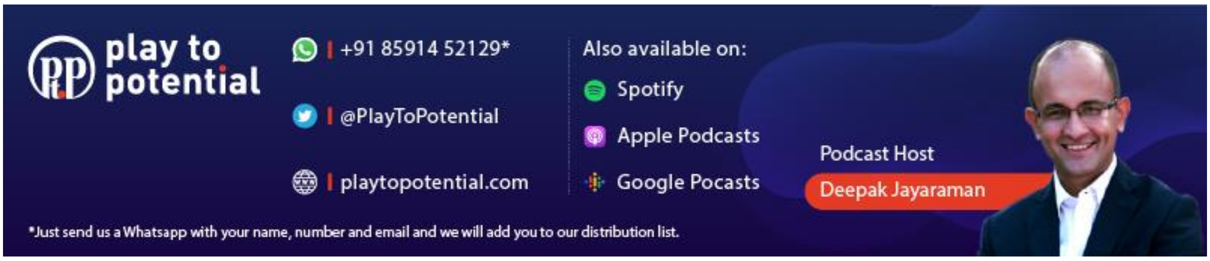

Guest

Roopa Kudva is Partner at Omidyar Network and Managing Director of Omidyar Network India Advisors, where she leads overall Investment Strategy, Operations and Portfolio Development. Prior to joining Omidyar Network, Roopa spent 23 years with CRISIL, and was its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer from 2007. She led CRISIL's transformation from India's premier ratings agency into a diversified global analytical company. Under her leadership the company's market capitalisation grew four-fold and revenues tripled.

In this podcast conversation, we spoke about her initial years in Assam and Meghalaya, her journey to IIMA after being rejected the first time based on a technicality. She speaks about her journey through CRISIL and how a stint in Standard in Poor (Paris) changed her mindset towards her career. She also talks about the various transitions in her career - getting to the Chief Rating Officer role, MD role and then to Omidyar Network. She shares some interesting insights around how she handled the passage of play from CRISIL to Omidyar Network in terms of exploring various pathways for her career.

Roopa holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Management from Indian Institute of Management - Ahmedabad (IIM-A).

Context to the conversation

Welcome to the 29th conversation at the Play to Potential Podcast. A series of reflective 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 help leaders and organizations play to their potential by engaging with them during periods of high stakes transition – personal and organizational. You could visit transitioninsight.com for more details.

My guest this time is Roopa Kudva. She heads Omidyar Network India Advisors and is an Omidyar Network partner. Previously, she was the MD and CEO of CRISIL, where she led CRISIL's evolution from being a leading Indian Rating Agency to a diversified Analytical company with clients ranging from large Investment Banks in the US to 10s of thousands of small firms spread across India.

In our conversation, we spoke about her journey including her initial years in Assam and Meghalaya, her journey to IIMA which is a story in itself. She talks about her journey at CRISIL in some detail. Her initial years where she says she was not really career oriented, a stint in Standard and Poor that changed her mindset, her transition to the Chief Rating Officer role which she talks about at some details and more.

She also speaks at length about how she thought about what next when she was moving on from CRISIL before she landed at Omidyar Network. As a student of transitions, I found that segment really interesting. He went on to talk about how she has had to flex her leadership style as she has move from CRISIL to Omidyar Network, very different scale and profile of people.

At the outset, I should mention that if you want to listen to conversation offline, say during an airplane ride or during a gym session or another time, you could access it at iTunes, Stitcher, Saavn or any of the other podcast apps that are out there. Without further ado, over to my conversation with Roopa.

Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): If you could talk a little bit about Omidyar network and how is different from some of the other impact investing firms around

Roopa Kudva (RK): At Omidyar network we invest in early stage entrepreneurs who have innovative ideas very often leveraging technology to achieve social impact at scale and we have a business model which is quite unique we are neither a VC nor a foundation and this unique business module steam from two fundamental beliefs, number one the belief and the power of the business to do good and second the believe and the power of a non-profit to build a strong ecosystem for entrepreneurs whether it be through policy or through market infrastructure and these beliefs are what live to our dual cheque book model, we therefor do both early stage equity investments in for profit start-ups and we also make grants to non-profit and we call this module a flexible capital module, so what's this flexible capital model enables us to do is to actually have a wider tool kit than any VC would have, than any impact investor would have or any foundation would have.

DJ: And how do you walk that tight rope from a capital allocation perspective, how do you think about how much gets deployed in each bucket?

RK: So what is interesting is that the same investment professional makes investments in for profits as well as the grants to non-profits and we treat our grand dollars as well as our equity dollars equally and is the investment professional who decides, what's the best use of the dollar so typically it's a market innovation of some kind would be a for profit equity investment but if it is to support organizations that work on policy agenda, policy reform or organizations that build sector infrastructure typically these would be non-profits and we would give a grant just to give you an example if you take the education sector we have invested in a company called aspiring minds, it's a small start-ups which does assessments for jobs through computerised adaptive test and that's the company in which we are equity investors, we have also provided a grant to teach for India which produces the teachers who you think of as critical sector infrastructure, similarly we have given a grant to an organization called the education alliance, which is an organization which works to promote public private partnerships in education and so together you can see how the combination of these three investments can help to move an entire sector and we really believe that if you can impact or accelerate the development of an entire sector we will affect or impact far more many lives that anyone single firm can do and if we have to move an entire sector it is important to have this holistic view of policy, sector infrastructure and disruptive innovators and so that's where the two cheque book module comes in.

DJ: How do you think about outcomes in success? What is success look like at a firm level at an investing professional level?

RK: So the success on different levels and on different parameters, so at the highest level, it has to do with social impact so what is the scale of our impact? The breath of the impact very simply it could be as simple as how many lives have we touched to the depth of the impact so how much does our investment touch and individual life and how much does it helped transform an individual life could be one way of looking at it on the financial side it's much easier because then you use the standard metric of multiple of invested capital or IRR as any other firm would do we also have measurements for sector level impact the way by we identify in advance what we will consider as markers in the development of the sector which we could deem as success of course and all of this we have to be humble because in the work that we do, it's very difficult to attribute success to us always we can talk about our contribution but to claim attribution for sector change or for depth of impact in an individual life I think becomes a bit challenging.

DJ: Picking on one of the themes you are passionate about and you have recently released a report innovating for the next half billion talk to us about what's the play here?

