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Context to the nugget

Mouli talks the fact that the time people put in a job is not an appropriate indication of the experience they have gained. He outlines TMRR (Target, Measure, Review and Reflect) as a process through which people could derive a lot more experience than what the average person might get in that time period. He also talks about how people can build in the habit so that they practice it on a regular basis.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Expand a little bit more on TMRR.

Chandramouli Venkatesan (CV): Let's go to the very context, why that's very important which is to succeed I think one of the most important thing is to build the right experience and what I found was the very notion and understanding of the concept of experiences poor. For all of us we think experience=time so we say I have ten years' experience of something, time is a input, Experience is the output the output cannot be equal to the input so if you are putting 10 years somebody can end up with 5 year experience out of it and somebody could end up with 15 years of experience out of it. And what I found was the difference between successful people and less successful people was their ability to convert time to experience. Successful people seem to have a higher conversion of time to experience they got most experience out of the time they put in and less successful people also put in the same hard work in the same time but they don't seem to get the same experience out of the time they have put so that's the context to the game and hence I was going to trying to answer the question what is it that successful people do to convert their time to experience, what's the module? And that's where I came to the TMR construct, which is Target, Measure, Review and Reflect. And if I can give you a bit of a story in that one which is a activity we put a lot of time which is walking and we have all been walking for so many years but we don't thing walking is an experience for us and the reason I don't think walking is an experience is because my walking today is not better than what it was five years back but I put in a lot of time but I do nothing to convert that time to experience but if you take up athlete in the Olympics who is participating in a 15 Kilometres walking race the same walking is converted to experience by that athlete, while walking is not an experience for you and me it's an experience for that person and hence I asked what is that, that person does? What that person does is TMR which is for walking that person as a target to say I want to do 15 kilo meters in 3 hours 36 minute as a measure to say I did it in actuals in 3 hours 40 mins and then as a review which is I had uphill section downhill section flag section I possibly didn't do a uphill well which means I have to strengthen my ham strings and as a process of improving walking and converting walking into an experience, so that was I think the insight around which I built TMRR and then I realized that a lot of people in a corporate world have this assumption that TMR is something which happens by itself because companies make you do TMR\R through annual appraisal process gold

sheets or you have a target you have a measure you have a review and people mistakenly assume that, that TMR process is building experience for you. That TMR process is designed to ensure that you deliver the results that the company requires so if a boss reviews you it's often a review for results in task the purpose of that review is not that how do you convert your time to your experience.

DJ: I guess it drives company P&L but does not drive your individual balance sheet, Individual balance sheet and a company P&L I think that's the disconnect.

CV: And which is where I brought the fourth R which is reflection and really saying that for the time that you have put in if you asked the question what could I have done better then you actually have a very efficient way of converting time to experience.

DJ: To make it tactical Mouli when you reflect on your journey and some of the other leaders you might have studied to come up with this insight any tactical suggestions on how people can bake this habit as they go through life?

CV: I think it really just a focus on habit building, a lot of good things in life, I mean one of the interesting things of habits is they say bad habits are easy to build and good habits are difficult to build and a lot of good things in life, we say we want to do but we don't get around to doing it be at exercise, be at reading, be at reflection so how do we convert it into an habit is the question that I have pushed people my own reflection habit for example, I have tried to make it a habit to say every day in the evening when I go back home from office sitting in the car the first fifteen minutes I asked the question what could I have done better? So now I have a very anchored habit of saying the moment I get into the car I reflect and it's an automatic process and it happens for every nature of activity I have done and I will give you a very interesting anecdote, very early on in my career right in the first year in fact I joined as a management trainee in Asian paints but that was the exigency and the godown was suddenly unmeant so they put me into the godown saying the business has to run we will figure out the fact that you are a fancy MBA later but right now you are going to run the godown so I ended up running the godown for three four months a lot of people who would think oh I am wasting my time I am doing a manual job of counting boxes and reconciling boxes in the paper and so on and so forth now if you go out with the mindset of saying I want to convert that time to experience which is valuable, with the same go down standing there you can either do the just mechanical activity of reconciling boxes with paper ensuring goods come in, goods go out or you can also learn about the business and I learnt many things about the business standing there. First thing I learnt was how order patterns happen? When do orders come? Which kind of retailers order went, city retailers, how's their order pattern different from up country retailer how is month end orders different from month beginning orders which excuse used ordered in full boxes, which excuse get ordered in half boxes it was almost like a analytical process for me if I chose to look at that data that way and hence for example in hindsight when I got into marketing them I knew how to design boxes and I knew sitting there in the go down that most people who have design the boxes have never sat in the godown and it was very inefficient to manage those boxes in that go down, so I think it's just a mindset that you bring to say I can take any activity and convert it to a valuable experience if I think of it in that way, if I think of it as a manual activity, I can execute it as a manual activity if I think of it as an analytical activity with a lot of data from which I can get insights I can execute it that way.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Three things struck me here.

- 1) First is the point about TMRR; We often assume that review cycles are what the boss sets for us but often miss out on reviewing ourselves in a consistent and a systematic way; We focus on the inputs and the outputs more often than not get taken care of
- 2) It is also interesting to see Mouli talk about Reflect being the key growth driver in the TMRR process. The first three help you take stock but it is the Reflection and Acting on that reflection which really moves you upward in terms of building your capability. Several people don't bake in time for reflecting on how they are doing. It is worth baking that as a habit
- 3) I would underscore the point that Mouli makes about having a habit anchored around a repeating event (whether it is your morning coffee or your car drive or your gym session); Author and Coach Marshall Goldsmith calls it Triggers and suggests that we find triggers and link our actions to those triggers so that we don't leave it to chance

But the final point I want to make is that this is a bit like Compound Interest. In my experience of having observed people over a prolonged period of time (including batch mates from IIT M, IIMA and McKinsey) this difference starts showing up over a 10 year period where somebody who has had a Kaizen approach to life really starts accelerating because he or she has been deliberate about self-growth through the years across the various things he or she has done.

Thank you for listening. If you are new to the podcast and want to get a sense of the nature of content that is covered, you might want to go to YouTube and type "PlaytoPotential Highlights from 2017". I have tried to capture the key takeaways from my various conversations last year with leaders across disciplines. From people such as Zia Mody, Nandan Nilekani, Viswanathan Anand, Vijay Amritraj, Amish Tripathi, Vinita Bali and the like. For more, please visit playtopotential.com where the content is organized by nuggets and they are tagged by themes so that you could get perspectives from multiple individuals on a topic that you care about. If you want to listen offline say during a car ride home or during airplane travel, you could also access the Podcast on iTunes, Stitcher, Saavn and several other podcast apps but that may not give you the flexibility to navigate across speakers by theme. If you find the content purposeful, please go to iTunes, rate the show and share a review. It will help others discover it.

End of nugget transcription

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Chandramouli Venkatesan - Nuggets

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- 28.02 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Turbocharging your growth - TMRR
- 28.03 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Raising the game when it matters
- 28.04 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Playing the 1st half to win in the 2nd half
- 28.05 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Picking mentors thoughtfully
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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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