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Context to the nugget

Deepa recounts her twin-ordeal in 1999. Her husband was fighting in the Kargil war and she was anxious about his well-being. At the same time she had a tumour in her back that worsened which got her to a point where she had to make the choice between leading a normal life and facing a high probability of death or going for surgery to improve her odds of living but in a wheel-chair. She discusses how she navigated this passage of play.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): You talk about Kargil, 1999 when your tumour had relapsed and you had to deal with this diagnosis amidst stories from casualties and fatalities from war talk to us about how you navigated this passage of play?

Deepa Malik (DM): I even got operated in the hospital which was a major place where all the war casualties were flown in that was referral and researched R&R Hospital in new Delhi I was referred from Jaipur to New Delhi and while I was undergoing my check-ups and the decisions of the surgeries, every hour a chopper would land and the moment we would hear the chopper the blades the noise everything would stand still for that moment and my only question in my eyes was that doctors could read was may I know if my husband is alive? So it was a very difficult time when I look back but again there is a paradox out there, the thing which scared me the most gave me the more energy to face my own loss because there were soldiers average age 25 years, somebody had lost a leg, somebodies eyes has blown off someone has got paralysed because of bullet injury in head or somebody who is perhaps going to die in sometime and I said that and each one would smile because what they had done was towards their nation. It was line of duty, it was level of patriotism, the higher the injury, the higher the love for the country and they were not cribbing about it then what reason did I have because mine was a disease, it wasn't that I chose to go there and get paralysed so that gave me innate strength at the same time it gave me the biggest fear of losing my husband because if I was going to either die on the operation table or remain chest below paralysed because by that point of time I had no clue what is going to happened to my life? And the way everybody was reacting to that news given by the doctors the general stereo typical impression given by society to me was that my life is going to end there, I am going to be home bound, I am going to be room bound I will never be able to step out and do normal things in life or perhaps here on I am going to be a liability on the family, so it was scary but yes we did good I won my battle over paralysis and my husband won the battle in the Kargil and we are moving on.

DJ: At that time I read one of the articles which said that you had a choice between living in the wheel chair or continuing to walk till the end and face possible death that was a choice to be made. Tell us about how did you think about that decision?

DM: I chose life, I think motherhood was my biggest strength, I wanted to be alive to see my children grow up because my daughters were barely 7 and 3 years old and they were very young and I think I was very possessive about my kids, I didn't want them to be brought up without my supervision and I think that became a huge strength, I will be very honest, it was purely motherhood that made me choose to live but eventually disability gave a focus to my life and it also gave a direction that if I use my education in the right spirit and all the values which have been given to me by my parents and a supportive in laws so I could probably put all this together and make a difference and am glad I was able to do that to an extent, though there are miles to go before I sleep and miles to go before I sleep.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Couple of things struck me here. First is the point Deepa makes about motherhood giving her the strength and getting her to choose life. I realize that whatever said and done, the source of energy for a lot of people often comes from the personal domain and having a healthy home front is often the foundation that gives us the ability to withstand shocks on other fronts.

Second is the point she makes about how her situation paled in comparison to soldiers that had gone for war, had gotten wounded and had a sense of pride. Sometimes, framing the situation makes all the difference. Sheryl Sandberg of Facebook talks about the situation when she lost her husband. When she was grieving about his loss, she talks about a conversation with Adam Grant where he says that what if this had happened when he was in the car with the kids. That suddenly got her to see the situation differently and develop gratitude for what she had.

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End of nugget transcription

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Deepa Malik - 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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Podcast Transcript [32.02 Deepa Malik - Dealing with two possible fatalities](#)

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