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Context to the nugget

Rama talks about how she has prioritized performance in a role over trying to belong. She talks about some tactics she uses to increase the chances of being heard adequately while operating in a forum full of men.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): How should women think about personal brand? Anything specific from a gender perspective that you want to highlight?

Rama Bijapurkar (RB): I think again it's about internal problems, I think women have to fix a couple of things inside. One is, perform don't belong, if your entire focus on belonging then you are never going to fully belong and you never going to fully perform, so I think if you focus on performance then it doesn't really matter, I am not saying be obnoxious or anything but you know what I mean? I mean, where do you focus your efforts do you focus your performance or do you focus on belonging? By belong I mean belonging to the group let's say if it's the management team or the board team or whatever it is, so belonging what means that I would come in earlier I have the coffees if I didn't feel like it, the network the network before the network after or do you want to write a note to everybody two days earlier that says because we may not have the time at the agenda I want to frame my thoughts on this matter and I think this is what you should do, and belongings means you need the opportunity when you open your mouth if they have decided not to do and if they have decided that they are not going to discuss the point at that point in time then you let it be or you are also vulnerable to people saying hey, you know do we really need to do this right now? But perform is really saying let me figure out, I am here because I will add value, let me, made me little harder to add the value but I would rather spend my time there then spend my time trying to part of the gang maybe because I will never be part of the gang if you like the gang that's great part of it but that's where the real effort is, should you kill yourself doing a lot of stuff? I think that's really important. And I also think about it also as the majority minority community I think women should understand that there is not that the deck is tact against them it's the majority community the rules for themselves, sometimes the stuff can get pretty bad and I think that you should be willing to call it out or sensitize or find ways around it to pretend that there is no gender issue doesn't makes sense. So for example I have had chairman who never let me speak, which is why I were use email as effectively as I like or I will set the process and can say each of us can please have one minute please and so we can roll out for the orders and which you chose to have a speed. The option and sort of careful to be able to do this, or if you are doing things which is country to what is expected and I think there is a real difference, so often there is a ... I think to deny that doesn't make sense to join that in future doesn't make sense, and I think you then get respected much more, if you are predictable in that sense and then you will get included where you need to be

included I mean I don't think I need to be included in everything else people tell me ohh unless you actually network, I am saying it's not that I am not networking what am I networking around, if I have an issue, I want to discuss I will call every single member of the board and I was saying you know what this thing is bothering me and I want to understand this better and two of them may say I don't really agree with the issue three of them may say he it's worth it lets talk about it, so that's networking for me, networking is not about not saying what I don't want to say because they may get upset with me.

DJ: How can we cultivate more women leaders to grow at the top? From an individual aspiring women leader's perspective are there two three themes around how they should think about their journey?

RB: Yes, I am also little concerned about this what qualifies to be a women leader? I think everybody should fundamentally think about what is the essence of winning for you in your career? So it's all the issues that we have talked about do you go this way? Do you go that way? I mean you have it as a man as well but women have it much more. And I think not be afraid to say that this is the way I want to win and go for the way you want to win its only when you adopt somebody else's idea what winning is you can't really go for it so figure out what exactly winning is and go for that.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: What was fascinating for me here was the notion of how one change the norms to ensure that the battlefield is even. We often look for binary options to situations but sometimes there might be interesting answers in the grey that could ensure that you have a fair shot at being heard without any biases. I am reminded of Amazon's Jeff Bezos who has the habit of starting every meeting with a phase of "writing" where people record what they want to say and read each other's opinion before they start talking. That levels the playing field and ensures that the loud voices aren't the only ones that are heard.

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End of nugget transcription

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Rama Bijapurkar - Nuggets

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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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Podcast Transcript [18.08 Rama Bijapurkar – Women and Leadership](#)

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