



Guest

Dan Cable is Professor of Organisational Behaviour at London Business School. Dan's research and teaching focus on employee engagement, change, organizational culture, leadership mindset, and the linkage between brands and employee behaviors. Dan was selected for the 2018 Thinkers50 Radar List, The Academy of Management has twice honored Dan with "Best article" awards, and The Academy of Management Perspectives ranked Dan in the "Top 25 most influential management scholars."

In our conversation, we spoke about his journey including a cancer diagnosis which led him to examine his life and make pivotal choices. We go deep into his book "Exceptional" where he speaks about how we all can unlock our "best self" by using the highlights reel, a concept that we are familiar with in the realm of sports. Gathering and reflecting on our highlights reel could open up new possibilities that can help us play to our potential.

Context to the conversation

Welcome to the 75th conversation at the Play to Potential Podcast. I am your host Deepak Jayaraman. This podcast is a labour of love for the long term where I have conversations with leading practitioners, thinkers, authors, artists, sportsmen and other leading professionals to decode insights around leadership, transitions and careers.

When I am not podcasting, I am working with leaders as a Trusted Sounding Board helping leaders and organizations play to their unique potential. To know more about what is in the podcast archives and the advisory work I do, you could just visit www.playtopotential.com.

We have an exciting update at the podcast. Several listeners have told us that we should be sharing some of the nuggets from the archives given we have 750 odd nuggets in the library and we continue to build on it. We have started doing that through whatsapp where we share a couple of nuggets a week. If you wish to receive these, do note the number +91 85914 52129, add that number to your contacts and send us a whatsapp message stating Interested. We will add you to the list. I repeat the number is +91 85914 52129.

My guest this time is Dan Cable, Professor of Organizational Behaviour at London Business School. He is the author of the book Exceptional – Build your personal highlight reel and unlock your potential. Dan says that just like we see highlights of sports games that provide us the best moments from the matches, there is an opportunity for each one of us to construct with the help of others, a personal highlights reel and that could help each one of us unlock our unique potential. His research is smack in the sweet spot of the kinds of things we are curious about at the podcast. Before diving into his work, we spoke about how he used a cancer diagnosis and a near brush with death to prioritize what mattered to him and moved forward in his life.

Without further ado, let's dive into the conversation with Dan Cable.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Dan, excited to have you at the Play to Potential Podcast. Thank you so much for taking the time.

Dan Cable (JG): Thanks a lot for having me. This will be fun.

DJ: And maybe just to kick things off, where are you today and how has your day been so far?

DC: I am here in London. I would say pretty good, I mean it is sunny. I am looking outside right now and I am seeing blue sky, so I guess I am smiling.

DJ: We could do with a little bit of cheer in these times, so it is great to hear that. Dan, also excited to talk to an LBS professor, having spent some time a decade plus back at London Business School. This podcast in a way I talk to people about their journeys and the three, let us say, words I am sort of loyal to in the podcast are Leadership, Transitions and Careers. And when I came across your book Exceptional, I was truly intrigued because in a way, especially when I am dealing with people at a transition point, the key question is, how do we really take stock of their strengths and help them navigate and create possibilities for the future. But before we dive into the book, Dan, I would love to know a little bit about your journey. Could you talk a little bit about your journey and what you do at LBS and maybe, a little bit of arc of your curiosity that led you to the book Exceptional.

DC: Yeah, absolutely. The two major things in terms of my journey were having a family that did not go to university, meaning my mom, dad, but also my older brother and uncles, nobody went, and I got a chance to go. You know, it is funny. I probably was not even there a year when I pretty much knew I wanted to be a professor. So like step one in my journey was at age 18-19 years old, just kind of falling for science and learning and teaching. So I think that is like step one for me. And then, it took a long time obviously to get my degree and get a masters and get a PhD, blah blah blah. But then I did get a job like a management professor down at Georgia Tech in Atlanta, Georgia. And then some things happened in between there and the sort of next big thing for me, but that is like huge thing where I actually wrote about it in the book quite a bit. It was when I got cancer, I got a stage 4 lymphoma and that woke me up. And it did not kill me, so again made me stronger I do not know. But I would say that actually was the second most important thing in a way because it helped me reconfigure my world. That is when I moved to London but more importantly, that is when I started, I might say, playing to my own strengths. And that might be something we talk about because that sounds like it is aligned with what you are trying to deliver readers. So I could say anything else, I do not want to go on and on, but I mean those are two really deep pieces of information about my trajectory.

DJ: Absolutely, Dan. If I talk about my journey, 2008, my father was diagnosed with late stage cancer when I was in the US and in a way, those six months, dealing with his terminal cancer in his case, he passed away in a few months, really changed a lot of things for me. Can you take us back to that moment when you got that diagnosis of stage 4 cancer and maybe walk us through that passage of play and how that changed things for you?

DC: Yeah, you know what is so interesting is, it is probably really pretty ways to say this but the way it felt to me was death as an idea stopped being an idea and started being something that would affect me and that was profound. I almost cannot say how profound it was because it went from being like a concept that was going to happen to other people to something that might affect me in

the next three to five months. And boy, that really changed the nature of the conversation in my brain. And I could say in a good way I never recovered from that and I never want to. You know, it is almost like, it became much more critical to align like what made me happy and what made me joyful and what felt purposeful, that became much more important to align that now. For example, one tiny example of this would be, I always knew I wanted to live outside the US but nobody in my family even had passport. You know, we were just like lower-middle-class, nobody even thought about leaving the country. And I knew I wanted to but just never did, and so pretty much. If we take it forward six months as soon as the doctor said all clear, I started trying to move to England. So it just kind of precipitated more purposeful living I would say.

DJ: And maybe picking up from that phase of life, Dan, to today, if you could talk a little bit about what you have been curious about and maybe give us a little bit of a context to why you wrote the book.

