

The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the right side of the banner is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. At the bottom left of the banner, a small note reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget

In this rapidly changing world, Ravi has three main nuggets of wisdom for graduates who are thinking about their careers and professional life ahead. How has the view of a 'career' changed over time and what is the best way to think about it today? What qualities should one spend time cultivating and nurturing? Hear on.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): With the wisdom of the career and the journey and the experiences you've had, if you were graduating from IIT Bombay today, how would you think about life ahead?

Ravi Venkatesan (RV): If I am graduating from anywhere, period, IIT or not, I think you've to realize that the world is changing rapidly, that the era of stable jobs, careers, etcetera, is almost over. When I was graduating from business school, on the last day, we had a little class on how to think about your career. A professor stood up and said, 'Listen, forget about lifetime employment. Already, a Harvard business school grad has two and a half jobs in their career. So, by the time you guys blossom, it's probably going to be four jobs'. That feels kind of ridiculous today. With automation, and outsourcing, and the gig, the marketplace, and all those kinds of ideas, I think you have to say, my life is not about a career or a job but rather a series of gigs or projects. If three or four of these gigs end up in the same organization, so be it. So, you need to frame your future professional life in a fundamentally different way. Rather than one smooth long highway ahead of you, you have to be prepared for lots of interesting and uncertain experiences. As a result of this, you need to be prepared to be an entrepreneur, or at the very least, self-employed. You need to have the confidence and the skills to be able to put food on the table and fend for yourself, rather than depend on an organization to feed you and take care of you, which means you better be really good at something around which you can build your professional life and economics.

The second thing is, you need to cultivate your professional reputation very intentionally. Most people today don't put any conscious thought into it. Therefore, if they have a reputation, it's an accident. I think people have to become far more intentional about it.

DJ: By doing what?

RV: First thing is, by being excellent. There is no room, or less and less room, for mediocrity. So, you have to be excellent at whatever you choose to do, and word will spread. You have to be dependable. You have to be a pretty reasonable integrity person. So, first of all, you have to focus on being a decent and competent professional. Then, make sure that that reputation is known, at least in the relevant circles. So, I think, conscious management of your professional reputation is going to

be more and more important. With that, high quality networks. Not having a thousand friends on Facebook that's worth almost a zero but high quality individuals on your network who are portals to other networks. So, you have to think about all these things.

Last thing, I would say is, you need to take more risk. Almost everybody I talk to, when they look back at their life and the older you get, the more you think about these things regrets not having taken enough risk. The thing you regret at age 70 is not the risk you took that didn't work out, but the risk you didn't take at all, the omissions. So, you wonder how life might have played out differently had you taken that role. You don't want to be there, that way, so right from the beginning, get used to taking on big challenges, being outside your comfort zone, confronting your fears. I think that's going to be really important as you get into a more and more complex, volatile, uncertain kind of world.

DJ: How do you deal with that tension of sticking long enough to ensure that you're resilient while responding to stuff that comes your way?

RV: I can only say how I've thought about it; I don't know that this is a prescription for anyone else. I have thought about every role I've got into with the idea 'what is the legacy I am going to leave behind'. So, almost everything I have done has been about a five to seven yearlong gig. Funnily, for the first few years of that gig, both I and the world thought I was going to fail. It's only by being resilient, tenacious, and seeing through all sorts of challenges that eventually you get to a point where you feel satisfied that you left something durable, enduring, and others do too.

I feel that the right way to go about it is probably in the beginning of your professional life, do lots of things. That means you might move every year, two years, but by the time you reach late 20s, you need to think about staying long enough to build something enduring, leave a legacy. So, the career path in that sense looks like not lots of little steps every two years but much bigger steps every five or seven years. So, even though the world is becoming more turbulent and stuff is flying at you from every direction, I think that it's still important to be able to weave, duck, bob, and build something impressive.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I am reminded of the advice was given by my first boss Focus on being employable and not on being employed. Simple statement but left a profound mark on me. But when I think about it this phrase is probably truer today and more relevant today than ever before.

Thank you for listening. For more please visit playtopotential.com or subscribe the podcast on iTunes, Stitcher or one of the other Podcast apps.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Early career: We live in a world of abundance of choices and that can be disconcerting and paralyzing. Leaders across fields talk about how individuals should think about some of their early

career moves including the very first job that they need to think of when they graduate from an educational institution. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Navigational principles: Leaders discuss their personal frameworks around how they made choices around pivotal moments in their lives. They articulate the set of criteria we should consider having when we are at a fork on the road and have to pick between disparate options. Arguably one of the most critical skills of the future as we navigate a world of abundance. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a **Podcast Whatsapp distribution group (+91 85914 52129)** where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating "INTERESTED". Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

Ravi Venkatesan Nuggets

- 06.00 Ravi Venkatesan The Full Conversation
- 06.01 Ravi Venkatesan Driving social impact
- 06.02 Ravi Venkatesan Early childhood wiring
- 06.03 Ravi Venkatesan Career planning 2.0 for graduates
- 06.04 Ravi Venkatesan Leading in India versus other markets
- 06.05 Ravi Venkatesan Transitioning from Cummins to Microsoft
- 06.06 Ravi Venkatesan Listening intently during transitions
- 06.07 Ravi Venkatesan Picking leaders to invest in
- 06.08 Ravi Venkatesan Hyper development of a leader in a startup
- 06.09 Ravi Venkatesan Executive to non-executive transition
- 06.10 Ravi Venkatesan Gig economy and careers

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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful.

This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.