



Guest

Stewart D. Friedman is a professor at the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania and the founding director of the Wharton Leadership Program and Wharton's Work/Life Integration Project. He has been on the Wharton faculty since 1984 and became the Management Department's first Practice Professor in recognition of his work within the fields of Leadership Development, Human Resources and Work–Life Integration on the application theory and research on the real challenges facing organizations.

In our conversation, we spoke about how Rd. Friedman thinks about 4 domains - Self, Work, Home and Community and how we can harmonise across the four domains by going after what he calls "4 way wins". He also talks about positive spill-over effects from one domain to another and urges us not to see these choices as trade-offs but as porous elements with osmosis across them. He goes on to talk about how we can craft experiments and interface with the various stakeholders to create a life that in line with what we care about and what matters to us.

Context to the conversation

Welcome to the 40th conversation at the Play to Potential Podcast. This is a series of reflective conversations with leaders across disciplines on topics around Leadership, Transitions and Careers. I am Deepak Jayaraman, your host and curator of the podcast. I am an Executive Coach and work with leaders and help them play to their unique potential. To know more about my LEADERSHIP Advisory work, you might want to visit the ABOUT section at www.playtopotential.com.

I believe that just like businesses need to be coherent about their answers to "where to play and how to win", we all need to be thoughtful about our responses to the 2 questions "where to go and how to grow". This is podcast is an attempt at exploring how some leaders across domains have grappled with these two questions as they have gone on their respective journeys.

When we reached out to some of the listeners around the end of 2018 and asked them for suggestions on how we could improve the podcast and take it to the next level, they said you have a lot of interesting journeys and reflections. Why don't you also get some thought leaders in. People who have spent significant amount of time thinking about a problem for a prolonged period of time.

In that context, I am excited to announce my guest for this Podcast - Dr Stewart Friedman. Stew is a Professor at the Wharton School Business at the University of Pennsylvania and the founding director of the Wharton's Work/Life Integration Project. He is also the author of the book - Total Leadership that has been a best-seller on several lists and has been translated to at least 7 languages.

Stew talks at length about how we should all think about work-life harmony and not balance because that suggests that it is a zero sum game. He also talks about 4 domains that we need to be

thoughtful about – Self, Work, Home and Community. I do think this is a significant epidemic, possibly amplified in India where people place disproportionate emphasis on work while neglecting the other domains and that invariably leads to some sort of a burnout or an event at some point or the other.

I hope you find the conversation purposeful. Without further ado, over to my conversation with Stew.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Taking you back in time really saying how did you zero in on work life integration as an area of interest as an academic, what was missing in the work that had already taken place till then for you to pursue your research in this space?

Rich Fernandez (RF): Well, as a graduate student a million years ago at there was in Michigan I had focused my research on how companies cultivate the next generation leadership talent. I did a large-scale study of half the four to five hundred looked in depth in those companies to see the systems that they used for selecting and developing the top three tiers of leadership and what impact that had on the company's financial performance and its reputation and I was doing a lot of work, I was doing a lot of research, consulting, teaching on what I discovered about what I called succession system, talent management system. I also had an interest adult socialization and I had a long-standing interest in the worlds that ... society starting from back in the 70s when I was a psychologist and there was something that I was very interested in so I did enhance course work in this area and Michigan which is a great place to study these things. Then my son was born, my first child was born in late 1987 that was a really transformational moment for me and as it is for many people when child arise in their life. It's the time to give fortune of being able to talk about it with my students because I was asking everyone after his arrival. What am I now going to do to make sure that the world is a nourishing one for him to grow up there and it's a question that I hadn't taken very seriously until I met him and when he arrived? I just couldn't get that on my head so when I waked back into my Wharton classroom sometime after his birth week or so later I told the students you know we are not going to talk about the case that you'll have prepared today on motivation and reward system there is something else that I have to talk to you about and I just started ranting. Basically about how I was interested in this question that I want to know pose to you dear students what are you as a future business leaders going to do to ensure the health and safety of not just the next generation talent in your business but the next generation full stop. There were number of people who were quite annoyed with me when I did this because they had prepared this case then I before and they were ready to talk about it and this is back to the day students prepare for the class. The real resistance was in how is this relevant for us this is not a business issues. There are other people in the room men and women were quite keen to hear more about this topic and to talk more about it. So when I said what are you going to do as a future business leader and as a human being who might have responsibility for raising members of the next generation what are you going? One of them said something to the effect of well you're the professor you tell us and of course all I was doing was asking the question which seems to be my particular talent that I am good at asking questions the provoke and annoy people. I realized that was a turning point for me it wasn't like I turned on a dime but it really shifted my thinking about what can do to help this people and other who were asking this question of themselves. So I began to do research I'm always out there and that wasn't a lot and so I organize the Wharton Work Life Integration project we launched in 1991