RK: We believe that today in India the mobile phone can be the biggest drivers of social impact with the costs of smart phones coming down and with data becoming cheaper we have more and more people coming online for the first time through their mobile phones today, and over the next five years we expect that 500 million people will come online in the India for the first time through their mobile phones and this is a population which is often referred to as the next half billion, what this means is that business now find it much easier to access this population than they could ever have imagined before and therefor this population now represents that interesting and attractive opportunity for businesses, however in order to build successful businesses targeted at the segment it is very important to understand that the next half billion are very different from the first wave of internet users they are different in terms of their income levels, their education levels, their skillsets, their language skills and even their social and cultural context and so there for the barriers that they face or they perceive while using the internet are unique and its only if entrepreneurs can understand these barriers and figure out how to address these barriers, can they build successful businesses targeted at the next half billion and these barriers could be several absence of adequate local language content on the internet, the internet content is dominated by English and so now you have increasingly businesses which are providing local language content so that's one barrier which businesses are addressing the second is for example the reticence of women to come online because the primary use of smartphone and the internet is social communication and entertainment there's a perception amongst this segment of the population that internet is quote unquote is a bad influence for women it exposes them to bad influences can destroy marriages and perceptions like this are actually reinforced by television serials and things like that with the result that a lot of women self-sensor, we did an interview with a woman and she told us that I have access to the internet but I never go on Facebook and I never go on WhatsApp cause I don't know what I will see and maybe I will see something that I am not supposed to see so if you have women in large numbers self-restricting their use of the internet you are actually cutting out one half of an important consumer demographic and so there for the businesses that help and encourage women to come online, like we have invested in a company called Healofy which is an app for pregnant mothers in tier 2 and tier 3 cities you are seeing good traction I think those kinds of businesses which make it safe and comfortable for women to come online and use the internet again will be successful with the segment of the population their social and cultural context again is very different you and I are very used to the shopping cart symbol and proceed to check out on an ecommerce website but essentially these symbols are try and replicate what is an offline consumer experience originally not even in India but from outside India but the shopping experience for the person in the next half billion is not going into a super market or a mall and picking things off the shelf and putting them in the basket their shopping experiences are walking up to the store standing behind a counter having a conversation with the shopkeeper behind the counter who takes thing off the shelf and helps them make the purchase, therefor these symbols like shopping cart and proceed to check out are not only alien to them but can also be intermediating, so I think the entrepreneurs who build businesses which tackle things like this I think have great potential to successfully address the segment.

DJ: In terms of nature of your nature and the exposure in this theme of half billion are there specific sub segments you are going after?

RK: Yes I think we have identified seven barriers and we are trying to build a portfolio of investments which address each of these several barriers and they have include things like reticence of women to use the internet, local language content building trust and confidence in transacting online, adaptation to the social and cultural context and things like that

DJ: So it's interesting that you sort of picked behaviours and you are going after people who are debottling those behaviours. Roopa in your journey are there two three things that you want to talk about in terms of what got shaped let's say may be in first 15-18 years which still forms a core part of who you are?

RK: I think one of the biggest formative influences is where I grew up and I grew up in the small towns of Assam and what is now Meghalaya it was a very simple upbringing close to nature and lots of books, so I think, on a typical holiday for example we would be outdoors spending a lot of time in the pine forest alongside brooks and dapple sunshine streaming through, so it was a very different world and quite unlike Bombay and I think the simplicity of the entire environment and the simplicity of the life in that place I think really was a major influence in shaping who I was and who I became. Another formative influence would be sometime around in the time I was 10 or 11 year old, when I started noticing, how people used to react to women who were working, my own mother till them who was a home maker started working and then I noticed several women who are working in different professions, some of our family friends were bureaucrats and they were women and I noticed that people around them treated them differently, they were treated with more respect, if I may use the word and that had an impact on me, of course at that time we had powerful influences like Indira Gandhi being prime minister and all of that and I think that had an impact and them later into my teenage years I think I became increasingly conscious of the fact that I was from a small town and a remote part of the country and maybe in some way my exposure was limited and so therefor I consciously looked for ways to expand my horizon and I remember I would spend hours and hours during a day listening to the BBC not just to know what was going on in the world but also to learn how to talk and I think that was another influence and finally I would say, there was a conversation that I just happen to overhear between my parents and it was not something that they said directly to me but something I overheard once, where my mother was talking about the fact that it was very important for women to be financially independent and it was not something they ever said to me, it was the conversation that I overheard once and that stuck with me and I do think that in some way it's kind of played a big role in how I thought about myself in my life and the future.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is your host Deepak Jayaraman here. This piece from Roopa reminds me of a chat I had with Anu Madgavkar (AM), a partner at the McKinsey Global Institute. She talks about how she got the idea of financial independence from a cousin of hers and how that has shaped her choices.

AM: "*I am happy to say that with all this super idealistic upbringing I had there was also a voice of reason and then came from a much unexpected quarter, so after I graduated, I had a degree in economics and I was wondering what to do next? And I had gotten into the IIMs but I was also toying with this idea of maybe I should even go and do like a masters in economics or something completely different there was this slightly romantic idea of what else I would like to do and then there was this cousin of mine who was not particular influence in my life at that point but out of the blue he just said you are a girl and you should remember that it is very important for you to be financial independent because you don't know what your circumstances are going to be you should be able to earn your own living and live well and stand in your own feet.*"

DJ: No one answer here but it is fascinating to see how much impact a small thing like a cousin saying something or overhearing parents talking about something can have on people's lives and profoundly shape their attitudes and choices.

A quick note on how you can access content at the podcast. If you want to listen offline say during a car ride home or during airplane travel, you could also access the Podcast on iTunes, Stitcher, Saavn and several other podcast apps. Google has recently launched an app for podcast listening on Android platforms too. If you went to playtopotential.com, you would also have the opportunity to listen to multiple voices curated by a topic. Play lists topics include – Reinventing Self (which is about how people changed trajectories significantly), early formative years where leaders talk about how their childhood has influenced them profoundly, Insight on career paths (various professionals talk about the ups and downs of their career and how individuals should think about embarking on that path)

If you find the content purposeful, please go to iTunes, rate the show and share a review. It will help others discover it. Now back to the chat with Roopa.

DJ: And just fast forwarding to undergrad to postgrad sort of inflection point I understand there was a little bit of complication into you getting into IIMA and I understand you had to write CAT twice, talk to us about that inflection point and what happened there?

RK: So, I graduated from Cotton college in Guwahati and I graduated in statistics and mathematic and before that after I finished my school I actually had to come to Bombay for a year and join Sydenham college where I was hoping to do my B.Com and within the few weeks of my coming to Bombay I realized that I just hate this place I couldn't adjust, I had grown up in small towns, I found this city quite overwhelming and at the end of one year I told my parents I want to come back and to their credit they didn't say why, I think they could figure out that this wasn't working for me and they were very gracious about it so I went back to Guwahati and I took up statistics and mathematics and I had to start a fresh. And then in 1983 was when I got admission into IIM-A and I was due to join on the 1st of July 1983 and at that time IIM expected us to have our graduation mark sheet but because of the anti-foreigner agitation and the students movement our exams got postponed and on July 1 I didn't even have, not only that I don't have mark sheets, I haven't written my graduation exams till then and so I requested IIM to see if they could defer my admission to next year not knowing whether this was the fluke or whether I would even get in another time and unfortunately their rules at that time did not allow a deferral, which is why I had to write the exams again next year and take the interview and fortunately I made it a second time and it turns out it wasn't so bad after all, in the interim I was the school teacher I taught in a kindergarten school and it was interesting that I had no plan B, if I didn't get into IIMA there was no other plan, so I would probably have ended up becoming a school teacher.

