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## Context to the nugget

Sound judgment is a must have for any leader in any domain. Having a sense of what makes sense all things considered is hard and critical. Zia provides her perspective on Judgment from a Lawyer's perspective.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** If I were to ask you, if you look at the judges, the great judges from the good ones what about makes them distinctive in terms of their sense of judgement?

**Zia Mody (ZM):** Fairness, first of all they are superb jurists but the way they apply the law is to deliver the fair verdict to society so the judgement is final unless it's appealed and so the Supreme Court makes the law and so why that institution is so important and relevant? Because by enlarge it disseminates law which is fair which works, which is trusted in its application, in its interpretation. The supreme court is per person it comes to an area where societies are affected by enlarge in many of its judgements and in most of its judgement the society is dealt with fairly for that city, the way you deal with it, even as a not a judge but as a transactional lawyer today if I want to cut a deal, I am not going to cut a deal if it's unfair to the other side, I don't care how much of I shout, how much of a bully I am, how abrasive I am. The guy on the other side is not an idiot, he will smile at me, he will be polite, he will may not be rude back but he won't sign the document. So ultimately what you have to cut across the table is the fare transaction, it's like when you are fight and you safety, I always tell my client "are you unhappy?" he says "Yes" I said "Good". That's a settlement, because if you have totally won, the guy is going to break the settlement, so that's the way it is.

**DJ:** But this notion of taking multiples like you said this notion of judgement which is about dealing with a lot of fuzzy data and coming up with on balance decision, what's been your experience in fine tuning that muscle, if you had to talk about how business leaders could sharpen that sense of judgement over time do you have any thoughts on, how have you seen people sharpen it over time?

**ZM:** It's a combination of experience, learning from mistakes you have made, learning from mistakes other people have made if you are observant enough and continuing to get more and more mastery over the subject matter on which you make decisions. If you have to make decisions on some economic theory, I can't and there's no point in saying I have a gut. How is my gut relevant unless it's papered with domain?

**DJ:** So sharpening the domain expertise with sort of reflection.

**ZM:** Yes, I mean without the domain you really can't make a judgement call.

DJ: And the other quote which stayed with me is a Professor in Harvard call Prof. Joseph Badaracco he actually says early in a career in any professions often the decisions are about right versus wrong but as you grow they are often about right versus right and that's when sort of the men get separated from the boys and the woman gets separated from the girls, again back to the field of law any reflection on how some people do it well?

ZM: So that's the nuancing property that I would put in the context of law, right and right, so the law is the law but how are you applying it in an absolutely refined manner to the fact of the case in fronted you, and nuancing every angle that's the way you do that.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If you like the topic of Judgment, you must watch the recent Clint Eastwood Movie - Sully. It is based on a real life incident in 2009 of a US Airways plane landing on the Hudson because of engine failure due to a bird hit. The movie was all about Captain Chesley Sullenberger took that judgment call to land the plane on water as against trying landing at one of the airports nearby. I remember one of the conversations as a Search Consultant when I was at EgonZehnder. The client had met 4 individuals for a CEO role and we had to make up our mind on which one to hire. I still remember what the client told me in that meeting as we were getting into the debrief. He said, we are paying a lot of money to you for this search. 50% of the price I am paying you as part of the search is for the discussion over the next 1 hour where we discuss these 4 individuals and figure out who makes sense given the role, the culture, risks the upsides and so on. Net net, all things considered, what makes sense is a judgment call that clients make in often lonely circumstances and if we can enable them to make good decisions in these complex circumstances, one starts inching towards that Trusted Advisor chair.

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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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