



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 logos for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the far right, a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, is shown with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. A small disclaimer at the bottom left reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Guest

KV Sridhar (Pops) is one of the most respected creative leaders in the Indian Advertising World and has been the driving force behind several international awards including 22 Cannes Lions. He currently runs Hyper collective - a cross-disciplinary platform for leading independent companies in strategy, communication, content, design, technology and data to collaborate and solve real world problems for brands, institutions and governments.

In our conversation, Pops spoke about his humble beginnings and how dyslexia (which was a diagnosis that happened later in his life) had an implication of the choices he made. He candidly shares about a passage of play when he was beginning to be noticed in the ad world and was getting several job offers but he went against the flow and took a 6 month break in Goa to discover his voice and develop greater conviction in his career direction. He talks about how he has reinvented himself in the context of the changing role of Advertising and Technology in the lives of consumers. He also shares some of the insights from his book 30 Second Thrillers - the story behind the making of some of the most memorable and enduring advertisements in India.

Context to the conversation

Welcome to the 23rd conversation in 2018 at the Play to Potential Podcast. A series of candid conversations with accomplished individuals across various fields on three broad themes – Leadership, Transitions and Careers. I am your host Deepak Jayaraman. I am an Executive Coach and I work with leaders and organizations play to their potential by engaging with them during periods of high stakes transition whether it is personal or organizational. You could visit transitioninsight.com for more details.

If you are new to the podcast and want to get a sense of the nature of content that is covered, you might want to go to YouTube and type “PlaytoPotential Highlights from 2017”. I have tried to capture the key takeaways from my various conversations last year with leaders across disciplines. From people such as Zia Mody, Nandan Nilekani, Viswanathan Anand, Vijay Amritraj, Avnish Bajaj, Vinita Bali and the like.

My guest this time is KV Sridhar, fondly known as POPs in the industry circles. Pops talks about his humble beginnings as a billboard painter to his journey to becoming a widely respected creative leader in the Indian ad world. He spoke candidly about his childhood, how he showed signs of dyslexia that got diagnosed later, how he got into the world of advertising when there were more commercially attractive opportunities at that time. I really enjoyed the segment where he talks about having 3 job offers in hand but taking a break and finding his voice in Goa by reading and painting for 6 months in seclusion. He also spoke about what it takes to succeed in the advertising industry and how he has thought about staying relevant in his journey.

Just a quick note on how you could access the content at playtopotential.com. You could listen to the full conversation or a particular nugget. If you are more interested in multiple perspectives that are curated by key themes, you could visit the Curated Playlists in the website.

Without further ado, over to the conversation with Pops.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Tell us a little bit about Hyper Collective and more importantly what lies behind you setting this up?

KV Sridhar (KV.S): There are two things advertising and communication system has not changed for many years as the industry is progressing now digital technology has come in and marketers have far more choice and far more tools now people are changing so they are also adopting newer technology. So, how do you become more relevant to this audience advertising agencies may not doing it so I thought technology company will help me so I joined the technology company, learnt everything it was almost like a break and then take going to an university for me, that's a sapient experience and then when I came back and I realize that no individual company can ever cater to the entire landscape so you need specialists you need to collaborate with many people so gone on the days where companies has started by individuals now you see three four people coming together and then starting so that collaborative nature of bringing all the expertise together and also build certain kind of agility where we can change and where we can bring in the latest cutting edge technology to our clients within no time so that was the background with which first scanned many companies and finally we zeroed in on 21 companies and then we have another 40 affiliates and close to 60, 70 individual consultants in the platform so we use all of them to really deliver the results to the client.

DJ: Across these 28 or 60 depending on how you cut it are there themes in terms of types of companies in the sense Classic marketing, Digital, how do you segment them?

KV.S: We have segmented everything into four buckets, first is strategy, so you have business strategy, you have creative strategy, you have brand strategy and then you have got experience strategy and then you have got performance strategy, you have got e-commerce strategy, so all the strategies in one bucket. So, we believe that there can't be hundreds of strategies, there is only one strategy called business strategy and everything must flow out of that. So, we have some companies and some individuals and they actually helping us in this strategic part of it. Which is where most of our work 80, 90 percent of work we have been doing from last six, eight months which was all strategy.

The second is a creative bucket the creative bucket is not just Television commercials but going on to the YouTube, Social and Gaming, Mix reality, AR, VR, Bringing all the things together 360 so a lot of things which we are doing, which are all very creative in nature even doing physical experiences you need to have the ability to tell the same consistent brand story and then create the experiences which evoke the same kind of response which you seek so that's the second bucket where all the creative actually sits.

The third is the technology while we live it to a lot of clients to do their own backend technology they don't have then we have couple of people in our group who can who can actually come and in

build the entire platform, integrate all the data and then make sure that all the things have been in place, then we do all the front end work, we have a lot of experienced designers who come in with a lot of UI, UX, experience in that and then we do as I said, a lot of innovation. Whether it involves technology and both physical and technological and then stitching of very complex VR films into your story line so a lot of technology driven experiences which we create, whether it is a web or otherwise a mobile, so that's into the technology bucket, we don't do back end technology we do front end technology and then backend if client want us to orchestrate then we bring in those specialists and then the last part is data and analytics I mean data is usually there are two kinds of data, Visible data, which is all your social media data and invisible data, your journey's your paths. What was really happening when you bought one piece, how did you end up buying second one, so tracking the consumer journeys tracking the behaviour of people, try and understand what they are doing and then we have a lot of partners who do a lot of predictive analysis for you, where you can use the data to really predict on laws of the consumer intelligence to predict which platforms will deliver most or which length and which topics you can really pick and take it forward so that's the model we bring in the entirety of strategic thinking, creativity, marketing technology and data and analytics and performance, so that we take ownership from end to end.

In house resources are like far more like orchestrators people who are there in the content, technology, so deal with the client and they connect the dots across these buckets and we also have very large muscle of creative which is what was lacking in the, in all the verticals so bring in that ability, creative ability.

DJ: What would be three four formative experiences in the childhood which actually sets them up for the journey?