DJ: Very different path to social impact but very interesting. And I understand from listening some of your earlier conversations, that you say that you don't necessarily call yourself a career oriented or an ambitious person in the initial passage of play and you talk about focusing on excellence and doing things well that other couldn't do so talk to us a little bit about your approach may be a first decade or two but more importantly with the wisdom of hindsight if you have approached it any differently?

RK: I think my approach was also shaped by the organization I happened to be in I would say that in the first two decades of my career I pretty much enjoyed myself and went with the flow would be a good way of describing it, I stumbled into Crisil in completely unplanned manner, primarily because I was looking for a job that would enable me to be in Bangalore, where my husband was moving and so while all of that was unplanned the moment I actually joined Crisil, I realized that this can be something really big. And they were pretty heady times in Crisil those days and it was pretty much a start-up, there was the excitement of evangelizing a concept in the country there was no regulatory support the whole concept of credit rating it was getting acceptance for the new concept, what was also new about the company at that point in time was that it was not a public sector company and yet it was not owned by any promoter it was wide institutional shareholding, so it was pretty much like we the early team were the owners of the company, the second distinctive thing which was I think enabled me to really sit back and really enjoy the journey was the culture in the company, I think right from day 1 Pradip Shah instituted a culture which was quite unique at that time which is that the *most important decisions of the company which was the rating decision was made in an open forum anyone in the company could attend the rating committee meeting and see how the decision was being made which was a bit of the* contrast to my earlier experience in IDBI where I would evaluate, do the analysis put together an investment memo and then it would go up and then the decision would be made at a committee or by a group where I even wasn't in the room, behind closed doors so I think that was backed the culture where it was opened and what mattered more was the power of your analysis than who you were in the organization was I think very inspiring and very motivating and I think therefore I would say it enabled all of us who were there at that point in time to give our best and because it was a start-up and it grew very fast our careers grew along with the company, so I just think we were very fortunate and that enabled me to I think just step back try and do that I could and them go with the flow so to speak.

On the second part of your question about trying to focus on my strengths, I think I very early in my career realized that there was no point in trying to be best in everything and again taking the example of Crisil we had truly outstanding analyst in different sectors, I would call myself a good analyst may be even a very good analyst I wouldn't call myself an outstanding analyst, there were so many people around me who were better than me. And so then I said to myself that if there are all this great people why would I want to be yet another person trying to do what this people are already doing so well and instead I said I realized that there were things that I could do the others probably couldn't do as well and it was things like communicating with teams, it was getting teams together to work towards the common goal it was working with others, it was having the ability to step back and form a picture of what needed to be done with the business for example which I thought were my strengths and it was the ability to conceive new product new ideas for the business and I think while I continued doing what I had to do I think over the years, unconsciously I started focusing more on some of the things I believed I could do differently from the others.

DJ: To be just a little provocative here some of these clearly add value to the business but often aren't visible from the outside like let's say fostering or collaborative culture, I have come across people and the organization who would do a great job sometimes it doesn't get noticed, so at some point in time they start wondering is it a good use of time and they pull back so were there any choices that you had to made or the calibrations that you had to make along the way?

RK: I think I was fortunate to have leaders in the company who were truly outstanding and truly inspiring and I remember an occasion when I was fairly junior in the company and as I said we were a start-up a lot of systems and processes were evolving and even though I was a rating analyst I had some time on my hand, so I went and did an external survey of performance appraisal systems in different kinds of companies, I went and interviewed ten of my classmates at IIMA, who were working in different companies and I came back and pulled together on the basis of those conversations performance appraisal system for Crisil, no one asked me to do that, no one knowing that I was doing it, and I sent it up to what was our management committee at that point in time and which included Ravi Mohan and then I forgot about it for two weeks and to their credit not only that they have a look at it but then I got the call from Ravi Mohan saying oh this is terrific what you have done and we are going to adopt it and so the fact that there were I think I was singularly fortunate to be in an environment where people were kind enough to notice and these things got picked up and I think that motivates to try and do more and try and do more new things.

DJ: At some point in your journey at Crisil, you have had a stint in Paris with Stander and Poor and that changed your approach to career building, so am curious about what that switch might have been?

RK: I wouldn't say it changed my approach to career building, I think it changed my perspective I think the best shift in one's career comes when you are able to make the transition from what I call a worms eye view to a bird's eye view so you make that shift and you are able to step back and look at the big picture, I think the fact that I moved out from India and was living and working in Europe and evaluating banks in 15 different countries allowed me to really develop that outside view, so if I was evaluating banks in Israel for example I knew nothing about Israel it enabled me to think more strategically about the economic context of Israel and how it impacts banks rather much better than I would have be able to do at high being sitting in Israel living in Israel and evaluating a bank and I think that shift and lens which happened because I moved out and I did this global analytical role helped me tremendously I think it made me really move a step up, it wasn't what I expected to happen I just thought I would go and learn more about banks in another countries but I think it enabled me to develop a far greater strategic orientation than I had when I went in.

DJ: You have transitioned from being a chief rating officer to the CEO of Crisil again I am curious about the CXO to CEO transition, from your journey talk to us about what that transition was like? What shifted for you and with the wisdom of hindsight what insight do you have for people especially for that CXO to CEO transition?

RK: For me the bigger transition was the transition to the chief rating officer and the chief rating officer is the business leader of the rating business which at that time was the largest business in Crisil and that transition for the first time put me in charge of what was the most important business of the company at that point in time but more importantly it was challenging because I was chosen over my peers to do the job so how do you really move up to that level and them learn to work collaboratively and successfully with peers who you have considered your equals for many many years, so I think that was I think a big learning for me and I think in that transition I learnt a few things which were very different, number 1 I learnt for the first time to manage multiple stake holders beyond my client and beyond my team it meant I needed to interact with the media I needed to interact with regulators, I needed to interact with shareholders in Crisil, I needed to interact with larger investor community who made investment decisions using Crisil ratings, so suddenly these new stake holders came into my life and I had to figure out how to deal with a lot of them at the same time and that happened when I became the chief rating officer. The second big learning and growth for me when I moved was realising that it's no longer about me and I don't know what's the right word whether its humility or what it is but this really is about everyone else except me it's about the team, it's about the customers it's about the market set large, it's about the shareholders who have repost trust in the company and the brand and all of that so I think that was the second big learning, and the third one more tactical but I think this was that shift which really taught me how to ruthlessly prioritise and manage my time? And I think these were the big step up required for me at that time, the transition to chief rating officer to CEO was far smoother, I think it was unsaid and it was generally I think Ravi Mohan ran phenomenal organization it was kind of clear to everyone including to me that I would be his successor and so that didn't come it was not that challenging the thing that, that transition taught me was how to build and run global businesses because when I became the CEO I was also responsible for our global research and analytical business and so working with the leading investment banks all over the world so we set up new search centres in China in Poland in Argentina how do you deal with customers demanding investment banks who were in the US for example then Europe before the global financial crisis and then later after the global financial crisis were massive learnings.

