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Context to the nugget

Dheeraj talks about the parallels across the Fragility spectrum that Nassim Nicholas Taleb refers to and the Honesty spectrum that Mike Robbins refers to) and talks about the connection across the two. He shares about how to build authenticity and anti-fragility in every aspect of the business.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Talk to us little bit about some of the near death experiences in Nutanix and more specifically what do you mean in terms of antifragility in terms of both building that mechanism at individual level but also how do you think about how do you inject antifragility into the culture of an organization?

Dheeraj Pandey (DP): Going back to drawing parallels, I believe that more things change the more they will make the same This Mike Robbin's Idea of authenticity is highly parallel to Nicholas Taleb's Idea of Anti-fragility because they both talk about the Idea of spectrum on the left of Taleb's spectrum is fragile systems on the middle of Taleb's spectrum is resilient systems which is like honesty, like resilience is not good enough and so if you apply pressure to the system it goes back to the original stage that's not good enough just like honesty is not good enough so both of them apply very similar Principals of shock or vulnerability to make it better Its just amazingly fascinating, there are two seemingly discreet things that have the exact same parallel in terms of the continuum and so on so antifragility and the shocks that Taleb attaches to the to those things is similar to honestly plus vulnerability makes you more authentic which is what, antifragile is so I think learning from shocks, being vulnerable are things that are very very closely tied to my psychic now.

DJ: And what is being vulnerable mean from a leadership stand point, what sort of behaviours would you recognize?

DP: In everything that we do as a business has engineers has architect has product managers, we need to have ... when you write a design doc you need to have something that says and these are the things that you have not and these are the things that you have not considered and by the way these are the things that does not addressed, in a product requirement documents we talk about trade-offs, what kind of things it does, and all of sudden its more authentic when you actually talk about the fact that we have not considered these things you are reducing friction, when you do press releases you don't talk about industry, I hate the word industry leader, I hate the word industry leader self-proclaimed monikers like industry leaders and that's what people just trying to be something and you have not achieved anything and along the way we should talk about how we could still fail and when you say that all of a sudden the audience lowers the god this is believable because its human to be vulnerable actually, you do the same things in board meetings, how do you

actually go there and not try to be this super human with the mantle of perfection around you that's highly impregnable business professional that is basically running perfect show and so on, it said if you look at your board members as human beings and as people you can learn from and they are willing to help you with some of the things, all of sudden it is a much better board environment than if you look at them as people who are over seeing you or something.

DJ: On culture how do you think about injecting antifragility into your culture at Nutanix? How have you gone about doing that?

DP: If you think about B to B and again similar to B to C as well customer success is everything and technology is a never perfect product and I look around and look at what really is common about the best brands in the world its customer service, you look at the best plans in the world it could be completely dispute and decrease but the one thing they have in common is loyalty from the customer which comes because of customer service, it's the Human – Human thing that actually connects, businesses to people, and I was listening to Deepak Chopra three years ago and he said look the richest people in the world they don't buy things they buy experiences so how do you deliver that experience during the lows, roguishly technology has failed, so if you go and make it memorable to this idea that you are apologetic, you are vulnerable and yet you will improve the situation, that's what people remember, you don't remember the fact that your product failed, what they remember is how you came together to really make it better and make their overall experience ... these are war stories that humans wants to remember, same thing with the software, we talk about self-healing, at the core of machine learning and AI is that man does less and machine does more and so what does it mean for machine to do more, machine learns from the other machine about its inherent vulnerability and it tries to improve by recovering on it's own and stuff like that, like we run software and commodity hardware, the word commodity is highly vulnerable cause commodity hardware fails a lot so how does software recovers from that and even the state of being says look its ok for hardware to fail I will go and make it better I will be able to before I alert the human I know what it means exactly for the software to recover and selfheal and so on I think they are all very important parts of the design or of the next generation systems where a man does less and less and the man machine interface is not crossed as often as we used to in the past human do as little as possible but machines can do more because machines are antifragile.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: What struck me here was the way Dheeraj connects the dots across Mike Robbins notion of vulnerability and Taleb's version of anti-fragility and how being vulnerable is like applying shock to a system. Both are quite powerful concepts in the context of developing as a leader and in terms of building a culture in an organization. This reminds me of an incident where I was working with a successful entrepreneur who had raised a large round of funding from a very prestigious fund house and had hired a Business Leader to help him with leverage so that he could go after growth and new horizons. When I was assessing the entrepreneur in the context of the transition, I spoke to one of his Board members and mentors. He said, this guy is great, strategic, doing the right thing and so on, but he seems too sure. It was a very interesting insight and in a way ties back to the point Dheeraj makes about vulnerability. While we celebrate intellectual horsepower and the ability to have an opinion in a leader, there is something to be said about being real, being honest and saying I am not sure whether it is your interaction with your Board, your employees or your customer.

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End of nugget transcription

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Dheeraj Pandey - Nuggets

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- 19.02 Dheeraj Pandey - Building optionality during early career
- 19.03 Dheeraj Pandey - Relationship between Co-founders and Company
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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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