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## Context to the nugget

Herminia speaks about how it is critical to create mind-space for us to reflect on our experiences especially when we deviate from the standard path. That process of reflection is often critical for people to have a clearer sense of their identity and their fit with the initiatives they are pursuing. She also speaks about how reinventing yourself around mid-life can sometimes take as long as 3 years.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** So back to the point around transition what have you observed about people trying to create that mind space what are some of the watch out for people here?

**Herminia Ibarra (HI):** It's really about bandwidth and the more we were trying to do is non-habitual. The more need not just clock time but mental availability, the sense that you can kind of step back and reflect and you not gone jump into something just because it's come to you on silver platter and so in the work place it manifest self just being too busy and cramped with meeting and so in leadership transition work what we find is that people leave such small slivers of time that then all they can do is fill it with the few minutes of answering email because it's not big enough to do anything else and so thinking about précising chunking a little bit more so that you can do more value added things is important. In career transition it's a little bit different it is often times you have to let the process go for a while before you actually start to get the alas of what you are trying to do and what you are really running away from and what you would like instead it's not all that obvious at first and it take going through the process but what happens is people got kind of nervous once it's been a few months or you know what's it gone look like on my CV and I'm meeting the same people ooh you are still on that sabbatical you know it feels quite not right and so they can substantial themselves because it feel like they are being idol when in fact may be what they are doing is just recouping, gathering forces, incubating ideas they haven't found the right thing yet but that time can be quite necessary even if it is uncomfortable to go through it

**DJ:** How do you see the spectrum of the of the time it takes for senior leaders let's say the successful leaders in the mid-40s to move from let's say context A to context B is it 6 months, 12 months?

**HI:** 3 Years, It's still 3 years, I mean I ask people all the time you know we have people here who are in the program that a 1 year program and they are hoping that will do the trick it never does in it's very frustrating because and honestly you know part of it is where does it start? When does the time frame actually start because there is also the bit of getting yourself to the point where you can start walking and so it's often a longer chunk than you think but it's if you think about extricating yourself, getting yourself to the point where we are actively looking for something else and then the looking

and then the finding just exactly the right fit if you take time often between and you have taking on back to school in between it can be easily be 3 years and it's because people not gone hire you unless you have the experience because you don't have the network into that yet, you don't even have the language, you are still sorting it out for yourself. Experiment and learn takes a little bit longer and that's the hard part for people but that's often why they also go portfolio they start consulting us some of the old stuff just to make sure some money is coming in because you have got a continue life.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I was recently reading the book – Range (why Generalists triumph in a specialized world), a New York Times best seller authored by David Epstein. He contrasts two approaches to excellence – One, the Tiger Woods model where his father introduced him to Golf before the age of 2 and then he rose to excellence. Two, the Roger Federer model where he tried a bunch of sports for a while till he really committed to tennis possibly in his teens. The crux of the insight from David is that he says that the Tiger approach works in kind environments where rules of the game are fixed and there are very few variables to worry about. But he says real life (even more so today than 20 years back) is wicked and the game is closer to what he calls Martian tennis where even the rules of the game are unknown. There he says that having a head-start is not really a competitive advantage but having a range of experiences and having reflected on them, we could end up in a better place.

In my work with leaders in transition, I see them naturally gravitate towards “more of the same” because progress is visible and the outcome is comfortable. But there is merit in creating a pause, architecting a few experiences on the fringes, reflecting on them, taking stock and moving forward.

In the pursuit of efficiency (landing the next job in X months), people often completely miss out on the effectiveness element in transitions as they prepare themselves for the long journey ahead.

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The Playlist reinventing yourself is about leaders who were at inflection points who were courageous to try different things and move into a new context. This includes Amish Tripathi speaking about how he moved from a career in Financial Services to writing, Roopa Kudva moving from CRISIL to Omidyar Network, Papa CJ speaking about moving from Management Consulting to Stand up, Nandan Nilekani moving from Infosys to the UID project and to politics, Atul Kasbekar moving from being a Photographer to a Producer, Devdutt Pattanaik moving from Healthcare to Mythology and so on. Hopefully the diversity of perspectives will provoke your thinking around how to navigate the transition.

The Playlist Navigational Principles gives you a flavour of the frameworks that various people used to deal with the various inflection points. In a world with more divergent pathways than before, the quality of the steering wheel is possibly as important if not more important than the quality of the engine we have in our car. This playlist gives you some thought starters which will help you build a more robust steering wheel for yourself.

You can access these playlists in the Curated Playlists section at [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com). And to know more about the Leadership and Transition Advisory work I do, please visit the about section at [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com). Bye now.

## End of nugget transcription

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**Mindfulness:** Given we live in a world with exponential increase in content creation and with firms like Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple vying for our attention, it is quite hard to reclaim our own space and attention. In this context, being mindful could be a key differentiator and a competitive advantage. Some leaders talk about how they created that space for themselves amidst the noise. You can access the playlist [here](#).

**Identity:** Identity refers to the reputation, characteristics etc. of a person that makes the individual or the people around him/her think about them in a certain way. To put simply, how do we think of ourselves and what to the others think of us. Identity is a key element that we need to wrestle with during pivotal transitions. Herminia Ibarra shares her insights on how we should treat Identity as a Work in Progress that gets influenced by the journey we go through and the choices we make. Ram Guha speaks about the multiple identities of Gandhiji. Atul Kasbekar speaks about how he saw his identity evolve from being a photographer to a producer. All this and more in this playlist. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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### Herminia Ibarra - Nuggets

- 47.00 Herminia Ibarra - The Full Conversation
- 47.01 Herminia Ibarra - Acting your way to new thinking
- 47.02 Herminia Ibarra - Experimenting with different pathways
- 47.03 Herminia Ibarra - Portfolio approach versus Full-time role
- 47.04 Herminia Ibarra - Pausing to reinvent

- 47.05 Herminia Ibarra - Operational, Personal and Strategic networks
- 47.06 Herminia Ibarra - Identity play versus Identity work
- 47.07 Herminia Ibarra - The perils of foreclosure
- 47.08 Herminia Ibarra - Role of the spouse
- 47.09 Herminia Ibarra - Transitioning from well-paying time-greedy careers

### **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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