KV.S: You always have in your childhood, something's which boosts your confidence, something which actually destroys your confidence, I think that vulnerability is what makes life far more exciting, without me knowing in those days there was no way of knowing but I was **Dyslexic**, now retrospective now you realize, they always used to have problems with the spellings which are misspelled and jumbling of words, when you read you can't read a sentence properly, you read up and down so it makes no sense, so ability to understand unless orally somebody teaching you, so reading from books it became little difficult when I was, as a kid it is far more profound so there is no way of knowing, everybody knows that I am good but I don't get marks, somewhere my journey into drawing and a Painting made my parents and everybody think that I am not interested in studying and I am far more interested in Painting which is blessing in disguise for me because I took up painting and then drawing very seriously from a very young age, so that's the positive fall out of where you think that you lack confidence because you didn't know those days clinically something wrong with you, so you only think you are not good enough rather than *chasing what is not good enough or chase what you are good*, without knowing it's an instinct which comes to you, and cheer that I enjoy this more because there are no spellings, nobody is judging you and then no body is actually saying and also my ability to get 100 out of 100 in drawing and adding to all this my father was a central government employee, so we had an option of taking the third language or a second language, which is drawing, because of linguistic things, which come in a way from one part of country to another part of the country, apart from English the second language is always Hindi, and then the third language is the local language so I took the option of second language missing so I never, I can speak fluently and understand Hindi but I can't write Hindi, I can't read and write Hindi, so these are the things which actually make you shift.

DJ: For parents with Kids Specifically with Dyslexia, any insights on what they could do to ensure their kids Play to their potential?

KV.S: I think my daughter is Dyslexic and then because of my suffering and knowledge of what Dyslexic children go through I could spot in her much area then I chase the school to actually get tested which has not happened and then she was getting lower grades then I went and got on my own studies with doctors and Dyslexic therapist, all the required certificates and then proceed this to school, schools refused and it took them four years to recognize that she is Dyslexic and they didn't have teacher who can actually teach a Dyslexic kid as per as Government of Maharashtra rule you can even get a writer for you if you are Dyslexic so instead the school really pressurized my daughter quite a lot, so at the same time the *Taare Zameen par*, so I went and told Prasoon who was writing that film that this looks like my story because what I have gone through and my wife was also not keeping well that time so actually I had spent hours and days and days with Sion Hospital, to really get her clinically tested and then got her certificates so that she will get the exceptions and little more time and five grace marks and whatever she was entitled to, and even not many teachers there were couple of them I was not very happy with so I *myself had to go through the training as a parent for teaching my daughter* and then I learned all the tricks when they are actually reading it you have to cover the book only one sentence for a time, easier for them to, so that they don't jumble the words and then they get used to it, it took me 25 years to overcome and then I could make it within 23 months, my daughter overcome that problem, I think when India still we are not sensitive towards the children and a lot of inabilities which they have, we don't recognize them.

DJ: How did you make sense of these seemingly diverging roads and how and how did you pick, which road to walk on?

KV.S: So while there is certain rational thinking towards that because I have always been caught up with very emotional and rational both because of being a science graduate it makes you reason things and being an **Artist** it make you think everything emotional way, retrospective you can fit in a lot of rational reasons, but like Swamy Vivekananda said "If there were to be ever a conflict between your heart and mind go by your heart" I think that was the conflict, the mind says you get paid well in a Medical Rep. you have the competency in that you understand make the money there and then use it for your painting.

The second one is being a drawing teacher which gives you anonymous amount of time to do what you want to do but you will end up not having money and your art scene was not as good as it is today those days it was nothing, it was like cricket, Test match if there is also you out, you are a disaster, today IPL is there, it takes 100 and 150, so there are far more choices which are available those days it was not available. So it was very difficult to really choose the subject of doing drawing in the school and not getting paid and even if you have three months of holiday every year what are you going to do with that time? When you don't have money.

The third one which is far more pragmatic and I said let me stay in what I like which is painting and then this is also a form of art so I can pursue, so there is Art and then there is a bit of science in understanding so I can use both the skills, so ended up being in advertising which offered both the skills.

DJ: How did you make sense of these seemingly diversion roads and how and how did you pick, which road to walk on?

KV.S: I think Indian parents put too much of pressure on children to excel academically not everybody can be first so finally if we have 3000 schools out there can only be three thousand kids who can be first, can't be more than the number of schools. So, parents don't realize they want their children to achieve their best so a lot of people, especially in IIT's, I have seen many kids who come up to IIT because they have to prove to their parents and then to the world that I am good enough

to clear the test of IIT, they come in very reluctantly into IIT, and then after the first year they drop out, and then some of them continue to finish it and then prove to the world that I can be an IIT graduate and then within a year or two after they get their placement they have even proved that they have got the job they are intelligent enough to do all that and *then make their career choice*, so there are two things in that, *what have you learnt? What you really like doing?* So what you have learnt may not be of waste but you should always pursue what you really want to do and my advice is without knowing those days education was not as evolved as it is today I pick two things where I have capabilities, my interest lies in painting which also I have studied academically and then my training and my background is also science, so I said when you take art and science together you will have a career which you will not regret because both you like both are part of you. So, if you are a mechanical engineer and you like photography, there is nothing on earth which stops you in using your mechanical engineering talent and also your knowledge into building Drones which can take Aerial Photography, there are three kids who are doing not just Aerial Photography as in still on movie they are doing Aerial photography for VR, so they are three IIT kids so they are doing that another three IIT kids who are actually building the first battery intelligence scooter which runs on your android phone so a lot of things, where your interest lies?, what your academically qualifications are you can match, for instance, you might like cricket and then you ended up being an MBBS doctor, so twenty years back it end of life today you can be a physio to cricket teams, you can be a surgeon who can actually perform a quicker surgery and then give them a relief. So, there are combinations of things which you can use today which actually allow you to live your passion and also use your knowledge and skill to really ignite your passion.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Just a quick pause here. The point Pops makes about being pragmatic reminds me of my conversation with Amish Tripathi (AT).

AT: *"It was a pragmatic decision, look I come from middle class family so I always joke "Bhai mere pass baap dada ka ashirvad hai jaaydat kuch nahi" so I have to be pragmatic and practical in my career decisions, I have responsibilities you know I am blessed with the child, I have a wife so I resigned only after second book when my royalty cheque became greater than my salary cheque."*

DJ: For me, the real question is not, should I follow the heart or my mind. The real question often is how do I play my cards so that I am pragmatic and walk a tight rope which addresses the matters of the heart and mind in a meaningful way. No easy answers but the people, who have built good careers, I notice, have often walked that tight rope well during those pivotal transitions.

Just a quick note on how the content is organized in the podcast. You could access each of the journeys and either listens to the full conversation or a particular nugget. If you want to access specific themes around leadership or transitions, you could visit the Curated Playlists section at the website – playtopotential.com. The playlists have insights on a particular topic from a range of people. If you find this conversation purposeful, do leave a review on iTunes. Now back to the chat with Pops.

DJ: You talk about getting three offers for the job at that stage but really going to Goa for a break instead of picking any of those offers, so tell us a more about what's behind that? And what's the reflection from that?

