

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 the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website '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 a man in a suit and glasses, identified as 'Podcast Host Deepak Jayaraman'. At the bottom left of the banner, there is a small text note: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the conversation

Neeraj speaks about how, given the emergence of AI, the integrative skill of leadership will become even more important. He also speaks about how we need to discern when to leverage AI to our benefit. He warns us that abdicating completely to AI may not be a good idea!

Transcription

Deepak

I want to move to a slightly different theme, Neeraj. AI. I've listened to some of your talks after Davos and clearly even otherwise you I'm sure you're in many of your conversations with leaders around the world and this comes up. How do you see AI impacting leadership? know if I were to ask you the leader of today compared to let's say a leader of 20 years back what has changed? What does it mean to be a more effective leader in the world of AI?

Neeraj

So I think firstly, even before AI, okay, two things. AI, think, is a profound shift in the world. I genuinely, genuinely believe it is not blockchain, it is not quantum, it's a profound shift. And second, the leaders of the 20th century leadership and the 21st century leadership has changed in many ways. I think the command and control, hierarchical leadership, to a place where you are an ecosystem orchestrator has become, so I think Satya says it well, you know, from a know it all to a Learn it all. think, I don't know, he came up with it or whatever, I heard it from him. And I genuinely think a know it all to learn it all. The Jack Welch era of leadership was a know-it-all kind of stuff is a very profound shift. And I think that gets accentuated in the world of AI. you will, firstly, anyway, the youngsters in your organization knew more than you. The ecosystem partners knew more than you. But now the technology may know more than you.

So you have to firstly get comfortable with that. That's a very important attribute. But equally, the integrative skill is a very hard skill. Very few people have it. I think knowledge at some stage maybe may become a commodity. But the integration of knowledge. mean, people who have been Vinod Khosla recently said in the TED talk, labor will be free, Knowledge will be free kind of stuff. I maybe. But I think the integration of different sources of knowledge, because knowledge is not one. I mean,

there's so many. I think that to me is a hard skill still. And to be able to know what does integration mean? One is different opinions. Sometimes, you know, is there a middle path or is there where you lean in? One could be play the axis of time. One could be a here and now decision, one could be a time series decision. One could be... Look, both could be realities. I have to take a call. I am just going to... Or sometimes finding one plus one is greater than two is a very important skill. So I feel that part of leadership is going to be very critical. So the leaders of tomorrow will be more learn it all, will be more integrative.

And I feel that's why... I think women are naturally a lot better at that than men. So I have a positive view that there will be more women leaders in the world of tomorrow. Because actually that comes to them more by default, they're better at this, I think. I don't know, but this is just my personal instinct. is just, this is not a BCG formula. This is just my view.

Deepak

Of course, of course. And I think maybe switching gears, we'll talk about Plaksha in a minute, but just maybe given you have access to youngsters, of course you have two kids, young kids, but also I'm sure you're seeing hundreds of them through Plaksha. What does AI mean in terms of how people who are sort of entering the world of universities, the world of careers, what has shifted? What's your advice to sort of this generation of people?

Neeraj

So I think everybody is, it is like everybody has a superhuman suit or a Marvel suit if you watch the Marvel movies kind of stuff that they can be here. So I think, and the benefit is I can make my hour seem like five, right? Because there's so many places that I can outsource to work to the AI engine, whatever your favorite engine is. That being said, so we did an interesting study in BCG where we said the gap between an average consultant and a good consultant reduce with the power of AI on some tasks. But some of the most creative tasks, AI can actually sometimes create so many options that navigating in them. on the more, you know, the less creative tasks, but where you needed hard work, the gap reduces. But on the more creative tasks, can actually also get at least the current version of AI, you get overwhelmed. And there it can create negative entropy rather than positive energy.

Deepak

Because of decision making becomes.

Neeraj

Yes, because if you're doing marketing and yes, it can generate 20 different... Paradox of choice. Paradox of choice, exactly.

Deepak

It is paradoxical.

Fascinating. So, bringing it to the youngsters of today, so the advice is tune into your strengths. I am just curious about

Neeraj

So I would have a couple of advice because partly the technology hallucinates. So, know, A, do not abdicate completely to technology. I still feel learning maths is important, learning some of the basic skills, the learning language is important. I think what my dad taught me is still important. I don't think you should abdicate to technology. I remember when one Google Maps caught me in a... 80-mile loop in Germany, which was a circular loop. After doing it twice, I realized that I was in a circular loop. I was not making progress and I had to use my human. And my daughter is learning driving and I told her learn the manual car because she said, dad, who drives the manual? I want to learn automatic. I said, I, there is maybe that one time that you need. So I do not feel we should abdicate completely. I think having that ability to, yes, you should use it for convenience, but you should practice the that's one.

Second, particularly in the creative aspects, know, so there are some skills, the technology is not good at all skills. So knowing where it is good at, use it, but knowing where it is not the best, you know, so knowing where to pull in and where to let go is also important.

