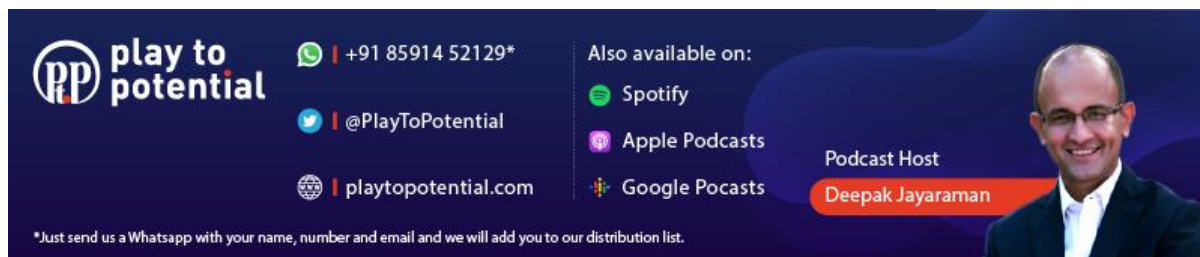


Podcast Transcript [110.01 Viral Doshi - From Super Alloys to guiding young minds](#)

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## Context to the conversation

Viral speaks about his journey from Cathedral to Cornell to Wall Street to setting up a Super Alloys business with his father. When he shut down the business in early 2000s, he speaks about pivoting to what he always enjoyed doing – Mentoring young students.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** Viral Thank you so much for taking the time and for coming on the Play to Potential podcast. Real honour to be spending time with you.

**Viral Doshi (VD):** My pleasure.

**(DJ):** I've heard so much about you. And you know the legend of Viral Doshi though she is sort of well-known across the country. But it's wonderful to sort of understand your journey. I think you've helped many people on that journey, but this one's a little more about your views on your journey and maybe your reflections on where careers are headed, actually, maybe a good place to start. Viral, could be going back in time. If you could talk a little bit about your formative years, what shaped you? If you looked at your first 15-20 years and look at who you are now, how much of who you are now got shaped in what ways in those years?

**(VD):** I think let's go back into history in my schooling at Cathedral showing you that coffee table book, which I had published in 2010, finished my ISC way back in 1975. That time we didn't have an international curriculum that all Indian curriculum either do ISC, CBS or S.S.C. correct? I was the last batch of a previous to that. We had the senior Cambridge in India.

We became the ISC and we finished in 1975. At that time, my father fell. Look here, you run the ISC, why don't you get some exposure to England? So I did my A-levels in England. At that time, when your father was an engineer, you had no other choice but to become an engineer because there was no other choice available to you.

So I did physics, chemistry match A-levels. And at that point of time, inflection was, what should I do? Should I stay back in England, go to America? My father had settled in America. I said, yes, you want to study in England? Because when you go to England to study, your teachers more or less brainwashed you to stay back in England to do your university.

So, you know, you come to America, you'll see that it's a great choice to be went off to America, went to Cornell, did my under graduate degree in engineering sometimes I ask myself, why did I do engineering? I could have done psychology. He could have done education. But I guess that time you had no opportunities in these areas, and your father would have told you, what do you do after that?

So it came down to engineering and a lovely time at Cornell, after Cornell obviously had the bug of getting into finance, because in those days in America, the two things which were popular after graduation was consulting or go into finance. Yes. So had a little bit of a experience in finance, working with Manufacturers Hanover Trust Bank, which doesn't exist anymore.

Chase has bought it out, worked there for two years, but always wanted to come back to India so came back to India in the mid-80s. And at that time, if you if you go back into history for any engineer, one thing you would love to do is to set up his own small scale unit. So my father being engineer, me being engineer, if I set up a Super Alloys plant in the mid-80s, sometime mid-80s, late 80s. Making super alloys is a cobalt and nickel alloys.

**(DJ):** And the customers for this would be.

**(VD):** customers would be people you know who want corrosion resistant electrodes. You want to like big companies, steel making companies who require corrosion resistance for all their basically nickel and cobalt alloys are corrosion resistance. So basically anybody who's making pumps, who's making products which are which have high corrosion, they would use cobalt and nickel alloys. Started the company way in late 80s, had a great run for 7 or 8 years.

There was a competition from China imports coming in a big way. We started making losses and and one fine day around late, around late mid-90s, late 90s, we decided to close down the plant because we're making huge losses. And we decided so that then if I go back, go back to the 80s, when I did come back in the mid-80s, I used to help a lot of my friends, friends, children with, you know, they wanted to talk about careers.