DC: Mmm, absolutely. That is a good one. I will take one step back and then I will move it forward. When I was at the University of North Carolina, and I was there about 13 years, I was fairly skeptical about the field called positive psychology. I was trained as an industrial psychologist, which was considerably more, I would not say cynical, but I would say, practical, that is probably the best word, very practical, like how do you hire the best people and how do you do selection testing, how do you do validation of hiring tools, you know, quite practical businessy kind of things. And then, positive psychology put its head up, it just seemed a little too good to be true. You know, it just seemed to, you know a lot of it seemed a little namby-pamby, kind of like, oh, come on, cannot be that simple. And so I kind of did not give it the time a day and something that happened was after the cancer, I started putting a lot more emphasis on it and started thinking harder about like what if it were true and what if my job could entail giving people more life. I mean I think that is way too broad and way too generous, but like, just the idea of my job as a professor being a platform for putting more living in the life and it was just an idea that I really wanted to pursue. Anyway, long story short is I truly dedicated myself to this concept of best self and that included, like starting a little business, create these reports about people at their best and I skewed my teaching toward the science of positive psychology and kind of taking it as a science and not sort of something to dismiss. And so I would say, since about 2010, positive psychology in general but also best self-activation as a sort of specific piece of that and even more specific is these highlight reels that you mentioned, that is a specific way to activate your best self, I would say that that stream of research and science has kind of consumed me. And I have got to tell you, Deepak, it is just now that I am starting to get that work published in the best journals, you know, it took a long time. Like what was not very hard, was to start doing research on how a company could use, best self-activation in the context of socializing new hires. I published something back in like, 2013 on that. And then it also was not too hard to publish something on how, if you allow people to create their job titles around their strengths, you could get more out of people and that also was published. But the most recent things that are just getting accepted now are the ones showing that the highlight reel improves team performance and improves each employee's ability to bring their best self to the team.

DJ: Fascinating. And if I may take you back actually, Dan, one of the earlier guests of the podcast who was a gentleman called Bruce Feiler who studied transitions across thousands of people, and he uses a term Lifequakes to talk about how people encounter these situations and how we use that as an opportunity to make meaning, with the wisdom of hindsight, if you go back to your days of making meaning out of being diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and recovering from it, what is the advice you would give for people who deal with these Lifequakes, having lived through a similar experience, what is something that you have learnt with the benefit of hindsight?

DC: Right. Well, the first thing I would say, which is the most honest thing is, I think these topics are so idiosyncratic that anything that I would say would probably be taken with a grain of salt because I just think that it can really come off as, I would say, disingenuous in a way to think that one person could give somebody else advice on this stuff. And here is another way of saying it, I, in my own life, have realized some post-traumatic growth, meaning I was fortunate enough through a lot of different reasons that when I came out of this thing, not dead, I was able to convert that suffering and that deep existential angst, somehow I was able to convert that into a more meaningful existence with much greater joy, blah blah blah. I am sure you have heard this story a hundred times, but maybe what we have not heard is the thousand times when people are not able to do that, where, for example, they end up suffering in a way physically where they just were not able to rebound and that has always gotten them down from then on, or maybe, it took away their faith in a religion, you know, it took away their faith that God would do this to them. So I would never want to act like, oh yeah, just do these three steps. So with that said, you know, I think what I can say is in my own sort of journey through it is, it just opened up the idea for me that it is not a dress rehearsal, it is going to death that is, it is going to happen pretty soon, you know, certainly I am more than halfway done, I am probably three quarters of the way done and it just sort of emphasizes that you do not have forever to ignore death. And in the book, I actually call that Transience Aversion. It is the idea that, as a society I think, and I will say in the US society more than others I believe, we are really afraid of talking about death, we are really afraid of bringing death to the forefront. We kind of act like it is a dirty topic, like defecating or like, you know, it is one of the things that everybody has to do but we do not say much about it because it makes us like the other animals. And we like to think we are very special animal I think. And I think that that is a bit of a curse. And for me, I will just speak for me, getting rid of that transience aversion and just acknowledging that I would not be here much longer was so liberating and it was so energizing. And for me, that was quite a discovery, you know, that was not something I was expecting.

DJ: Got it. And back to work, Dan, in the context of the book *Exceptional*, maybe if I could ask a provocative question, right, I think there is a lot being said about build on your strengths, right, do not over sweat the weakness but double down on your strengths. In what ways is your work, you know, talk to us about the nuance that you are bringing to the discussion here.

DC: Sure. The first thing I would like to say just to kind of put it out there is, it still does mostly have to do with playing to your strengths and doubling down on your strengths. I mean, I am going to say some things that I do think add quite a bit, but it is nothing really new under the sun and I would say that it plays on that theme pretty much primarily, you know, if I am honest, one of the biggest difference is and perhaps, the biggest difference is, how you learn about your strengths, has been a real interesting journey for me. I think that a lot of people think they know their strengths, but my research suggests that we often do not. We have ideas about what we think we are best at but a lot of times, we forget that our strengths are not what we are best at it. It is more the intersection of what we are good at doing and what we love doing. But it also has a real important element of how we make an impact. And so, if you start to think about that as a Venn diagram, you might know what you are good at, you might know what you like but oftentimes, we do not know what affects other people the most. You could call that your impact or you could call that kind of like, it is good calling your purpose, you know like, what you are sort of doing for the world and for other people. And one thing that we have been finding is self-reflection often does not yield that. By the way, so I did not invent any of this but at the University of Michigan, there were some, I would call them my heroes, frankly, but these would be people like Dutton, and this would be like Laura Morgan Roberts, and this would be a Gretchen Spitzer, Bob Quinn, these people, you know, this was 15 years ago, they started writing in an abstract conceptual way about how, if you want to know your impact, you should ask the people that you impact. And that concept of a reflection of your best self was really

intriguing to me 15 years ago. Well, they and many people in the field did not do empirical research on that. And so that is the sort of bucket that I picked up and ran with is, we really should work on that, we really should understand if that is even true. And so anyway, over the last 10 years, I feel like I have learned a lot about how surprised people are when they get one of these highlights reels. And basically what that is, it is memories and stories from family, from friends, from colleagues, from mentors, it is people that have watched you over the years, even over the decades. And then they write a story that is their memory of a time you have done something exceptional, that is name of a book, that is why that book is called Exceptional, there are times when you have had an extraordinary impact and here is my memory of you doing that. I just cannot tell you, number one, how powerful and emotional that is to read it from other people, as opposed to just self-reflecting, so that is one thing. I think a second thing I will put out there is, just the vast amount of new insights that you can get, because a lot of things that people remember for 15 years, 20 years, and they write down in a lot of detail you might not even think of as a big deal. You might think oh no, that is just easy, that is what anybody would do. And if you have seven, eight, nine people writing different stories but around that same theme but you yourself just do not think that is a big deal, that highlight reel starts to unveil ways of you becoming exceptional and I call them high leverage moves. It is just a way that you can do a little more in area and create a much bigger impact but you would not do it because you kind of downplay, you think anybody would do it.

DJ: And there may be a couple of questions just to understand this a little better, Dan. One is, are we asking the question when have I been exceptional or are we asking the question when have I done something exceptional to you, something that made a difference to you, that is sort of question number one, and second is, how do we think about who to ask, how narrow or how wide should the catchment radius be.

