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Context to the nugget

We often find ourselves in situations where the circumstances at work and on the personal front have changed significantly over time and there is a need to move onto the next innings. These are uncomfortable phases where there are no easy answers or approaches. Viren talks about how he took stock of life when he was playing hockey for India and the circumstances which led him to pursue an MBA at ISB

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): You retired at the peak of your game. You alluded to the fact that when people wanted you to study, you wanted to play, and when people wanted you to play, you wanted to move on to study. So, give us a sense of how you took stock of life at that point in time.

Viren Rasquinha (VR): Again, as I said, I came from a background where studies were important to me. It's not that because I chose sport initially, I did not want to study. It was always something that was important to me. I came from a background where studies were important. I think, post-graduation, from 21 till I was 28, I was so busy training, playing, traveling with the Indian team; I honestly did not touch a book for seven years. So, I always knew that I wanted to study and I wanted to do my MBA. I just didn't know when the right time was. I always knew that once I retired, I would do my MBA. So, that decision was clear in my mind. When I was 26–27, at that point of time, it had been almost eight–nine years in the Indian team. I was getting a little bit frustrated, because the travel, the load, the pressure was a lot. I was getting little bit frustrated with selection issues, with selectors, with injuries that I was having. And I felt at that point of time, maybe I was not enjoying myself as much as I should have been. That set me thinking. If I am not enjoying something at the highest, then I have no right to be there and if I am not feeling that I can give 200% every single day in training, then maybe I need to think about my future. So, that's what got me thinking. I went to ISB to do my MBA eventually.

DJ: Was that the first batch around that time?

VR: No, the first batch was in 2001. I went in the class of 2009, so much later. Incidentally, in 2003, at the Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad, where India won and we had beaten Pakistan in the final, the Indian team was put up at ISB. So, that's how I came to know about ISB. I was impressed with the infrastructure, with the campus, with the curriculum, with the place. I had known about ISB since then. When I was planning on retiring and thinking about what to do, I knew that I always wanted to be in India. Hockey gave me the chance to go across the world and travel everywhere, but, for me, I've always wanted to be in India and make a difference over here. I didn't see myself studying for two years and doing an MBA abroad. I didn't have that much money to study abroad for two years.

So, I thought, ISB one-year course, top-class curriculum, top-class peer group, great faculty, great infrastructure, everything. It made good sense for me. I started studying for my GMAT simultaneously, when I was playing. I did shit in the first one. I did really well in the second one, and I applied to ISB. Once I got in, I decided this is the right time for me to announce my retirement.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: However, clichéd it may sound, feeling like you want to wake up and go to work is arguably the best barometer there is to see if you should continue doing what you are doing. I find that several people stay on because they haven't really figured out what else or haven't had the time to think about alternate possibilities. I have found that taking time off like a sabbatical or moving to a temporary part-time model to buy yourself bandwidth to really take stock can often do wonders in providing clarity of thought. Very often, I find that staying in a 24x7 intense role and solving for the future don't go hand in hand. Some of this sounds obvious but I am sometimes amazed at the number of people who are stuck with the catch 22 of status quo.

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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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