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Context to the nugget

Vijay discusses how he has dealt with challenging moments when he was on court. He talks about navigating forks in the road where you often have to choose between low risk and decent outcomes and high risk with a potential of making it big. He shares an insight from Billy Jean King who says "Every challenge is an opportunity and pressure is a privilege". He discusses the frame of mind with which one could approach such crucial moments.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Give us an insight into where do you look for courage, where do you go to get that courage, to win that moment?

Vijay Amritraj (VA): Well I think, I generally feel most people have it and they don't know it, and it's a question to being able to find it. It's almost like that terrific film with Harrison Ford playing Indiana Jones and they are looking for the lost stock for the covenant which was going to give them life forever and so on and so forth and it trying to find things that you almost didn't think existed and that's what you sort of look for it in yourself irrespective of what job you are doing, in sport there is a lot more clarity to it, especially in an individual sport because it's just you and the another person and it's a question of how difficult the times are how difficult the situation it is whether it's the Weather, whether it's the Heat, whether it's the Humidity, whether it's lack of Nutrition that you might not have taken the last four days and all of a sudden you have got pushed into the fourth set and you are two sets to one down or whatever else it might be and now the question comes is to a, as I did in 1987 Argentina match where I was clearly down and India was done two matches to win and you look back and think what made you get out of it and I think at that particular moment in time where I were at the tail end of my career. So, am retired at the peck already almost 34 years old and the guy I was playing with was 21 he was the guy amongst top 10, he was closing me out very comfortably to shut in the out in that first day and after I manage to squish out the third set 8-6 and we came into the locker room for 10 mins of a break and I was on the training table and the physio was working on me all my team was around me the manager said listen you are done I think you have done extremely well it's time to go home and the doctors also said listen I don't think you should go out there that you have lost a lot of weight and it will be harmful to your health and that's the point in time where we all face in the course of life where there is the fork on the road and there is the fork on the road where one take a right where everything is calm and comfortable, you can go home and lie in the tub and them eventually have a good meal and lie in bed and that's your right turn and that keeps you good you will always be remembered as a good player and then there is that left turn which you take which is practically impossible to navigate you can't see through the forest

there are all kinds of the obstacles in the way which challenges aren't a mountable and you don't have either the energy or the strength or the ability or the belief to be able to take it forward and taking that road is again a very high risk proposition but that's where you are able to test your own self against the question of greatness and so very few people are given that opportunity. So, as the great Belgian King said you know, every challenge is an opportunity and pressure is privileged and very few people have it in those kinds of situations with their such a great clarity this side if safe this side is not this side you will remain good this side you have the potential to be great with the one percent chance, so, do you want to take it? So, you dive head long to it because that's who I was and I am, and eventually you have pulled yourself out of that situation because then trend line takes you beyond the realm of reality, eventually being done two match on the forth and then winning 6-2 in the fifth by the time you got to the fifth set the Argentinian were already beaten and then they knew that the Woman tan was swung the forearm of the crowd was over whelming I was playing beyond my own capability and the loss was never in any one's mind except winning that particular match. So, then we went out or courts for the David's with final, but I think the most important aspect of that particular match as it was with the one when I was 13 and the half year old is what it teaches you about yourself it's not about winning and losing about that match, yes, I could have loss that match, but I don't think that's the issue the issue is more the question of who are you? What it did for you? And how did it teach you to become a better person and what did it teach you about your character and your own belief in yourself and those kinds of things and I think that's the kind of thing you want everyone to learn from it and it not just the winning and losing.

DJ: How did you deal with failure? Give us an insight into how leaders can cope with failures and bounce back stronger?