DC: Hmm. Yeah, let us start with this, like I mean. So in terms of who, I just try to get people to go with as many people as they can who know them quite well. So usually, I recommend one or two people you have met in the last couple of years, you know, who know that newest version of you so often that is work colleagues and new friends. Then I ask for people that have known you a long time. So this is going back perhaps in the childhood. In my own for example, I had a high school buddy, I had a junior high school buddy, I obviously had a parent, I had people from university, so, you know, that would be 18 to 22 and then I had a mentor, so an old, well, professor but somebody that kind of helped me through my career. So diversity of people, so work, non-work, family, non-family, that sort of thing and newer people that just have known you a little while and people that have known you a long while, that is the sort of. You really cannot go wrong. To be honest, you are not going to get that wrong other than asking to few people.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is your host Deepak Jayaraman here. I have come to realize that we sometimes don't appreciate enough how we come across to the people around us and how we touch their lives. The best way to get to that is to ask them! I also realize that we cannot meditate our way out of this by going to a Vipassana camp. The vectors of internal and external self-awareness are often orthogonal. One of my earlier guests, Tasha Eurich (TE), an expert in the area of Self-Awareness speaks about this notion.

TE: *"Several awareness is made up of two type of self-knowledge. The first is something we named internal self-awareness which essentially knows who we are on the inside. What do we value? What are we passionate about? What are our aspirations? What are the pattern of behaviour that we exhibit across situation but equally important is something called external self-awareness and in a*

nutshell what that means is knowing how other people see us and what was fascinating at least to me in our research was that we found that those two types of self-knowledge which are required for us to really be self-aware but they are not related to each other which I was kind of surprised by I was thought you know if somebody kind of knows you they are from the inside of course they would do the work and find out how they were seen on the outside and vice versa. But we discover that they are you sort have to think about the... independent skill set within the self-awareness area."

DJ: In the work I do, I have started realizing the value of speaking to people beyond the immediate work colleagues. The question I often ask them is How 360 is your 360? Let's now get back to Dan Cable

DJ: I wanted to pick up on one of the things you said, right, you spoke about transience aversion, in the book, you also talk about eulogy delay as two things that come in the way of us leveraging the power of this, could you talk to us a little bit about the eulogy delay please?

DC: Absolutely, the eulogy delay, so what a eulogy is, it is that thing that we seem to do, lots of cultures do it actually, where you wait till somebody dies and then you say what you appreciate about them. And usually, that is a very somber moment, there is a lot of tears and they cannot hear you, ironically. And that is ironic, that is interesting that we, not every culture but most cultures kind of wait until the people cannot hear you to say that. And that delay reveals something interesting about our society that we do not feel comfortable, or another way to say this, we have made it uncomfortable to share that. And what my research is showing is that people are very reluctant for that reason to do the highlight reel. You know, I do it in all my classes and I have done it, I guess we have done that for 14,000 people now. You know, it is something that I know quite a lot about. And I can tell you that most people on the front end just have that aversion. They have that sort of like, oh, that is weird and guess what, it is, it is strange, we do not do it but that does not make it wrong. You are not going to randomly do a highlight reel because it involves stepping outside your comfort zone and asking people for their memories of you. I mean I hope that the listeners would give it a go but just to reinforce it if you do not want to read the book, there is a lot of science suggesting. And I mean like University of Chicago published in one of our best journals Psychological Science showing that not only do the letter writers enjoy writing that, meaning their heart gets bigger and they feel a lot of warmth and love while they are writing those memories but there is research that shows that it improves your own life and it improves the relationship. And so, you know, after all this research, and I mean I have done I guess six studies on this now but there is probably 20 studies out there now, there is no downside other than that weird awkwardness. And, you know Deepak, I liken it to an optical illusion where, when you look at an optical illusion, you often see that like straight lines look wavy and then you hold up a ruler to them and they are straight, they are parallel, there is complete, but your mind fools you in the thinking they are not straight, and that that is what happens with this stuff. It is like because we have these sort of cultural oddities, you know, the cultural decisions we have made, it feel like it is going to be really weird to ask and that is just too much. But then after 14,000 people have done it, like 97 percent of them, and I mean literally almost every person says, I just wish I had asked more people, I just wish I had done this earlier in my life, you know, I cannot believe we are not doing this as a species. And you have to be on that side of you, you have to hold up the ruler, you have to check the science to see that that is an optical illusion, it is holding me back from my potential.

DJ: Fascinating. And in the book in a related context, you talk about the power of visualization as well, right, and you refer to the golfer Jack Nicklaus and you sort of say that he was able to recreate a successful experience in his mind before he played a shot, talk to us a little bit about the parallel

you see between a sportsman or a sportsperson rather sort of using the power of visualization to deliver that perfect shot versus, you know, us using the highlight reel to visualize yourself.

DC: There is two important ideas here. So the first really important idea is our brain gets stronger when we practice and that is just the notion of neuroplasticity, which, at this point, I think is a fact. In the book, I try to go to some of it, but it appears for example that when taxi drivers in London have to get the knowledge, their actual physical brain changes to allow that many streets to get into their brain. And that is really interesting and it is powerful and it is really important that we remember that the brain is just a muscle. And sometimes it does not seem like that but the fact is the brain is just a muscle. And when you use it, it gets stronger. So that is a really important point. So you asked me a really good question, which is to kind of talk about the similarities and the differences between visualization and the highlight reel. Okay, so let us talk about how it is different and how it is the same. One way that it clearly is different is, unlike athletes, we do not usually actually create films of our best moves. You know, we are not able to look at that perfect golf swing or that perfect kick where the ball just went into the net and over the goalie's head. So what we have to rely on instead are people's memories of how we made them feel, how we solved a problem, what unique value we brought to the party. So that is one really important difference because that means we are dealing more with memories and words and less with, you know, video recorded. I think that is where it is putting out there, I know that is a big difference, but a big similarity is, trying to make yourself at your best salient. So I recently did one of these podcasts with a coach who worked with gold medalists and silver medalists at Olympic levels. He worked with some of the premier athletes in the world. And he says, what is so interesting is when we are on the outside of that, we look at those as the gold standard and we think oh, they must be so confident. He said in reality, they suffer an imposter syndrome just like we do because they too get there and think, I do not belong here, I am not this good, and I am going to blow it. And what they do is they have to make salient the times that they were that good. They have to really bring forward in their brain, almost as a confidence boost and also is a way of practicing this is what you are capable of. So it allows them to access that more immediately, more readily and so actually, wow, that is really an exciting point actually for me, we have just got to the most important element. This is not wishful thinking. This is not hoping of what I might achieve one day if I just wish hard. This is saying there have been times in my life when I have created an exceptional impact on other people. The question is how I can get there more often. It is not saying 24 hours a day. It does not even say seven days a week. It is just saying I am capable of that impact. I know it because these 20 people have written me memories of times I have done that for them. I can do that more often with intentionality and I think right there, there is so many more things I could say about it of course. I actually think that right there should help even the, okay, when I was a cynic that is one of the reasons why. I thought it was just wishful thinking. And what I have come to learn is, the neuroplasticity of the brain says, what leaps into your brain about who you are. And if we can train the brain to dish up memories of what you are capable of, you are more likely to do that more often.