had some funding from... and from the school we started doing launch scale survey research, we went out into the field and found people who were exemplar at integrating the different parts of their lives and ways that worked for all of them not just about child growing but all the different thing that they did how did they do it? What were the principles they followed? What were the skills needed? And that over the next decade or so developed into a set of actionable able ideas. So I started teaching them. I can go on about that period that was totally origin if I stay with answering your first question.

DJ: May be just picking it up and diving in Stew you talk about four broad themes self, work, home and community couple of questions one is how did you arrive on this taxonomy this different ways of looking at life so I am curious about how you came over this four but also I think work and home are well understood but self and community are often less understood if I sort of talk from a point of at least in India the conversation that I have people around people often frame the trade off as a again as a trade-off I think we should talk about it as we move forward but the understand work and home but the other two piece are missing so I'd love to get your perspective on how you got here?

SF: There have been number of people writing about work and life then I started reading what other people were targeting and I also was reading philosophy and psychology my background is in psychology and so these seems like a good working set to capture most of what most people talk about when they think about the different roles they play the different domains of their lives. It's not a perfect taxonomy or categorization but it seems to work pretty well it seems to be work universally because I brought this now to all over the world. So the community piece just to answer your question about what is that and how it is relevant? People struggle with that I often get questions about what is community and why does that matter? Community captures everything you and your work in your family. So that includes your networking friends and neighbours that people place where you live but it could also include people that you are engaged in with in some kind of political group or religious group. That usually has some meaning for it may not be the most important thing but some people it is and the self of course this is who are you as an individual in your own private sphere, the things that matter to your physical health, your mental health and emotional growth and your spiritual life which is important to some people and not for others but these aspects of our existence are for most people pretty important. So these four buckets if you will seem to capture most of our experience and it's also simple there is not 12 categories there is just four and last point about this I ask people to define these domains of their lives in ways that make sense to them so there is no rigid definition that I impose but rather it's a device to help you to think about the differentiated parts of their life. That helps you to make sense of how to bring them together in order to make sense of the whole you have to see what the parts are and so people make their decisions, choices about well what does home mean to me how do I define family and the way you define might be different the way I define and etc. so it's useful in that way that everything about this approach is subjectively defined by the learner or the user.

DJ: We are just picking up on one of the things that you said Stew talk to us about what do you mean by spiritual when you talk about self again different people interpret differently how do you see the spiritual part of self?

SF: Well for some people its formal religion, organized formal religion but for many people it is cultivating yourself your sense of connection to other human beings, to some sense of the divine everyday existence, the interconnectedness of all things and the experience of feeling connected to something bigger than just you. That people have been cultivated since the dawn of time, the dawn of human time and in very different ways in different parts of world but that peace. As I understand it and I explain it.

DJ: Just one of the that strikes me about how you think about this and how you frame this you talk about how each of the domains is generative and there are positive spill over effects and rather than looking at these domains as trade-offs so for the purpose of so for the listeners could you talk about what you mean by this and how this different from how people normally see it?

SF: Most people when you talk about work in life, they say balance and I deliberately called our project the work life integration project in 1991 because I knew then and I feel much more strongly now in the wake of decades of experience and evidence that the balance is just a long metaphor even though that's the one in common. You such when you think of the scales and balance your mind automatically goes to the necessity of trade off the necessity of sacrifice in one particular life for success in another part. If I'm gone be successful at work what that means I have to give something else, I have to give up my personal life that how the balance metaphor works in terms of your mind-set. If you keep that a side and use a different metaphor that allows you to contemplate what can I do in my life under my control that allows me to pursue my values the things that matters most to me and to do that in ways that allow me to have some success in all the different parts of my life I worked at home, in the community, myself personally other things that I can do that would allow me to create value in all the different parts either directly or indirectly through a kind of spill over self I take care of myself in a way that I haven't picked for perhaps through exercise or proper nutrition. What can I expect to see as an impact of that change on my performance at work or my relationship with my family and so you start thinking differently about the possibility for what we physiologist call positive spill over or ripple effects which exists when you open your mind to a different kind of metaphor then the scale and balance and you think instead about the pursuit of harmony among the different parts over the course of time then you see a lot more possibility for innovation for creativity, for change under your control that can produce gains or benefits or success as you define it in the different parts and it works when you look for it when you put on a new set of lenses and you look through them to see where are the chances for me to take action that are gone be benefit my family as well my work as well as my network of friends and how I fell about myself personally you start to see those and you see certainly see more of those are opportunity those possibilities then if you just assume well I have got to give up everything in my personal life for me to become successful in my business.