VA: Well first of all if someone says to you, it didn't bother than that much than you should be playing this sport in first place, this is the very high risk adventure and Wins and Losses are the part of the game but at the end of the day we all know that we lose more than we win and that's why it makes the wins so important and so wonderful at the same time when you lose and especially when you lose in a tight match in a tight format the disappointment is huge, recovery slow disappointment is huge you are upset but what it does is it tells you to look at it, you look at it again and again and again and not make that mistake again if there is a mistake that you have made or in certain cases like it happened in 1979 against Paul in Wimbledon on court number 1 again I will have two sets to won three won left fourth in a ... and lost in five sets, now there was no way I should have lost that particular match and I did and I looked back at that match and I think could I have done something different? And the answer was clearly No. it was one of those matches that won in a thousand times you have to won and that happened to be that one time disappointment, again in 1981 against Connors in Wimbledon two sets to love up three to fifteen, thirty I lost in five sets now when we look back at losses and failures you learn a lot more than you do from successes we are all fairly clear about that because when you win a match you don't think about that match that's done and dusted so you look at the next round as to who you are playing you don't think of the guy that you have beaten whereas when you lose a match you only continuously think of that guy that you lost to and you wonder what I can do to get better to, never let that guy beat me again and it could happen again and again and again as it happened between me and Ken Rosewall he beat six time in a row before I finally beat him in London but it never stopped me from continuously thinking that I need to get better to beat this guy in the particular format which is I ended up doing so I think as far as failure is concerned it's not really a failure, It is a failure if you don't learn from it and I think that's where the rubs comes in disappointment? Yes! Are you upset? Yes! Anger perhaps not, in certain

cases it might be people who are angry, how did I miss that smash? Or how did I miss this pass? And so on and so forth but I think to great extent the failure comes from honestly not learning from it, Lincen lost so many elections before he eventually became president at United States and he lost literally all of the earlier elections and where did he end up becoming president, it just shows the character of the man so I think when you look at things like that there are numerous examples success that where you actually learn from failure and that's why you are successful not because you took failure so much to hard that puts you back in your seat.

DJ: Give us an insight into how leaders should think about combining peak performance with longevity, how should one's think about ensuring that you don't burn our too quickly in an intense whether its profession or sport.

VA: I am not quite sure that you can plan it that simply and say I want to play for 20 years especially in a sport and especially in an individual sport, injury can come and take you in 6 months two surgeries and you are done, an ankle twist it take you out six months all those things are normal setbacks for an athlete, there is no athlete who's gone through in life 20 years without having any kind of hiccupped, pitfall and an obstacle that's very much a part of profession has been chosen but at the end of the day for me my greatest achievement was to a flag that long at a very high level and being able to contend in every tournament that I have played to win the tournament nothing short of it even to this day if I happened to be the Asian player with the most number of tour and titles thirty forty years after I played the game without there playing I am still, I still have more titles than any other Asian player which is an unusual record which needs to be broken because we need players of that calibre to play at that very high level. So, I think when you look at things like this and you say the longevity, longevity comes afterwards and yes, I had surgeries I had all kinds of physical issues and so on and so forth but the longer you play of course you have more of a problem post your career where all of these injuries and setbacks and the physical elements that you have had don't just go away one fine morning when because you quit the game it lasts through your life time you just have to deal with it.

I think also a lot had to do with the fact we are also looking for others to follow and I think if we were clearly on the map to keep us in the world group and the Davis cup to be able to contend Wimbledon every year and all of that it would have probably made my exit a little quicker from the sport but not having that at that particular time I received many thousands of letters asking me to continue playing and all of that it speared me onto stage perhaps few years longer than I should have but it didn't reduce my capacity to compete.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: What struck me the most in this was the notion of winning and losing is less about the outcomes, but more about whether one learnt something from an event or not. One of my mentors would often say that when you win or lose your project as a consulting firm you ask the question to the client. Why did you give the project to me if you won it, or why did you not give the project to me if you lost it? There's just so much learning opportunity as we go through events if we are willing to look at situations beyond just winning or losing. Thank you for listening. For more, you could follow the Twitter handle Play to Potential.

End of nugget transcription

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Vijay Amritraj - Nuggets

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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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