KV.S: The reason was, I came to advertising to really learn, advertising used to be into compartmentalize, it used to work into compartmentalize way, somebody gives a brief and then somebody writes a copy, lines, clever lines, and somebody visualizes it and somebody art works it and then it goes and then there is no little interaction between any two of these departments. So, I was little frustrated that I don't want to be in that chain. Without even knowing in *modern times*, the *Charlie Chaplin* only and the assembly line doing it he does not know, what happens before and what happens later, so I never wanted to be like that, so I broke away, I had to fight with the company saying that you know while I was doing well in creative, I wanted to be on the business side also to really learn so once I came to the business side of the business I have learnt quite a lot of problem solving ability of an agency and then how creatively you can solve the problem for marketers so it was all very good and then we started, me and couple of friends started our own agency then suddenly I found myself chasing money, so I said this is not the reason why I, once you come here of course money is important but you know that's not the only thing, you need to really understand and you need to learn instead of learning at the young age of whatever 25, 26 and then you really feel that you are making far more money, you can't even imagine the amount of money you are making, then I took a shift, then I said, if I am in Hyderabad this is my reputation people want me to make money for them because I can be a servicing guy, I can be a creative guy, I can set up an office for them and then I bring in people then *I came to Mumbai, with the vulnerability of saying that will I find the job in creative?* I have come to servicing only to understand *to learn the assembly line* not that I wanted to leave creative part of the business so I came to Mumbai and I mate to agencies pretending to be a creative guy, and third agency I went to pretending to be a business guy, wearing a tie, so I got job in all three then my vulnerability has gone, I said this is piece of cake, you can find a job wherever you want even with the big agencies, so I said let me take a break before I joined any agency because you will never get a break to do things, so I went to Goa which is the obvious destination sitting at Mumbai, so I went to Goa to take 10, 15 days off, that's what I have told everyone that after 10 days, I will be comeback.

Objective of the break being that you have been doing certain thing and then you have come back to Mumbai, and then everybody is welcoming you and giving you a job, so job insecurity is not there, you can find a job anytime you have got the confidence, now let me think and then let me learn because learning faded in the past couple of years, I said let me learn, let me enjoy life and then go back fresh so I wanted to refresh and reboot to myself to the new job so I went to Goa I lived in a, those days only four star hotel Goa International at Panajim, it was charging some 500 bucks a day then I went on a little tour on a bike and then at Bagha Beach I really found let's say advertising curiosity, there will be a board which say 'Villa for hire' so I went there as and said how much you want this 500 rupees a month too expensive for you, you look like a little boy what will you do with this I said no I want it and then I gave him money there and then because I made a lot of money so I made them three months advance and then said three months I am taking it so three months became six months but I took the bungalow which was on the beach then I came back to Mumbai, then I went to stand bookstall and then I bought lots of books, then I went to Himalaya and then bought a lot of art material, so now where to put all this, my hotel reception the guy was screaming every day you are bringing so many stuff every day, so many boxes I can't put anywhere, and then with the help of the hotel I went and hire a truck at Dhobi Talaab so it was a matador with a back, so I had put all my stuff there and then I said *Chalo Goa chalte hai'* sitting next to that truck driver we left somewhere in the evening and then we reached there next day afternoon and the truck even couldn't take all the Ghat sections.

DJ: How do you Justify something like this with your Parent or community was that an issue at all?

KV.S: It was an issue and first my mother was very scared that what I was doing is wrong that I am one blowing up all the money and second not taking a job and taking a, those days taking breaks and

holidays was never, but one thing my father always believed saying that “he always found a job so why are you worried in find a job? So they never knew that I am going to stay for very long time, so almost three months which became six months, six months I lived their without a newspaper, radio, there was no television any way and any news from outside, I was secluded completely, I cut myself off from the world, only world I have is reading and painting, these are the only two things, so I gave Calangut post office the number so my father used to drop a card, I used to go and then collect it and then drop another card saying that I am fine not to worry.

DJ: That’s a great story Pops and I guess in a lot of ways in the world we live in today there is just so much noise around us that probably the need to go and listen to ourselves is much harder and there for it’s probably a lot more important today than it was may be around the time you did it.

KV.S: Probably there is one of the not only few times that’s the only time actually in my entire life I had such so much of time to read what I really want to read, somehow I always been fond of reading so that’s how you make *friends so each author is such a great friend of mine* and that’s how I feel because in my head it’s a two way interaction as far as the book is concerned it might just be one way of communication but in your head because you are talking back you are questioning and then you are realizing many things whether you are a Socrates to, Thomas to anyone, the kind of serious books you used to read, because you have the mind space to really read, today sitting in a car can you just open and read a Harman, you can’t. On a flight can you actually read? Any of those books? You can’t, you need to be at ease with yourself and then you need to have that time and space that to really push and have the answer in yourself or find answers in the future chapters and then be satisfied it’s a very different feeling which you can’t explain and second thing is taking a bike with any destination in mind so each day you take your bike and then you go whatever destination you want to as the bike there is no GPS and there is only a map and only way you need to know is humanity if somebody comes and then says something then you ask for a direction and then you head back while going you don’t even need anything and then you find a nice stop and then you park your vehicle and then you do your landscape, I have never done landscape before, even in college I use to do it as a subject, as something which you need to do because of the academics reasons but all my teachers some of them were really very good landscape artist so that is the phase when I did lots of landscape work apart from, people is always been my fascination, so I have done a lot of people work, chasing all the markets and fisherman going on their boats and getting things, I mean all that you will never get again, I feel that till you are 10, 11 in your life you live a selfless life and all your friends are also selfless they don’t know that tomorrow you are going to be successful they don’t even know how much your father is worth they just make friendship so there is certain innocence in that world and as you grow up you know everything you personalized this guy will be useful this book will be useful this thought will be useful this experience might be useful so you collect a lot of things with a selfish motive so again going back to that state of mind selflessness because you have no job, you have nothing else that learning is a pure learning because you are not learning that to apply into something else I think to me that was the most liberating thing to live like a child again at the age of 26 is something which I cherish a lot.

DJ: How did you bring this to an end, when did you think, you said 6 months but how did you draw that line?

KV.S: I figure it out to live my entire life like that, I went to flea markets to sell my paintings and then I made some money so that worked so I went to Goa tourism and then showed some of the landscape they said very good you discover a new spot and we will pay you we will buy you some, so I said yes this is the another way of making money, wherever you go into the world there will be a flea market where you can go and then sell on a Saturday or a Sunday and wherever you go there will be a tourism board which will be interested in the local thing, third I figured out I went back at

Goa International one day and they said we have got enough but you must catch that there is a new hotel which is coming up may be they might need landscapes so I figured out how to live, probably there was a lot of temptation to live like a vagabond not just in Goa but across the world, you go to any place in the world,

DJ: You had figured a model, which was replicable in any geography,

KV.S: It can be replicable so there is no fear, I can go anywhere without money and then you can make money so two things when I did landscapes and suddenly in one of the letters my mother said that you are doing landscapes your teacher will be very happy, and then he was a very great landscape artist, everybody knows him, so why don't you come and show that to him? Then I went back to Hyderabad and everybody liked the work and I exhibited in Hyderabad and went to Bangalore I exhibited work in Bangalore, so that's how it to an end because the culmination of all that was the work which I did not the knowledge I got but the work which I did ended up being exhibited in many forums so that's how it has ended and Ulka as an agency so they started chasing me to start a branch in Hyderabad so my fate is always been that in Hyderabad my reputation is been like a horse trader the guy who can actually setup everything and do stuff so that's how I did comeback.