DJ: As you think about spill overs, I guess some of the spill over are well understood Stew let's say the need to be healthy and that will contribute to my productivity at my work but in your experience over the decade are there spill overs that you see people significantly underestimating when they come to your class?

SF: The most common insight for many people for most people is I need to take care of myself so that I can be there for other people that is by far the most common observation when I take them through the series of exercise that asks them to identify what matters most to them who matters most to them important people in their life at work, at home and community and with those mutual expectations are among those key people and then talking to those key people to really understand what those folks expect of you know what you think they expect but what they actually expect you generate inside about ideas for innovation that you can take to produce what I call this four way wins. So many people come to the realization if I take care of myself I would be less cranky more available, more energetic, and generally better in all my relationship so there is that. But there are many different ideas for innovation that people come up with their nine different kind of experiments that are research team identified over 15 years ago and we looked at the first thousand or so people who have done it these experiment as I call them designed to pursue it Four way win and we classified them and use those nine different types to serve as example for what people can try and to stimulate their own thinking. There are some really basic things that people come up with that they haven't done that they haven't liked be doing like for example delegating more consciously

to let go some of the things to do that or not high value and that other people might benefit from doing that for you are to invest more of your time and attention and the things that really matter so that's what the pretty common one. Another one that is often surprising for participants the notion of revelling and engaging with other people and ways that they have before so one of the first sets if exercise is ask people to tell a few stories about their life histories so what has happened in your life since you are born. Three or four critical episodes that have shaped who you are and how you see the world and what you care about right those get reaction from colleague's every-thing that we do is peer to peer coaching exchanges. So you write those stories anything, you had to be willing to disclose those stories there are many episodes and histories that we don't want anyone to know about so what are you willing to disclose and the very first thing I do in my Wharton course for example which just launched last week the very first day that 55 MBA students taking this Elective Course and I have them going them to small groups until tell one of the two other stories and its extremely powerful as a way of building trust having a clear sense of confidence about being able to tell your story and the way that brings other people closer to you and also reviles to them who you are and what you are about and why and so people then say there are more people who could in my life who could benefit from hearing that story or the story of my leadership vision where I want to go 15 years from now why I want to be going there and what I be doing on that day 15 years from today in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening and why am I doing what I'm doing there are people who might want to hear that and then so they decide to take that idea those stories and share them with people and their lives. In the intention of reliving their values bringing other people closer to them and enhancing their ability to inspire others. So that's the surprise for many other people to realize that telling stories like that can be powerful tool.

DJ: I think one of the thinks that struck me when I read your book total leadership was you talk about three pretty meaty and heart heating words authenticity, integrity and creativity that people need to have as they go through this journey of bringing harmony across these four dimensions could you talk about what you mean by these words in the context of work life integration?

SF: So the total leadership model it came to fruition when I was recruited by the CEO of the Ford Motor Company to be the global head of the leadership development for that company and that was about 20 years ago and I spent few years there. I told him in the interview that I had for that job. I said Jack what I am going to do is Leadership Development from the point of the view of the whole person and he said great do it and that was my charge and so I took what we have been learning about work life integration with what I have been learning about leadership development which was my day job. I launched the leadership program at Wharton also in 1991. Developing the course work for MBA students and undergrads and I'm also doing this research on work life integration. And what I came to see that were really became super clear when we have the opportunity to some really innovator program at Ford was it's really the same puzzle. Growing as a leader including the harmony among the different parts if your lives are the same game. So hence that's total leadership the whole person. So authenticity, integrity and creativity are the is the short version of what we discovered is our research when we went into the field to find people who were good at this. Who excelled at leading the lives that they wanted to lead and were affected in that and what we found is that they did in common were this three qualities being real acting with authenticity by clarifying what matters most to you your values , your vision. To be whole, to act rather than integrity by respecting the whole person and here I use the term integrity. To describe, the Latin root of the integrity is one whole coherence. So how do the pieces fit together and that came to life in this program in what I was saying earlier bout the identification of who are the most important people in the different parts of their life why are they important how did they fit with your values and your vision and what do they expect from you what do they need from you may be for non and then talking with them to find out what they really think. Now what you think they think about what's

important and in those conversations, you discover that what they need from you is actually a little less than what you have thought and a little different than what you have thought.