Deepak

And even that's a human element, The judgment of when to use the machine. I remember when I spoke to Vishy Anand in the context of the podcast, I remember asking him about Deep Blue and the fact that machines are getting smarter than men, men or women. And I remember him saying, you know, it's what's man versus machine is not the conversation. Man plus machine versus man plus machine is a And where's that going and what can you do with it?

Neeraj

Actually in that chess is a very interesting example because while Deep Blue became better than Kasparov in the second round and has the ELO rating of a machine is much higher than human. But I think since technology has come more humans play chess than before. Chess.com is one of the most endearing sites in the world. I'm sure Vishy must have talked about it.

Deepak

And he also said machines often bring out edge cases that humans overlook and has actually made the game richer because humans would have had a certain linear, would have a certain set of pathways but machines often come up with other pathways that we've not seen and actually players have gotten much better.

Neeraj

That and also I'm sitting alone by myself. It can create a competitor for me who's at my level and I can play. It's created spar, know, an ability for... So I'm quite excited by possibilities also, which we may not have imagined originally.

Deepak

And one of the things people talk about in the context of AI and Neeraj is just what does being human mean in the context of machines. You have a take on that? You know, therefore if we really extrapolate where it's going...

Neeraj

So firstly, two things I would say. In our clients, as BCGV, I'll use one phrase. We use this 10, 20, 70. We say 10 is the algorithm, 20 is data or the tech, but 70 is the people element of any change. So there are lots of enterprises where the 10 and the 20 happen, but the 70 of taking people along in the journey, where people have to unlearn and learn, where people have to be made, where you have to make, rather than tell and push, you have to create pull, is a very important part and we don't do that side of the change.

I think the other side of the change is, the technology is still too clinical, right? Think and not, mean, there is a, and everything in the world is not about just, I mean, the parallel is IQ and the EQ still. I think it's you get a great IQ tool, but the best magic happens when you combine IQ with EQ. So the human side, maybe one day the technology will get very good at that as well. But till such time, that is a scary time if it becomes very good at that, but till such time I think the EQ is knowing what to use. Because IQ is like a hammer. But knowing when to use a soft hammer or the hard hammer is a gift you need to have.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I am reminded of my conversation with Vinay Sitapati, the Author of Half Lion, the biography of our former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. He spoke about how Narasimha Rao assembled a team of highly qualified people around him. When I asked Vinay about how Narasimha Rao was able to add value on top, he spoke about the same integrative capability that Neeraj alluded to a minute back.

VS: I will give you NR's view he trusted people around him but he also realised that the expert knows only one thing but the problem may have multiple components, Manmohan Singh understands tariff reductions very well, MS doesn't know how to get it through the Lok Sabha, MS doesn't know how to get it through the Rajya Sabha, the IFS offices, diplomat tell you that we need to make overtures to Israel the diplomat doesn't know that you need the political signing of hugging Yasser Arafat so I think NR's remarkable ability was that he relied on experts but he knew that he alone had the 360 degree view and the how part. And the how part requires a 360 degree view, in fact I don't know where this is relevant to this conversation but my former boss Shekar Gupta would always tell me that the

difference between Indian leadership and Pakistani leadership is that democratic politicians are force to take the 360 degree view whereas Pakistani leaders typically military dictators are all looking at the Army view, and the Army view is just one view Mushrraf knows how to attack Kargil he doesn't know how to be a diplomat, he doesn't know how the economy works so in any organization we are going for specialist, specialist and specialist but the ultimate decision maker has to realise what is good for the entire organization and that was NR and that's another reason why he felt that even though MS knew more about him than in finance, AN Verma who was the former industry secretary, understood industries very well KN Venugopal, Yugan Dhar understood welfare schemes, he was the only person who had the keys to all kingdoms and decisions required that.

End of transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

AI Implications: Artificial Intelligence is ushering a new wave of opportunity and threatens to eliminate many jobs. It also has many implications on how we think about leadership and our careers. We examine some implications here

Judgment: Judgment is a key trait that differentiates the great leaders from the average ones. How do you make decisions and exercise choices in a world full of options and grey areas with multiple stakeholders around you. In addition, the playlist has nuggets that discuss how one creates a climate for the people around you to exercise good judgment. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a **Podcast Whatsapp distribution group (+91 85914 52129)** where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating "INTERESTED". Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

Neeraj Aggarwal - Nuggets

- 104.01 Neeraj Aggarwal - Early years in Asandh, Haryana
- 104.02 Neeraj Aggarwal - Transition to Leading India and APAC
- 104.03 Neeraj Aggarwal - Leadership nuances in Asia
- 104.04 Neeraj Aggarwal - Managing your energy
- 104.05 Neeraj Aggarwal - Adding a delay function

- 104.06 Neeraj Aggarwal - Managing dual careers
- 104.07 Neeraj Aggarwal - Cultivating optimism and trust
- 104.08 Neeraj Aggarwal - Striving for excellence
- 104.09 Neeraj Aggarwal - AI and Impact on Leadership and Careers
- 104.10 Neeraj Aggarwal - Vision for Plaksha University
- 104.11 Neeraj Aggarwal - 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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.