DJ: After Long career in Advertising you moved to join a Tech company, so I am curious about that fork in a road? How does that come about and how did you process the opportunity when it happened?

KV.S: Before joining Sapient for almost 7 years from 2008. Olympics at the time I was part of Leo Burnett Global Creative Board so we were driving the creativity driving the entire company into new direction so one of the job which we have accepted and then volunteered to do in the region for me right from Japan to Australia I used to really push the newer technology newer ways of communicating with people technology was not that much, it was there but not that was creating an app was a technology that time, so I was exploring the newer ways of communication and then trying to inspire the agency to really do things newer things in the communication field so then we decided that, yes you need a digital agency and then we brought in one brand which is there in Singapore which is there across the world more from Singapore point of view, we brought that into India called Arc so supposed to be a digital company but it became an activation company later then we had to actually part of that acquisition team to really identify a digital company small digital agency called Indigo and then we acquired Indigo tried very hard to really leverage both of them try to marry technology and creativity which did not happened then by the time *I understood technology is not just wire frames and information architecture technology is far more marketing technology which is happening beneath which advertising agencies were not aware of which clients and technology companies are doing* and then Sapient came in, I didn't know Sapient very much, I only knew as they are an outpost of Sapient of US that's all then I spoke to one of my friends in RGA, RGA is world's best creative and digital company so their chief creative officer was an Australian and he is a good friend of mine, we both used to talk about cricket, cricket bonded us quite a lot, at all the international events, wherever we go, so I asked him and he said Pops I know you, you don't leave your food, you don't leave your country and then if you, they have made huge investments into India and they are close to 10000 people in India, they do 60% of the work everywhere, that's the place where you can learn and try and apply and then can make a difference to your country so that's how I took up Sapient to really understand the marketing technology the way it is and then how this marketing technology can affect creativity and then how to tell stories of the brands in this day and age so that's one rational thing irrational thing again in your head if you are not relevant to your children they will reject you, the same thing if you are not relevant to your consumers they will throw you out and then finally in marketing and advertising you are working for those people, who

buy your products, you need to be relevant to them you need to learn everything which makes the brand connect with them, so those are the two things made me take up Sapient.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This reminds me of the conversation with Atul Kasbekar (AK), the celebrated photographer who spoke about the notion of staying relevant. He was talking about how he coped with the advent of digital phones and reinvented himself as a Producer. His first film Neerja won the National Award.

AK: "You don't want to be the last guy who is selling horse carriages when the car dealerships at the right, that technology innovation is constant is going to go I have maintain this from day one is that your knowledge in photography or your expertise in photography will depend on greatly how much you read and immerse yourself in all the arts and you are just generally aware in and you are a sponge and you accumulate and then simulate, you should have a keen interest in all the other arts in fine arts, culture, and it adds to a broader graphic design you need not know how to design something you going to appreciate good from great"

DJ: It was great to hear Atul talk about building a wider appreciation of various fields apart from being a subject matter expert in your domain. Hope you are finding the conversation purposeful. If so, do take a moment and leave a review on iTunes. For more nuggets from other speakers or across other themes, look up playtopotential.com. Now back to the chat with Pops.

DJ: How should a youngster of today think about a career in advertising, especially on the creative side, what's your thought on how people should process Advertising as a Profession?

KV.S: So we are the product of the decisions which we make a lot of people, all your college friends or schoolmates we all sit together why some are successful some are not successful, some are just still working very hard for that success on surface it looks like some people got it easy some people got it, never got it, but I think at every point in life you will have choices the choices which you make or the decisions which you take will shape who you are and then what you do so I strongly believe in you are a reflection of the work which you do, and then the work you do is the reflection of your own self it's a two way combination so a lot of creative people have the search of expressing themselves but somehow that expressing yourself to expressing through somebody else is a difficult task like screen writers they never be seen but each dialogue is uttered by really good set of actors advertising creativity is also like that you need to be invisible in many times and then you need to allow you need to choose all the other elements so that your work will shine so a lot of people don't realize they come to advertising, they want everything of their own, they don't want to be invisible they want to be visible so therefore you lose your ability to really get into any kind of, if you are writing for a Managing Director for a speech you write in a tone of voice which belongs to that person, if you are writing a speech for a creative guy and then the creative guy's tone of voice will be different and his personality is different what he says in the same way the brands are like that so the youngsters who come in today must understand that they should not have a voice of their own they should adopt to the voices of the brands and then the companies that you work for.

DJ: What is the question that the person should ask, should say if advertising is a career for me. What are the traits that enable people to able to do this well?

KV.S: I think about one of the example which we spoke about a lot of IIT graduates, they come to advertising, IIT, IIM, anyway naturally they come, so I think one of the questions people should ask

themselves is am I a good story teller? And can I connect with people? So all of us lie and each lie is a beautiful story and depending on how beautifully you tell that lie you will be forgiven and most often these stories which we create or plausible stories but not but not real stories so that means you are cooking up your line about life, life is good when life is not good but you are lying life is good but you must lie in such a convincing way and you must lie in such a beautiful way such innocent way that people will forgive you it is like a little kid who goes to the school fifteen minutes late and then he can't tell his teacher that I got up late therefore I came in late, he has to actually cook up a story and say that no while coming from there to hear something has happened, my father's car got punctured or I saw a little puppy and then really I put the puppy to safety, some story, some accident has happened, so obviously people know that the boy is lying but they forgive there is that innocence to that lie and there is the purpose to that lie, the purpose is to get the pardon to get into the class, so it is the same way advertising and storytelling is also the same way so you are talking about the things which does not exist but make people believe that they exist and then they know that you are exaggerated your product benefit but if you do it in a tasteful and beautiful manner they don't mind forgiving you for that little license which you take to exaggerate so I think that charm and that ability to tell a story is what makes you as a good advertising person and I believe at the same time continuing rational and emotional part of it, to be successful in advertising you need to understand businesses what a client business is and what is his source of income? How can he grow? How is his category growing? How is his competition growing? What are the policies which have been adopted by the government? How those policies are affecting them? So if you understand the business of your client and also understand the human behaviour and then the socio-cultural things that are happening which is shaping the behaviour of a generation of people if you have way to have insight or understanding or both this two, you can put them together, so I believe that there are a lot of business man who understand their businesses much better than you can ever do and a lot of creative people who understand people better than you Javed Akhtar understand people better than you, politicians understand people better than you, there are a lot of people who understand people better than you, your skill lies in bringing these two understandings on to the table and then use them for mutually beneficial relationship.

