

The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129\*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the right side of the banner is a portrait of Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. A small disclaimer at the bottom left reads: '\*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

## Context to the nugget

Mouli underscores the criticality of having sound mentors in today's world where there are more forks in the road and several choices to be made for all of us. Mouli also talks about his framework for how we all should think about selecting the mentors that guide us. He talks about how Mentors should have seen some parts of the "movie" that you haven't and should be completely vested in your success with no conflict of interest.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** How you think people should pick mentors as they go through the journey?

Chandramouli Venkatesan (CV): Firstly, mentors are hyper crucial in today's careers. Because I think careers are non-linear it's quite unpredictable and hence I have many choices which you don't know how to make well. And you need somebody's help to make career choices well, nobody is there today who can make their own career choices perfectly so you need mentors the question then comes to say then how do you choose the mentor? And I think I have two or three principals on that first and for most a mentor is different from a career counsellor and the key difference is the mentor has the personal interest in you succeeding a career counsellor, I can counsel 1000 people today if they come to me and say give me advice I will give but I am giving it from neutral principle, I don't know them and I don't have a stake in their success but a mentor must have a stake in your success so that's I think one of the most important principals for me hence they know you and they care for you. The second thing is a mentor must be able to provide a view which is different from your view so often we make career choices talking to our peers our friends. The thing is all of us have the same view because of we are at rough stimulus stage of the career so we look at the same direction it is like you are in a road, you are in a 20<sup>th</sup> Kilo meter, you are looking at a 30<sup>th</sup> Kilo meter all of you are at the 20<sup>th</sup> Kilo meter a mentor must have a different view to your career, the mentor is at the 30<sup>th</sup> Kilo meter looking back and saying this is how the journey looks, looking back so mentor must be somebody who can give you a different view and hence must be at a stage of career and a position which is a view different from yours and the third principal are like in choosing mentors is no conflict of interest, a mentor must give advice based on only what is good for you and they have no conflict of interest in either managing their own requirement or the requirements of the organization they have only one criteria which is what is good for you? I think this is how you construct the mentor and which is why it is so difficult to find mentors.

**DJ:** In terms of mentors how have you thought about mentors? Has it been one or two people or has it been a pool of people that you have consult at key moments in time?

CV: I think it is difficult to have many mentors there would of course be many people that you consult but I think the difference between consulting and mentoring is in consulting you take the opinion and then you make the choice, mentoring sometimes you must be willing to even go by the mentor's choice if it is different from yours so hence it must be people you deeply trust and I have sometimes gone by mentors choice which are different from mine so it has been a few key people where I have built that degree of trust, where I have the confidence that they will only suggest it for my good.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: What I really liked in this segment was the point Mouli makes about careers becoming non-linear and there being several more forks in the road today than there were maybe 20 years ago. I believe, the two big questions we need to navigate as we go through our careers are Where to go & how go grow? People often think about mentors in the context of personal growth. While that is true, like Mouli says, I believe they can add significant value when we have a fork in the road and have a tough decision to make.

Very often people get lucky and get eye-opening insights on themselves in the most unexpected of places. One of my earlier guests Anu Madgavkar (AM) (who is now a Partner at McKinsey Global Institute but started her career in Banking) talks about an interview with a very Senior Partner at McKinsey who got her thinking about what sort of an environment she would flourish in

*AM: "I go back actually to the moment of epiphany that I had in a very unexpected place which was when I was being interviewed by one of the most senior partners in McKinsey 15 years ago when I was applying to join the firm and I have had a series of interviews which went fine and then this very very senior partner was sitting there and he said, asked me a little bit about my career goals or something like that and I started telling him that how I enjoyed every aspect of my professional journey so far except this one particular phase and he stopped me there in my track and he just in a very penetrating way he said why did you not enjoyed that phase and sitting in that interview actually I went through a moment of complete self-awareness, I was not aware of this but because he asked me that pointed question I took a couple of minutes to think about it and then I came back and I said as I think about everything I discovered in that phase that I am not fundamentally a very comparative person I am much more a collaborative person and that situation demanded a level of comparative behaviour that I was not very comfortable"*

DJ: Building on Mouli's point, it makes sense not to rely on luck but have a Personal Board of Directors who can be of value during crucial moments. I guess the benefit of Mentors is three fold

- 1) They have a deep insight into you and what makes you tick
- 2) They are truly vested in your success
- 3) They have a view from a vantage point which is very different from yours and their input, whether right or wrong will definitely make your decision more robust

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](http://playtopotential.com)

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## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Anu Madgavkar that is referenced: [Navigating your career](#).

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**Navigational Principles:** Leaders discuss their personal frameworks around how they made choices around pivotal moments in their lives. They articulate the set of criteria we should consider having when we are at a fork on the road and have to pick between disparate options. Arguably one of the most critical skills of the future as we navigate a world of abundance. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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### Chandramouli Venkatesan - Nuggets

- 28.00 Chandramouli Venkatesan - The Full Conversation
- 28.01 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Genesis of the book - CATALYST
- 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
- 28.06 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Decoupling quitting & joining decisions
- 28.07 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Evolving views on the notion of success
- 28.08 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Impact of Life on Work
- 28.09 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Cultivating "Lodestar" values
- 28.10 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Overemphasizing fit in a career choice
- 28.11 Chandramouli Venkatesan - Winning the Second half of career
- 28.12 Chandramouli Venkatesan - 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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