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Her goal: To be one of the most famous architecture firms in Los Angeles

Pınar Ayhan and Feyza Önay are two Turkish women entrepreneurs whose paths crossed in Los Angeles, thousands of kilometers away from Turkey. At a very young age, they adopted the principle of overcoming the difficulties, struggling and not giving up and then created their own luck in America, so to say in the land of opportunities. Both of them received training in the field of architecture and design and gained experience. Then they started their own architecture firm in Los Angeles, where the world's most expensive houses are located. The goal of Ayhan and Önay, who took on big projects in a short time, is to be one of the most famous architecture firms in Los Angeles.

While staying in the same room during the preparatory camp of Curling National Team, Pinar Ayhan and Feyza Öney began to build first their friendship and then their common story of the entrepreneurship. They had a lot in common; they were both diagnosed with dyslexia, a type of learning disability. For this reason, they adopted the principle of working by writing. They had been trained in different fields, but they liked to try new things and to row against the tide. Both had a fighting spirit and had unlimited dreams. They combined their dreams and decided to fly together.

Pinar Ayhan, who has been living in Los Angeles for 12 years, graduated from Istanbul University, Department of French Language Teaching. Being the daughter of a civil servant father, Ayhan was always a very social student throughout her school life. She participated in folklore groups in primary school, took part in dance group, marching band and table tennis team in secondary school. She played guitar and cross flute in high school, sang in the school group. She was always interested in sports, played volleyball, and joined the paragliding club in the college. She played ice hockey and curling. She founded women's and men's teams of ice hockey and curling at Istanbul University and managed these teams for a while. Despite being so versatile, she never sought financial support from her family. She either chose the clubs she was in for free or earned her own money by giving private lessons. She was a child diagnosed with dyslexia, a type of learning disability, despite her social strength. But she never gave up. After the college, she turned her route to America. She studied Design at Los Angeles Valley College and worked in many kinds of jobs during her 12 years of life in America, from babysitting to

weekend teacher, from food delivery to tour guide. Finding reasons to love everything she did and the environment she is in, Ayhan entered the architectural sales sector 7 years ago when she started working for a Turkish natural stone company. Connected with love to her job, Ayhan made use of better offers and worked in 4 different companies during this time.

Feyza Öney, who graduated from Kocaeli University Sports Academy and Anadolu University Business Administration Department, had a very important heart disease in the summer when she had just finished the first class of the primary school. She went through an intensive treatment process. After this time, her family tried to make her move as little as possible to follow her heart rhythms. Being away from sports and movement at a very young age made Öney very sad, and on the contrary, she became passionate about sports in her later years. She played volleyball and basketball against all the prohibitions. Her illness relapsed when she was in secondary school. Her passion for sports was growing. Just like her business partner Pinar Ayhan, she also had a diagnosis of dyslexia. But she never gave up. After fully recovered, she prepared for the sports academy exams and won the academy. In this period, she took part in the curling and ice hockey teams of Kocaeli University and participated in the inter-university winter games in Erzurum. She also took part in the folklore team of Kocaeli University and participated in the competitions in European cities. She acted as a referee in important rallies of Turkish Automobile Sports Federation, including the World Rally Championship. After graduating from the school, she attended many courses in Europe, America and also in online platforms in the fields of fitness, pilates,

Advice from Ayhan and Önay to young entrepreneurs

As two partners, we have had to struggle our whole lives with one of the learning difficulties, dyslexia. This trouble, which affected all our education and business life, was like an effort to swim in a constantly rough sea. We can say to anyone who has a desire for success: "Never lose your self-confidence." If productive and creative generations can be raised who know themselves, have a strong inner voice, know what they want, create ways to be happy with what they do, and can turn the ways what they are happy with into their hobbies and work, these people will have no excuses for failure. Failure is an illusion built on excuses. If you are constantly failing, if you cannot achieve the success you want, you may be in the wrong place. Before using external factors as