DJ: How have you thought about success and impact at different points in your journey and how's that changed and evolved over time?

KV.S: I think first part of your career thirty years of your career out of close to forty years success always measured on how well the brand did, and that is where we used to feel very good success and recall of your add you go and then tell somebody that you did this ad they must recognize there are two majors which you always used to see success when you become older the success which you see is the impact which you make on humanity so today if somebody way to ask me why don't you retire? So why should I retire? Today I have more power than ever because I know media I know people, I know a lot of business houses so if you want to do something good you can do it because you have the wherewithal to really make that happen, so that is the bigger difference, when you are young you try to measure success in a little selfish way, not selfish way but your work having an impact on people so that their products are moving and impact on your clients business that is moving these two will have an impact on your own companies business and then therefore you will be recognized today you don't you do all that the biggest thing which you get satisfaction is the impact which you make on humanity because at the end of the day what you have learnt is how do you change human behaviour? So you understood that trick of changing human behaviour last ten years I have been working with Ladlee which is initiative of Population First which is funded by UN FBA in fact now I am member of their board and trustees trying to help eradicate the gender bias between boys and girls the sex ratios are really dropping and what we did was for fist ten years we said there is no point in going and then telling the entire world, you advertising media you guys are

stereo typing the girls and I said the biggest issue in the world is ignorance only if you were to know that you are going to harm somebody beforehand your actions will be different you don't know so a lot of times when you sit in front of a white paper there is no client who actually says that, stereo type a women and then make her as a housewife let her bring the tea and then let the father son decide on the course of life nobody really says that and then you want to communicate that you can make a difference to their family that's the only thing which you wanted to do whether it is insurance or any product then the creative person who is actually staring at a white paper which is the scariest thing and then the most beautiful thing scariest you don't know where to start and what to put on that and then the easiest thing is you already have your thoughts you are screaming in your own head and then you can write a beautiful story instead of a boy becoming a cricket player to a girl becoming a cricket player, and then go and tell your client that when have you ever seen in a television commercial? They would buy so you are making without knowing or unknowingly we have made so many mistakes one of the biggest mistakes which we have in our country in terms of publicity is when Mrs. Gandhi was there when the population explosion everyone thought that the India is going to explode and all Indians are going to attack the world and eat every food grain from their godown that was the fear the world had about us, so we had to control our population because we were a very poor country who could not afford to take the burden of so much of the population so ideal family, the family planning I don't know whether you remember the graphic which had a Mother, Father, a boy and a girl which was beautiful "*Hum do, Humare do*" became agnomen, it worked and then people had only two but during that course of 25 years of journey that communication made it also created a stereo typing saying that in an actual family is to have a boy and a girl in a country where nobody wants a girl even if the first girl way to survive there is only 70% chance of first girl surviving at the worst case scenario, best case scenario yes the 90% chance and the same thing if the second girl if you way to see best case scenario best case scenario 60% worst case scenario 40% so then imagine the impact of that on society in future you will not see as many sisters now instead of having a boy and a girl as sibling playing you way to have two girls playing it changes people's perception, ideal family is not just a boy and a girl two girls, how beautiful it is to see two girls so there is a lot of things, you cannot, I am not Bill Gates to actually 150 billion dollars to somebody but you have the ability to change the perceptions of people by showing consistent image and consistent communication so what we wanted and did was, we did lots of workshops personally going and then talking to a lot of creative people, creative directors, to tell them be sensitive, this is what is happening in the world each time you put a boy and a girl you are responsible for somebody's death, each time you put two boys you are responsible, each time you make a girl do homework and a boy play outside cricket you are responsible, so now if you see there is a lot of social change the is happening in advertising last ten years so that's the impact, people may not know you are invisible but you know that what you have planted and how it is working so that impact is what you seek as you become older, you have got so much from the industry, you have got so much from the society, what are you giving back? So what you really believe in then you can make a difference.

DJ: If you had to reflect on how you have evolved as a leader as a person, How do you get a person to develop, What's been your approach to your development and what's your thought, what's been your experience on helping other people scale up, what's worked?

KV.S: I think from 83 or 84 onwards after coming back 84 from that time to till 93, 94 I was fearlessly competitive because somewhere, if you play cricket you have to be like Gavaskar, you can't be a field, you have to do your best work, so come what may never use to let anybody interfere in work which you are doing sometimes even clients also used to go and then fight with them quite a lot, write checks for them if you can't afford I will give you the money, so I used to go to any land to really do that somewhere in our 85 or 86 is where the life took a turn as you are also growing, you

became a leader, but a leader who fearlessly independent and to compete with everyone is not a great thing so then I learned, I have read a book how to manage creative organizations which talks about destiny, which talks about Sony Pictures, which talks about a lot of companies 3M a lot of different kinds of companies which involved in a lot of innovation and creativity so one thing what they mention is, you need to create an environment for people to get ideas so how do you really create an environment for people to really get the Ideas then it just stopped with that line in my head then I tried to figure it out saying that, why people do their best in workshops not at work situations in work situations what happens is if you have setups 15 people working on a project for you each one of them way to think one hour, so they can put one idea on paper while human mind is capable of connecting billions and billions of images you cognate may be 5 to 10 of them but you only put one on the paper because you are eliminating the rest by pre-empting client may not like it, my boss may not like it, my bosses boss may not like it, somebody else, consumer may not like it, somebody else may not like it so there are a lot of inhibitions in that and people are pre-empting all the time in situations, in a workshop situation where you are free after two drinks, you can say anything there is no boss there is no subordinate and what happens in brain storming, the dynamics is, you see something which may not be the right thing and then you say stupid if you want to do that you should do it this way, so somebody builds on that and then somebody builds on that so at the end of that entire exercise of a workshop, you will come up with five, six great ideas within a day or two the same team work has not happened in an agency and then you may not get nuggets because people are chopping them on each other's ideas so somewhere as a leader you said you must create an atmosphere where people are free so demolish all the designations there is only a copy writer , a creative director, and a creative leader, which is an ECD, demolish all the designations and then money will be paid a copy writer may get paid more money than a creative director, so hierarchy has taken over, taken completely a back sit and they said that's only for functional need a creative director is a functional need and then what he does is not necessary that he is the best creative guy, he manages creative resources well, he goes and then sell it with the clients with conviction, he puts a great vision about how to bring the idea come alive, his job is different as a copy writer if you have certain skills and then you can, so dealing the compensation from what they do to what they bring into the party so this and also an open structure where people can come work at any time, go anytime there is no pressure on people if somebody were not to do his work you say fine, just go home and then take a break, you can't ask somebody to work late for three days in a row and then have a fight with his girlfriend and then do his best the next day morning can't happen and advertising is a team game, it's not an individual game so a lot of people even now also play as an individual's it's a team game that's the reason why you need so many people, it's not like manufacturing, you put on the button and then today 30 car site I deliver, I make 30 cars only they make then don't make 31 out of 29 advertising is not like that advertising creative people are so insecure and they need to be, you have no idea next day morning will you get an idea or not? That's the worst feeling gone, whatever you have done next day, so how do you make them feel very secure? And then how to really make them feel that it's ok if you don't do it somebody else, you need team for that, the same way when you have a team and then you are making the team work, so I think the team work, giving people freedom, understanding them little beyond the work and then their motivations why they are doing, what they are doing all this will really help in shaping then so a lot of people have become very successful working with me and they also made me very successful unless they are successful you cannot be successful, with 400 people, what can you do? With 12000 people in Sapient what can you do? You can't do anything unless they do so you can only as a leader create an environment for them to excel and give them confidence to excel and each one will find their own formulae to excel, I think that's where to me it worked.