DJ: Fascinating. I want to link it to one of the things that I discussed with a fellow London Business School faculty member, Herminia Ibarra, she talks about this notion of liminality when it comes to our identity, especially when we are in transitions, can you talk a little bit about how we could take advantage of the highlights reel to help us get a better grip on our Identity or identities, if you will, any nuance there?

DC: Absolutely. Yeah, the first thing I want to do is I want to point out, I am going to call it an area of confusion for me but then, I will point to where I think my own research and my own teaching is going, okay. Herminia talks about this authenticity paradox, which is a beautiful concept that she is known for, which is a lot of times when we start doing something new, it feels awkward and like it is not authentic. And then that holds us back from becoming great. It holds us back from changing into

a bigger, better, more impactful identity because we are handcuffed to what we used to be. Now when we talk about playing your strengths and you have had good discussions with Herminia about this, what sometimes people think is, oh, playing your strengths just means like kind of mailing it in, like almost hanging out with what you are already good at. And therefore, you know, you are kind of like holding yourself back and what I am talking more about is stretching into your strengths. What I am really interested in when you talk about the liminality, so the liminality idea would be neither betwixt and between for a little while we have to just play, we are not our new person yet, we have to play our way into that. And the way I am thinking about that is thinking hard about what unique strengths we have to make an impact and then asking the question, how can I grow that impact, how can I use the strengths and abilities that I have to make an even bigger effect on the world, a more positive impact on other people. And I have to tell you, that is what drags us positively into new strengths. See, in my own opinion, when we play to our strengths, it is energizing, our strengths strengthen us. When we use our strengths, we feel strengthened. And so that is quite, it gives you a resilience and it makes you robust. And so when we can keep playing our strengths in a new area, it does not go perfect at first but it is energizing to try, whereas when we try to shore up our limitations and kind of improve what we are not good at, it actually can be very detracting. It can even burn people out if you do it sort of too much. If you are overfocused on your weaknesses and trying to become average, it actually can wear us out, year in and year out. And so I think that in that long-winded answer I tried to give there, there are these little nuggets of not continuing to do exactly the behavior you have done in the past but to use your strengths to improve your impact. I think that that is sort of my best answer forward on this issue. But I am really happy for you to challenge or, push because this is an area that, I would still say, it has some elements of confusion for me.

DJ: You clearly have spent a lot more time studying this than I have but the way I see it, Dan, I think strengths are a little bit around the what domain, what are the situations where you make an impact. Identity is a little bit of who am I kind of a plane. So I was wondering if this exercise of the highlights reel can throw light on the who am I plane, especially lot of my work is with leaders around midlife, right. Now of course, we are moving away from the midlife to the anytime life crisis given the paradigm of careers these days but that is where I was coming from. But you are right, there is no clean answer. I guess what I take away from you is the highlights reel tells us where we are distinctive in terms of when we use our strengths to make a big difference to the people around us and then we play with it to discover who we are and move forward possibly. Does that make sense?

DC: Hmm, it does. And some of the things right in between there too and that is where I am really happy to allow the confusion, you know, because life is not clear and identity definitely is not clear. And I think that these are very cloudy concepts in some ways. Easy, maybe, for an academic to define but maybe, not always so easy to see it as a differentiation in real life. So one thing that is really, whatever words we use I am not sure but I will say one thing that I have been really happy to do for people when we create these highlight reels is, certain things jump off the page to people and they capture people in almost an emotional way, beyond the words, beyond the concepts, beyond, sort of, the cognitive consideration, almost like that makes my heart sing or seeing that I have had that impact on those people calls to me, or when I think back to those moments, it make me feel more alive. I think that we are very complex machines, us humans, and sometimes as an academic, I can tend to be over cognitive but when I work with people that are actually trying to make improvements in their world using the highlight reel, let me give an example, you know, because this will really show what I mean, and I mentioned this person in the book, there was somebody that got the highlight reel. And in all of the stories from family members, and friends, and uncles, and friends from high school, curiosity and their natural insatiable asking why it came up, and they loved it

about this person. And he was always inventing things and playing and like, trying to figure things out and being curious but none of his work colleagues brought that up at all. They mentioned like punctual and efficient. And so, it is really interesting. He started thinking more about why he does not bring that to work and why does not he bring his curiosity to work. And, you know, he talked about how, he is now a partner in a consulting firm and so on, he starts meetings really abruptly and he looks to get very efficient and his wife got so crowded that efficiency became his major watchword, but really, since he was a kid, he has been one of these sort of curious investigators. So what he started doing after realizing that he was not bringing the best part of himself to work, he just started playing with that self. You know, he started, for example in a meeting, instead of diving in and being on the agenda, he would start by asking some question of somebody in there that he was genuinely curious about it, maybe like what movie you have seen recently or did you hear about this new news about, you know, blockchain or whatever it might be, just to be curious. And if he was meeting with a client, he was trying to like, you know, meet with a CEO of a firm, just being more curious about like the industry and what is the person seeing that is hot and what is not, but just being curious rather than like work efficiency kind of thing. And he said, we are number one. He said the meeting started going a lot better, that he enjoyed the more, yes, but like other people seemed to enjoy that more too and he just seemed more useful. It felt like the work became more giving but also people liked him more. People enjoy him as a human, why, because he was more authentic or because he was just being more curious and inquisitive. But the bottom line is a year later, things are going better for him and he was much happier. And it is just one of those things where he had gotten into his head a narrative that curiosity had no place in his job as a partner of the big consulting firm and, you know, numbers, numbers, numbers, revenues, sales. You know I do not know if I am even making sense to you right now because I just wanted to tell that story to reveal that as we reach these different career transitions, sometimes a good strong dose of this is who you are when your heart is singing and this is who you grew up being, you know, this is what you have been as a cohesive person, since you are like a boy or a girl. So I do not know if that is useful to you or if that is even what you wanted me, anyway, ask more questions if I can make it work for you.