DJ: I was actually quite surprised that they often expect less from then you think and willing to support you more than you think is quite interesting.

SF: Try that you will see if it doesn't happen in every case, certainly and I'm not making any guarantees about that but that's generally what happens and so authenticity, integrity and creativity the other thing that we saw in these exemplars is continual experimentation with how things get done there. Always looking for ways to question... and see new ways of doing things and to bring out this along with them focusing on results that matter with being really flexible that how they get done and encouraging other people... so that's what you mean by being innovative acting with creativity and continually experimenting on how things get done and that's what we have our students and program participants do.

DJ: You spoke about teaching this course at Wharton and I am curious about how this shows up differently at different phases of life and how this ties in with the thinking around human development, so just to maybe pick three prototypes let's say somebody who is at B school being prototype 1, somebody maybe around mid-30s to mid-40s let's call it midlife as 2 and somebody who is around retirement is three do you see any big themes in terms of the nature of things that show up at each of these inflection points.

SF: With students MBA students for example people in their mid-20s early 30s, the questions that are most pronounced and issues that they are most commonly struggling with have to do with having the courage to articulate what they want in their lives and to free themselves from the constraints of social expectations, pressures and to really tap into with what they feel good about have some talent for and what their real values are? And understanding what those are and becoming more conscious and more aware and wrestling with those questions, finding a direction that is meaningful so that's what most pronounced at that stage, for the people who are 10 15 years older than them and I teach them as well in our executive MBA program both in Philadelphia and in California where we have a campus in San Francisco. It's different because here you have people who are, many of them are in executive roles they have families, many of them are also responsible for aging parents they still have a lot of ambition but they also are more humble because they have been around and they have seen and experienced frustration, disappointments and they have better sense of their limits but also the better knowledge of what it is really important for them and that's really the sweet spot of the market, if you might put it that way for this kind of content and in deep program by now it's initially born 20 years ago at Ford as design from mid-career high potentials which is these folks are. So there it's how you be the father you want to be the mother you wanted to be the spouse you wanted to be and you know the citizen you wanted to be well advancing your professional goals the questions of how you maintain and you really invest in the really important relationships in your life become more pronounced. With advanced pressures and responsibilities, they are also with greater assets and support and confidence.

DJ: May be if I may add I guess by that time given that you have worked for 10 15 years you also have as you said more realistic data on what you enjoy what you don't what gives you energy, where the skills are so I guess that gives you meaningful data to work with at that stage.

SF: Absolutely, you are clear about what you care about and what you are good at so that's less of the struggle. It's more about how do you lead in such a way that other people are benefiting from what you are doing including your children, including your friends, your society. At the later stages in life the question that are most prominent have more to do with how I can be cultivating the next

generation as keepers of the flame, as the people who are going to succeed me and that is the most pronounced question for the people in say their 60s and beyond is what can I be doing how can I be making the most of my remaining time in terms of ensuring that I have done everything that I can to bolster the prospects of those who follow me.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is your host Deepak Jayaraman. Of the three situations Stew talks about the middle one is an area of specific interest for me; possibly because of my stage of life given I am in my early 40s. When I reflect on my coaching work or conversations with some of my clients, friends, past colleagues at McKinsey and EgonZehnder, I find that this is a time where three things often come together (kids often need the most attention, parents are aging and often need help and career is often at its busiest. This is the power play phase where everything comes together and people are galloping in their career). This perfect storm across three dimensions can be tremendously unsettling. I had written a longish thought piece on my take on this phenomenon and how people could grapple with this phase. If you would like to read it, you can visit [bit.ly/Navigating Midlife](https://bit.ly/NavigatingMidlife) (the N of Navigating, the M of Mid and the L of life is upper case). You can also see the Nugget context for this on the website and it has the hyperlink to this.