DJ: What's been your approach to learning through your phases of life?

KV.S: Insecurities, vulnerability, because the worst nightmare is to open your mouth and be foolish and as I said if you are not relevant to your children, you are not relevant to anyone, so the first thing you need to learn is what are the technologies which people are adopting and then you try and then see and what are the technologies which marketing people are and what are the instruments, what are the tools, what are the measurement systems which they are using and then you say that what are the things which are happening whether java 2 is better or java 1 is better, so what is better? What is that? HTML5 is far better or something else so evaluation criteria and then what they do and what is programming, how does programming work whether it is C or C+ is the basics which you learn so one is, you wanted to catch up because in advertising you might be a guru working for 37 years everybody will listen to you in technology world I am the highest paid trainee, so when you are the highest paid trainee their expectations is also very high, you are going to change a lot of things, you know nothing and then you are a trainee so learning again with a lot of, Sapient is a wonderful and wonderful people whether they are technologies stuff, whether they are Scientists or Data Scientist, whether they are programmers, I used to take them out have lunch with them, try and understand what they do? How they do? And what are the new things which are happening what are the sources through which I can really learn, I used to wake up in the morning crack all of them learn something about social topography, how does social campaigns are mounted, how does technology is moving, how does commodities work and what is nascom, what do they do, how does things change so all that from that vulnerability of I don't know, will I look like a foolish guy? Making a shift and then falling flat, so you need to do some homework to catch up with then otherwise you are not going to be of any use to the company which has hired you and then the companies which are going to hire you to solve their problems which are clients.

DJ: What's your take on how people could effectively settle into an organization?

KV.S: It's not as tuff as what people think it is when I was working on TCS, I learnt everything about every software which they released, when I was working with ECAL in 1979-80, I learnt everything about the main frame computers which they are doing in mid 80s when Wipro was launching first DTP software, while we were the agency I went out of my way to really work with the developers, to convert that into a usable platform for DTP publications so even Premaji was so happy and then he used to tell me that you sit here I will give you stock also you are in indispensable source of this thing for that, so what you always, confectionary, today DHFL a lot of financial technology which I am working with, Nestle's all their brand, Unilever all their brands so if you ask me any brand any business which I have worked with, you understand their business, so I think any business leader if they were to be taken from one, for an instance take Sanjay Behl was with Unilever he went to Nokia and now Raymond he is just transforming, is he from Fashion Industry? No, is he a fashion designer? No, does he have the experience in fashion industry? No, so you learn a category much quicker, even in advertising we learn much more, because we work with multiple categories, 15, 20 categories at a time so you understand the category, you understand their environment, you understand, but you need to work hard to really understand initially it will tuff.

DJ: Building Networks within a new organization.

KV.S: I think it's a stupid way actually you walk into an organization you sack half of them and you tell people that whatever you have been doing till yesterday was all stupid I am going to tell you what to do? So it hurts human sentiments, you destroy the culture you destroy the confidence and then you make more enemies, so you go and give them a chance first and then say that you guys are wonderful, because of you the company has till come here and then gain their confidence and then plant the newer people who can influence the culture, and then the moment you have those instigations made to really re-engineer a cultures if a company then you start taking little more calls upbringing in some more newer people by that time the people whom you have brought in have

already become part of the company so it needs to be a transition which needs to be done in very delicate way not in an abrupt way, having said that if you see the biggest corporate turmoil both Infosys and TATA if the founders were to stand firm on values you gain enormous support from people because its human values on which certain values on which the companies have been run, all these years, people respect that and then people respect you for fighting for those values whether you are an insider or you are a founder or you are an outsider, standing there and fighting for values you get a lot of sympathy within the company and outside the company also if you don't, then you have a problem why Ratan Tata still, people respect him fighting anything for their company is because he has put in the values, first in commerce and that's far more important, why so much of pressure the Infosys's current management? When Narayan Murthy comes back saying that these are not the principles on which this company has been built, we need transparency people will believe him it's his company, that's how he has built so people should not forget the values with the companies have been built. If you cannot take those values forward then you will have problems so a lot of people will come in and the want to put in newer values which is very difficult in an established huge brand, what you can do is imbibe those values and then contemporize them a bit and then make a little interpretation of that which is relevant today so against.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This piece from Pops reminds of my earlier chat with Ravi Venkatesan (RV) who used to head Cummins in India and then Microsoft in India and now sits on several boards. He talks about the importance of listening from various stakeholders and forming a nuanced view before you start making your moves.

RV: "so from this you begin to piece together first the situation and then out of that emerges a theory of change which is, what interventions are really going to Make a difference and who are going to be an important alliances if you don't listen and you start to imide you are coming with the point of view you starts jumping into action right away you going to make a lot of mistakes because you hadn't built this nuance and reasonably accurate picture of the landscape"

DJ: If this topic is of interest, you might also like some of the nuggets from my conversation with Nandan Nilekani, a man who has reinvented himself several times over in the last several years.

Hope you are finding the conversation purposeful. If so, do take a moment and leave a review on iTunes. For more nuggets from other speakers or across other themes, look up playtopotential.com. Now back to the chat with Pops.

DJ: If you really look at the underlying elements behind the success of these adds, what are the three four themes in these adds that stand out, which made them the success that they were?

