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Context to the nugget

Dr. Guha speaks about Gandhiji went about making complex decisions. He talks about how he was able to combine the need to be democratic and to listen to the various people around him with the ability to be decisive and back his instincts given the overall context.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): How he made complex decisions? How Gandhiji went about making key decisions and how he involved the people around him? What can we learn about the way he went about making decisions?

Dr. Ramachandra Guha (RG): Well, I think he listened, observed, took in criticism but he could be quite firm when he made the decision, so Quit India is a great example. So the Quit India was one in which it was a very complex and difficult decision to make I mean we have the whole long chapter on this because the British are fighting for their own freedom against the NAZIs, India wants independence, British have their backs on the wall, they are being bombed, people are dying they can't see the Indian point of view, Nehru is saying Hitler is truly evil he is much worse than the British so at this stage we must side with the British, Rajaji saying the same thing but Gandhi is like a says no, they are not listening to us at least let them concede some symbolically say they will grant us independence although they have not done that, he is old he knows his time on earth is running out people around him are dying so he decides to launch this final battle and takes people along with him including people like Nehru who were disagreed with him. Rajaji opts out, Rajaji says no this is wrong and these are breach which would heat later so in many ways I mean he did not; he listened to people, he took their views in account but on matters that mattered greatly to him, he didn't like take a popular vote and yield to the popular vote... Subhas Bose is another example Subhas Bose finally had to resigned. Likewise with Ambedkar when he went on fast in Pune it kind of coerced Ambedkar because Ambedkar had to give in because he felt that otherwise the death of Gandhi would be on his hands so that says he was not, he didn't have a complete decentralized the democratic approach I mean he will listen to people but he believed in something passionately he followed it. Usually through force or a will he got other people with him and some people left, Rajaji left in 1942 but Nehru fell in line in and went to jail.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

I guess the art of leadership is often about walking a tight rope across multiple dimensions, one of them being the decisiveness/democracy spectrum. While neither end is perfect, knowing when to swing to which side of the spectrum is possibly where the art of leadership lies. Great leaders like

Gandhiji are so finely tuned to the context and the environment they are in; they are able to pick a strategy that is fit for purpose given the situation they are in. While clarity of thinking and processing complex problems is a well-understood pre-requisite, what is often not as well understood I observe is being aware of what is happening around you and having feedback loops and communication channels that keep you abreast of the ground realities?

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 and visit the Curated Playlists section. To know more about the Coaching and Transition Advisory work I do, please visit transitioninsight.com

End of nugget transcription

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- 39.00 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - The Full Conversation
- 39.01 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Path to becoming a Historian
- 39.02 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Being a historian - what it takes
- 39.03 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Key career choices
- 39.04 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Multiple identities of Gandhiji
- 39.05 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Settling in a new context

- 39.06 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Gandhiji's personal life
- 39.07 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Being vulnerable
- 39.08 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - How Gandhiji made decisions
- 39.09 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - Inner journey
- 39.10 Dr. Ramachandra Guha - 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](#).

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