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Context to the nugget

“The cost of our dreams is much lower than we think it is in our heads!” Using this profound thought Papa CJ discusses what business schools don't teach us. Don't miss the part about the three things that constitute happiness!

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): What are the three things that they don't teach you at B-school?

Papa CJ (CJ): They don't necessarily teach you empathy. A business school is normally an environment with a whole bunch of A-type people who are very driven. I don't think they teach you how to sit back and smell the roses as they say. And I'm a very big advocate of the offline world. Nowadays, everything is about online, it's Facebook and Twitter. I believe in the art of conversation. I think, it's beautiful to be able to just leave your phone behind, sit with somebody, have a cup of coffee, and just talk. I'm going off track from business school, but I don't think it's all about getting to some destination really quickly. Sometimes, it's nice to take a stroll and take your time to get there, because once you get there, then what? So, I think business school doesn't necessarily teach you to enjoy the journey.

One of the questions I've always asked, especially young people who come to talk to me about careers or things like that, I ask them, if you had a billion dollars in the bank, how would you spend your time differently? Not what would you spend the money on. And, I think, that's an important question to answer. Often, somebody'll say, oh I will travel to Europe for a month. When you actually translate it down to what will that actually cost, let's get to the specifics, often, I find that the cost of our dreams is much lower than we think it is our heads. The problem is, we all think, I'm going to work, I'm going to achieve, I'm going to do this, and then I will do this thing that I really want to do. Why? I mean, at the end of it, we're all going to be dead. You're not going to take anything with you. Why don't you just enjoy yourself while you're at it? Why does it have to be I'm going to reach there, and then I'm going to do that? I mean, there are so many people who, when their lives are hit by some major tragedy — whether it's cancer, whether it's an accident, whether it's surviving one of those — that changes their perspective and they look at the things that they really value in life. Why should you want to need to wait for something like that to happen to you before you can start appreciating what is important in the world? I think, that is something that business school does not teach you.

DJ: True. That's quite profound and I've noticed, in the long run, as determinants of happiness and fulfilment, some of these hold a greater cue.

CJ: You know, they say that happiness is where three things meet: pleasure, challenge, and meaning. Often, we run for pleasure, challenge tends to get thrown our way one way or the other, but it's that search for meaning. So, if you can find that meaning and build your pleasure and challenge around that, then you might find happiness.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I am a big fan of the work of Professor Stewart Friedman in Wharton who talks about the notion of Work/Life Harmony. He urges us to look at our life in 4 porous compartments - Self, Work, Home and Community and suggests that we undertake initiatives which tick multiple boxes rather than having them as water-tight containers. When I juxtapose this with the work of one my Professors at London Business School - Lynda Gratton and her work in 100 year life, she makes the point that we all need to ensure that we are working in a way that is sustainable for several years to come. When I used to train for Half Marathons, my trainer would say that the only variable you need to watch is the pace at which you run. The rest will take care of itself.

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End of nugget 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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