DJ: No, it is a lot of sense, Dan. I hear you and I do think there are cues hidden in the way we live some of or other domains, right, in terms of how we are with our children or how we are with our friends and bring some of what makes us come alive from one domain, take that in another domain. So in a way, what you are saying also reinforces the interconnectedness of things, right. As I do my research in this field, I am realizing the value of just the interconnectedness of things, right, who we are as a parent, as a son, as a spouse, as a colleague. It is just that, you know, it is all one interconnected whole. So to your point, I do think there is a great opportunity for us to bring our best selves from one domain and bring that to bear in other domains as well. So point very well taken. In the book, you also use a term Emotional Labor at some point, you refer to Seth Godin who speaks about this as well. And you actually say it takes more energy to hide parts of ourselves than to live authentically. I found that quote quite provoking. And you also say that activating our best selves with a highlight reel increases our resilience against both social stress and sickness, could you talk a little bit about this?

DC: Yeah. Emotional labor is the idea of having to hide what is natural, what feelings are happening naturally. So a really crass example is if you are a flight attendant and one of the passengers grabbed you in a sexual way, they are sort of trained to hide that disgust and that dismay and to obviously be firm but still be positive and pleasant and that is very wearing. Now, that may be a business necessity but is very wearing. And that is a very harsh example. A less harsh example is, if we feel like we have to hide who we are at work, you know, sets a curiosity and just wear the mask as some people call it. That is not actively hiding say disgust but it is in a day out day out basis kind of sanding down our natural selves in order to become somebody that we are not really. And that can wear us

out. You know, that causes emotional labor, causes sickness because of the energy consumption. It makes us less good at our jobs. Like another example of that by the way, again, these are harsh examples but it is worth putting them out there. There is a lot of research showing a stereotype threat causes people to do a lot worse because it, like say you go to Stanford University and you are going to be electronics engineer in a class and your name is whatever, Joanne and you are one woman in a class of 72 men, maybe there is one other woman in there. But it is a classic, there is more people named John than there are women, that kind of thing. There is this thing called stereotype threat where you start to become worried of how you are being judged. And that worry becomes a form of emotional labor where you have to kind of show them what you are capable of. But you are so consumed with showing them, you are not able to actually perform as well. So there is really good research on if you can make those people feel better about themselves and their strengths, if you can affirm who they are at their best, they are able to bring more of their thinking to the table because they can be less worried, they can be less anxious. And so the study after study showing this self-affirmation allows us to overcome that stereotype threat. So anyway, there is a whole lot of research on that concept. Your second question though takes us in a slightly different direction and one that I think, maybe I know even more about because I am not really a stereotype threat researcher, although I love that domain, the thing that I have been intrigued by, and again intrigued does not mean that I know everything about it, but it does mean I have read an awful lot about it, somehow some way when we are highlighting what we are our best, it seems to activate this part of our brain, this ventral striatum. And in the book, I have a book called *Alive at Work*, I call that the seeking system after a neuroscientist named Jaak Panksepp, he called it the seeking system, there is something about highlighting our unique skills, our unique values, what makes us unique as an individual that seems to charge up this part of the brain and delivers a hit of dopamine, which is literally like an energizing neuro, it is a chemical in our brain, it is a neuro-transmitter. And that is not only energizing, meaning it is like a free drug that gives us energy, it does seem to reduce anxiety and help us deal with stress. Another way to say that is, it seems to kind of tamp that down a little bit. So that is really powerful and interesting, and I think important. In one of the studies and right now, this is at a revise and resubmit at a journal, we found that by giving people these highlight reels and then stressing them out, they were not only more able to deal with the stress, and I can tell you lot more about the specific study if you think the readers, I mean the listeners would like to hear more, so once you stress them out, they were not only able to perform better, be more creative, solve more problems but they also, we have them expectorate into a cup, which is basically spit into a cup, and then we assayed that for their ability to fight disease, their immunity. And we found that it not only caused them to perform better but it caused them to be more immune to disease. That is really powerful physical results that our body does for us when we highlight and are made aware of what we are capable of. Again, lots of confusion, it is not as though this is final and I am positive that this is the way it works but we have replicated it twice now. And there is really good evidence suggesting that something happens in our brains when we highlight what is unique and best about ourselves.

DJ: Got it. And bringing it to day-to-day life in the corporate world, Dan, anything we can learn about the art of giving good constructive feedback from the work you have done? Clearly as a manager, you need to communicate strengths. In the context of a role, you need to communicate development areas. In the context of your research around underscoring highlights and positives, what has been your reflection around what it takes to land good feedback?

DC: Yeah. And I love that last question you just asked is what I wanted to start with. The first bit of advice, which is it is so clear, it has to do with negative and positive feedback. But it is the specific memory, the specific nature of memory. If you tell somebody, for example, you are really good with kids, that is a nice thing to say, or you are very good with details, that is pleasant, that is a really nice

thing to say. It is not particularly sticky and it is not particularly energizing, it is not particularly emotional. It does not really help me relive a moment and experience. It does not help my brain light up with what it is that I do best. And the visceral emotional nature of our brain is that it loves stories, it loves a beginning, a middle and an end, it expects that, it remembers that. That is what it is sort of, like, it is responding to that. So I have this way of saying it which is catch somebody doing something right and then help them relive it. It means that if somebody, a friend, a family member but also a colleague, a boss, someone that you work with, does something really helpful, really useful, jot down a couple of things that like, number one, it is a beginning, here is the context, this is where we found ourselves in the middle, here is what you did, here is what you brought to the party, here is what you did that was unique, and then in end, here is how you helped us, here is how you made me feel, okay. If you jot that down, just a paragraph, it might take your five minutes, maximum it would take you 15 minutes, but jotting it down, and really playing through the details, and trying to help them relive it, that is what is going to have that astounding impact. And then even, in my opinion, the idea of writing it down, not just saying good job, you know, that was really good work with that detail but instead taking the time to record the memory with specificity, it speaks volumes that you are noticing them and that you are giving them this gift of a specific memory when they excelled and they really added value, that is going to light them up. Now, it is exactly the same with the negative feedback. But the fact is that is what most of us live, is all the good stuff, we just kind of let go and we assume it, including with our partners, including with our children, we tend to like let all the good stuff become assumed. And then we focus on the couple of things that did not go well, letting the 98% swish by. But if you need to give negative feedback, I think you know this, the literature is very clear that you do not say you need a little more help with your specificity. You know, you are not always on the ball, you know these types of vague almost incoherent sentences, they frustrate people but they do not see the help people very much. And what you really want to do is a when we had that client meeting and you spoke up in this way and then you kind of went on too long, the affect that that had was to actually push the client away and sort of turn them off and tune them out. And here is how what made us feel. As a firm, you made us seem like we are relevant but the idea of, again, articulating specific details in a story in a memory is I almost cannot give any better advice, so I think that is probably the. The second thing that I do want to say though, and again, I will stop because I do not want to just go on and on here, the second thing that I can say in terms of like giving really good feedback is to remember the emotion of gratitude. Especially in organizational life, we just do not seem to use gratitude very much. In my podcast recently, I did this study, we covered this study around headwinds and tailwinds. And the headwinds in life are like when you are riding your bike or you are running and that wind is blowing in your face and it is kind of feeling like it is holding you back and it is really obvious and salient to you and so we tend to focus on that, like, what is the problem in my life. The tailwinds in life are the things that are going well and they are just kind of pushing us forward, we just do not notice them because it just makes everything a little easier. And we forget to have gratitude for the tailwinds and we focus a lot on the headwinds. And I think this is why in real life organizations, we spend so much time on people's limitations and mess-ups, which tends to kind of shut them down. And so that is a threat emotion that we are causing there. No, I am not saying that people do not need good feedback and when you mess something up, they have to take responsibility for it. But we kind of forget to be grateful for the good things that they do and that is a very energizing emotion. You know, gratitude is a very positive emotion that lights people up, it causes reciprocity. So yeah, those are the things that I would say. I am positive I could go on and on about those but I think that those are the two things I wanted to say.