KV.S: I think for any advertising to live that long there has to be some magic in them, I think good advertising is like a homoeopathy pill while the outer coating is the entertainment which is sweet and nice and then the medicine is actually hidden inside but you way to have a pill which is the other way so like the allopathic pill we used to have when we were very young, without any of those coating which was so bitter that you want to throw them so that's the secret if you see all the popular work which I have picked up not from advertising agencies from peoples perspective so all these adds have got something which made people connect, whether it is little girl who says I love you Rasna, Rasna cut became a cult for children so that was age of innocence that she is very selfish and instead of giving one glass to doll she actually has that also because on behalf of the doll she

has, there is a lot of innocence which is built and you go back to your own childhood or you go back to the observation of your own children or nephews or nieces and then you empathize with that so when you look at advertise which stands at test of time they all have this quality of human nature corner of eye observation a greater human truth which is inside and if you way to say children are innocent they are simple that's a life truth Rasana's truth the product truth is, it's simple you just have to mix it with some water and then serve the product is so simple it was so simplified never any other had as simple as that for people so this is the product truth and this is the life truth they both are matching 100% so you have a great add which talks about both it connects with people and also it charms people.

DJ: You have interviewed several add makers that were behind the making of these advertisements, reflecting on some common themes, are there three or four things about them which make these people so distinctive in the work they do?

KV.S: So all of them, as I said they are all great story tellers and they have the knack of human observation and then culling out great life insights and then picking the relevant insights for relevant brand because we live with so much of observation and so many insights in your head but picking the right one for the right brand is the judgement which you make that is what makes an ad great, the relevance is very high it becomes really great, look at all the Fevicol advertising look at the advertising for Pepsi, Nike, so each one of them have this ability to tell a beautiful story and also understand which insight to be used at what time, for what brand. So, that makes them quite different and all of them are obsessive about their craft and then their ideas so once you get an idea never give that up, you have seen Happydent commercial, the length with which they have gone to really make it or the Thumbs up commercials which I did, if you way to cheat not do a bungee jumping actual bungee jumping you would have not had that impact and bungee jumping was not there in India so you have to actually get, I mean it would have been easier to go and then shoot in New Zealand where bungee jumping was born, modern bungee jumping was born, but those days, foreign exchange was a huge problem, either you have to choose an illegal means of going and then shooting there or legal means to getting them to India and then shooting it in India which was more expensive, call them to India and made them do this so at a time when you gets an Idea to execution is when creative people become extremely obsessive about what they do and they take pride in the finished product.

DJ: And there do you see the clash between commerce and creativity?

KV.S: There is no, it is to enhance the commerce, the more craft which you put into your work the multiplier effect will become that much more you can have lazy ideas you can spot those ideas but they make no impact to people because the idea is bad the Idea was not brought in to life, as much passion as it should have and if you look at all the advertising, every little detail is been taken care, when you see HDFC which is what I passionately work for so many years till I left every little detail, you will never see a mother serving tea while the father and little girl are talking about what the girl want to become, she wants to become an astronaut, they both are talking you will see the wife sitting behind on a table and then working on a computer, father on a Sunday taking care of the child and then you have the mother who is actually doing her office work on a computer so this is a progressive one because I have a different agenda, I don't want to stereo type a women, therefore I find ways to do it but if you see the brand is consistent now they can't get out of it so they becomes victims of their own image that's where your passion and then your interest will come if you way to remove that self-respect in the context of financial independence there is no brand and then today HDFC life the more they advertise the more HDFC bank does well and their home loans do well not only it impacts that business it also impacting the businesses of the group so which is adding backed quite a lot, so commerce it is just that the more you craft it the better it is, that Cadbury that girl

Kuch khas hai it is a greatest liberation the amount of money in the stadium putting all those and then getting the cricketers and then doing that entire, it was a very expensive film, but look at the impact of what had happened?, British Airways it was again one of the most expensive films for internet but look at the impact which it has made, the grandmother and the Airhostess. So, there are a lot of times when you craft something, you need to do it in a way, which is convincing and then the more you do the more impact, that's where you make a ten rupees work like hundred, that's where even clients also get the money back, its only short sightedness that "*Chalega kuch bhi chalega saste me karenge.*"

DJ: What's your approach on building the capability of storytelling in people? What's been your approach in helping people to become good story tellers, what's your advice to them?

KV.S: I think it not only, anything can be acquired there are two things misconception is I cannot write a story therefore I am not creative I cannot paint therefore I am not creative, I can't play a guitar therefore I am not creative that is stupidity in every living being not just human being but there is scientific evidence that every living being finds the solution and a creative alternate to any path, you put if a line of ants marching and then you put an obstacle they figure out a way and then they start going so that's creativity so something which comes up and they overcome that hurdle by doing something else but the second part of it is the craftsmanship while everybody is capable of thinking creative coming up with creative ideas second part is craftsmanship, craftsmanship is not inbound, creativity is inbound, every mind had got creativity.

DJ: and how do you define that, the Craftsmanship?

KV.S: The craftsmanship is if you were to be a poet you should know how to express that and you must have a word with this thing, comfortable with words, play with the words it needs to be a good words frame the toolkit required, the skillset is different if you are a painter you know that there are no shortcuts, that you need to learn by skill, every child draws a skeleton, bares skeleton drawing, but we go to arts school to really study the skeletal drawing is actually a skeleton, what are the bone structure how do people say it how many bones can turn, how much? What does your hip allow you to what kind of moments what is the shape of that so you learn the anatomy and then you put this bone structure then you put muscle on to that so you need to know about the muscles, because each painting stroke which you do is according to the muscular moment and placement on your bones then you learn about skin and then skin tones and then you put skin on to the muscles and then that skin tones and then that tissue, you will learn a lot more details in that, this is the six year course is for nothing for you to go through all this craft and then learn then you become a painter where you can actually paint, you understand, if you are painting somebody you understand how the bones are how the muscles are, what are the expression, how do you make them express something the body language, everything becomes easier but the idea of somebody is sitting on the chair will occur to anyone but when you can draw then you become an artist, when you can draw a word picture of essay of imaginary guy sitting on an imaginary chair will become a piece of prose then poetry imaginary person is sitting there and then the feelings about that person and then the thoughts about that persons head will make it piece of poetry then a lot of things if you were to be a guitarist and then look at the man and then his body language then you can just how Beatles do their songs, write a song, so that's all craftsmanship, craftsmanship can acquired with a lot of hard work and practice, hour and hours and hours of practice and days and days of practice and that's the reason why creative people get so obsessed with that process of craftsmanship, ideas are there inbound with everyone and then more so with people who do it more often than others, you can play a cricket, I can play a cricket but we have never spent twelve hours or fourteen hours a day playing cricket in out childhood, if we were to play probably would have become also like Tendulkar, he learned the craft apart from idea of playing the cricket, we all know the idea of playing the

cricket, you need to have the skills, a great story will have a very intriguing beginning and interesting body and the twist right at the end so if you can manage that structure and then you can tell a story, are you fit a way to a feature film, you set a premise you create a conflict and then you find a resolution there you have the story but stories that you start practicing that's the craft and what is the best way of saying for instance Dangal, when it is been done the first script which Nitesh and team has written are from the girls perspective they said that no it is not making much of a sense now what can you say? Every girl want to win so it is only the father and his obsession and passion is far more important and girls kept on talking about the father when he was interviewing them and then they came back and said whatever we are doing is all wrong it would be a better story if we were to tell from that Mahavir Singh so they changed the story from daughters perspective to a fathers perspective and then wrote the entire story and that is what made that film.

