

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 a man in a suit and glasses, identified as 'Podcast Host Deepak Jayaraman'. At the bottom left, a small note 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

Vinay talks about how Narasimha Rao was a fusion of Don Quixote (somebody who acted without too much thinking) and Hamlet (somebody who thought a lot but didn't act as much) and how he brought the various shades of grey in his personality to bear as a leader. He talk about how we need to be cognizant of our environment when we think about what we do and how we implement it.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** In summary for our listeners about how to play to potential.

Vinay Sitapati (VS): Well I think the NR knew what but he also knew the how, that's really important, I am at the beginning of my career so I am asking myself what do I learnt from NR and that is if you want to do something how do you go about it? You have got to know your ecosystem, you have got to know the DNA of your organization, when your boss changes you have got to know the DNA of the new boss you have got to realize that when you have a mandate and when you don't, you have got to realize that when your boss is saying something is the boss actually giving you the power to do what you want or not? And within that realm of the real how do you put through what you want to do? Is what I think is the key lesson on NR.

**DJ:** And may be just to add to that what I found find fascinating is, he seemed like a reasonably introverted kind of a man given the way you describe him so to be so perceptive despite being introverted is just a fascinating paradox for me as I think about him.

VS: In fact in the book there is this famous essay by Russian writer who says that the two great figures in modern fiction is Don Quixote and Hamlet, Hamlet is somebody he thinks so much and he can't act, Don Quixote who's someone who acts without thinking and NR at his best merged both he was somebody who was thinking and somebody who was acting and that's what remarkable about him, he was a scholar as well as he was a politician so he was an introvert but he also knew how to act, he was somebody who was not very comfortable spending time with people but here we have it, he was a politician who would met hundreds of people every day and I think that essential contradiction of being half a lion is what made him work and he was exactly the kind of contradictory figure that India needed in 90s and this mix of being Don Quixote and Hamlet in the best sense of the word is what caused India to change.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Being finely tuned to the organizational context through various transitions whether it is a Market event like an acquisition or a new boss coming in is critical for leaders to adjust.

For instance one of the leaders I was working with was a Chief Product Officer in a Tech company. He was a creative kind of a professional and believed in Deep Work and long cycles in coming up with compelling product ideas. He was working with the Founder who had a vision around where he wanted to take the product. As the organization approached ramp up, the founder hired a COO from the FMCG world who was now the new boss for this Chief Product Officer.

Now suddenly the operating rhythm changed. The FMCG leader was looking for quick wins and 80% answers and started losing patience with this creative Chief Product Officer who worked well with the Founder but didn't recalibrate his style to the new leader who came in who was operating at a different cadence.

This is just one example but the key point is that we need to be acutely aware of our environment and tailor our decisions and course of action depending on the situation.

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. 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. Google has recently launched an app for podcast listening on Android platforms too. If you went to [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com), you would also have the opportunity to listen to multiple voices curated by a topic.

To give you a sense, one of the playlists is Inflection Points. These are points in time where the notion of what got you here, won't get you there applies in a pretty profound way.

If you find the content purposeful, please go to iTunes, rate the show and share a review. It will help others discover it. Thank you for listening.

## End of nugget transcription

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**Politics:** Insight into the realities of the political journey and the challenges when one transitions from the world of. You can access the playlist [here](#).

**Listening:** When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new". This is a quote by Dalai Lama. Several leaders talk about their experiences

with listening and how they have grown with it. More specifically, leaders also reflect on the criticality of listening when transitioning into a new context. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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## Vinay Sitapati - Nuggets

- 30.00 Vinay Sitapati - The Full Conversation
- 30.01 Vinay Sitapati - Early career choices - Law, Journalism, Teaching and Writing
- 30.02 Vinay Sitapati - Delivering good judgments
- 30.03 Vinay Sitapati - The reflection habit - decoding signal from the noise
- 30.04 Vinay Sitapati - Managing time, unfettered curiosity and resilience
- 30.05 Vinay Sitapati - Leadership under extreme constraints - Lion, Fox and Mouse
- 30.06 Vinay Sitapati - Staying relevant through transitions
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- 30.10 Vinay Sitapati - 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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