



play to potential

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## Context to the nugget

Dheeraj talks about how he draws parallels across diverse domains - life, business and technology. He also talks about looking at the company like a combination of multiple sub-companies that are building, scaling and maintaining all concurrently.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Just going back to your leadership style you spoke about pulling the company forward Than being the bottle neck as one of the prerequisites, as the organization evolves let's say from being hustlers to builders to scalers, how has your leadership style evolved how have you evolved as a person, how have you grown and where have you gone?

Dheeraj Pandey (DP): One thing that I have observed about myself is that I learn from the life than ever before I have really come to internalize that business and life are not two different things, technology and business are not two different things they are all into weave together actually so I have come to really value context. And when I say context I mean that at the end of the day technology is not an end in itself it's a means to an end business is not an end itself its means to an end eventually they all have to draw parallels from everything that we see around us in life so I am doing more and more of that so we never there's a tough decision to be made, I am looking at what else is out there that looks like this and it doesn't have to be from the industry could be from something completely different and it helps its just this idea of focus listen respect that I talk to my son about, I am trying to figure out are we doing that enough with our customers? Are we doing that enough with our employees and so on, we have this customer centring attitude but employees are also customers in some sense and so on I think I have evolved a lot in this area of really connecting the dots with the life and business and business and technology I have also evolved to be more uncomfortable which means feeling more vulnerable when it come to tough decisions making because early on if you are a people guy and you are gregarious and so on you like being liked and then you've got to realize that your decision have to go to protect the company as much and because the company is the bunch of people as oppose to just the individuals, the individual relationships that you have than the relationship that you have with the company and if you do a good job of it then all of a sudden you will get comfortable about the realization that you might not be liked but you better of being respected so how do you start to get comfortable with this idea that you draw that like being respected than being liked and there is very fine line between the two actually.

DJ: From a behaviour stand point what's the trade-off there what do you need to start doing differently to move the needle from being liked to being respected?

DP: A lot of it is about decision making a lot of it is about seeing two to three years ahead, a lot of it is about optimising for the whole versus the individual including myself because that's what keeps me vulnerable as well it's not like I am the guy without which the company won't run actually, I have to think about things like sensation planning as if it's a natural state of being as oppose to something that's uncomfortable I have to think about the company as if it's a living being and think about its goodness and these are things that you never thought about because when you started out it was about you are brilliant, your ideas and sort of endurance and things like that, eventually its like well I am just helping a living being because there are thousands of families that now depend on this thing and these 3000+ families dependent on Nutanix today so you got to know what the burden of responsibility means and obviously I have become a lot more long term greedy than ever before every year I am becoming more about the long term than before and again it ties back to thinking about the company, what does it mean to be long term greedy than being short term greedy and have this instant gratification sort of,

DJ: Give us an example of the decisions you take to sort of to move the organization in that direction of being long term greedy?

DP: Obviously lot of companies wants to optimize the current quarter and because they believe that the stock will go up if they actually get going job with the current quarter but many times the short term and the long term are odds to each other's as a public company yes we need to do sprints, quarterly sprints, would you need to constantly keep in mind that look this company is a marathon of sprints and yes wall street cares about sprints but eventually the stake holders in the company who are long term shareholders and employees and customers, they care for the marathon because they are investing for the marathon customers of Nutanix are just not buying things today they are buying the experience for next five years, employees are not just employed you for next 6 months they are investing an experience for the next five years hopefully company defining and a generational wealth building and so on and these are not the short term decisions that they have taken, because what we have done is, we are trying to rearchitect computing so it already is a highly disruptive just the definition re-architecture is highly disruptive so the customers that are actually embracing us are forks who are saying I want to look at next four to five years with you because I don't re-architect every year so I think that long term greed is more pervasive in me than ever before.

DJ: What's the signature shift from each of this phases from hustling to building to scaling if you had to really bring it down to one two or three are there distinctive shift that you have made in the way you engage with the living being

DP: So the first thing is that the companies in the company's parks of life there is a great presentation that Mark actually made few years ago at Stanford, he is one of my mentors actually he is the founder and ex CEO of ... the software he was on the board for four years and he basically talked about how we need to keep launching new arts of a company for it to be relevant, the cycle of creative disruption which is compressing every five years and its compressing further I think you are scaling and you are building and you are maintaining all at the same time may be three different products, maybe there are three different companies within larger company, because obviously if you are not building five years hence then your current product will be destroyed or destructed because of the competitive landscape around you and I think in that sense that fact that you have multiple product portfolio company now we have to go and watch since you, what you built eight years ago and six years ago but we are also constantly building and scaling maybe two of the products or like we have built an operating system which is a which is a hypervisor four years ago and we are scaling it and then we are building things on top of that, so this is now multi-layered cake

and the base of the cake is something that you are maintaining but the top layers of the cake is what you actually building.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Couple of things struck me here. First is the point Dheeraj makes about the linkages between business, technology and life. I find the great leaders being highly reflective and extremely insightful about the parallels between what we experience at work and in other domains. It is fascinating how they take the learnings from one domain to another. The other piece that struck me was Dheeraj's point around having 3 sub-companies within a company like a multi-layered cake. The one question I try and get to the bottom of when I work with a leader is how they are spending time? And how much of that time is allocated for building, scaling and maintaining or whatever the equivalent might be for a services business. The tension here is that if you are successful with your product/service, your bandwidth is likely to get sucked into milking the here and now. How do you create the bandwidth for yourself and the organization to solve for the future arc of disruption is a question worth asking for leaders

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## End of nugget transcription

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- 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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- 19.08 Dheeraj Pandey – Work,life and success
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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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