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## Context to the nugget

Vishy talks about what he looks for when he is looking for long-term potential. He talks about the criticality of consistency in performance coupled with an attitude where someone is willing to grind away at a goal. He also discusses the success of academies that have produced a pipeline of talent and juxtaposes that with examples of a Roger Federer emerging from Switzerland or a Magnus Carlsen emerging from Norway.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): I am curious about those spotting potential, what do you look for when you see a young athlete in any game, what do you look for you to say this person will rise all the way to the top, are there markers of potential that you look for? Apart from the capability in that sport?

Viswanathan Anand (VA): I think you look at some basic technical level, at least on the chess board if I see several good moves in a row or something like that, I mean one good move can be accidental but not five in a row, then you might think oh that's interesting, it's not in a single move it's the fact that five of them were good then you think oh wait that can be accidental, sometimes you look for an attitude someone who just sits there and willing to grind away well that's the different kind of sporting skill which also should be rewarded, with Olympic Gold Quest it's actually a lot of data but we take someone who's already been well trained if you like so someone who is already a National champion or a record holder or a common wealth thing, there is something that we work with and then Viren gets in touch we try to evaluate the their prospects what are the steps they need to get better, what are the best steps they need them to qualify in the Olympics what are the mile stones along the way you expect them to do, what are their training needs, what are their financial needs, practical needs things like that, how can we help? A lot of that but we don't do so much talent spotting yet, we are doing more and more spotting now as we work with the younger athletes but while I can tell if someone is reasonably talented, I can never say how high they are going to go because there are so many things along the way then it becomes unpredictable,

DJ: What's your take on creating a condition to create a pipeline of talent? What does it take?

VA: I honestly don't know because clearly you have the Soviet school of chess you have the German football academy then you have then you have the Barcelona football academy, you have tennis academies and things like that, so there are examples of these things but I, but then there was nothing that anybody has done, which should have created a Navitech and a world champion, the chess champion I don't know anything that Switzerland did to get a great tennis player, so for every story where you say so these were the steps followed and we can make a factory out of this there's things that arise at just have no expectation and I simply don't know what it is that required? Why

are not the Switzerland have such a good tennis player, there are just too many things that are not predictable I think all you can do with an academy is to set a reasonable expectations but that's it talent follows its own rules.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It is interesting to see that there are a few things that need to come into play for us to harness potential. Building on what Vishy says, one needs to look for a certain consistency in performance coupled with an attitude to grind it out day after day over the long term. One also needs to put together a support plan or a development plan in a corporate context that is tailored to the need of the individual to fulfil their potential. In one of my earlier podcast conversations, Viren Rasquinha (VR) (who has played Hockey for India and is now the CEO of Olympic Gold Quest) spoke about this in some detail. He spoke about what he looked for when he was trying to spot potential

*VR: "for me the very important quality is the hunger and desire to be the best in the world, and not just being happy with being national champion or common wealth game champion, we want our athletes to have dream and desire to be best in the world, and for that we need to gage whether are they are ready to run through a brick wall every single day in training."*

DJ: He also spoke about how at OGQ they try to tailor the development plan including the selection of the coach to cater to a specific developmental need for the athlete to fulfil their potential

*VR: "how do you pick a coach in context of player, so I will answer it with Mary Kom's example, in 2009 women's boxing was introduced in the London 2012 Olympics for the first time ever, Mary was already a five times world champion winner, but in the 46 KG weight category and 48 KG for last one, now when women's boxing was announced in 2009 that it would be for the first time in London 2012 Olympics, before that boxing was only a Men's sport, but the least weight category for women was 51 Kgs so that means Mary Kom who was originally a 46 Kgs boxer to move into 51, which is two weight categories higher, I had been unheard of for a boxer to go two weight categories higher and win an Olympic medal now the challenge was because when you fighting in weight category not only you have to put on the right kind of weight but you are fighting against taller opponent, which is a major technical challenge in boxing if you are fighting against taller opponent that's the big challenge, we researched a lot and found out a coach by the name of Charles Atkinson who's specialized in taking fighters up weight categories and making them into world champions"*

DJ: If I translate that to the corporate world, it implies that we need to have a razor sharp sense of the developmental need for a leader before we go and put together a development plan or pick a coach who is best in class for that issue.

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## End of nugget transcription

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Podcast Transcript [21.09 Viswanathan Anand - Identifying and unlocking potential](#)

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Nugget from Viren Rasquinha that is referenced: [Spotting potential](#).

Nugget from Viren Rasquinha that is referenced: [Picking a coach - Learning fom Mary Kom's example](#).

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## Viswanathan Anand - 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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