an excuse, you should ask yourself, "Do I enjoy doing what I am doing now?" The things we enjoy learning about are the aspects that make us who we are and that we can improve. Development and learning continue until our last breath. By identifying internal motivations, you should focus on the areas you enjoy doing. Do not listen to any voice other than your inner voice. Do not miss the chance when you have the opportunity to do research and observe and experience the areas you want to go on. There will always be some difficulties, there will be those who want to discourage you, those who do not believe you, those who do not hear you, those who want to influence your decisions, and those who believe that they know you better than you and want to change your decision. It is very important that you can distinguish between your own voice and these voices.

yoga, leadership and personal development and received international trainings. After working as a sports trainer and coach in Turkey for a while, she turned her route to America in 2015. Taking courses of Sustainability and Design at Santa Monica College in Los Angeles, Önay's passion for personal development and wellness pushed her to learn new things. Önay, who has initiatives in finance, real estate and home design, has her own housing company that offers short-term accommodation services since 6 years. Önay, who also designs the

interiors of the places where she provides these services, has two other companies she manages together in sister sectors, one of which is Pinar Ayhan, and two other partners.

The acquaintance of Pinar Ayhan and Feyza Önay began in 2010 when they stayed in the same room during the National Team Curling camp. As one of these two women both successful curling players, Feyza Önay was living in Turkey at that time. Over the years, their friendship evolved into a companionship. With Önay's moving to America,



they decided to bring together the education and knowledge they had gained in the field of design, which they had a common interest in, under one roof and they established Phase Interiors & Development company.

Although they established the company in January 2022, they had a rigorous preparation process beforehand. At the moment, there are 3 big projects they are working on. Ayhan and Onay, on their way as Interior Architects, while making use of the opportunities and needs which they came across, expanded their business in a wider area by taking steps in the issues about the regional and overseas procurement of materials needed by a construction, including furniture, and about obtaining the construction permits and forming contacts with practitioners. Ayhan and Onay cooperate with A+ quality manufacturers who can export overseas from Turkey as well as local manufacturers, and collect the manufacturers they may need in every field of construction within a system. For the development part of the company, they included another friend of theirs whom they trust for the experience. Phase Interiors & Development is



now growing with its own capital and the company, with a team of 17 people in Turkey, has many stakeholders with whom it works on a project basis.

Ayhan and Onay, who supplied the natural stone for businessperson Adnan Şen's project in Beverly Hills, are currently working on a mansion project of 3 thousand square meters. The project is planned to be put up for sale for \$80 million at the beginning of 2023. Their work sites are on the Beverly Hills, Bel Air and Hollywood Hills areas. Throughout the state of California, Ayhan and Onay have nearly 300 residential projects they follow in the region and nearly 400 architecture and construction companies they work with. Ayhan and Onay have traveled from street to street in 7 years, expressing their desire to be involved in any project they found. They regularly collected the information of the projects in Google Map system they created and laid the foundations of the company they own today. They are currently working with Turkey's leading glass producers, stone quarries, kitchen, bathroom furniture and building materials manufacturers. Being also in talks with big Turkish companies, they say: "Our aim is to bring the A++ construction

products imported from Europe to America, from Turkey and to ensure that Turkey takes place in the market. Most of our team is in Turkey and we want to work with Turkish companies."

Their goal is to become one of the most famous architecture firms in Los Angeles

Stating that she never thought she would do her own business in the construction sector during the first 6 years of her career, Ayhan tells that this field was a male-dominated sector in the USA, so the processes of being accepted and proving herself were difficult. Ayhan speaks as follows: "I can explain the story of turning the idea into my own business as 'the right time, the right place and the right people'. I was included in the interior architects whatsapp group in Turkey, from there I met the architects who would later form our team in Turkey. I shared my idea of starting a business in the architecture and construction sector with Feyza. Based on the management and organizational success, stress management, determination and stability of the companies that Feyza had already established and managed, I offered to set out on this way with her together. It was great to see her excited about the idea. If we ask 'Are we at the point we wanted to be?', we are far ahead of what we had imagined, considering our founding date. Where we want to be is to become the most famous, best architecture and construction firm in the city of Los Angeles. Reminding that the world's well-known architectural firms are our competitors, we certainly have a long way to go."

