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Context to the nugget

Herminia speaks about the specific challenges facing professionals who are in time-greedy and identity-consuming careers. She provides some thought-starters for those professionals to take charge of the narrative and steer their journeys in line with their evolving life context.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Just talking a particular cohort of people that I have encounter Herminia Advisors, Bankers, Lawyers, Consultants, Private Equity Professionals I see a lot of them in their 40's early 40's mid 40's possibly have made money for their life time if you will a lot this situation early entrepreneur I'll throw them in and for a lot of them it's about if I had all the money what would I do with my time and they grapple with that question how do I really plan to live my next and back to Lynda Gratton how do I left my next 50 or 55 years what are some of the while some of the universal principles that you talk about here applying in this as well but may be narrowing on this particular segment is there something a unique or specific you have observe with this cohort?

Herminia Ibarra (HI): These are people who have been very driven in careers that are very greedy that take all and so for a lot of us we do have other anchors for identity and may things that we do outside the main day job. The more that main day job is kind of a monolithic thing that takes all. The harder it is to extricate yourself and then you know you start to see that it's just not just the money it's that is your identity and it's is really scary to move beyond that. Now what's universal is that for everybody you don't move away from something good to something undefined you just don't so you have two possibilities either that something is not good and in fact it's destroying you and you know somewhere in your gut even if you don't can't articulate it then you have to get out of it it's going to kill you and sometimes also the people who either have a burnout or actually take a long sabbatical and realize they can't go back to it. Be your feet start walking and the lay you catch up to the fact that you have to leave because it was gone kill you so that's one option the other option is you know that dissatisfaction starts to simmer and you start looking around outside and a lot and this is the working identity story a lot of people start top build up other things that we want them professionally, externally through boards through consulting, through start-ups, through investments, through teaching and as that thing kind of grow and becomes more interesting and becomes more identity defining it gets easier to eliminate the move away from the first but as I said that process is harder in the very time greedy careers and often times with companies that are so identity defining because they are blue chip you know it's like how could you leave Goldman Sachs or how could you leave this partnership count on you, you are the only one that can do this and this is always start getting into the whole adult development sphere where I think the work of Bob Keegan and Lisa Leehy has been incredibly important to understand how do we make a transition for making decision that are based on others expectation of us what you need to do as a good

husband, as a good organizational member, as a loyal partner in this firm to what is it that I need to do for myself while still take you know for filling obligation to others but it's gone be me who drives out that's self-authoring aspect and that's a big physiological shift and how to make it on your own which is why networks are such an important part in making the shift as soon as you see other people doing it people have come ahead who have done well, who are in situations that you can admire then it gets easier because you can see in flesh and blood in front of you.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is something I observe a lot in my peer group. Several people who are Partners, MDs in PE firms, Investment Banks, Consulting firm's etc. Often are at a point where they have hit financial security for life but somehow hurtle along inexorably recognizing that something has got to give. There are a couple of pieces here.

1) These careers are often time greedy so structurally, they don't give you the mind-space to be thoughtful about other possibilities that could make sense for you unless you take a long sabbatical to think about this.

2) They are all consuming that you often end up tying your identity to this career, so the notion of stepping away without having something concrete that you can tie your identity to can be immensely unnerving to many.

With this cohort of people, I often find that people have a frog in the boiling water syndrome when they go through long journeys in organizations. There is a certain context and a set of assumptions with which they embarked on a path and it made sense for a set of reasons. But what they don't account for enough is that several variables change along the way, identity being one of them.

It is worth reflecting on how you would build the pause in your life; create the mind-space for reflection, latitude for experimentation and reflection as you think about re-inventing yourself if you are at this inflection point.

Thank you for listening. For more podcast content, please visit playtopotential.com. The website also has content organized by specific themes in the Curated Playlists section. Given you are listening to this podcast; you might specifically find the themes Reinventing yourself and Navigational principles relevant.

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. And to know more about the Leadership and Transition Advisory work I do, please visit the about section at playtopotential.com. Bye now.

End of nugget transcription

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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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