DJ: And maybe just a different frame, as a father to two young children, 11 and 7, I was also reflecting on this notion of highlights reel as being something powerful as a gift that I could give my children as they grow older because I get to see them do things and observe things that they might forget by the time they are old. So any reflections as a parent, you know, how can we leverage the

work you have done around the highlight reel as helping our children discover and activate their best self?

DC: That is really good. I mean, I have tried a couple of different things. You know, it is not like I have any study on this but I have tried a couple things in my own life where, my kids are 14 and 18. And just last winter, that is only four months ago, I created my own stories, four stories for each of them about specific ways I have seen them acting that are unique, that are valuable in this world, that I think will really serve them well, and I did write those out. I would say, just speaking practically in my own experience, the 18-year-old really responded well. She gave it a lot of thought, she had also written some for me, so that was a really nice sharing moment. She is going away to university in the fall. So as you are saying, that almost became a collection of sorts. For better or for worse, you know, everybody has their own way. I do not think the 14-year-old really was in the place to respond to it. You know, speaking of identity, she is trying to form her own identity and that might mean moving away from us a little bit right now, that could be part of it but it is not that in any way, I wish I had not done it, it was a wonderful exercise for me that actually made me feel really warm but I would say for my 14 year old it was more like thank you for this daddy.

DJ: Dan, in the book, you speak about the fact that we could collect the highlight reel elements from various people but you actually suggest that we read them as a big bang rather than a drip feed, if I may paraphrase your suggestion. And you suggest that we wait for 10 plus stories to accumulate before we really process them, that is sort of suggestion number one. The other thing you also say is that we choose the right time and place and allow the stories to breathe rather than skim over them. Can you talk a little bit about how we should process the highlight reel once we collect them?

DC: Yes. The waiting for the stories to collect, that to me is really important because we want to have this emotional jolt. In my opinion, a long way back in our conversation, we talked about what cancer did for me and it created this jolt, it jolted my life, it was traumatic and that trauma, well, I would not wish it on anybody, it was important because it causes us to question our normal assumptions. And that is what this highlight reel can do for people. It is traumatizing but in a positive way, it causes many people to cry, it unleashes a lot of emotions that you do not even really know where they are coming from, they are mostly positive but they are a bit stunning. If you get one story or maybe two in a week and then you sort of read them as they are coming in and maybe just like open up on your email while you are doing other things, really that may not have its maximum impact. And then you may even kind of two now, like some people, if I understood all this and would give people this advice, they would read them as they came dribbling in and they would kind of do it like, on the bus or on the tube or on the way home and, you know, you are not going to really allow your emotions out on the tube. You are not really going to, even if you got a very powerful emotional thing, you are not going to let tears roll down. But to read and really get the biggest jolt on this, you really want to give a space where, you know, for me, say a 25-30 stories, you would want to leave an hour to let that kind of soak in, take your time, real gift. This is not something you probably have ever read before and these are some of the most important people in your lives and they have taken real time to commit stories to paper and you really want to just give it the space it deserves. So if anybody out there who is listening and is going to try this, I actually would wait until you had all the stories in, even if it was just going to be 5-10 stories, get them all, hold out and then, wait until you can give it space and quiet and you can experience the emotions. And then what we do in my classes and my courses, I have them read it the night before but then they bring it in and then we start to debrief what it means and how it can help them and how they would craft their jobs or their lives around these strengths. I am actually really glad you brought that up because part of what this book is good for in my opinion, this Exceptional book, some of it is to expose these ideas, these evidence-based ideas to people but some of it is very practical. You know, each one of us can

get a little more living out of life and so, this point you bring up right now, it is just a really practical point of like how do you get the most out of your highlight reel.

DJ: And the other thing you suggest, which once again intrigued me was you say that you try and use your art to represent the story that resonates with us the most. Talk to us a little bit about, you know, what is the benefit of doing that.

DC: Yeah. I am going to say that there is a couple of different things. First one is, it is not art itself so much as using different parts of our brain to work on a concept helps our brain remember that concept. So for example, speaking about it is different from reading about it and reading about it is different from drawing it. And they all can reveal something different that helps our brain process it deeper and deeper. So I think that is one really important thing. The second thing is, I am not an expert what I am going to say now, but art seems to use a part of our brain that does not need words. So it is going to be hard for me to talk about this but it appears in the science that when we draw, and I do not even mean, like a way that is literal, I do not mean like you draw an event, like here is the person holding the ball as a child through it, I mean more like, it might be a splash of color on the page that this is how the story made me feel, or it might be a bunch of shapes that you made out of clay that here is how that day made me feel. But what using art seems to allow us to do is express our emotions and almost unconscious ideas that are words just do not do justice to. Let me give you a specific thing that I do, and by the way I am not saying that this is for everybody, I am saying that different people also learn in different ways. But in my own class here, I have a class on sort of creating change in our own lives and in our organizations, what I do is I have them read their best self report the night before, I help them debrief in the morning and then the afternoon, I bring in an artist who works with them. For instance, he will have them illustrate with pastels, the way that one of the stories made them feel and then he will have them use let us say clay to have another story. And then they will introduce those stories, they will pair off and then we introduce, this is what this story meant, here is what this splash of color meant, or here is what their shape meant. And that not only allows them to articulate something in a different way, it gives them a way to talk about it with people.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is your host Deepak Jayaraman here. This insight from Dan reminds me of my conversation with Jennifer Goldman Wetzler (JGW), a Conflict Management expert, who speaks about the notion of engaging our emotions while speaking to others. In our conversation, she alludes to the great “I have a dream” speech by Martin Luther King and she actually goes onto say that one of the reasons it is such a great speech is because it engages all our senses.

