

The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129\*', a Twitter icon with '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the right side of the banner is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name 'Deepak Jayaraman' in a red box below it. At the bottom left of the banner, a small note reads: '\*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

## Context to the conversation

Ricardo speaks about how we often end up having a shield and adopting a different persona at work and how that can drain our energy and come in the way of truly bringing our full self to work.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Another term that intrigued me or your take on the term, which was sort of thought-provoking, in the book you say that professionalism means acting in ways that take us away from our original personality, from our humanity, and therefore can block access to energy. And I thought that was a very interesting take on the word. Professionalism is often used in a sort of a... you need to adopt professionalism, it's sort of a no brainer kind of a thing when you join the workforce but you have a slightly nuanced take on the word. So, just talk to us about what you mean here.

Ricardo Sunderland (RS): What I mean by this is that sometimes we believe that we need to go through life with a professional persona, it is a bit of a shield. And then we come with this belief that you actually can compartmentalise your life. You can have a shield at work and be professional and you can take that shield off and be at home and be more personal. One of the things I do, Deepak, when I coach my clients is I create a personal supporting system, I coach their families too. That's why I can work with a level four of the human energy field. So, I coach the spouse, the husband, and the kids. For example, I ask the kids, what takes energy away from mom? What takes energy away from dad? What do you think they answer when I ask them this?

DJ: Disagreements?

RS: Work. A hundred percent of them will say work. Probably more than a thousand of them I have talked to. So, there is this belief that it is a flawed belief. We actually believe, and there is a spillover between home and work and work and home. No matter how good we think we are in putting this shield at work or at home. When my clients are able then to understand that this shield actually holds them back to be able to be the boss that can shape context, for example, or the father that could be able to show vulnerability as strength at home, then we start to figure out what is it that's holding them back to take this shield off. Because also, that shield is there for reason. It is not necessarily something that it is part of the culture of the country or part of the culture of the work. It has to do also, to complete the answer to your question, it has to do with everybody's story. We all have a story. We all have a wound and we are all protecting ourselves to feel how we felt when we decided to protect ourselves and start to creating this shield. It is important to be able to help them

discover the original, the roots of this so that they can feel comfortable, again, level two, so that you can start feeling more comfortable about yourself, more confident, more loving to yourself, so that with that level of assurance you can start to let go off that shield that actually it takes a lot of work. If you can take that off, then your ability to have more freedom of choice and where you are giving energy and what energy you are willing to give, it is more purposeful.

DJ: Wonderful.

RS: That's what I mean by that.

DJ: I was touched by the term you said about working with the family because in the work I do, I very often speak to siblings and spouses and children to gather feedback on the leader I am working with and I have seen people use the word, the phrase team coaching in the context of coaching the leader and the leadership team but it is wonderful that you are sort of working with the leader and the family and that's a team as well; that's probably a more important team in a lot of ways. That's wonderful, that's something... that's the first time actually I have heard somebody talk about that, it is very, very interesting. How did... can you talk a little bit about that? Just that how do you carry the family along because it sort of seems like a very fresh way of thinking about driving change?

RS: You know, when you start to get into the story of each person, each has a unique struggle in their lives. All these big leaders, they have all gone through struggles, which is why they are so resilient in their ability to take so much responsibility and still be functional and thrive and feel. As I started to go deeper into the story, it is quite difficult to help a very successful person change. How to find a right hook, a loving hook, and I started to realise that many of these leaders, they are not, there weren't that in need to change for their companies, but for their families they would do anything. So, when you start to see how much the words of a loving person, how much an insight. I will give you one example. I was recently talking to one of the daughters of one of my clients, and she actually told me that... I asked her, when you are walking with your dad during the weekend, just give me an example of what he does and who's your dad? And she said, well, my dad's an artist. And he runs a very big organisation. I was like, tell me more. Yeah, my dad's an artist. When he is with a camera, he is able to find the most beautiful things and designs and he can create the most beautiful photographs. I was like taken so much by this insight, which is seen by the eyes of the daughter. And then when I spoke to him and I told him, can you bring the photographer to work, he was like, what do you mean? Because according to your daughter, you can find beauty in everywhere you go. And as he started to realise and discover how to bring the photographer into the office, rather than sometimes, you know, certain rigidity in his way of solving things, he kept, of course, his ability to structure and solve things because that's a superpower. But he started to see more beauty that was compartmentalised in a weekend and started to bring it home... and started to bring it to the workplace. So, those were the things that when you start to connect through this hook, then you start to see that it is a beautiful connection that allows for people to change because they are inspired, because they are... they feel loved, because they... then it takes a lot of the burden and the threat of the pain that you have to go through to be able to change because there is no shortcut. You always have to feel the emotion that made you close in the first place, which is not joy, nor love. But if you can do it in a non-threatening way and then with the intention to help become a better father or a better mother and as well a better leader, I just found that it is, again, it is level four who connects with level two and then level three amplifies and you are starting to connect more with your energy and you are allowing yourself to get that stuck energy to be unstuck.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: A related point that comes up in these situations is that instead of wearing a mask of professionalism, we are true to ourselves in the way we come across the various ecosystems we interact with. But that begs the question, true to which self. The past self, the current self or the future self. Jeffrey Pfeffer (JP) of Stanford speaks about this.

*JP: "This goes back to this whole thing about authenticity, you need to be true to your inner self or your true self, but I would hope that most human beings are on a journey of learning and development and that Deepak at your current age, whatever that is because you look amazingly young to me, is not exactly the same person as Deepak a 10 or 5 or 20 or 25 or 30. My hope would be, from our conversation, my belief would be that you have been on a journey of learning and self-discovery and that you have been on a journey of growth and development, and so that therefore, when you say be true to yourself. If you are really true to yourself, you are basically not going to be on a journey of growth and development because you are going to say I have to be true to my one year old self which basically does not use the toilet. That is an extreme example but you get the point. The point is just that as you have evolved, as people learn, I believe in the redemption of souls, I believe that people can forgive, I believe that people can develop, I believe people evolve, at least I hope they do, and so as they evolve, their values, their beliefs, their behaviors, everything would change. I do not think that is being authentic, I think that is called learning."*

DJ: If you wish to dig in deeper into this theme, Members can go to [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com) and access more than 20 nuggets on Authenticity from multiple speakers over the years.

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## End of transcription

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Nugget from Jeffrey Pfeffer that is referenced: [True to which Self?](#)

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Podcast Transcript [103.04 Ricardo Sunderland - Downside of professionalism](#)

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## Ricardo Sunderland- Nuggets

- 103.01 Ricardo Sunderland - Leadership - Shaping context rather than setting direction
- 103.02 Ricardo Sunderland - 7 layers of the human energy field
- 103.03 Ricardo Sunderland - Tuning into our emotions
- 103.04 Ricardo Sunderland - Downside of professionalism
- 103.05 Ricardo Sunderland - The spiritual dimension
- 103.06 Ricardo Sunderland - Tuning into our purpose
- 103.07 Ricardo Sunderland - Role of breath in tuning into ourselves
- 103.08 Ricardo Sunderland - Tackling self-limiting beliefs
- 103.09 Ricardo Sunderland - Finding your rightful place in your family system
- 103.10 Ricardo Sunderland - Spiritual energy - The yeast in the bread of human energy
- 103.11 Ricardo Sunderland - In Summary - Playing to Potential

## About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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