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Context to the nugget

Dheeraj talks about how the relationship between him, the co-founders and the company has evolved over a period of time. He also talks about 4As which are at the core of how he looks at himself and others he works with.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Journey at Nutanix, how founders should think about the co-founders? What does it take to make the good relation work?

Dheeraj Pandey (DP): Obviously there's a relation between the founder but also there is relation between the founders and the company and how the company is paramount because the company is not consistent with not just the founders and their entitlement but also the new people who are joining because the new people who have joined are now the company and which is the founder themselves are so it's a relatively profound sort of I would say combination of relationships which is like between the founders in the company and I think to balance all of that is a very complex sort of system and the one thing I have learned and I have learned this relatively early that nobody is above the company and the more you think like that and the more vulnerable you are the more the company gives back to you, that's how authentic relationships are you don't just keep thinking about kinking from the company because you have founded it very much like parents and children and at some point you have to realize that they have the life of their own as well and they will have their own careers and decision making process and things like that but eventually it's the family that you really care for as oppose to saying, I am your father and I am your mother so therefor it should be in this for.

DJ: Just to understand behaviourally what does it mean in terms of Do's and Don'ts, what do you have in mind when you say entitlement as a founder?

DP: I mean to say that, you believe in yourself is great, I think there's this irrational confidence that you need and self-assuredness that you need because obviously the world is saying don't do it so founders need to be having that irrational confidence but at the same time you now need to also understand what does it mean to do this in the best interest with the company where you are secured, where you give and you get back and I think being authentic where you are honest and you are reducing the level of self-righteousness that you need to have there's a level of self-righteousness you need to even start a company but then as you have this thing becoming more and more real and I have that dust is settling and the companies becoming less nebulous and the market is being explored, you need to reduce the self-righteousness because now the negotiation is beginning with your early employees and with your early customers and so on so now you need to

work in the context of people who are willing to give you a chance, the early employee want to give you a chance, the early customer wants to give you a chance so you need to reduce and lessen that amount of self-righteousness and add a little bit of vulnerability where you are willing to say look I think I could be wrong and let me go and learn from my early employee and let me go and learn from my early customers and that's the kind of give and take that you need to start off where the people want to say, look I want to actually deal with this set of founders if its early employee, I am going to deal with this company if you are early customer and so on so there's a lot of people dynamics and you know the psychological piece that's equally important here, they are just the idea itself, everybody has ideas the question is how do you really go and landing it would be in doing business which is the most important thing about doing business which is dealing with people.

DJ: Journey at Nutanix, how founders should think about the co-founders? What does it take to make the good relation work?

DP: So the first one to me is constantly evolving , because the company is supposed to evolve and it starts from this core idea to a business to a competitive landscape, to a constantly changing landscape, if the company need to be that bean that has to evolve how can you do that without the core volume all the time so the most important thing to me is that a constantly evolving core every founder out there seems where I can actually outpace the company revolution because then I am pulling the company forward rather than being pushed by the company, if you are lagging behind you have to push by the company. So that is the core of it now the second one is how do you deal with shocks, can you learn from shocks and can you be better? With shocks in the system, can you learn from mistakes? Which is again going back to constantly evolving sort of individual and of course the other one which you can't early on figure out because a lot of these things are tested overtime is being authentic and authentic is an easy word to say but it's really difficult to practice, one of my best mentors is person by the name of Mike Robins one of the Ted's speaker talks about authenticity he has written books on it and he says it's a formulae, spectrum that goes from dishonest people on the left to honest people in the middle it basically says it's not good enough to be honest so you got to take something out of honesty and add something to honesty to make to make it authentic what you take out is self-righteousness and what we add is vulnerability and *Honesty-Selfrighteousness+vulnerability*, So I go by four A's for myself when I look at a business, when I look at people and I am trying to practice myself to become a better professional and a leader obviously one of them is antifragility like how do you learn from shocks and get better, authenticity, ambition and attention to detail. Ambition, attention to detail go hand in hand, ambition is the optimism and attention to detail is paranoia and together they have to be, because they are the left brain – right brain the schizophrenic sort of mindset that you need to have as founders because you need to be a visionary but at the same time you need to know how to land the vision and landing is about to attention to detail.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Of the various things, Dheeraj talks about, I liked the point he makes about the tension between Ambition and Attention to detail. I recently read a blog post by the CEO of Acumen Fund (Jacqueline Novogratz). She talks about the notion of looking at Values as a tension between two opposing things. Being Decisive and Democratic, Listening and Leading, Being Audacious and humble and so on. It also reminds me of one of my earlier conversation with the Venture Investor - Avnish Bajaj who spoke about Rudyard Kipling's IF which talks about how it is all about striking a balance across the various elements.

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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
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- 19.10 Dheeraj Pandey - In Summary - Playing to Potential

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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