



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

Arun discusses his definition of a leader – “she or he who takes the first steps towards something that she or he deeply cares about and in ways that others wish to follow”. He talks about the criticality of listening to what other people care about as a key element of building engagement and followership.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): In the book I really like the metaphor where you say listening is a bit like Yoga, where you breath out to direct the conversation, so that you are able to breath in the point of view of the other, but again as a leader sometimes you need to steer a ship in a certain direction, there are objectives to be met and stakeholders to be satisfied, how do you balance the need to steer conversation somewhere as a leader with the point you make about resisting the urge to steer. Is there a tension there?

Arun Miara (AM): Of course there is, but I reconcile like this that if I care deeply about something, very deeply and I want that to be the driver of not just myself but of the world, some value that I care about very deeply, I can't run away from that to change that is very difficult and perhaps not necessary, I mean if my value is one in which I want to make a world better in my perspective better for other people and not just myself then I should pursue that value but I want followers to come along with me people will follow if they care for where you are going, if they care for the same thing that you care about. I would hate to be in a position where I have marched off with this great passion and commitment, thinking in my mind that this is the right thing if people will follow me and then I turn around having marched off and I find no one behind me then I am like Don Quixote is on is a little animal no one's around and then I can pretend I am a leader but there are no followers, so I must as I take off on this journey, start listening to others around myself, listening to what they care about, and if I influence them with my caring as I learnt in my days in Tatas, when you are listening to someone else there's a window given to you because they will ask you also, then only they will openly ask you after you have respected them and heard them then they might, otherwise they age because you are the boss hear you, but they are not wishing to follow you, they do not wish to follow you but they have to, so I do feel that for a leader, yes you must have something that you care about, so I say that my definition of leadership is she or he who takes the first steps towards something that she or he deeply cares about and in ways that others will wish to follow, so in that sentence with this three parts I think there some key things here, it's about something that you deeply care about, it's about taking the first steps and not waiting for others to take the steps, so you take the risk and immediately in ways that others wish to follow and to locate what others wishes are and to be even be moulded by their wishes, its ok be open to change yourself.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In my work in leadership transitions, I find that when people move from a CXO to a CEO role, this need for listening really shoots up and takes a lot of people by surprise and some even get burnt badly by it because they are too rigid in their ways.

When you are in your function, you are often the master of your domain and you can get away by speaking more, listening less and dazzling your troops with your technical brilliance. But when you come a General Manager or a CEO with multiple functions reporting in, a couple of things happen.

1) The power-distance between you and your direct report suddenly shrinks in most situations. The people that report into you are not that different from you in terms of their journey and in some cases are possibly even more experienced or tenured than you

2) You are now in several conversations where your team member know much more you on a certain topic. Listening is your only way out to build credibility and to add value

Given we grow in a context that applauds achievement, I have seen several people race upto the CXO mark and suddenly they derail because they are not able to make this shift to leading through listening. Thank you for listening. For more please visit playtopotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

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](#).

Influencing: Leaders reflect on what it takes to get the ideas in your head to a wider set of people and drive buy-in. It's often a function of being tactful about listening to what the various stakeholders want; getting a sense of when the timing is right and driving the change you want by influencing the various constituents. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Communication: Communication and story-telling is at the essence of building culture in an organization. Lessons from an ad-guru, mythologist, armed forces officer, motivational speaker and more about how one could think about narrating compelling stories. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a **Podcast Whatsapp distribution group (+91 85914 52129)** where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating "INTERESTED". Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

Arun Miara - Nuggets

- 34.00 Arun Miara - The Full Conversation
- 34.01 Arun Miara - Art of asking good questions
- 34.02 Arun Miara - Steering by listening
- 34.03 Arun Miara - Giving feedback by listening
- 34.04 Arun Miara - Having deep conversations at scale
- 34.05 Arun Miara - The art of facilitation
- 34.06 Arun Miara - Judgment and values
- 34.07 Arun Miara - Listening & "Thinking fast and slow"
- 34.08 Arun Miara - Being heard in a noisier world
- 34.09 Arun Miara - Reinventing oneself at 45
- 34.10 Arun Miara - Transitioning across contexts
- 34.11 Arun Miara - Leadership in an open system
- 34.12 Arun Miara - 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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

Podcast Transcript [34.02 Arun Miara - Steering by listening](#)

Also available on Apple Podcasts | Google Podcasts | Spotify

www.playtopotential.com

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.