If you find the podcast of value, do take a moment to rate and review on iTunes. It will help others discover it.

Now let's get back to the conversation with Stew Friedman.

DJ: What are the big shifts in your thinking around work life integration, what has changed over the past 35 years?

SF: So, let me tell you what hasn't changed is that the principles are being real being hobby ... reflecting from what you learnt from trying, experiments that are designed to make things better with the people who matters most to you in the different parts of your life and to be more aligned with your values in terms of where you invest your attention that has become even more important to more people and to be reflecting on what you learnt from consciously, deliberately, intentionally trying to create meaningful change in your world, where you learn about leadership and about creating change that's sustainable because it works not just for you, not just for your business, not just for your family, not just for your community but for all the different stake holders in your life that has become increasingly important to more people men and women but in the digital age, in the early stages which is still young a lot has changed and so there is the much greater need, hunger, crying, pain for people to learn how to manage the boundaries between work and the other points of life because it is so hard now with the ubiquity of the information avail with our smartphones and all the digital devices to shut it off so there are many more people doing experiments in the type that I call focus and concentrate where the goal of the experiment is to try to do one thing at a time or focus on one person at a time, to bound your attention to one thing there are a lot more people doing those kinds of experiments now and seeing the benefits during that. So, with the power the remarkable power of digital communication making so many things more efficient, it also come at some cost which am sure, you have thought a lot about probably talked a lot about here, and what I see with my clients or my students is that this is a major issue that they are wrestling with how to deal with how do we develop the psychological tools, the social tools that enable us to use this technological tools in a way that advances the human prospect without undermining it or destroying

it, there is a risk of that. There shifts including and especially the role of man and women in society which is radically changed over this last few decades.

DJ: You also talk about the notion of psychology interference to your point across the four domains and you say that comes in the way of people being effective in each of the domains I found the term quite interesting, could you talk to us a little bit about what you mean by that? And how it impacts our effectiveness each of their domains?

SF: We all wrestle with psychological interference across the different purviews, it simply means, you are with your child worrying about a problem at work or a person at work is cause you difficulty she is looking right at you maybe you are having dinner or maybe watching her playing with sand box or to a puzzle or something but your mind is not there you are somewhere else and that psychological interference that's when your mind is somewhere other than where your body is and your thoughts are interfering with your being present and that causes all kinds of difficulties. Especially for kids because they will pick it up, they will pick it up and I had done research on this, looking specifically at children's mental health and how it affected by their parent's experiences with work and their values about work and in one of our findings in that study, just issued a piece out that probably our digital icon at HBR I have heard about this what are our finding, that is try to summarise and that is that when parents especially fathers are thinking about work, there is interference between work and family their children have poor mental health as a result so it's a really important concept and it's one that we can do something about, you can change that it takes efforts, you have got to care about it, you have to know that it's an issue which is why this stake holders dialogues that we have people do are so crucial because they really do send a wake-up call to many people where you have conversations with say your children and ask here is what I think is important to you, do I have it right? And they are going to tell you what I really need from you is for you to pay attention to me that's really common.

DJ: You talk about, in stake holder dialogue you say that expectations are often stated as positions and not as interest; I found that quite thought provoking could you expand on that a little bit?

SF: Well, putting this part in the program together we borrowed heavily from modern negotiations theory and that's where this notion comes from. So, if you read the great Roger Fischer and Bill Yury (Getting to Yes) which is one of the fundamental work in their field you learn about special positions now at interest the base criteria there is what you want to find out from people as you trying to discover new ways of doing things that are good for both of you or agreements that are and going to work for both of you win wins you have got to get passed the positioning to the underlying interest so what you really care about? Well, I want to be ... more, ok! But what's really important for you? Well, I needed you to be around more, ok! Why is it important to you? So that I know you care about me, that I know you love me. Then you have my interest in mind and then you are going to do everything you can to protect me and to nurture me. Oh OK! Well, let's talk about the different ways then I can make that happen even when I am not here. So, he starts to talk about all kinds of creative possibilities, instead of arguing over when you are home, it's not too much about when you are home it's about where your heart is? And where your mind is? When you are with people who matter most and this goes off course for people that work and in the community as well and so another thing that we found is says not so much seem out of the time that parents spend with their kids that affects their mental health, their emotional health it's the quality of that time. Am I present? And for moms, especially for mothers it was a matter of again not the amount of time they spend with their children and in fact the more time that mothers spent on their own self-care the better of their children were in terms of their mental health and that of course is because when you take care of yourself as a mother you better able to take your kids when you need to.

