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Context to the nugget

Meher talks about her approach towards CSR and Philanthropy and how she thinks about “chunking” rather than “sprinkling” (a phrase Adam Grant uses in his book Give and Take). She also talks about the criticality of working with the Government to drive Scale.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Talk to us a little bit about the distinction between CSR and Philanthropy, talk to us a little bit about CSR the way you think about it and how it's similar or different from the Philanthropy?

Meher Pudumjee (MP): I don't know whether it is right or wrong that the way I look at it is, Philanthropy is more personal so it's what you do with your money. So say take myself, where do I get the money from either I get it from a salary which I don't receive now but whatever, salary, and my dividend now what do I do with that is my philanthropy in terms of financial of course time would be the same irrespective, whereas CSR is corporate social responsibility so some way it's the money of the corporate so that's in terms of financial resources, corporate social responsibility of course goes beyond that in terms of what do you want to do with the company's money in terms of resources to make an impact on society so we have decided in both Philanthropy as well as CSR to look at education and we are also trying to see how do we make an impact sometimes with similar NGOs but leveraging on both are personal money as well as corporate money, so that you are not defusing so then you are making an impact otherwise it could be a little here little there and I always feel that whether it's philanthropy or whether it's corporate social responsibility if you fritter away the money in terms of ten fifteen twenty little causes you are not possibly going to see that change happening in your lifetime of course depending on the course that you take so I think it's nice to be able to leverage nice to be able to try and work with other corporates which is what we are doing in a few of our ventures, it's nice to be able to work with the government because the government nobody can bring scale as much as the government and you can only do so much you can be like a proof point in terms of what you do but ultimately then it's a government that scales it up.

DJ: If I look at the questions that people often ask, where to give, how to give and how much to give, where to give? You said education that's for you, any insights around how you got there?

MP: The way we got there is purely because when my brother was around he was very keen on giving a lot of our money and he sort of told my mum and put a gun to her head and said you have to give 90% of your wealth away and my mum said you can't tell me what I should do with my money, you concentrate on what you are doing and of course when he passed away a year later and so my mum felt that lets do something and of course as I said, she is been a social worker so she has

always done something or the other but nothing in impactful manner and we said how do we do it, we are so busy with Thermax and we have got so much on our plate let's find a good credible NGO that we trust we had no idea whether it's going to be education, health, music, science, nothing. We just came across somebody told mum why don't you go and meet Shahin Mistry at that time she had just started Akanksha and so mum met her and their relationship brew and she just felt that this is someone that I can trust and so that's how we started with education and then we have seen the power of education through Akanksha, through Teach for India, through all the other NGOs that we are working with and we have seen how it can change a child, a family's life and it's with that we decided let's focus much more and let's focus all our efforts on education and then try and make a difference so that's how it started, there was no real game plan or anything like that.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It is interesting how Meher took up a cause for philanthropy and CSR, which is education in her case. I am reminded of what Adam Grant says in his Book – Give and Take. To use his words, he says when it comes to giving back, Chunking is often better than sprinkling so that in the heads of the Giver, it adds up to something significant. Meher makes a similar point about picking a cause that they care about and making a difference. Thank you for listening. For more please visit Playtopotential.com, for other speakers and curated playlists against themes.

End of nugget transcription

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Meher Pudumjee - 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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