



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 '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with '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 Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. A small disclaimer at the bottom left 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

Matt speaks about how he works with athletes to expand their mental reservoir that they can tap into during a big event. He also delves into the detail behind how successful athletes debrief after a failure. He speaks about the importance of a grieving window and the need for perspective where the coach could offer significant value.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): How do you think about expanding or strengthening the mental reservoir of strength that we need to leverage?

Matt Dixon (MD): I think the confidence as a coach you cannot develop confidence, you can set a path where you can be the driver behind it but the quest is to put people in repeatable learning experiences and when people become familiar and they see progress, confidence grows out of it and so we are always looking for the opportunity to put them into what we always call successful challenge in other words, challenging people but not so that they may fail but so that they can just be successful on growth. Another component the confidence comes out of is really framing what success is and realising in many ways framing what failure is? Many people see so many life experiences and so many sporting experiences is being pass/fail, but we have success and we have opportunity for growth and when we look at the most successful athletes every time, they are the athletes that have understood or developed the resilience and the tools to navigate failure, in fact the one thing that is consistent is they failed a heck of a lot and strengths and confidence and mental resilience comes out of repeatable learning behaviours developing the resilience if failure and the growth opportunities that come from it. I will tell you Deepak when we have athletes who go to races one of their phrases that we use freedom to fail so you have got an athlete who is stepping up into the world championships and there's obviously a strategy behind how they can work post the race but we say you have absolute freedom to fail, many people that sounds defeatist but it's not ultimately there are things you can control and cannot control and in sport we cannot ultimately determine success, what we can do ever think that we can do in our power to give ourselves the best performance necessary and if we took everything in our power and we don't win that is successful failure and it's an opportunity for growth so I think the driver behind it is exposure, framing is success and then ultimately the one final component in this carries from sport although across the life and of course into business development realising that underneath that what I really said was embracing the journey. You can't rush it; confidence comes out of wisdom and growth over time it's never just going to arrive into an employee or into an athlete.

DJ: Back to these athletes who treat failure as a learning opportunity, if I were to go beyond let's say the clichés and dive into that moment in time, let's say if somebody is prepared for world

championship which comes maybe once in every few years, you have trained hard day in day out and then you have a bad day and you don't win a medal or you don't finish well, what is it about successful athletes about how they process that moment, the moment when they finish the race just sort of many a double click on that for us in terms of how they process those moments when, the moments of truth if you will?

MD: I think the first thing to say is that, it's really painful and so when we talk about athletes becoming really equipped to manage failure it doesn't mean they ... failure and it doesn't mean the pain isn't there and in fact great athletes despise failure and that's important they want to win but the key is managing and adapting to it is learnable. It is a skill and it fits within context. So, the first thing that I will say is that when we have these races, world championships, Olympic games, components like that most and the most successful athletes tend to be less outcome driven with particular events or singular events on that singular races most athletes tend to be intrinsically driven to in the pursuit of finding their best performance. So, that is the really empowering mind-set for a company if the quest is oh I just want to take the company public, I want to take the company public that tends to be a bit more outcome focussed and ultimately less impactful than I want to create an absolutely amazing company that is going to have this impact for this reason and I am going to get immense satisfaction and the buy products of it might be so I go public, or the buy product might be I win a world championship and so the first component to it is framing why the athlete does what they do? And very few of the very best athletes across all sports think I only do this sport to win a world cup or to win an Olympic medal, they are on a personal quest to become great and they love the sport and they love the journey and I think that set pressing component is the first step of resilience. The second component then is really what you was, what happens when you do have a really poor performance and I think there is a phase or a series of phase that they go through the first is to leaning to the grieving of it and so when an athlete has a bad race the first thing that we avoid is immediate analysis, trying to find the solution or the reason for that failure within the first 48 hours because it's impossible to think logically, think clearly and objectively and analyse yourself and how you went into that race with a clear head when you have the pain that is there so instead we give and we till about this degrading process we give this athlete 24 to 72 hours depending on the size of the event or the impact that it has had on him just to be just to leave it marinate and then we go through and we do a really objective analysis, and I think this is really important not just in failure but also in success, why did we succeed? And what if we fail? And when we think about that component we look at, it really anchors on controllable and things that are out of your control, so did you do everything that was necessary that you were trying to do in order to be successful and those the areas that are actionable. So we will stop at this thing control ... act on more you can impact and an athlete is much better at acquit to get over the grieving, get over the pain and move on if they have clarity in the areas that they can improve on next time and in areas that they can grow, they are also a better equipped to retain motivation and get over the grieving as well if they acknowledge the areas that were just out of their control they had accrue failure someone was better than them, the environment, something changed with the environment whatever it might be, it's all about differentiating between areas that you can control and impact and grow in next time and then saying look this just happened, it's a much better bridge to move on to progress for next time.

