Context to the nugget

Dheeraj talks about the distinction between process and substance in the context of making career choices. He also talks about how he built optionality at various points in his early career.

Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): How did you think about that fork on the road? When you had to pick between job on India and a Job at Deloitte what was the processing framework at that stage?

Dheeraj Pandey (DP): This is more like looking at process in some stints, I talk about this in negotiation this is the way I think about the things in life so I was negotiating with my career in some sense and a PhD was a process the Deloitte and the Unilever job was like a substance you actually say that look, I know exactly what I am gonna make therefor should I chose this and figure out things every three four years and pick a process that robust and that robust process is the PhD and I like computer science and I in fact developed a very good sense for math as well at IIT or set theory in Algebra, Graph theory, Linier Algebra, operation researches and there is a lot of those things that I also did along with the computer science so I knew that your tool will be a good place for that too if I were to really get into cozy Math, Cozy computer Science too and in some sense I just knew that you build a good foundation and because it was fellowship I thought that it would give me optionality to go and pick what I wanted in the next 18 months so I don't have to pick something right away.

DJ: Processing another fork on the road you subsequently quit your PhD and went to the valley, so how did you process the trade off at that point in time?

DP: So I had interned in the summer of 1998 at Oracle the summer of 1998 if you remember was probably was the height of the bubble, the internet bubble and this was in … in California right in the heart of the silicon valley where everything was booming like it had never before, I mean they had found internet in 1994 or 95 there was obviously the era of Netscape the browser was and things like that just looked like it was a different world all together, it was probably as good as it was when we probably found oil or steam engine or something of that nature actually it was the disruptive so I think it was heady, I mean those days were heady and I was there for three months and I was like you know what timing is everything so why don't I actually take a leave of absence once I go back, so I finished my masters requirements and I said I will come back because right now its also important to really deal with the industry and learn from the industry as well so I did that for couple of years when I was in new fabs finely it was altered in me having, so you have to reapply if you really want to do PhD so in the year 2000 I literally drove from Texas to California actually.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: What struck me about how Dheeraj navigated his early career was the notion of building "Real options", a concept that is often discussed at length in the context of corporate finance and how it impacts discounted cash flows. But I find that there is a huge opportunity in thinking about building optionality as you pursue different paths. It has an implication of how you use the current place you are in and build an insurance policy for yourself before you take the plunge somewhere. When you couple this approach with the notion of taking the plunge when the worst is not bad enough, the point Dheeraj makes earlier, it can be a powerful way of navigating through your career.

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End of nugget transcription

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Dheeraj Pandey - Nuggets

- 19.00 Dheeraj Pandey - The Full Conversation
- 19.01 Dheeraj Pandey - Early formative years (including retaking JEE)
- 19.02 Dheeraj Pandey - Building optionality during early career
- 19.03 Dheeraj Pandey - Relationship between Co-founders and Company
- 19.04 Dheeraj Pandey - Evolving as a leader with the company
- 19.05 Dheeraj Pandey - Building an anti-fragile culture
- 19.06 Dheeraj Pandey - Perspectives around career choice
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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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