DJ: And this is like a ratings business plus a KPO almost so it was like two businesses.

RK: And that later on grew to become even larger than the ratings business.

DJ: Back to the point you have mentioned Roopa, one thing you mentioned about dealing with peers and recalibrating that relationship and second is about adjusting your pie chart of time so talk to us about may be in a little more detail on how you have managed these two, what's the lesson to be learnt?

RK: I think on the dealing with peers it was a tricky one, it was there was the big risk that people would leave the firm and it was the risk that eventually panned out and a lot of people ended up leaving not immediately but over time I feel I handled it in two ways number 1 I make sure I spoke to every one of my team members who would directly working with me every single day for the first three months so every evening there were eight or nine of them I would call each one of them and have a chat with them it could be anyway for 5 minutes to 15 minutes but I would do that and get their advice an talk about what I was doing and how they thinking about it but I think that enabled me to kind of keep the trust in tact because there was the risk of that, so I think that made a difference secondly I think I also kind of recognised that they were like I said very strong people and pretty much let them drive their agenda, knowing fully well that they would do a great job of it and I focused on things that I believed that needed to be done in the business at that point in time, number one which had never been done before was talking to the investor community and increase in Crisil engagement with the investor community to increase the demand for Crisil ratings. Number two string lining operations, I remember that point in time receivables were an issue and we needed to focus on how to do that. Number three was communication within the organization, from a small company suddenly we had grown very big and there was an explosion of new employees in the company so the whole aspect of replicating what was a culture in a small company to a big company to cup a fair bit of my time so I think combination of greater communication trust building with people who were my peers empowering them to do what they were good at doing and focusing on taking the business in a new direction and doing some of the things that needed to be there, I think that's what helped me really I think get through the first year.

DJ: On the pie chart of time that you are eluded to be there any one or two key shifts in terms of what you would spending time on that fundamentally changed when you moved role?

RK: So I think before I became either the chief rating officer my time was spent essentially with my small group of customers and my team that pretty much took up my time and some business development after I think the pie chart shifted so I would say about 25% of my time was spent with customers, new business development about 20% in nurturing new product I would spend a lot of time with the new product development teams and these new because what tends to happened is the smaller businesses tend to get ignored but if you really believe that they are the businesses of the future, leadership these to spend time so I would spend a lot of time but to it, almost as much time as I spent with customers, I would spend 15% of my time with the board and shareholders maybe another 15% in business reviews another 15% in talent management that was a big part of my time, figuring out who our key performers were spending time with them, development career planning for the team and the balance 10% would be doing other stuff including media outreach and other forms of doing this.

DJ: And moving along Roopa Talking about the fork in the road when you joined Omidyar how you took stock of your career after possibly around 23 year stint in Crisil, give us a sense of how you thought about options at that point in time, what else could have been a path way and how you thought about Omidyar network?

RK: So I had spent 22 years in Crisil, 7 years as the CEO, I just loved the job and for years I said that it is the best job in the country and I really believed that it was the best job in the country I think it gave you a ring side view of anything important that was happening in India and it gave you a platform to shape where India was going in so many different ways, so it was phenomenal, so we had a ratings business, we had the global analytics business we had an small and medium enterprises business which where we have evaluated one lac enterprises and we had a policy advisory business so it was a very powerful portfolio and I loved what I was doing and I was very grateful to the company, I think the first emotion when I think about Crisil is really gratitude because I think it made me who I am it gave me the opportunity and so I was very grateful to everything I had turned 50 and I had already been a CEO for 7 years I had another 10 years to go and I said to myself that if I had to stay for another 10 years I would have been ended up being a CEO of a 17 years and I don’t think that’s good and I don’t think that’s good for the company it’s not good for me and I also figured that in fact all I wanted to do is something else again it was not clear what I wanted to do this would be a good time because I won’t get a clear runway to do something completely different not knowing what it would be and so I had a chat with my board and said I want to leave but I am not going to leave immediately, I will manage a smooth transition because I don’t know what I am going to do next and to their credit they saw the point of what I was saying of course it took nine months from the time I decided to the time I left just because we were public listed company we actually disclosed as soon as I made the decision that it is my intent to leave at some point and it took nine months and because it was public knowledge that I was going to leave the committee to succession and all of that one of the people contacted me was someone who is now my colleague at Omidyar network and I remember when they called me my first reaction to him was why are you calling me I don’t even know what impact investing means? And from there the more I got started talking to the folks here I realize that this is an organization which is don’t outstanding work but more importantly it had which I didn’t quite understand at that point in time what exactly this whole combination of investing in grounds was,

DJ: And what was your colleagues’ response on how he/she called you?

RK: I think he said someone told us that you might be interested or something like that in at least talking to us but what really made Omidyar network very exciting for my perspective was just the quality of the team and when I went to the website and I looked at the people who were in the firm and I looked at what they had done and their background I said to myself that each one of these people could be doing anything that they wanted to and the fact that they have chosen to be here and the fact that they have chosen to work for Omidyar network said something about the firm so that got me interested and that later further conversation for me.

DJ: The reason why I asked this is this is also time where people often go after scale in terms of the number of people they want to lead and large financial and from a people scale perspective is probably a factor of 100 or if not somewhere there, it's a big drop from the number at Crisil to Omidyar, if not Omidyar what else you think you could have ended up doing at that stage?

RK: The honest answer is I don't know, I only knew that I wanted to leave Crisil and I wanted to do something completely different I didn't know what it was and I said there will be a process of discovery by which I would figure it out but my entire energies at that point in time were mentally coming to the decision that I want to leave Crisil because it was, I didn't think of Crisil as my job, I thought of it as my company, so even to come to a final decision to leave was a big decision there were many people I had conversations with during this 9 month period but everything seemed there was the usual stuff some private equity some policy some work and some large, I didn't see myself as a person working in an NGO I didn't think I was cut out for that and so it's really hard for me to answer the question of what else, who knows maybe I might have done nothing, I don't know but this really appeal to me, and you are right I think when I joined Omidyar network I knew I would love the organization, I knew I would love the work and I was inspired, truly inspired by what the organization was doing. My biggest concern was for me in the sense that I wasn't confident at that point in time that I would be able to make the transition from a 4000 people company to a company which is globally 150 people and 15-20 people in India at that point in time how would I handle that? It may seem silly but how would I handle the fact that, I never sat in an open office would I adjust? I wouldn't have for day to day support the so called office of the CEO with two people figuring or doing the research and someone doing the PowerPoint desk, it may seem minor but those were the kind of apprehensions I had about whether I would be able to make those shifts, I was less worried about how easy would it be for me to understand investing or early stage entrepreneurs or non-profits I had a greater confidence that I would be able to figure that part of it out but the smaller things were the bigger apprehensions in my mind.