DJ: And may be just sticking to that the way you debrief an outcome, whether it's a win or a loss what are some of the things that you find to be in the blind spot of the athlete that sometimes you see but the athlete doesn't?

I think that many athletes have very short term memories, in fact we all have short term memories and when we think about the most common one that we have is, if an athlete has had a highly inconsistent runway into the race so much has gone wrong and he doesn't mean that necessarily a wonderful performance can't come out of it the first step for that athlete if they have a challenging performance is they consistently fail to self-reflect and in an objective way acknowledge or join the dots that may be their preparation wasn't optimal and a reason for that is a really good thing is self-belief and desire to be great and so great athletes have the ability to ignore adversity and still drive forward when things don't go well quite often they have a hard time joining the dots and so when an athlete has or face challenge I think that the blind spot is that word perspective of coming up and being able to just say let's not try and find a guilty quality for the reason your performance wasn't great and let's actually paint a global picture and that's incredibly hard for an athlete or an employee when they are so passionate and so motivated and so dedicated it becomes a very challenging and I think if there is the biggest impact of a coach it's the ability to help the athlete come up for perspective and see the big picture and it's an incredibly hard thing to do by yourself but once you taken on that journey it's an most empowering and impactful thing that you can do as an athlete.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Couple of things struck me here. First is the point Matt makes about the criticality of a successful challenge. He speaks about the step being small enough that it feels like a win but large enough that it moves you towards your objective.

Sean Young, The author of *Stick with it – The Science of Lasting Behaviour* – a great book on driving sustained behaviour changes, talks about the notion of step ladders (or baby steps) where you set yourself a small stretch target and you deliver it. He says that the reason it is possibly that effectively, partly is due to the dopamine rush you get when you make it happen. And that gives you added momentum and moves you in the direction you want. He says that too many people put themselves through too much misery for a dopamine rush at the end. And structurally, it is hard to motivate yourself day in and day out towards the goal with that much asymmetry of payoffs.

The other point that Matt makes is so true. The way the leaders see the world Inside out is very different from how I as a Coach see it Outside In. This is where I see the difference between Coachable and Non-Coachable leaders. The Coachable ones actually are willing to be vulnerable and explore blind-spots in their thinking as they debrief on the situation. While the less coachable ones often tend to externalize the problem and pick on some people that might have caused this.

Thank you for listening. Please visit playtopotential.com for more content. You could visit the Curated playlists section for specific bite sized nuggets that are captured by themes some of which might be relevant for you.

You can also find the podcast offline on platforms like Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Spotify and more. If you find this content purposeful, please rate and review wherever you consume this content. It will help others discover it. To receive updates on new content at the podcast, please sign up at www.playtopotential.com

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Deliberate practice: Deliberate practice refers to a special type of practice that is purposeful and systematic. While regular practice might include mindless repetitions, deliberate practice requires focused attention and is conducted with the specific goal of improving performance. Leaders across fields talk about how they think about this topic in their respective fields. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Resilience: Research by Angela Lee Duckworth (of Wharton) talks about a special blend of passion and commitment that she calls Grit. Leaders from various fields (Armed Forces, Writing, Sport, Entrepreneurship and more) talk about their experiences in cultivating resilience. 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.

Matt Dixon - Nuggets

- 46.00 Matt Dixon - The Full Conversation
- 46.01 Matt Dixon - Coaching CEOs and Elite Athletes
- 46.02 Matt Dixon - Coach Coachee relationship
- 46.03 Matt Dixon - Athlete to Coach to Entrepreneur
- 46.04 Matt Dixon - Forced growth - plugging the weaknesses
- 46.05 Matt Dixon - Toughness is not a differentiator
- 46.06 Matt Dixon - Expanding the mental reservoir
- 46.07 Matt Dixon - Visualization as a technique
- 46.08 Matt Dixon - Dealing with the "wall"
- 46.09 Matt Dixon - Rest, Sleep and recharge

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.

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.