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Context to the nugget

How much of you as an individual can be attributed to early childhood experiences? In this nugget hear Ravi speak about three main influences in his early years that shaped his personality. Did you know that he had to take a year off from school due to medical reasons and this turned out to be a boon in shaping his boundless curiosity!

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): If you had to say three things that formed you as a person as you grew up, let's say, till the end of education, that still form a core part of who you are, any themes that show up?

Ravi Venkatesan (RV): Yeah, certainly. I think it's that early childhood programming that actually persists in a very, very profound way. I think, the single most important influence in my life was my mother, not surprising. She instilled in me a desire to excel and be successful, and I have not been able to soften that conditioning very much at all. So, whatever I do, I try to pour all of myself into it and try and excel. So, that's been a lasting one.

Second is, fairly early again, I realized I wasn't the brightest person in the room, and the way I compensated for that is, I worked harder than almost anybody else. Even today, whatever I do, I burn the candle at both ends and the middle! So, that's an important part of growing up influences.

A third one would be just because of my family and the people who were friends of the family, I grew up as a very curious boy. There was a year when I had to drop out of school for medical reasons, and it was the best year. Because we lived in Chandigarh near a big state library, so, every day, I'd totter over to the library and come back with books that were way ahead of me, at least one book a day, not really reading every word. So, I grew up with profound curiosity, not just a narrow curiosity, and a boundless curiosity. I think that has served me very well.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: When I work with leaders and talk to them about how much of who they are traces back to early childhood, it is fascinating to see that in a lot of situations, a big chunk of people's personalities get baked early on in life. The trade-off becomes real because in a lot of cases, this is exactly the phase when your career is peaking and is demanding. It's walking that tight rope which often becomes the challenge. Clay Christensen, in his book, "How will you measure your life", talks about the tendency that people have to invest the marginal unit of time in places where they get immediate visible,

attributable returns. Being aware of this tension and trade-off is often a good place to start as we go about pursuing our busy lives.

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End of nugget transcription

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Parenting: Discussions around the role that parenting plays in shaping who we are and our beliefs, habits, behaviors and mindsets. Leaders share their personal experiences around how a lot of who they are got baked in their early years. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Curiosity: "A Curious Mind" by Brian Grazer (Oscar winning Producer of movies like A Beautiful Mind and Apollo 13) was the inspiration behind the Play to Potential Podcast. In this playlist, Leaders reflect about the role of curiosity and how it has helped them in their journeys. As Alvin Toffler says, the Illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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- 06.02 Ravi Venkatesan - Early childhood wiring
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- 06.04 Ravi Venkatesan - Leading in India versus other markets
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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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