that is the basis of entrepreneurship.”

As CEO, Danish’s thought process is focused on how to make a business sustainable by generating revenue and having people see value in your service.

“If you don’t figure out how to make yourself sustainable, tomorrow you might not be alive to continue serving the population who you aspire to serve.”

According to Danish, being a CEO means finding clarity in the uncertainty. Danish recommends that you surround yourself with a circle of trust of executive coaches, therapists, and a peer group of other founders.

“Take control of your destiny” is one of the strong pieces of advice that he believes facilitates success and does not compromise authority.

In an effort to inspire other entrepreneurs, Danish outlines what he calls the “secret to success” during the episode.

An avid cyclist, and always busy trying to hit changing milestones for the success of Orai, Danish finds time to relax by engaging in meditation, practicing yoga, eating healthy, and sleeping well.

“Eight hours of sleep is so important. It is the most effective remedy against a ton of illnesses.”

This episode will air live on Friday 27 March 2021, on [The Ismaili TV](#) at 10 am, 2:30 pm, 8 pm, and 11 pm EST; 9 am, 3 pm, and 7:30 pm GMT; 1 pm, 7 pm, and 11:30 pm GST.

After airing, this episode will also be available to watch in full on [The Ismaili TV On Demand](#).

Last week, on the fourth episode of Trailblazers, we heard from Rahim Daya, the head of Barclays Private Bank, Middle East. You can now watch the episode on demand [here](#).