DJ: Back to that inflection point Roopa again with the wisdom of hindsight for leaders who are at that cross road who takes stock of life where they are, any insight into how they could thoughtfully get to that next inning

RK: There was a friend who gave me a really good advice when I had decide to leave Crisil but had no clue about what next and she said to me go out and talk to people and you will be surprise to hear how people perceive you, when you go out and start talking to people just to understand what is out there, you will be astonished and then you will have clarity and I actually did that, because there were so much time and I was doing the succession and because in Crisil, I was just fortunate to have a set of clients who were all either policy makers or regulators or CEOs of company and I had the platform to interact with them and everyone knew that I was going to leave so they all called up and said lets chat etc. and so I would go and have a cup of tea with and I did this with about 45 people and over the 9 months and it was just amazing as my friend have told me the insight that I got and I think the first clarity what I got was what I did not want to do and I think that itself become clear to me through these conversations where people said why don't you do this or we think why don't you join us? And that gave me clarity on what I did that helped in the elimination process in my mind I don't want to do this and after that I think it became much simpler I knew there was a small subset of themes that I wanted to look at and that small subset of things was where can I use my skills and capabilities and apply them on a wider platform to bring about some kind of change and didn't know what kind of change it would be in India, so I just knew that part of it and I came through to that realization through these conversations and a process of elimination and then it was serendipity Omidyar caught.

DJ: Very profound advise that your friend gave and maybe just sticking with it, talk to us about what you did not want to do at that point in time, what were the themes there?

RK: So for some time I actually toyed with the idea of doing stuff in government, with the government and there were someone who gave me really good advice and he said to me that you got to realize that you are not the kind of person I don't think you are the kind of person who will succeed in government and he gave me the reasons why? And that was insightful and that was valuable advice from a very senior person of which I am very grateful he gave me because I think he was right in what he was saying so I knew that much though it was a something that I would have liked to do I realize I wouldn't be successful given nature of my personality, I thought that other kinds of things were doing strategy types things in large business group etc. I didn't think the traditional corporate jobs be at leading businesses, strategy innovation, those kinds of things and a corporate setting didn't appealed to me because I said to myself, what I have currently is better than any of that, actually it was a pretty long list which was very easy to eliminate very quickly and at one point when I faced with the it was clarifying but it was also there was a point where I said, maybe I will end up doing nothing and then I said to myself OK that's OK as well but that's why I think there was this nebulous idea that was forming of this wider platform, impact etc. without quite knowing and I think the fact that the call from the Omidyar came at that point in time helped it all crystalize.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is your host Deepak Jayaraman here. I should mention that there are a couple of structural sub-optimality's in the transition process in 90% of the situations.

First sub-optimality is around not having a window for seeking market feedback; Here Roopa talks about having a 9 month period where the organization and the world around her knew that she was moving on from CRISIL. That gave her the comfort to have conversations with people around her and seek feedback around potential direction. In several situations, leaders often don't have that window or don't create that window for themselves given the sensitivity of the conversation. They get a Search Consultant call and they have their current job to protect. So, they don't get that feedback.

The second sub optimality, I have noticed is that in your working career, you get tonnes of feedback around what you are good at and what you could do better. But nobody really gives you feedback on the canvas where you will be the best fit, which is actually the question you are grappling with when you are at a transition. Or in other words, you get feedback around the question "How to grow" but the real question you are grappling with is "Where to go";

In my observation of leaders who are thoughtful about these transitions or in terms of what shows up when I am working with a leader in transition as part of my Advisory practice, I find that mining for this insight from the people that know you well on the personal and professional front immensely revealing. And we often tend to label ourselves using certain lenses but people sometimes frame the opportunity in a totally "out of the box" way.

One of my earlier guests was Atul Kasbekar (AK) a celebrated photographer and producer of the National Award Winning film "Neerja". To digress for 10 seconds, his career is an interesting one. He was studying Chemical Engineering at UDCT, arguably one of the best Chemical Engineering colleges in the country, he quit that to pursue photography in the US and came back to become one of the most successful photographers in the industry.

When I asked him about the transition from being a photographer to a producer, he spoke about a piece of feedback he got from one of the people around him he trusted

AK: *"I mean I have more of a friend who is a spiritual guide and he lives in Bangalore and he was saying that this is the excellent space for you because what you may not see but what he sees and it actually turned out to be quite true, he says you know you actually a very habitable platform for people otherwise who would never meet each other to be pulled on to and to co-exist and work in a harmonious way and be able to create."*

DJ: Like Atul Kasbekar says, sometimes, the answer lies in our blind spot. Sometimes when you get this feedback from the world around you, it is framed it in such a way that it opens up new pathways as you explore possibilities for the future. And this does take time. I also tell people not to rush this process of gaining directional clarity.

Just a quick note on how you could access the content at the podcast. You could download it and listen offline at iTunes, Stitcher, Saavn or any of other places where you normally get your podcast. But that may not allow you to navigate across speakers by theme. If you want to do that, you could go to playtopotential.com and navigate through any of the Curated Playlists that you find of value. If you find the conversation purposeful, do rate and review on iTunes. It will help others discover the podcast and seek value from it. Now, let's get back to the conversation with Roopa.

DJ: Talking about Omidyar, in what ways did you have adjusted your leadership style in this context 15-20 people versus 4000 people?

