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Context to the conversation

Ricardo speaks about how we get shaped by the roles we end up playing / not playing in our family context. He speaks about how that influences how we show up at the work place.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other phrase I was curious about in the book, Ricardo, is you speak about family constellations being a big source of breakthrough for your clients. And I think more specifically one of the questions that really got me thinking was am I in my rightful place in the family system? You ask people to reflect on it. So, can you talk a little bit about family constellations and just what do you mean by the rightful place in the family system and how does that impact our performance and who we are?

Ricardo Sunderland (RS): Yes. I mean, this is deeply into level four, which is how to be able to be in good relationships with your...with you and your loving, caring family. And family constellations is a framework that was created by a German named Bert Hellinger. He was a very wise man. The way that he was able to discover the foundation of this framework was he was a missionary in the Zulu tribe in Africa. He later was able to connect with other tribes in other parts of the world and he became incredibly surprised that the rites of passage, the traditions were very similar between tribe to tribe without each tribe having any possibility of communication to each other back in the day. So, he started to realise that there was a collective unconsciousness that if he was to distil in principle of life, what he started to realise is whenever there is a disorder in these principles, then energy gets stuck. And when you put in order these principles, then energy flows. There is the sense of belonging is the first one. The second one is being in a good relationship. And good relationship is a balance between the giving and the taking. And there is only one exception in the giving and the taking, which is parents give, children take, and it works very, very well. And then the third one is what you were making reference on, which is how to be able to be in your right place. So, for example, if there is a balance, a disorder in the balance of relationship, and parents for whatever reason they start to take from you at a very early stage in your life, you start to play a different role in the family. If for any reason mom or dad were not available, let's say, for example, emotionally, and you have to start to take care of members of the family, then you start to play the role unconsciously of mom or dad at a very early stage in your life. When you do, you are not in the right order. If you are, let's say, brother three and brother one or brother two or sister one or sister two weren't able to play the role of, let's say, the caretaker, because for whatever reason you were the one with more resiliency, then if a sibling three, you play the role of, let's say, father or mother, then at a very early stage in your life you start to get... miss opportunities in life. You are not able to play, you are not able to take life more relaxed. On the contrary, you start to take life way too seriously at

a very early stage in your life. Sometimes this is called parentification. When this happens, then you take these patterns into your adulthood, and you start to play that way when you are a leader of an organisation. When you have this disorder, then you will be fathering or mothering your teams in your organisation the same way as you are doing in your family system. And then the children or your direct reports will be behaving as children because you are mothering them or fathering them. No matter how senior your direct reports are, when you are able to put in order the energy in the system and rather than being the mother of the system, you become sister three or you become the boss of the system, not the mother or the father of the system, then the children get back into place and they start to behave as the adults that they need to be behaving. It is fascinating. When you start to put all these things in order, the system gets in order. Both the individual gets in order. This is a lot... this is also incredibly helpful in family-owned systems, where the energy, for example, of the father sets the culture of the organisation. And sometimes the CEO of that generation to come over CEO from the past generation behaves exactly the same way because the patterns persist. So, one of the rules of family constellation is whatever you exclude, the pattern will repeat, whatever you integrate, you will be able to transcend. Whenever you are able to put things in order, then you transcend the transgenerational trauma in the system, both in your family system, for example, and also in the workplace. Family constellations in these are incredibly helpful. The dynamics of family systems are the ones who sometimes are placed in question. Whenever I explain the theory, it is like, my God, this is very logical. This is something that if you are able to put in order, I can see that, or I can kind of like understand what you are saying. It is the dynamics of family constellation that sometimes can put people uncomfortable because there are parts of the framework and the way that you approach these dynamics that surrendering to the mystery of life sometimes is incredibly helpful. However, when you are able to put in order the family and the members of the family in a place where it is being held by the facilitator, it is incredible how the unconscious surface, and it is one of the best frameworks that I have seen with the right facilitator that allows for you to be able to identify the root cause as to why you behave the way that you behave. And sometimes the root cause is held in the most unsuspected of places and when you are able to find then the reordering that happens and the energy that flows is immense and very lasting.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In the coaching work I do, I often strive to understand the operating system of the person that is often shaped by childhood experiences and the ice under the water surface often plays a big role in how we show up in different situations. I love the nuance around understanding somebody's journey and seeing if they have played roles that are not coherent with their place in the family and then seeing if they are carrying some of those elements to the field of work.

End of transcription

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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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