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Context to the conversation

Neeraj speaks about how he has tuned into the vital few things that energize him (good conversations with good people, kids, sport, Plaksha). He speaks about how he has been intentional in architecting this portfolio.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): That's a great point you make, just to sort of even observe and sort of hold these multiple perspectives concurrently without saying this is right, that is wrong or you know without judging. Powerful and maybe just being very...

Neeraj Aggarwal (NA): Maybe I'll add one more thing. think I've learnt over a... Earlier I used to be too in the moment. So I would have an emotion and I would express it. I've learnt to add a... maybe a 15 second or a one-minute time lag to my emotion. I think it's an acquired skill. But that allows me not to hit the highs and the lows that much. feel nothing is reason to feel that good or nothing is reason to feel that bad. If you just add a little bit of time lag to my emotion.

DJ: And can you talk about the how if I may stay with that.

NA: It's just training of your mind to say like whatever emotion is just add a delay function to it. It's just I don't have more to it but it's a mental training to say like early on, okay here's how I trained my mind actually now that I remember it. Early on if there was an emotion, I would do a tally mark at the back of my notebook. So in a meeting I would have 20 tally marks so I got it down to 10 to 5 and then I got it down to 0. I just trained my mind to it so every time I had an emotion particularly negative motion, I would add a tally mark.

DJ: Any particular emotion or in general when you have a volatility or a surge?

NA: Yeah, a surge of emotion, particularly when I disagreed strongly, I would add a tally mark. like, know, sometimes, you know, the best way to and I would in the past when I had a disagreement, sometimes be sharp in my rebuttal. But now I sometimes feel just making a joke out of it. Sometimes just having a smile and you know, making the person realize the idiosyncrasy of what they are

saying, you know, is just sometimes better. Yeah, exactly. So I think that's been an, I wish I had the skill earlier in life, but I've really enjoyed acquiring that skill.

DJ: Fascinating. One of my earlier guests was a gentleman called Rich Fernandez. was running Search Inside Yourself, which is a company incubated in Google, which they spun it out separately. And he spoke about the distinction between responding and reacting. Responding is basically the delay function that you speak about, which is really how do you... And he talks about mindfulness and some of the other methods. I was curious if there was... But Tally marks, I think it's fascinating. think there's also, if I may come in, there's enough research to say journaling or sort of some element of putting pen to paper, which apparently... is like running a version update on yourself. So in a way this to me also feels like one of those things where there's a certain, you're going through, you're observing, there's a pen to paper, there's a reflection, there's feedback, there's correction.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Rich Fernandez (RA), the person I refer to in my conversation with Neeraj uses the term Response Flexibility versus reaction. He goes on to talk about how we all can find simple strategies in the rhythm of our day to move from reacting to responding.

RA: *"When people think about meditation, they think about having to do exactly what I have just said which is set side you know x block of time and you know sit in a certain way and close your eyes and protect the space for formal practice. But there is also a way to practice mindfulness and meditation in an integrated way. For example, as you move through the course of your day, integrate it into your day between meetings if you need to walk to the rest room make that a walking meditation. I am actually serious about that. Become aware of your bodies as it moves for space between your office and the rest room. Become aware of your foot fall, become aware of the felt sense of your body. How are you feeling actually in that moment? Or take the opportunity to focus on breath or this being in India this Podcast you know if you have a "Mantra" that you are familiar with or particularly like us that. And I say "Mantra" and there is an often a religious component to that but here what I am referring to is really finding an object of your attention to train your attention upon it whether be "Mantra" or breath or walking or sensation you can really do this throughout the course of your day. I was driving to work today and I was focusing on my breath not so much that I wasn't able to drive but there but when there is a red light when I was stopped in traffic in and out for three breaths, I noticed my breath. Next stop like same thing integrated practice is also helpful one.*

One thing we know also thing we know also another bit of neuroscience is that what they found is that people have a better memory for things they have written down than that which they have typed in class room setting that's bit of finding in neuroscience and what's neuroscientist have found is the reason for that is that because we can type faster than we can write long hand and we can type almost at the speed of what's being spoken and so basically what we are doing is we are just essentially quickly processing but not encoding what's being said. When you write something long hand like when you journal you actually have to articulate the entire thoughts in your heads and they become encoded in your memory in a much stronger fashion. Basically, you are programming yourself in another sense of the word when you journal you are programming your brain to perceive a situation through a certain lens or perspective and it becomes much more real and concrete and, in some ways, you start to live your way into that if that make any sense. For Journaling to get started

or to have bit sure of it make it more of a habit thinks about a prompt today I feel “dot dot dot” And then just write for 2 minutes without stopping stream of consciousness.”

DJ: While there is no one approach, I love what Neeraj says about using Tally marks to work on his delay function! All it requires is attention and intentionality. If this is of interest, you might like the membership section at Playtopotential.com. We have curated specific insights by theme including topics like mindfulness where there are perspectives from many speakers on one topic that you are curious about. Its www.playtopotential.com

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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