RK: I think significantly, one of the biggest recalibrations I have to make, it was bare in mind that I had no understanding of the business, early stage investing is a very different ball game and I was also not exposed beyond the work that we have done in the Crisil foundation, not very exposed to the world of non-profits and so a lot of time was spent in understanding of the business I have also realized very quickly that we have a formidable team and again it was when we have such an understanding people you just have to make sure that you create an environment where everyone is motivated to come in and give their best to every single day and I don't need to do much more beyond that they are just fabulous so I think that realisation came pretty early I think also very helpful people so I would sit and ask stupid questions and everyone answers them patiently and help me up to get the learning curve. What I focus therefor on was building out the team so a lot of my personal time went in recruiting people and so we significantly augmented the team since I joined and we built a new office in Bangalore as well where I spent my time was with entrepreneurs, getting to know who these people are, in Crisil I used to work with entrepreneurs who have arrive and build corporations here I was talking to entrepreneurs who were just getting started so just understanding this community, it's a very different generation, it's a generation which knows no fear they have no fear of failure, they are everything to take the risks they want to do good they want to have an impact so it was good to get to understand the entrepreneurs, I also spent a lot of time thinking about the future of Omidyar Network in India and how we should really focus, we work in 6 or 7 sectors how do we approach our business in a way that makes the whole of what we do, greater than the sum of the path and what are some of the new things that we should be doing which are unique to India and may not necessarily be applicable globally whether it be things like judiciary whether it be things like public digital platforms leaning from our Aadhaar and India stack experience, whether it be working on scaling of non-profit, so these are some of the area that just finalize the strategy for India and I think it's been the culmination of my observations learnings and reflections in the two and half years that I have been here, I finally feel that we are at a place where we are able to fully capitalize on the environment for the kind of work that Omidyar network does, I think India's time is now on the one hand you have the eco system for entrepreneurship in general, being very positive, much more positive than it has ever been before and on the other hand the drivers of the social impact whether it be the mobile phone penetration or the skilling policy or everything else are gathering greater momentum so I think we are in a really sweet spot and I just feel it's a very inspiring organization to be in simply because of the power of the work that the entrepreneurs are doing it truly an elevating and uplifting experience to do this job.

DJ: Back to the point you have mentioned, coming in with the no prior background either working with young entrepreneurs or working with investing or with social impact as a leaders how do you established respect and credibility when you come in from that sort of an orbit?

RK: So first of all its small team so we are not talking about hundreds of people, I think that I mentioned there for this much more manageable the scale and we are talking about 150 people globally so again I think some of the same principles which have worked for me, one is communication and listening I think that makes a big difference to is not being afraid to ask the questions, not being shy not being embarrassed to say that I don't know and three is it's a global firm so again invested a lot of time we had global sector leads, where each of the areas that we work in invested a lot of time building relationship trust with each of them I think all of that helped in the beginning, I also feel that people who work at Omidyar network are truly driven by a mission to make a difference it's a very A typical organization where you don't have like I said people who are here because believe they believe in the work and they believe in the mission and I think it was not just me, equally the team made it their problem to make me succeed so that helped.

DJ: Another piece in the context of the transition Roopa is the notion of judgment you have moved from a rating context to an investing context, investing in a social impact kind of context talk to us a little bit about the notion of judgment how is it different and how do you come up to speed in the kind of judgment that's required in the new context?

RK: The social impact part of it is relatively easier because that's our first screen so our first screen is, is this organization inherently a fit with one of our predefined areas of social impact so I feel that there is less of a judgment we exercised on that front I think there's is a difference in judgement as a business leader when you are taking business decisions that you are taking for a business that you are running yourself compared with judgement as an investor I think you are one step removed because you are making a judgment about an entrepreneur who in turn has to make judgments about businesses in areas where there is not much more data which are at the front here of innovation so it makes it harder in a sense. I feel though that early stage investing is about thinking of the possibilities and figuring out the possibilities and applying judgment to what are the types of business and will this business model and will this entrepreneur succeed? I think that's the judgment we are making in the rating decisions the judgement is about the risk, what could go wrong in the sense and in running a company the judgment involves are a different set of judgments altogether, it's about competitive strategy, it's about positioning, it's about new products and things like that so I think the judgements are in three different context in that sense, in investing I feel that initially understanding the world of start-up entrepreneur was important for me to kind of learn how to think as an investor I think that was the most important part in term of commercial understanding of businesses and how the economics of business work I think that was less challenging really, it was more about how the world of technology is evolving and what are these new age entrepreneurs like, I think developing that understanding I think was the learning curve.

DJ: You talked about going beyond data to having that gut or having that instinct or wisdom, how do you build that over time? What's been your approach to strengthening that muscle?

RK: I think I feel that it happened to because of diversity of exposure I think just the fact that you are exposed to a number of different business situations, business environments, different sectors is that richness of that exposure and the diversity of that exposure is very important to developing judgment, I think and I was just fortunate I had it by the nature of the work that we did at Crisil and the fact that over time Crisil become a business which diversified beyond ratings into other areas and into geographies and countries beyond India.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is your host Deepak Jayaraman here. I find that leaders that transition effectively do a great job of going beyond the conceptual understanding of the business metrics and a develop a first-hand pulse of the ecosystem the company operates in. Like Roopa says, the commercial element is often the easy part. The harder part is really building that pulse of your ecosystem. One of the people I had interviewed earlier was Suresh Narayanan (SN), MD of Nestle India Limited and the key architect in turning around Maggi when they were faced with a crisis around perceived quality of their product. He spoke about how he would settle into a new stint when he was transferred across countries.

SN: *"What happens to us that being operating mangers for better part of our lives, our immediate worry is how do I get my next week sales or my next quarter profits or whatever. Especially at senior management levels it is important to step back and observe, so what I used to do in all the new situations is, I always walk around. I don't sit in my chair, I will walk around the office, I walk around to the sites, I walk around where talk to the common people, what are the kinds of things that interest you, what are the kinds of things that bothers you, what suggestion would you give to build this company better, I think there are ways in which you touch the lives of people, the minute you touched the lives of people you as a leader do not become unreachable anymore and in cultures which are fairly hierarchical, I mean Egypt is pharaonic, very hierarchical culture, Singapore meritocratic but still very authority driven, Philippines again is very rigid in terms of the structural tenets of who's the boss and who's the subordinate? Thailand similar, they have a strong sense of position rank and society, so if you are able to break that then you get a very clear path and in that first three six months if you are able to assimilate, understand and then draw up the four or five big issues that you will address, you will be more successful in the balance part of your stint."*

DJ: I that leaders often have to re-build a nuanced understanding of the various ecosystems around the business to start developing a sense of judgment. And this is beyond understanding the commercial levers, the numbers and the sectorial trends of the new business. Now back to the conversation with Roopa.

DJ: Are there one or two areas where you think there isn't adequate commentary as you think about women rising to the top what's your insight around women in terms of how they manage their careers, how they make choices along the way are there one or two pieces you think there isn't as much public discussion around which is crucial for having more women leaders at the top?

