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Context to the nugget

Indranil talks about how we can apply the concept of Story-listening in the context of understanding another human being. He also discusses the power of stories in a home context. He says that stories make things real. Very often we are busy communicating abstract concepts without giving our children an insight into where the opinion comes from.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Now again may be this is a question from liner work that I am into let's say story listening and coaching again you don't discuss that explicitly in the book but I guess each individual life is so unique and so nuanced and so much of who we are and why we do what we do is contextual. As a coach I am curious about how we can leverage the power of stories to understand another human being?

Indranil Chakraborty (IC): By the way I do am an ICF certified coach. I don't talk about it too much that's only because I personally think that you know when people meet people, they need to put them in boxes to handle and if I say I am this and that and they don't know which box to put me in. I'd rather at this point occupy the story telling box. Now I think one is and you know this because you are practicing this so much is the power of listening is the difference between so many things. When I had become a coach one of the first thing my wife said is why you didn't become the couch earlier about the power of listening. Now the thing is that if I take the would I do with my new knowledge of story listening in coaching is really ask people to make real their opinions. So, if they came and said you know I don't want to do this because my boss is judging me is that's an opinion. If I go back and say give me an example of your boss judging you then I know what exactly what he means because remember again A) language is complex B) most of us are not even native English speakers. The word judging me may mean two different things to the coacher and the coachee and so if you jump into conclusion saying oh that's what he means why my boss is judging. You are now listening for that kind of judgement which is different from what he thinks is judging. If you can make that real so you are not listening to the fact that he is saying that the boss is judging but you are listening to the reality behind that statement of boss is judging and then you are on the same concreteness.

DJ: I think the again talking more on the home front, your book also got me reflecting on the impact stories can have in one's family life as a parent of as a father of two young kids I was just wondering just such a powerful way of getting messages across rather than telling them things again this is possibly not related to business story telling but may be a quick detour any quick insights on what leaders can learn in applying stories to their home context?

IC: Yes, absolutely I means it's not just home it's about communication so I would have brought this to the crux it's something that I have just mentioned little earlier which is what stories are doing is making things real. So, when you go and tell people you need to work hard to succeed that's abstract both hard work, success and the relationship between the two. Now why do you have that opinion all the opinion that you give your kids in business or in society where this opinion did comes from. You are not born with these opinions. Your opinion came from either a story that you are part of or the story that you have heard and that's how opinion happened. When instead of just giving the opinion alone you tell the story that made you to have that opinion that guy gets it. That guy also remembers it and the reason for that is very simple which is that when we give opinion, we are actually taking to the neocortex part of the brain which process language, data etc. but that's the young brain and it's extremely bad with memory its good when are interacting and then it forgets. Now however when you tell me a story I visualize when I told you that story earlier about the Coorg receptionist did you or did you not visualized to receptionist your receptionist could be one woman one men mine could be both men doesn't matter. You may not have been to... but you imagined the reception. This went to that part of your brain that does not understand language but processes visuals and emotions and this part of the brain has been with man for hundreds and thousands of years and scientists believe that because of the fact that it has been with us for hundreds and thousands of years it's been fantastic with memory. So, when you can not only appeal to the neocortex which is dealing with language but using a story appeal to the part that can remember because that part does not understand language it understands visuals and emotions. Then suddenly not only do you have the clarity of the message you have memorability as well. So, what I urge you to do is the next time you are driving an opinion at home which of course you will do thousands of times in a day. Wait for the one as a starting point wait for the one that you really believe in strongly and before you pontificate on it just ask yourself why I believe this. Whatever it is. Why do I believe that? What has happened in my life? Or what I have heard about someone else life that makes me believe this and then share that incident along with that opinion and see magic happen.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: My father in law is a retired Brigadier from the Indian Army. He fought the 1971 Bangladesh War and spent a year in the hospital nursing the bullet wounds from the war. Like most army men, he gets into a story telling mode often and it is fascinating to see the extent of recall that my children have of the various stories that he narrates over the dinner table.

I hadn't quite internalised it the way Indranil puts it. I guess there is something to be said about the memorability of a story as compared to an opinion. It is interesting to note that stories go to a different part of the brain that does a better job of storing information for longer.

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End of nugget transcription

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Indranil Chakraborty - 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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