DJ: It goes back to the spill-over over point, right?

SF: Exactly, the relationship among the different parts and especially taking care of themselves, so one of the common trends over the years I see this in just a that every group is that people rate, I ask them to rate their satisfaction with their lives their sense of wellbeing in the four domains of work, home, community, and self and the self is rated lowest in four groups because it's just easiest to let yourself down but once you started digging and realise that if you not care for yourself you really can't perform well in other wars that you have that's when you start to realise that you got to take care of yourself in order to be a better leader at work, a better father, a better friend.

DJ: That's a great insight, rather than treating it as a residual variable you start solving for it. You also talk about the art of interruptibility as a key capability for the leader of today; again I found the term quite intriguing talk to us about the nuance here.

SF: That is the term my friend and colleague Joel Deluca came up with to describe the ability to shift attention in a way that allowed you to be intentional and focused on now I am going to move my attention from this conversation to this piece of work or this activity to just be intentional about how you get to move from doing one task or one conversation to other. It's a skill and so to be interruptible, the art of interruptibility is about really just that knowing how to interrupt yourself, interrupt exchanges that are occurring in a way that is a graceful and considerate and minimises the of moving from one task to another because there is a cost in terms of residual brain processing your mind just doesn't go immediately from one thing to another without they are being transfer of attention has a cost to your brain so training to do that well is what the art of interruptibility about.

DJ: You also talk about being artfully political while managing multiple boundaries talk to us about how this plays out in the way we manage the boundaries?

SF: Well so, Joel DeLuca is a really smart guy and he wrote a wonderful book called Political Savvy - Leadership behind the scenes and I have learned a ton from that book and so some of these ideas into leadership on a chapter that's about moving your idea forward in the real world so after you done some self-analysis and thinking about articulating your values your leadership vision after you have identified the key people in your life and talked about your mutual expectations and gotten of better understanding of all those social forces swirling about and you have got a clearer picture of what you need to do to better align who you are with what you do and who you surround yourself with and how you serve them? Well then you've got to make change that's the innovative part the creativity part ... and there's going to be resistance whenever you try to change something so when you are trying to make change happen to look at teaches so well in his wonderful book you have got to of course serve the interest of the people around you so that means to be artfully political is just that know what the real interest of the people around you are and to do everything you can to adjust your plans so I have my students they develop a game plan and a score card for change that they have decided and experiment that takes place over a month or two in pursuit of a four way win and as soon as they try it they realise well this isn't working because I forgot to think about how my boss was going to react or my colleague or my client or my wife or my kids and they have a stake in it so I am trying to create time and attention for me to say take care of myself, maybe go for a bicycle with my children on weekends, connect with them and be healthier with all the benefits might come from that, let me try that and then you realise you thought you were going for bike ride with your daughter any morning and she is busy and doesn't want to do that.

DJ: She often has a busier calendar than I do.

SF: So to the artfully political simply means to be conscious of the interests of the people as you trying to get them to support you, when you are trying to do something new and that's a big insight for people for many of the participants, it seemed simple and straight forward but it's a really important one. And the good news in that is that you can be smarter about what the interest of others are and that's one of the main insights people took from this program and that's why it's really about leadership, creating change and bringing this along with you as you as you are doing it.

DJ: What are the two three areas where you see coaches adding disproportionate value and what I mean by that is what are the steps which are often harder to do as an individual.

SF: There's couple of different kinds of coaching experiences that I try to create for people for name on though and there was an appendix in the Total Leadership that takes you through the process for the name method is peer to peer. So, what I am trying to do wherever I go whether I am speaking to two thousand people and like I said in New York or its 12 people sitting in a conference room, leadership team at a bank in ... or anything and everything in between always keen to create learning community where people are committed to being compassionate caring, curious, candid and where they are helping each other and then take seriously responsibility to be useful coaches for their peers and the key elements of how to do that are not that complicated and almost everyone can do it and they start doing it and feel comfortable doing it and that is demonstrate interest through genuine curiosity about what's inside the other person and really the main thing you got to do is just pay attention and ask questions without judgment and we find that when you put people in peer to peer coaching pairs or trios or quartets and you have them say tell the story of the critical episodes of their life history or talk about why the people that they chose are most important in their lives, at work, at home, in the community why that's going to be important? Or what they discovering through their stake holder dialogues what is difficult to say there, they saying and trying to get their experiment going because they are afraid to try something new because they might fail. When you put people in a coaching experience peer to peer especially you build accountability and you build support where it works well and those are the two key forces that really help people under path the change and intentional change and you need that. We also work with professional coaches to supplement the peer to peer coaching and that's another powerful means of gaining another perspective, being held accountable and really being compelled to articulate your observations your reflections your ideas your fears. So that you are going to stand in better, this coaching from many different angles as you can afford given the time and cost it always helps.