It was just a passion, which I had. And especially at that time when you were applying abroad, you didn't have a opportunity to go to the internet and find out it was going to USIS going through the books and finding out which college to apply to, how to apply. Very antiquated.

**(DJ):** Much more friction.

**(VD):** Absolutely. And that's the time I was helping a lot of people, just deciding on career paths and going abroad. As a matter of fact, very proud to say that one of the first students I sent was Fareed Zakaria, who's now a TV anchor at CNN. And so I used do this as a hobby. And when we shut down the plant, I started thinking, now what do I really want to do?

And I felt the my passion lay with helping children. And I saw in India it was just sending children abroad so nobody to mentor them. So what I wanted to do was something very different. Of course, going abroad wasn't part of the whole story is to mentor young minds about career path. People are so confused what career paths to fall.

I saw my confusion as if I could do something. Let me help other children. So around early 2000s, because we shut down our plant in 1998, it took me 4 or 5 years to wind up everything because you know how it is in India. And then around 2004, I took a change in pivot into something which I was passionate about was helping children.

So we were all started around 2004. It's been now more than 22 years. Guiding children, helping children. So we started initially doing career guidance. What we do with children is we do career counseling.

We make them undertake a psychometric test where we analyse a child's strengths and weaknesses, interest and aptitude. Typically, we start this in grade 9-10 and based on the psychometric tests, we are able to plan out career maps. What they can do after grade 12. Then we map out a career map for a child for four years in high school and then help them with the college applications.

But one thing led to another. Then when they entered college, they wanted me help me with the postgraduate studies. So it became a virtual, became a life mentor to these children that they started with me at 18 and they would be with me till 24. And after that also, they would keep in touch with me. As a matter of fact, I'm so proud that I'm helping their children now to go to colleges and look at career paths.

And over the years we grew. I think we were able to piggyback on the growth in India education and from doing psychometric testing, doing college applications, we ventured into helping schools and colleges with setting up career counseling units, giving talks all over the country to people on careers and career planning. And eventually one thing led to another. And now we have offices in Singapore, Dubai, London and New York. So I spend one week every month in these countries. Gives me a good perspective of what's happening in the world market around me. It's been a very exciting journey, and I think I've been very lucky that not very many people have a chance to convert into a second career, and my passion became a profession.

It's a chance, I guess you get once in a lifetime. I am lucky to have had that. And I will rise the wave in India with rising affluence, the education will become a big thing in India, as you know. So I've been very fortunate, very happy. I think what it really gives me happiness to see what I'm, what I have done and what I have been able to do. I think that's a joy which you get in this business.

**(DJ): Absolutely. And, and I'm sure deeply fulfilling in a way, such a pivotal role in setting people up for success.**

**(VD):** Yes, absolutely.

**(DJ): And that the gratitude they would have, I'm sure, is Sort of**

**(VD):** It's amazing. When people ask you what gives you satisfaction? I say, when I meet somebody in a movie theatre and say, oh, thank you so much, I have become this because thanks to your guidance just makes you feel so happy. Or you have a younger sibling who's come to me because the elder sibling was so happy makes you very happy. So I think that satisfaction of taking these small buds and making them grow into what they are today, the tremendous sense of satisfaction.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

**DJ:** While Viral makes it look simple, if you go back to that point in time, the transition from Super Alloys to Counselling is non-trivial. Especially at a time when this was not an established Profession. I guess the decision was not taken in a vacuum but he could see the early demand for international education given the rising affluence in India. But still, it was a non-trivial transition.

I find that people that play the long game come from a place of deep awareness of who they are and what brings them joy. In addition to of course looking at the market trends and the commercial feasibility of a pathway.

When we find ourselves in a transition, we don't have to look far for clues. The answers might be closer than we think. If this is a theme of interest, do look up the conversation with Amish Tripathi and Papa CJ at the Play to Potential Podcast. Amish transitioned from the world of Financial Service to writing about Mythology. Papa CJ transitioned from Management Consulting to Doing Stand-up.

If you want to know more, you can go to [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com) and look up the Curated Playlist – Reinventing Self; Several individuals speak about how they pivoted from one pathway to another in their journeys.

## End of transcription

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- 110.01 Viral Doshi - From Super Alloys to guiding young minds
- 110.02 Viral Doshi - The path not taken – Boarding School Headmaster
- 110.03 Viral Doshi - Viral's operational model
- 110.04 Viral Doshi - Choosing to be a Rolex, not a Swatch
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- 110.06 Viral Doshi - Evolving preferences for educational choices
- 110.07 Viral Doshi - Common mistakes students and parents make
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- 110.09 Viral Doshi - Aptitude and Career direction

### **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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