JGW: *“And the best way that I know how to engage our imagination is to make it really concrete actually by using our five senses plus our emotions to imagine what the future could be like. And if you watch Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s I Have a Dream speech, it is unbelievable. The way that he uses language to help us imagine the future that he wants for us by using the senses of sight, sound, touch, he talks about, you know, the valleys and the mountaintops, he talks about quicksand and then, hearing the ringing bells of freedom, so you can feel that quicksand that you might be sinking into but then you can hear those bells of freedom ringing. And so that imagery, that is such a great concrete example that he provides for us of what we can do for ourselves. So I encourage us all to be our own Martin Luther King Jr. and imagine what would it look like then, what would it sound like then, what would it feel like then.”*

DJ: At a very personal level, I took the plunge to move from a Corporate Career to what I do now in Feb 2016. A few months later, the movie MS Dhoni released featuring Sushant Singh Rajput who isn't with us anymore. which has this lovely song Besabriyaan. I was learning the chords of the song when I listened to the words –

"Kya Ye Ujaale

Kya Ye Andhere

Donon ke Aage hai Manzar tere

Kyon Roshni tu Bahar Talaashe

Teri Mashaalen hain andar tere

Kyun Dhoondna Pairon ke nishaan

Jaaye vahin le jaaye jahaan

Besabriyaan..."

Not just that line Kyun Roshni tu Bahar Talashe, Teri Mashaalen andar tere just touched part of my heart that words hadn't. It translates as why are you looking for light outside when you have the fire within. May be it was the stage of my life but there is something so powerful about art and how it touches you. I guess this song is even more poignant today given Sushant Singh Rajput passed away a few months back at a young age If I link it back to what Dan is saying, Teri Mashaalen andar tere is a bit like activating your best self based on insights from your past. Let's now get back to the conversation with Dan Cable.

DC: Deepak, have you ever heard of LEGO Serious Play?

DJ: My son is a big fan of LEGO Serious Play.

DC: Exactly. So LEGO is something we usually associate with kids and play, which it is, but it also is something that we are now using in leadership courses and in training to allow people to build their thoughts because when you build a three-dimensional thought, you then can hold it up and show people and describe it. It becomes a prop that pools ideas and concepts out of ourselves. So there is a whole literature on that by the way.

DJ: LEGO Serious Play is it?

DC: That is right. I have a book called Alive at Work and I have a whole chapter dedicated to that because it is becoming science. It is one of these really fun ideas that there is now really good research on and it is showing that it makes our brain work differently and better to be playful and tactile with our ideas.

DJ: Since you mentioned, do you want to just maybe spend a minute or two on it, how do we use LEGO in the context of leadership development, if you could just maybe expand on that.

DC: Okay. I will even go one step farther in the context of career transitions, which I work with. We have a program here called the Sloan's and it is a one year MBA kind of program for very senior folks

that are like going into a new direction in their careers. We have them work on who they were in their last job and we literally have a session with LEGOs where there will be little people, there will be hoses and there will be building blocks and windows and doors and trees and we will just say, okay pick 25 pieces and then assemble them in a way that shows us who you are in your job today and then we give them 25 minutes to do that. And then we will say, okay, now grab 25 more pieces and draw what you are going to move toward in 15 years from now. If everything worked out perfectly, who would you be, what would you be doing, what would be your role. And so then we have them do that, 25 minutes. And then what we do is we put those two together and we will say now describe to somebody what it meant and what it will be. And boy, the room just lights up because like the hose that they used to represent feeling strangled or the prison they put a block and they put a little person in it and say, this is me, I feel like I am in a prison and it just becomes animated and emotional. And by pointing at it, by turning it, it reveals things that they meant to say but like they would not have said it unless it was there. They will put a skeleton there and say, this is how I usually feel today. And then on the other one, they will sort of build a person out of vibrant colors and say, this is what I want to feel like and boy, it just becomes really fun instead of static, it becomes enjoyable and dynamic instead of kind of, oh, I do not know, overly cognitive. So, anyway, I will stop going on about it but it does appear there is some really interesting science that when we allow our hands to build our ideas, we end up in a different and sometimes better place than when we just rely on a verbal medium.

DJ: Fascinating.

DC: We have so much to learn, Deepak. It is one of the things that thrills me. I think I want to say that out loud, I love remembering that we do not really know that much about our brains and our emotions. You know, even in physics in the physical world, we have only known about gravity for 400 years. So we have only started learning about our brains in the 1980s. You know, we did not know about behavioral plasticity really until the 1990s. I love to remember that what we do not know is much bigger than what we know.

DJ: Absolutely. You know the reason why I do this podcast is, a) it gives me an opportunity to talk to people like you and learn from what you have learnt, but the other thing I find fascinating is, I come in thinking I will learn ABCD but I end up learning ABCD and then some EFGH, which is totally different.

DC: Love it, I love it.

DJ: So I came in to learn about Exceptional and I walked away learning, not just about Exceptional but LEGO Serious Play, which is completely in my blind spot, right, which is the beauty of having these conversations.

DC: That is great.

DJ: Lovely. And as we sort of come towards the end of the podcast conversation, Dan, you also talk about the risk of probably overusing our strengths if we do not apply it thoughtfully. Second, you talk a little bit about what are the watchouts in the context of the highlight reels and strengths, what are some of the things that we should bear in mind so that we do not tip over to the wrong side?

DC: That is right. This is another one and I am really glad you are bringing it up because practically speaking, there is a concept called Achilles heel, which is another way to say overused strengths. It is another way of saying that your strengths become a weakness if you overdo them. And I have tried to think about this so much because I would never would want to lead people astray. I would never

want them to stop being humble about how much they have to grow and also never want anyone to think that they are perfect. You know, we are all flawed and we are all going to die flawed. It is really more about how do we discover the way to do the best part of ourselves more often. And so, in terms of this Achilles heel and overplaying our strengths, I will give you a specific example that I wrote about in the book. In my own self, one of the things that I can do really well is kind of be an extrovert that forms quick relationships and I guess apparently good at like quick vulnerability where I will say very true humbling things about myself, which allow people to open up around me, frankly, to kind of feel comfortable and psychologically safe. So, as an extrovert, I get a buzz from that. So that works great in a classroom setting, it does not work great when I am out on a date with my partner. And I end up spending 10 minutes talking to the bartender, another 4 minutes talking to somebody that seems interesting on the way back and then maybe a 10 minutes talking to a waiter. And I am intrigued, I am lit up, I think that this is exciting and interesting but I am getting dopamine release, I am self-expressing, it is all very exciting but it is not what that date was for. So the way that I am phrasing it these days is to think about the impact that you are trying to create with your strengths. And that is going to vary a lot depending on the context. And if you are not careful, overusing your strengths actually can get in your own way. But if you are careful and if you are thoughtful and if you are intelligent about playing your strengths, you cannot really do them too much. The way Marcus Buckingham put it is, you would never want to turn down your strengths, you would want to turn up your strengths but use them intelligently. And so that is something where I am, you know, I am always working on that myself. I think maybe we all are, but it is just that space of both staying humble and also that space of using it to create the impact that you seek, not using it for using it sake. Does that make sense to you by the way? Am I am expressing that clearly?

