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## Context to the nugget

Devdutt talks about his journey after graduating with a degree in medicine. He mentions that he didn't have any childhood inclination in Mythology and he first used the word Mythology in a deliberate sense somewhere in the 1990s. He talks about how he started gravitating towards mythology in an organic fashion including writing several books and the TED talk in 2009. He mentions that he was in the Pharma industry till about 2007 after which he became the Chief Belief Officer at Future Group and possibly committed to Mythology as a career.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** How you got here from medicine to mythology? What were the key reflections points and what was some of the choices you made?

Devdutt Pattanaik (DP): I didn't really create this journey, this journey happened, I took advantage of every opportunity that came in my way, so I was just a medical graduate who didn't want to practice clinical medicine, and didn't know what to do, and you have to earn a living, you are a middle class family your family is ... your father is retired how do you earn money and I was good at communication, one thing lead to the other and I was in what is called medical communications, writing pamphlets I didn't realize it was a big thing at that time I would do it very casually, I had 8-10 clients and I was, now when I think about it I had already a consultation in the very early days but at that time nobody told me it was a big thing, I just had to do it, because I had to earn the money and I met the right people who taught me how to write better senior people, I was just got lucky, but they always knew I had this interest in Mythology and they just used to find it amazing which have this conversations about this I joined the healthcare pharma Industry for fifteen years I am doing this in the free time, I am writhing a Mythology, I was writing my Mythology and somebody just told me hey somebody wants to publish a book would you like to republish your book? So I didn't look for a publisher, publisher came to me. It was post medicine it was something that usually in the later part of the medical I would say post medicine completely. I used to read broadly philosophy religion but this Mythology is the word actually emerged only in the late 90s, I used the word Mythology for the first time very technically and I was obsessed with defining it and nobody was defining it correctly for me, so there is completely zeroing on Mythology happened only in 95-96, really my journey is because series of coming my way right person who helps me right medical literature and then I get the publisher who publish my book and I have published my first book 20 years ago and he kept publishing my books but it was not doing well, who would get Mythology and that time then I have to keep doing my management, and that time I joined pharmaceutical industry and when I joined the Pharmaceutical industry I was doing very well because you are smart, I today realize that I am a peristomes thinker, I think patterns, that time I didn't know that so I could take any job and I would like very fast, so I was like one of those rapid risers much loved by the directors, not loved by the

juniors because you are thinking too fast for them and you are figuring out it very rapidly and I remember some people saying you meant to be a consultant, you can work anywhere, I didn't understand what is consultant? I never heard this word and then I heard auditors, what are auditors? I never heard these words, I am entering a corporate world and I would read up on that, what is this? So this was the all very organic, until one day in these organic, I used to give these casual lectures with the friend of mine who on Mythology and in university some people in advertising knew me a lot there were people who read my books on advertising, Santosh Desai for example knew me many years ago long before I was popular, he used to always like me and he used to spend a lot of time, he writes TOI's some of the most complex articles in City City bang bang but to give you a sense of there were people who knew but they were like but they were like the stylist segment and then you are introduced one day to Kishore Biyani of the future group and he thinks you are of value and tells you to do it full time, now this I didn't plan it, it happened so these things are happened or Ted happens to me because somebody says do you want to do Ted in Indian I have never heard Ted in my life until I went to the venue I didn't know how important or big it was I just knew we want something new in Mythology and everybody they met kept saying this is the guy called Devdutt Pattanaik so the lady met me I said ok and I thought oh my god why am I going to Mysore to talk for, and 18 minutes I would be very angry, what is this, this is not the way you can teach this and this was 2009 so I had no clue there's something called Ted and I am doing my own thing I have already written 5-6 books at that time not 5-6 I think 10 books by that time but it's not popular, popular in the sense the way it is popular today, so it's very organic, so ted happened and then Menaka Joshi walks into my future group office and tells us that we want to do a show on Business Sutra, I don't think she was also sure what she wanted and I said you know what I am very interested in Business and Management because by then I had a very good understanding of business and I saw that the dissonance with India, complete dissonance, complete and utter dissonance today I realize that there is a problem with management, everybody in this word is questioning what is management, what is the entire modules are being questioned this growth module is being questioned, we are hurtling towards the disaster but that time I sensed it intuitively because our patterns were not matching, and whenever I do use this word, nobody is educated around me so they look me like who is this? So they used to like "*Ye Ramayan, Mahabharat ki story bolta hai*" which was fine because it help me earn my money but I knew that this is just the tip of the iceberg and now I realize that you have to see things before others and then show it to them be patient and I have been lucky in that journey, I have just got the right people and then you know Amish Tripathi happened and a lot of the things happened and the category grew without we doing anything and then suddenly people realize ok that's entertainment and fiction but there's something deeper so 80% of my readers are interested in entertainment part of it but there are 20% who are like hey there's something more here which everybody in India knows, we all know there's a lot of wisdom in India but we have never articulated it and the Guruji is articulated, when I used to read the Guruji and I was like oh my god so wise man and today I am realising no fault in thinking because now this is a science coming back you and why they are saying these words and where are these words coming from and then you read post modernism that was a very important part of a structuralism philosophy literature, you start studying other things as a free reading in order to understand Mythology and you start questioning western understandings of the subject, you start questioning the best minds in the world because you start saying what is their prejudice unlike material science where prejudice doesn't really exist or exist very insignificant way, the human sciences or the social sciences are full of bias like Marston cannot talk without bias however hard he tries here's data but how you read a data is based on bias now these are things that you are only learn only not in medicine because clinical medicine is full of bias but pure medicine which is anatomy, physiology, Pharmacology cannot have bias it's just data the moment human beings come so you apply the same principles and that's what I sort of, and that happened over time and then its organic till 2007 I am still in the pharma industry its only after 2007 so it's literally 10 years now

