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Context to the nugget

Arun talks about how one must be clear about how one should think about structuring a meeting/conversation. He also suggests different formats depending on different depths to which we wish to go in the conversation. He makes the distinction between discussion, debate, deliberation and dialogue and urges us to be clear about what to use when.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Getting deeper in a ten minute at one on one conversation and let's say deeper in a 10 person conversation that you are facilitating what are some of the tactical insights you want to share with the listeners? For example what do you do differently now and in 10 min one on one that you didn't maybe 20 years back?

Arun Miara (AM): I find and my daughter does this in the California, she is master at this very well and my wife observes this about me now so we get into a train and just, you know some doorman at a place with us for ten minutes because the care hasn't come and she says you instinct is always to ask the person so nice to see you this is nice place, are you happy here? And then the person will say Yay or Nay, and then I will ask the person so what were you doing before this, of course if the person says happy here I promptly do ask, so what makes you so happy here? If the person who is very rarely they would say but they do say sometimes you know, it's not quite nice then I ask, so what's not quite nice here? And within three or four minutes that person had a conversation with me as they say to me that they hardly have with anyone else and I have learnt something about human being and the next time I meet that person I see that we can carry on from there if I want to or the person any case treats me differently that I seem interested in the person.

DJ: And maybe just to complete the point, leaders today go to a lot of meetings, facilitated a lot of meetings, what have you learnt about facilitating a productive meeting again when you were the part of the planning commission you have to facilitates meetings often with stakeholders on agendas that pulled in different directions, what have you learnt about the art of facilitation especially when you have got sort of diverse voices in room.

AM: Yes, well you know there are meetings and meetings and meetings, and the discussions and discussions and discussions. To design a good meeting one must establish first what's the purpose of the meeting that's how you start a design of anything, you know what the purpose of it is? So what's the purpose of this meeting so there can be a meeting which is merely to present some information to everybody and you call it a meeting, well that's the purpose then let's do that efficiently and effectively there can be a meeting where many people need to provide information so I can design a meeting where that is happening efficiently then there can be meetings where they say, where you

say we want to start locating what is really going on here, going on here means the system. Then if they said that's the purpose of the meeting then I would ask them first that look is there enough information already available amongst you but what is going on this situation if not then you will have to have a longer meeting because in the first part at least this data level so that you have common data is out there after that we are going to another meeting as you will, it's the same group maybe in the second stage we are going to now explore, what we believe is right or wrong in what is going on out there and then deeper than that what we believe is causing this to happen, so this is you know our theories of why certain things are happening and quite often it of course ends up in logical differences as well as ideological differences.

DJ: And you also talk about discussion, debate, deliberation and dialogue and you talk about the specific differences between these, for the purpose of our understanding what's the crux of the insight here?

AM: Well I will say very broadly the 4 Ds, Discussion I say just like it doesn't matter, you are not bothering about whether there's a purpose here to it at all in a debate you are wanting to debate between two points of view and this is the old Socratics and the Greek necks said dialectical between this and that and this is been the form of discovery about the rightness in any matter that is gone on to the court systems, you know the prosecutor and the defendant and debates, and it's the, it's a way of enquiry, this way of enquiry of course makes you defend a point of view when one want to win against another. So you are setting up a sort of a boundary and a competition between two points of view, when you go into a deliberation, it's not a contest. There are different points of view when perhaps even conflicting points of view but you are not wishing to break it up into who will won and who will lost and therefor in a deliberation I would not set it up against whether this versus that whereas I do find it is in TV or in college that it had to be are you for? Or you against? There's no grey zones. In a deliberation there are many greys happening there and so we are exploring them all but in the deliberation, we would stay in the ladder of meetings I was talking about at that second level where we got the data like and we are exploring what is going on, in a dialogue I wish to come to a deeper understanding about why you think that way and who you are? So the dialogue is always used as you know in that thing where two people generally where they say are in dialogue, four eyes conversation as the German said two eyes looking to two other eyes and trying to understand each other.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The big takeaway from this segment was that the point Arun makes about the structure of the conversation being informed by the objectives. Every so often, meetings are organized without adequate thought to who should attend, how it would be facilitated, what a good outcome would be and so on.

The other thing that occurred to me was that we possibly need more deliberations where we are trying to explore each other's point of view and build a more nuanced understanding of the situation and fewer debates where each side is trying to win the argument at all costs.

As a leader, how we frame the conversation and facilitation the interaction can play a significant difference in the outcomes and the culture of the organization.

Thank you for listening. For more please visit playtopotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

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Arun Miara - 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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