DJ: How people should think about where to play? When people come into your program, how should people think about flexing the boundaries within the current canvas versus looking for a new canvas?

SF: Well, I think your approach to working the canvas that you have currently got in front of you to its limit is the smart approach. The theory of small wins is an important concept that is underlying the design of this total leadership method and this theory of small wins is really very simple, you are a lot more done when you take small steps in the direction that you chose, because it's easier to take small steps than big leaps there's less risk and you are going to go an because you take one step and you realise maybe I need to just low... may direction in this way so that I can get to where I want to go and bring this along with me you learn more you develop confidence, small steps at a time so incremental change towards the big idea and many people think well, my work situation is terrible I got to get out of here, I am miserable and instead of thinking well, other ways for me to make some experiments some small experiment that might create a different approach, a different feeling, if sets it myself in this role with a less radical less risky adjustments and so trying those first is generally a wiser approach because it costs less and you learn more faster.

DJ: I guess once you tried whatever you could try and you hit the limits and then maybe it's time to move to the different question but point well taken.

SF: And Herminia Ibarra has done great work on this especially in her book *Working Identity* when she studied career changers and this is essentially what she found. It's wiser to take small steps in it not radically familiar environment but in the moment you know and see which you can do the craft your job, change your experience or another parts of your life in ways that are better aligned with what you care about and what you get up.

DJ: In Summary what would you like to tell our listeners about how to playing to potential.

SF: I think that's a wonderful title and I think it's an important aspiration for all of us at different stages of your life, what that potential is going to be of course it's going to change over time but I think the fundamental insight related to that that I developed in my work is that your potential is not limitless and to focus your investment of where you going to play what game you are going to play on something that you care about deeply and that you have some talent for but you are caring deeply about what it is that you are about the game that you are playing is fundamental and that's why the leadership, aspirations that we have they start an end with your values and your vision of the world that you are trying to create so I would urge your listeners to try to have the courage to reflect on the legacy they want to leave with their lives and to be doing everything they can to just to focus their efforts on investments of their time and talent on those arenas of action where they get to play the game they want to be playing.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Three things struck me in this conversation:

a) First - I couldn't help noticing a Meta theme in Stew's journey. Even before he had started the Work-life Integration project at Wharton, he had started integrated the various domains of his life by talking about some of the elements around family and community in the Wharton classroom when his child was born back in late 1980s

b) Second – I see most people around me often solving this as a two piece puzzle where they think about work and home and try to optimize for that. But noticing that you need to solve for yourself (physical, mental and spiritual health) to be effective in the other domains is a key insight for me. And I really like the notion of four way wins and taking on an experimenter's mind-set as we go about our life. In a way some of these themes came up in my previous conversation with Rd. Guha who spoke about the various experiments that Gandhiji conducted as he went about his life. So, the piece around having an experimenting mind-set was a valuable insight for me.

c) The third piece that really struck me was that this is not a solo-exercise but something that needs to be solved in the context of your life and by involving all the key stakeholders and by engaging with them. Very often, people seclude themselves to create the mind-space for reflection but I guess one need to be mindful about how we engage the key constituents of our life and move forward. If you want to know more about this, you might like my conversation with Arun Maira (former Chairman of BCG India and a Former Member of the Planning Commission India). He spoke at length about how Systems Thinking can help us navigate these situations.

Thank you for listening. I hope you found the conversation as purposeful as I did. If you found it of value, do take a moment and leave a review on iTunes and share it with people that you think could

benefit from this. I look forward to having you at one of my subsequent conversations at the Podcast. Signing off this is Deepak Jayaraman. To know more about the Leadership Advisory work I do, please visit the ABOUT section of playtopotential.com Bye now.

End of transcription

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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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