RK: The one that there is the most discussion around is the fact that women drop out of the work force when they start a family. And the challenges around that I think there's a lot of discussion around that on those things is changing on two fronts happily so. One is the fact that families today tend to be much more supportive of working women particularly in the metros because it is almost become a necessity now for both spouses to work and therefor the support available for child care from family and other sources I think has increased and that's a good thing, the other good thing that has happened is that organizations have realized that it pays to invest in women and I think they are more accommodating of the fact and more understanding of the fact that there will be this phase in a women's career when you have to be supportive, it will pay off multiple times when she comes back, it pays to me patient it pays to be supportive, it pays to be flexible and that is something that still continues to be talked about but I think that problem will get solved the second barrier that women hit is later on when they are in the upper end of middle management or in senior management but when it comes to them taking the top jobs I feel that there is a mental barrier of self-belief that I can and I should ask for the top jobs and I can do it I think women hold back, they hold back in asking for a seat at the table and I think that is where other women leaders can play a very big role, my own thinking on this has evolved in the last 15 years if you asked me 15 years ago I would have said it's all about merit and if you do good work you will be recognized women don't need special treatment is the argument that I would have made. Today I believe that the second barrier that I talked about is a very big barrier and therefor it is actually almost incumbent on other women leaders to reach out and talk about this issue and help other women to cross this barrier, I have also changed my views about things like quotas for women on board, this is something that I would have been opposed to fifteen years ago but I actually believe it's a good idea now and the reason I do so is I believe that if you actually, put women in those positions are they raised to those positions? There is an example that I like to give, which is not in a corporate context but in a context of a Village Panchayat when the constitutional amendment etc. lead to greater devolution of past to the villages and then you had the reservation of the Sarpanch position for women in certain villages and there was this anecdote which is oft repeated of a women who reached on republic day for the flag hoisting she reached couple of minutes late and she found that the men in the village the elders reached hoisting the flag and had gone home, but when she reached there she said that I am the Sarpanch it's my job to hoist the flag and she insisted that all of them come back and she hoisted the flag so initially you may get the wives and the sisters and the daughters in law of men coming and occupying those positions and be so called puppets so to speak as its well but over time I feel as women come to recognize the power to the position gives them and power in a nice way I think they rise to the occasion and they deliver and it's amazing the moment you have these quotas etc it actually pushes the boards to go out and look for more women on boards so typically you would get board members through your contacts etc. but the moment you go out and hire a search firm for example it's amazing the number of women who show up on the list of candidates which otherwise would have never happen for these board rooms.

DJ: Looking at women leaders what does it take to be on that list of Golden Skirt? In your experience what does it take to be a credible contender for board roles? What should women leaders bear in mind?

RK: I feel that today being a board member particularly if you are a board member in a public listen company a serious business its massive responsibility board positions also come with personal risk at time personal liability and I think everyone and this is not just applicable for women needs to be conscious of that and so there for it is important to first figure out whether you have that time because boards need a lot of time it's not that you show up for the board meeting once a quarter and leave today the kinds of expectations from boards are rising and you have got to be clear that you have that time you also have got be clear that you also have the permission and when I say the permission it means from either the organization you are working in ensure that they don't have any conflicts with anyone else that you do. I think these are hygiene issues it's important to also reflect on what skills you will bring to the board and while there are many technical skills I think it's very important to ask yourself, do I have the judgment and the wisdom to sit on this board, am I seasoned enough in the kind of issues that this board and this company at the stage of revolution is likely to be dealing with and do I have the requisites and not just the hard skillset do I have the requisite judgment and wisdom to bring to that position and I think some of these things are gender neutral, these are things that you have to reflect upon and think about whether you are a man or whether you are a women as far as women in particular our concern I think it's just for more senior women to make it known, you thankfully have search firms which I getting into the act today in recruiting women for board positions so it's just the question of letting it be known that you are open to board roles I don't think it takes more than that. I don't think it takes women no need to do anymore preparations for board roles than men need to do, I often find it really funny that there's almost no conversation about men preparing for board roles and yet everyone is talking about preparing women for board roles and I think being a board member or being a CEO is equally hard and incredibly a big step up that you need to take irrespective of the fact that you are a man or a women whereas the conversations tend to be more about how do women think of preparing for board positions.

DJ: How people define success as they go through their journey so as you reflect on your journey have there been points in time where your metric for yourself has shifted significantly?

RK: I wouldn't say that I think success at the end of the day is a journey, that keeps, you can never say I have been successful it's a long journey and here is how I think about success number one am I working for a larger purpose is it clear to me what that larger purpose is? Because that's what creates the inspiration and that's what creates the motivation and I think again I have been fortunate, whether it was in Crisil, it was all about the larger purpose of making markets function better here at Omidyar network, it's about supporting innovations that can create opportunities for millions of people who are otherwise either excluded or underserved or disempowered so do I have a sense of that larger purpose I think is an important part of the success formula beyond that I think it is, am I enjoying what I do? Am I utilising my strengths and at the end of the day over a period of time are there more good outcomes than bad outcomes?

DJ: What they don't teach at IIMA but should?

RK: It's a tough one, because I must say that I quite sure of how the IIM curriculum has evolved over 30 years now and it's a long time but I feel that there are a few things that IIM did personally for me, number one I think at some level it provided some tools and some framework but then those I could have picked up those things even elsewhere I presume, the most important thing for me at IIM was that it taught me how to think and it taught me how to think from first principles, being the product if you are a non IIT graduate the Indian education system doesn't teach you how to think at all its about knowing and memorising some facts and studying a few days before exam but I think IIM changed truly changed that for me so there is something that they did for where I was for a person with my background and my kind of exposure I think that made a very big difference and I think it also provided a platform for interacting with really truly outstanding and brilliant set of peers, who I would never have met elsewhere so I think there's a lot of focus on the questions about what IIM don't teach you and there's a lot of talk about how it's just one more screening layer to kind of narrow the funnel even more but I do think things like this and for me particularly some of this frameworks and learning how to think were very important and I think there's no enough talk about what IIM does teach you. I think when I look back I feel that with a little more work experience I would probably have appreciated and got more from the program then I did as a fresh graduate and as more and more people with work experience I joining the institutes today I think they probably be able to get more out of the course than I did in a lighter vein I think IIM teaches you to be a CEO to think about being CEO from day 1 and not enough and not about the journey of what it takes to get there.

DJ: And if you had to be immodest about yourself what about you have enabled you to come this far in your journey?

RK: I think not just for me but for most people that you talk to in the course of this incredible podcast series that you put together is really about being in the right place at the right time and that is luck, I think it plays a very big role and it has for me as well I was lucky to have joined an organization at a very early stage and as the company grew I grew I was lucky to have had excellent role models throughout my career quite candidly if I look back, I would say that I have had no major failures or setbacks and that was not something that everyone can say and I have feel therefor that I have been truly privileged and a lot to be grateful for, I think along the journey I just tended to focus on what I was good at, what I thought I was good at I have always tried to do new things and I generally will not give up easily…

DJ: In summary playing to potential for our listeners.

RK: I feel that a lot of thinking about one's own career and even about one's own potential evolves over time, I see a lot of young people looking for all the answers today and while that is terrific, I think today people are much more thoughtful and much more focused where their careers are concerned and that's brilliant but I think also a realization that some of the answers will come over time and being able to accept that and therefor being a little more relaxed about your careers and that doesn't mean slacking that doesn't mean not working incredibly hard but just being mentally more relaxed and less stressed about things that you may not always have the answers to immediately I think will go a long way for younger people for playing to their potential in the first ten fifteen years of their career. And I think once you kind of go through that, I think it just sets you up for leapfrogging to a very different dimension in the next fifteen years of your career.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Hope you found the conversation as purposeful as I did. There were three big takeaways for me in this conversation.

