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## Context to the nugget

Dr Guha discusses the dichotomy between Gandhiji's accomplishments on the public front and contrasts that with some of the challenges he had with relationships on the home front. He provides some context around why this might have happened.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other piece about Gandhiji's life is sort of the strange dichotomy between the accomplishments and the success let's say on the public front and let's say the tension in the family front in terms of the four sons especially, what's your take on, why it turned on that way?

Dr. Ramachandra Guha (RG): It's often true of many successful people that they neglected children and their romantic partners. I am sure if you look at great artists great musicians Picasso, Hussain, Einstein it's very true, even Nehru was rather neglectful of his wife that's known. Where you are very consumed by your career and making am sure many CEOs likewise. In Gandhi's case it was complicated by the fact that he had his children very young so with Harilal for example this is something explained with the great length in the prequel to this book Gandhi before India that Harilal was born when Gandhi was 18. Now do you have children?

DJ: I have two children

RG: How old were you? When your first child was born?

DJ: I was 33

RG: So you were 33 and I was 32 when my first child was born but Gandhi was 18 so when I was having my midlife career at the age of 40 or 38 and leaving the university and 37<sup>th</sup>, my child was 6 or 7 years old, there was no issue Gandhi was having his midlife career which was I want to give up lawyering to become full time activist when his son at 18 was having adolescent mid-life crisis saying do I want to do this do I want to do that? And they clashed so this is not to excuse Gandhi's harsh treatment of Harilal but to contextualise it that he was finding him a new calling he wanted to abandon being a prosperous lawyer and become a full time community activist working with the community and that made him deaf to what Harilal wanted. He told Harilal you go to jail because I am loving going to jail, Harilal said you went to London became a lawyer let me also do that first then of course the things then deteriorated and so on but he was a harsh and unfeeling father particularly to his two elder sons and towards his wife he was a typically Hindu patriarch of that time without questioning.

DJ: I guess you also go on to say in the book that Devdas the youngest was possibly the closest to...

RG: It took him a long time to learn how to deal with his children but he finally learnt and he had a very cosy relationship with Devdas.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It is interesting to have Dr Guha talk about the transitions that Gandhiji goes through and concurrently the transitions his family members (especially his sons) are going through. That is one interesting way of looking at work-life choices I guess. Being mindful of the various transitions that are going on in the personal and professional front around us (whether it is maternity, kids graduating, parents turning a certain age or something else).

Thank you for listening. Apologies for the audio being a little noisy. Dr. Guha and I had this conversation in the outdoors in the pleasant Bangalorean winter. But we couldn't put the construction worker at a neighbouring site or the birds on mute. Hope that didn't come in the way of the listening experience. For more podcast content curated by theme, please visit [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com) and visit the Curated Playlists section. To know more about the Coaching and Transition Advisory work I do, please visit [transitioninsight.com](http://transitioninsight.com)

## End of nugget transcription

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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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