



# Financial Planning & Funding with Dr. Nassim Abdi



*“There’s a fine line between being stubborn and being resilient.”*

- Dr. Nassim Abdi  
Learning Scientist, DEI Leader, & Co-Founder of StoryBolt

## EARLY LESSONS & INSPIRATION



*Answer the following questions based on what you learned from the video. Be as specific as possible.*

### 1 EARLY INSPIRATION & BIG IDEAS

What inspired Dr. Nassim Abdi to start StoryBolt, and how did her background shape that vision?

#### **Answer (0:30-3:00):**

Before founding StoryBolt, Nassim was a journalist in Iran and later a learning scientist in the U.S. Her curiosity about how people change —and how stories create empathy— inspired her to launch a platform that brings human stories into training and education.

► Hint: Her journey shows how personal experiences can spark powerful business ideas.

### 2 FUNDING & FOCUS

How did Dr. Nassim first approach funding StoryBolt?

#### **Answer (7:40-10:30):**

She bootstrapped the company for two years before joining 1871 in Chicago, a startup accelerator for women in tech. That experience helped her learn how to pitch investors, understand operations, and build a clear business model.

► Hint: Learning how funding works is just as important as having a great idea.

### 3 OUTSIDE INVESTMENT

What was Dr. Nassim’s approach to raising outside investment as a mission-driven founder?

#### **Answer (11:20-12:50):**

She found that funding a values-led business meant finding investors who believed in her vision. Through Purdue’s I-Corps program and pitch competitions, StoryBolt earned its first institutional check from Elevate Ventures.

► Hint: Investors back founders who know their audience and can prove impact matters.

## 4 PIVOTING FOR PROGRESS

How did Dr. Nassim decide when to pivot StoryBolt's business model?

### Answer (15:20-17:30):

When corporate contracts slowed, she paused to reassess. Instead of pushing forward blindly, she stepped back to research new markets — returning to customer discovery to find what was next.

► Hint: Sometimes the smartest financial move is to pause, listen, and adapt.

## DISCUSSION-BASED QUESTIONS



*Reflect on your personal thoughts and write your answers below.*

### 1 PERSONAL CONNECTION

What part of Dr. Nassim's story stood out the most? Why?

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### 2 BIGGEST TAKEAWAY

What's your biggest takeaway from her story about funding and staying true to your mission? How can you apply that to your own ideas?

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**3 APPLYING LESSONS**

Dr. Nassim said that finding the right funders meant finding people who believed in her vision. Think about a goal you have — who could support you if they understood your “why”? How would you explain it to them?

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**4 INSPIRATION**

Dr. Nassim faced big challenges as an immigrant and woman entrepreneur but kept moving forward with purpose. Who inspires you to stay resilient, and how can you use that energy to pursue your own dreams?

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**5 STORYTELLING & IMPACT**

Dr. Nassim built StoryBolt on the idea that **stories create empathy and drive change**. Think about a story, documentary, podcast, article, or nonfiction book that really stuck with you. What made it memorable? Did it change how you thought or felt? Did it inspire you to do anything differently?

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! Use your creativity to complete the following activity.

**1 PLAN WITH PURPOSE**

Dr. Nassim Abdi built StoryBolt to spark empathy and inclusion through storytelling. When it came time to raise money, she learned that funding isn't just about the dollars — it's about finding people who believe in your mission. Now it's your turn to practice connecting purpose + plan.

**Step 1: Define Your Mission**

What's one cause, issue, or idea you care deeply about?

**Step 2: Build Your Solution**

How could you turn that passion into a business or project? Describe what it would do and who it would help.

**Step 3: Know Your Numbers**

Imagine you're pitching to an investor or a grant panel. How much money would you need to start, and what would it go toward?

**Amount Needed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**It would pay for:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4: Find the Right Partner** Dr. Nassim looked for funders who shared her values. List two kinds of people or organizations who might support your mission — and why.

1.

2.

**2 PITCH PERFECT**

Using your answers from Steps 1–4, write out your own elevator pitch — something you could say in 30 seconds to make someone believe in your idea.

Example: "Hi, I'm [Name], and I'm creating [business or idea] to [solve problem]. We help [audience] by [solution], and with [support type], we can [impact]."

Now write yours below:

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**GREAT WORK!**

You're one step closer to thinking like an entrepreneur. Keep exploring, learning, and dreaming big!