1) First is the theme of resilience and tenacity that we can see in people through their journey. Even when we go back to her days of college and the two attempts to get into IIMA, there is a certain determination that one can see. One of my earlier guests was Dheeraj Pandey who is the Founder and Chairman at Nutanix Inc (a cloud computing software company). He is an alumnus of IIT Kanpur Computer Science batch of 1997. He actually mentioned that he got in in 1992 but got a rank in the 1000s and got a branch he didn't want. So, backed himself, took a year off, prepared and got back to IIT to study what he wanted. No, one right approach here but it is fascinating to see the fierce resolve that some of these people show and the signs can often be visible early on in their journeys

2) Second is the point Roopa makes in the context of Women Leadership. She talks about the notion of self-belief as women get into senior management roles. I would make a slightly broader point here. I see several leaders (men and women) hit a glass ceiling when they move from a CXO role to a CEO role. The ones that struggle the most are the high IQ variety who ace the exams for

the prestigious universities and accelerate through the first few years of their career. But when you move to the second half of the career, a lot of the competencies that determine success are around how you motivate the people around you, how you build relationships, how you set the right climate in the organization and so on. Several people struggle with this transition to the new canvas. I tell people, it is like moving from playing cricket in the flat pitches of India to playing in Perth in bouncy, swinging conditions. A lot of the old behaviours and patterns might have to be unlearnt as you move forward. Seeking help through a coach and/or having a personal board of advisors might help avoid collateral damage along the way as you grow

3) The third piece that struck me was the thoughtfulness with which Roopa approaches the transition from CRISIL to Omidyar network. Very often people, who are successful in their current careers, keep chugging along, one day they get a call from a recruiter about an opportunity and they jump into it. There is nothing wrong with the approach but if you think about the classical approach to problem solving, you first develop clarity around the criteria with which you will make decisions, you then generate options and then you pick what makes sense. Agreed that life is a little too messy for such a clean process to work but it is worth taking a pause from time to time before you move onto the next innings. That reflection will give you the conviction in the path and the energy to play at the next canvas for a prolonged period of time.

Thank you for listening. If you find the content purposeful, please share with those that could find this valuable and do take a moment to rate and leave a review on iTunes. For more content from leaders like Nandan Nilekani, Zia Mody, Vinita Bali, Jay Panda, Vishy Anand, Atul Kasbekar, Amish Tripathi and more, do visit playtopotential.com. You could access a full conversation, or access content that is curated by key themes that might be of interest to you. My next guest is Vinay Sitapati (VS), an Assistant Professor at Ashoka University. India. We discuss his recently published book Half Lion where he talks about Narasimha Rao and what we can learn from the man who was the key force behind the economic liberalisation of 1991.

Vinay talks about Narasimha Rao's journey and what we can learn as leaders from his journey from a village called Vangara in Andhra Pradesh to becoming the Prime Minister of India who shaped the country's future.

VS: *"the central question of book how does the man so weak achieve so much change so it was not just that he was running a minority government his own party hated him, he had to report to Sonia Gandhi and the crisis that India had from secession issues in Assam, Punjab and Kashmir to a balance of payment crisis to fall of the Soviet Union to Rajeev Gandhi assassination so here's a man with a very little power and NR also had the charisma of dead fish so he was a really boring guy so man with very little charisma very little raw political power very little mandate and facing an inbox from hell made this kind of change and that's really heart of the book and I push it again and again, I think a core feature of why NR was successful was that instead of focusing on what needed to be done he focused on how it should be done? I think that's very important"*

DJ: I look forward to having you at one of the subsequent conversations of the playtopotential podcast. Bye now.

End of transcription

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Nugget from Anu Madgavkar that is referenced: Early formative years.

Nugget from Atul Kasbekar that is referenced: Entrepreneurial pursuits beyond photography.

Nugget from Suresh Narayanan that is referenced: Transitioning effectively to a new context.

Nugget from Vinay Sitapati that is referenced: Leadership under extreme constraints - Lion, Fox and Mouse.

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Resilience: Research by Angela Lee Duckworth (of Wharton) talks about a special blend of passion and commitment that she calls Grit. Leaders from various fields (Armed Forces, Writing, Sport, Entrepreneurship and more) talk about their experiences in cultivating resilience. 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.

Culture: Culture eats Strategy for breakfast but how does one build it. Leaders across domains (Academics, Armed Forces, Silicon Valley, Bollywood, Venture Investing) talk about the notion of culture and how they go about building it in their organizations. You can access the playlist here.

Early Career: We live in a world of abundance of choices and that can be disconcerting and paralyzing. Leaders across fields talk about how individuals should think about some of their early career moves including the very first job that they need to think of when they graduate from an educational institution. You can access the playlist here.

Leadership Transitions: Perspectives around moving from one role from another especially while moving from Functional Leadership to General Management; Leaders also talk about how they thought about inter-generational transition as business owners. You can access the playlist here.

Inflection points: Inflection points are when the notion of "what got you here won't get you there" hold. Whether it is a company moving from a start-up to a scale-up or a leader moving from a CXO to a CEO role, these passages of play have to be navigated carefully as there is a high risk of derailment. 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.

Context based Leadership: You can access the playlist 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.

Women Leadership: The fact that we don't have enough women leaders in the Board room is well understood. Leaders share their perspectives on what needs to happen across various stages (education, maternity, late career) for women to rise to the very top. You can access the playlist here.

Maternity Transition: It is well understood that maternity is a key inflection where there is leakage in the leadership pipeline. Women leaders talk about hard choices and trade-offs that women have to make but also offer perspectives on how they could think about Maternity & Career rather than making an Either/Or choice. 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.

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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Roopa Kudva - Nuggets

- 29.00 Roopa Kudva - The Full Conversation
- 29.01 Roopa Kudva - Omidyar Network and innovating for next Half Billion
- 29.02 Roopa Kudva - Early formative years
- 29.03 Roopa Kudva - Growing through the ranks at CRISIL
- 29.04 Roopa Kudva - Transitioning to a General Management role
- 29.05 Roopa Kudva - Choosing career direction post CRISIL
- 29.06 Roopa Kudva - Flexing leadership style at Omidyar Network
- 29.07 Roopa Kudva - Developing a sense of judgment
- 29.08 Roopa Kudva - Women Leadership - The barrier that doesn't get spoken about as much
- 29.09 Roopa Kudva - Perspectives on Success
- 29.10 Roopa Kudva - What they don't teach you at IIMA but should
- 29.11 Roopa Kudva - 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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