Saying that she decided to become an entrepreneur after meeting with the marketing vision of America, Feyza Onay tells: "The idea of working in a single field for a lifetime seems unfair to me and

for my potential. That's why I've always been tempted to do research on new areas of interest which I was not a professional in. Pinar's realization of the architectural needs of Los Angeles houses, which I already know about its real estate market, and our work on this matter created the PHASE."

"Doing your job well is an indicator of the personality"

Pinar Ayhan, who has a 3-year-old daughter and spends all the time outside of her work with her family, is grateful to everyone who crossed paths with her on her career journey. Ayhan expresses "Everyone, including my likes and dislikes, has left instructive traces in my life. Everything and everyone I came across made me who I am. My family, my teachers, my colleagues, my principals, my business partners, my clients, they are all the architects of my life. I hope everyone realizes the architects of their own life." Years ago, while still sitting at school desks, the advice one of her teachers to her friend, who was ashamed because his father was a cleaner, formed the basis of Ayhan's philosophy of life. Ayhan tells the following: "Our teacher told my friend: 'Every profession is born out of necessity. Never stop dreaming. Your dreams evolve. When the life takes you where you need to be, not where you want to be; enjoying where you are and what you are doing, doing the best in what you do, doing it with love will make you special and strong, it will make you shine. Whatever you do in your life, do your best. This is not a necessity of your job, this is an indicator of your personality.' And since that day, I carried this saying in the deepest part of my heart. And my perspective on life changed." In addition, the advices given to her by her teachers Dr. Bülent Bayraktar, Dr. Resa Aydın and Dr. Adnan Kamar

were effective in determining Ayhan's route and finding the light within her by herself.

Who knows more; a person who reads a lot or travels a lot?

Feyza Onay's parents are at the forefront of the names that left a mark on her career. On the debate "Who knows more, a person who reads a lot or travels a lot?", her mother gave the answer "Who reads a lot" and her father gave the answer "Who travels a lot". And their answers created today; Onay read a lot and travelled a lot. Robert Kiyosaki's Rich Dad Poor Dad; Michael A. Singer's Four Agreements, Free Spirit; Daniel Kahneman's Thinking Fast and Slow; Tony Robbins' all books; the authors and the books such as Dr. Joe Dispenza, Azra Kohen, Sinan Canan, Lewis Homes changed Onay's perspective about the life.



The two partners draw attention to the fact that the world order goes under a rapid change and transformation and it has reached a point that cannot be ignored with regard to the need for women and they speak as follows: "Although freedom could not be fully achieved in the next 10 years, we believe that the gap between the genders will decrease worldwide due to the increase of awareness in the countries where access to the information is free. Women entrepreneurs like to work with women, we know this from ourselves. We are aware of the power and abilities of women. We think of a company as a tree. Every woman who is appreciated will become stronger and touch other women, empower them, support them, and make them grow. While our branches and roots are growing, we think that at some point male-dominated communities, governments and male-dominated world will give up this war and this unnecessary effort."



"Although the equality maybe cannot fully achieved in the next 10 years, we believe that the gap between them will decrease with the increase of awareness in the world and in countries where access to information is free. Women entrepreneurs love to work with women and we know this from ourselves. We are aware of the power and abilities of women. We consider a company as a tree. Every woman who is appreciated will become stronger and touch other women, empower them, support them, and make them grow as they grow too. As our branches and roots grow, we are of the opinion that at some point, male-dominated communities, administrations and male-dominated world will give up this unnecessary effort and war."