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Context to the nugget

Matt speaks about how athletes deal with “the wall” which often happens when you deplete your stored glycogen (carbohydrate stored in our muscles) and the negativity and the feelings of fatigue that come with it. He also speaks about how he gets athletes to deal with pain and the nature of the relationship they could develop with pain to derive the performance that they desire.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): How people can learn from endeavour from sport in how athletes deal with the wall when it hits them?

Matt Dixon (MD): There is no better analogy than the emotional and physical impact to going through one of the toughest physical challenges that there is in endurance sport and one of the mistakes that people make and it's ironic that we came to this topic often spoken about visualization. Visualization really sounds positive and it's almost dreamy, we visualize ourselves as being robust and resilient and strong and we visualize our race performance as being free of adversity but the first step in developing the emotional resilience to navigate the wall or a complete break-down is first acknowledging is that adversity is inevitable and so even if we think about the iron man, the professional level that takes 8 to 9 hours depending on if you are a male or a female and for regulate everyday armatures it takes 9, 10, 11 about to 17 hours. If we think about just our energy in regular day, we have massive ebbs and flows of times that we fill out with thriving with feeling really good other times that we can barely keep our eyes open and those sensations are going to occur over the course of and iron man, you can magnify times a hundred. So, what we have to realize first is that adversity is a part of performance and you will have times where you feel like you can't go on, where you feel like you are breaking down and what it comes back to is first acknowledging and realizing that it's not the end when this occurs and I think what happens with many people is the first sign of adversity, the first sign of physically breaking down they move forward and they think goodness me, I am 20 KMs in I still have 20 KMs to go and then mind jumps to how am I going to finish this? I am just going to feel terrible for now and this is the start of the ... and people falling to a defeatist mind-set but it comes back to that sign control what you can control act on what you can impact and so we have athletes to do two things. First – is to take physical action, so physical action is often you need to take sugar very quickly in a sporting context and we need to change our rhythm whatever it might be so if you dragging yourself to a marathon you need to change your rhythm, you need to change your speed and that's sometimes its bizarrely speeding up for a short period of time to change the rhythm sometimes taking a walk break and whatever it might be but in mental component it comes back to what can I control right now what can I impact? And having the wisdom to realise this is how I am feeling right now, it is normal, but I have to know shorten those mini projects we talked about before to become very short so in an athletic mind-set

is I need to do the next mile or the next Kilo meter and nothing else and the driving point behind this, I think when you have the wall being open to feeling good again and when athletes just double down on themselves and they take some physical impact and they are patient their body can be open to coming back and so I think the one of the things I think really important is the word Pain and pain is the part of this and am sure in your half marathon you have experienced pain, it's not a very pleasant thing, but the relationship with the pain from an emotional stand point is a key component of navigating times of adversity or you call it the wall because pain isn't a response to your hard work, to your efforts to you doing something very special and so we always talk to athletes about having a conversation with yourself when you are under pain and we often are trying to push the pain away and say goodness me I don't want to have pain I don't want it to impact instead you are actually saying this is no more this is anticipated and this is a result of the hard work and doing something really positive and when you start to shift it from being Oh no I am in pain I must be struggling and this is going to be really hurtful to, pain is actually buy product of me doing something really special it helps build back resilience and confidence to keep pushing through.

DJ: Where do you draw the line between bearing pain and pushing through versus being pragmatic, listening to your body and saying you know maybe I am doing some long term damage here and cutting the loses do you come up with that situation?

MD: Yes, I mean pain can express several itself in many different ways so, when someone is in a race, pain is a natural buy product that we expect and you don't count your loses there you absolutely maximise what you are looking to do but on a chronic level on a day to day level where are, I think there are two things to impact here, what is good pain and what is not good pain? And that becomes a key component of staying healthy and in fact I would also say you could transplant the word pain with fatigue, what is good fatigue and what is negative fatigue? And I think that the question is it anticipated or not anticipated is it isolated or is it global, so when we talk about pain if you are working very hard and it hurts physically but it hurts across your body but it hurts in the areas the you were expected to if you are on a rolling machine your legs and your arms are aching and they are soar and it's hurting or your breathing is very challenging, that's anticipated, that's normal that's an outcome that you would expect there' no reason to back off but if it's isolated and its sharp and it's on one leg and I mean it's on the knee that's are you actually doing benefit or are you breaking down structurally and I think the same occurs with fatigue. Many people say, ask the question when should you push through and when should you back off. Well, key component of training globally is to stress the body and achieve positive adaptations, your body will always adapt, but you say adapting by getting stronger and growing and evolving or is it going into metabolic overstress, is it going down to where you are going to pull a hamstring muscles something along those lines, it comes back to is it anticipated or not? And so with an athlete if they are on a training camp it is anticipated fatigue and you push through but for a very busy executive that is training it's not that we need to fear for fatigue but we have to be have to come out of this perspective and say is this session going to lead for me to be able to grow and adapt and evolve, am I going to be successful? And it really ties in many ways Deepak to that toughness is not a differentiator because the best athletes, the best executives have the courage to recover when necessary so that they can ultimately grow.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I can relate this to my personal journey as a Solopreneur. When you are working in a large organization, there is some organizational momentum that pushes you in a certain direction but if you are on your own, you pretty much have to create that energy or momentum. There are some days (especially in the first few months) where you hit a wall and I would feel paralysed. I find the tip

from Matt around focusing on the next kilometre on the next mile very valuable. In the early days, when there would be a lull between projects, as a solo-preneur it would be easy to get into a zone of self-doubt and depression. I would use that time to finish the next podcast. May be getting one or two in the pipeline so that when work comes up, I don't have to create separate bandwidth for this piece of work. Even with the podcast, I would find that breaking it down into working on the next nugget or some small chunk of work would help change how I feel about the situation. I like the phrase Matt uses – Being open to feeling good again. It is a simple sounding term but a profound one when we hit a wall. Focusing on baby steps and keeping an open mind, I feel does wonders to coming back into a cadence. At some level, this relates to the quote that is often attributed to Woody Allen – 80% of success is just showing up every day.

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End of nugget transcription

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Matt Dixon - Nuggets

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- 46.03 Matt Dixon - Athlete to Coach to Entrepreneur
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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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