DJ: It is a lot of sense, Dan. The way I interpret it is for us to be aware, right, not to just sort of blindly turn it up all the time, but your point, be aware of where we are on the outcomes we are trying to drive and ensure that we are thoughtful about the application and the context in which we apply it, so that is the way I interpret it.

DC: That is right. And it is really interesting to think about how, like going back to my own thing and just being honest with myself, even in the situation of like say, going out, you know, going out with my partner versus going out with some friends, it can even be the same literal setting, let us call it a pub in London but if the impact that I want to make with my partner is, let me use my strengths with her, I might play up my natural curiosity and sort of entertain her with a story that I heard that day and maybe a piece of science that I read that I am intrigued by and that is playing to my strengths, whereas if I am with five friends and they are having a good time, then it may be perfectly fine for me to talk to the bartender and light up their world a little bit and then all the way back, talk to a wait staff and just kind of light them up a little bit because that is not only playing to my strengths but it is giving me that dopamine rush. And it is a certain awareness and a certain intelligence of using that. I find that really interesting and practical. So I am actually really glad you brought it up, even to allow me to relive it again.

DJ: Dan, this podcast is called Play to Potential. Given your journey, your life, your lived experiences, your research, if you had to sort of leave the listeners with a couple of things that occurred to you when I say the phrase Play to Potential, what comes top of mind?

DC: Yeah. I absolutely love how you would end it with that by the way, it is the things we have already talked about but I will just re-highlight them, the transience aversion and the eulogy delay. I would say those are, transience aversion is remember to keep death close to you. I really believe the monks and the aesthetics I believe, they used to keep a skull on their desk and the idea would be, you know, I am close to death and by remembering that it reminds us to play hard, you know, to really try to do what we are capable of doing today and not just put it off for a day and then a week

and then a month and then a decade. So I think that is number one. And I think the number two is that if we catch people doing something right, and alert them to their impact, we not only build better relationships, so they like us better and they feel they can trust us more and they feel closer to us but then they feel this reciprocity where they all do that back to you. And I feel like if we can get beyond these barriers, these natural resistances, we can be, that is one of ways of becoming exceptional. You know, we really can become somebody that highlights people's strengths and builds better relationships and does it today rather than kind of blending into the woodwork, which is actually a place that some of us end up being if we are not careful.

DJ: Lovely. On that note, Dan, true privilege talking to you and really enjoyed the energy that you brought to the conversation, not to mention the insights. So thank you so much for your time.

DC: Great, it was my pleasure. Thanks for taking the time with me too.

DJ: Thank you.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for listening. I hope you found the conversation purposeful. A couple of messages before we wrap up. If you find the podcast purposeful, do take a moment and contribute to Antarang Foundation. I work closely with them and can vouch for their impact with young adults who come from challenging backgrounds. While we are battling the health crisis, we cannot afford to ignore the issue of solving for livelihoods in our battle to save lives. This second Covid wave has further worsened the employment crisis in India and supporting an organization like Antarang can mean a lot in these challenging times. You can get more details at the Pay It forward section at playtopotential.com.

Do also rate and review the show on Apple podcasts or wherever you consume the content. It might seem like a repetitive ask. But trust me it makes a big difference in people discovering this podcast amidst a lot of noise out there given the boom in the podcast supply in India in the last few months. It also helps us attract good quality speakers.

To know more about what is in the podcast archives and the advisory work I do, you could just visit www.playtopotential.com. To receive a bite sized nugget every 3-4 days from the podcast archives, do send a Whatsapp message to +91 85914 52129 stating INTERESTED. Thank you and hope to have you tune into one of the subsequent conversations at the podcast. Bye now.

End of transcription

Nugget from Tasha Eurich that is referenced: [Self-awareness: Meta-skill of 21st century](#).

Nugget from Jennifer Goldman Wetzler that is referenced: [Engaging our senses](#).

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

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

Listening: When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new”. This is a quote by Dalai Lama. Several leaders talk about their experiences with listening and how they have grown with it. More specifically, leaders also reflect on the criticality of listening when transitioning into a new context. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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Identity: Identity refers to the reputation, characteristics etc. of a person that makes the individual or the people around him/her think about them in a certain way. To put simply, how do we think of ourselves and what to the others think of us. Identity is a key element that we need to wrestle with during pivotal transitions. Herminia Ibarra shares her insights on how we should treat Identity as a Work in Progress that gets influenced by the journey we go through and the choices we make. Ram Guha speaks about the multiple identities of Gandhiji. Atul Kasbekar speaks about how he saw his identity evolve from being a photographer to a producer. All this and more in this playlist. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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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](#).

Communication: Communication and story-telling is at the essence of building culture in an organization. Lessons from an ad-guru, mythologist, armed forces officer, motivational speaker and

more about how one could think about narrating compelling stories. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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

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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Dan Cable - Nuggets

- 75.00 Dan Cable - The Full Conversation
- 75.01 Dan Cable - Cancer and life-choices
- 75.02 Dan Cable - Crowd-sourcing your highlights reel
- 75.03 Dan Cable - Eulogy delay
- 75.04 Dan Cable - Visualization and peak-performance
- 75.05 Dan Cable - Developing directional clarity
- 75.06 Dan Cable - Emotional Labour
- 75.07 Dan Cable - Providing thoughtful feedback
- 75.08 Dan Cable - Highlights - Big bang vs Drip feed
- 75.09 Dan Cable - Engaging different parts of our brain
- 75.10 Dan Cable - When strengths become derailers
- 75.11 Dan Cable - In Summary - Playing to Potential

About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the human potential of senior executive's / leadership teams by working with them as an Executive Coach / Sounding Board / Transition Advisor. You can know more about his work [here](#).

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