DJ: In summary what would you tell our listeners about playing to their unique potential?

KV.S: I think that whatever you do, you must enjoy it and you will only enjoy if you really like it if you don't like it don't get stuck in that find your love find your purpose at times people find their purpose at very young age of 8, 9, purpose of their life like Tendulkar did a lot of great people do some people find a purpose which Picasso found, Husain found after they cross 70 its never late opportunity will be there find your purpose of existence, find what you really love and then like doing it and then pursue that does not matter that you have studied something else that knowledge is only going to help you in really figuring out what you want to do so figure out what you want to do combine that with the strength that you have and then move ahead people want something new all the time if you people want people play role in their life and then if you can't play role in somebody else's life you can't grow beyond yourself even as a parent also you have to impact on children and then children will respect you otherwise they will abandon and they will go, so is your wife, so it's true with society, you need to find a purpose, so what is the purpose you are serving in an organization, what is the purpose you are serving in other peoples life in old days there is profit in mining let me go to mining and invest money in mining, today people don't see profit, what is the human problem? And then how can I solve the problem? They find a purpose, so it is solving a problem to the world, so that purpose you need to find, if you find that purpose nothing like it, second best is put your interest and put your skills together and then try and do something.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This was one of the longest podcast conversations I have conducted so far. But I learnt so much from this journey. Right from how he made some early career choices in line with his passion for painting while being pragmatic about commercials, his retreat to Goa when he had three lucrative jobs in front of him, how he transitioned to the world of technology and re-invented himself to stay relevant and his take on creativity and craftsmanship among other things. Hope you found the conversation as purposeful as I did.

Just a quick note on how the content is organized in the podcast. At playtopotential.com, you could access each of the journeys and either listens to the full conversation or a nugget. If you want to access specific themes around leadership or transitions, you could visit the Curated Playlists section at the website. To give you a flavour Topics include Women Leadership, Resilience, Re-inventing yourself and so on. If you the podcast purposeful, do take a moment and leave a review on iTunes. I look forward to having you at one of the subsequent conversations at the Play to Potential Podcast.

End of transcription

Nugget from Amish Tripathi that is referenced: [Transitioning from Financial Services to Writing](#).

Nugget from Atul Kasbekar that is referenced: [Staying relevant over the long-term](#).

Nugget from Ravi Venkatesan that is referenced: [Listening intently during Transitions](#).

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Pursuing your passion: “Follow your heart” is an advice that is commonly doled out to individuals that are trying to make career choices. However, the reality is little more nuanced. People who have followed their heart talk about how they have weaved it into their lives or in some cases, how they have been pragmatic about taking the plunge. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Self-awareness: Insights around what it takes to build a better understanding of self. This includes perspectives around how we can deepen our picture of ourselves through a combination of inner work, mindfulness practices and by gathering meaningful feedback from the world around us. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Reinventing self: “How do I stay relevant” is a question that all of us have to grapple with as we go through our respective journeys. Careers aren’t linear any more. Some of the leaders talk about how they managed to pivot during their journeys and significantly change trajectories. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Settling into a new context: Figuring out “where to go” is only a part of the challenge for leaders in transition. How you land effectively in a new context is as critical. Hair line cracks often become full blown fractures if not attended to carefully. Leaders talk about some key lessons Individuals could bear in mind as they transition across contexts (Army to Business world, US to India, MNC to Family Business, and Consulting to Industry/Investing etc.) You can access the playlist [here](#).

Insights on career paths: There’s nothing like learning about a path from somebody who has walked it. Professionals across backgrounds (Sports, Law, Banking, Consulting, Investing, Academia, Stand-up, Consumer Goods, Politics, Market Research, Entrepreneurship, Advertising etc.) talk about the path, the highs and the lows and share nuanced views on how people should think about traversing that path. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Advertising: What are the inherent traits one should possess to pursue a career in Advertising? What differentiates the iconic ads from the average ones? Let us learn from somebody who has walked the path. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Views on success: Leaders talk about how they have recalibrated the notion of what success means to them. This is often a moving target and one has to constantly evolve it as we go through our respective journeys. They also discuss how this thinking has helped them make a more robust “where to go” decision when they were at an inflection point. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Leadership development: “How do I grow” is a question that all of us grapple with. The recipe for success is also changing as we move from an Industrial paradigm to a Digital paradigm. This is all the more pronounced in a start-up context where the job outgrows you very quickly. Successful leaders talk about the role of mentors, coaching, listening and more in scaling up one’s capability. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Excellence: Learn how individuals from across disciplines have pushed themselves to move to the very top of their field and profession. As we move towards a flattening world with a leveling of the playing field, there is a high risk of being commoditized if we do not strive towards excellence. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Deliberate Practice: Deliberate practice refers to a special type of practice that is purposeful and systematic. While regular practice might include mindless repetitions, deliberate practice requires focused attention and is conducted with the specific goal of improving performance. Leaders across fields talk about how they think about this topic in their respective fields. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Storytelling: Perspectives from practitioners and thought leaders on how we could use the power of stories at the work place in order to build a stronger culture. You can access the playlist [here](#).

In Summary - Playing to Potential: This playlist captures the essence of what the speaker is trying to say in their conversation. In a way, it captures the key principles with which they have approached life which has brought them to where they are today. They share their perspectives on the mindset we need to adopt as we navigate through life. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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KV Sridhar - Nuggets

- 23.00 KV Sridhar - The Full Conversation
- 23.01 KV Sridhar - Convergence of Strategy, Creative, Tech and Data
- 23.02 KV Sridhar - Early Childhood and Dyslexia
- 23.03 KV Sridhar - Early career choices - Medical Rep/Painting/Advertising
- 23.04 KV Sridhar - Rejecting 3 jobs and painting in Goa
- 23.05 KV Sridhar - Transitioning from Advertising to the Tech world
- 23.06 KV Sridhar - Advertising as a career option
- 23.07 KV Sridhar - Evolving perspectives on success and impact
- 23.08 KV Sridhar - Developing as a leader
- 23.09 KV Sridhar - Settling effectively in a new organization
- 23.10 KV Sridhar - Secret sauce behind great ads and film-makers
- 23.11 KV Sridhar - Building story telling skills
- 23.12 KV Sridhar - In Summary - Playing to Potential

About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock 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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