where I am doing my own thing I was officially employed with companies but the private understanding was I will be on my own and I will do my own thing.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It is interesting to contrast this with the transition of Amish Tripathi (AT) who, after going to IIM Calcutta pursued a career in Financial Services then switched to writing. In Amish's case, the seeds of transition were possibly sown in his growing up years.

*AT: "I think the seed had to be found perhaps in an incident that happened 11, 12 years ago, When my family and I we were watching TV and we discovered something interesting and a philosophical discussion ensued and that was the genesis of 'The Shiva Trilogy' it was a philosophical discussion into the nature of evil. My grandfather was a Pundit in Kashi both my parents were deeply religious, so, we have an atmosphere in our family of our mates our scriptures of discussions of debates on it in our family we also read a lot, every one reads a lot."*

DJ: Devdutt, on the other hand talks about getting to Mythology much later but the seeds of enquiry being sown during the days in medicine thanks to some of his teachers.

I think what's common however is that this transition is often an organic process and not a magic switch. It's important to realize that as we think about transitions. Both these individuals had arguably already gathered significant expertise and market recognition before they left the previous orbit whether it was Amish leaving IDBI Federal and Devdutt leaving Future Group. When I asked Amish about when he quit his banking job this is what he said

*AT: "It was a pragmatic decision, look I come from middle class family so I always joke "Bhai mere pass baap dada ka ashirvad hai jaaydat kuch nahi" so I have to be pragmatic and practical in my career decisions, I have responsibilities you know I am blessed with the child, I have a wife so I resigned only after second book when my royalty cheque became greater than my salary cheque"*

DJ: Devdutt continues to have a career in the Pharma industry at least for about a decade before he commits to Mythology as a direction. I mention this because several people quit their jobs and start going after their passion from Ground zero and that can be a really tricky proposition because that doesn't guarantee cash flows and the lack of cash flows can come in the way of having fun in what you thought might be fun!

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## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Amish Tripathi that is referenced: [Where the seeds of transition were sown](#).

Nugget from Amish Tripathi that is referenced: [Transitioning from Financial Services to Writing](#).

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## Devdutt Pattanaik - Nuggets

- 25.00 Devdutt Pattanaik - The Full Conversation
- 25.01 Devdutt Pattanaik - Early formative years
- 25.02 Devdutt Pattanaik - Transitioning from Healthcare to Mythology
- 25.03 Devdutt Pattanaik - Being effective in the Gig Economy
- 25.04 Devdutt Pattanaik - Dealing with various life transitions
- 25.05 Devdutt Pattanaik - Effective coaching process
- 25.06 Devdutt Pattanaik - Focus vs. Perspective
- 25.07 Devdutt Pattanaik - Building Habits vs. Enhancing Awareness
- 25.08 Devdutt Pattanaik - Understanding fear to decipher beliefs
- 25.09 Devdutt Pattanaik - Building perspective and judgment
- 25.10 Devdutt Pattanaik - Building story telling capability
- 25.11 Devdutt Pattanaik - 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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