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Context to the nugget

Paddy speaks about how great sportsmen deal with failure. We specifically reflect on how Kane Williamson handled himself when New Zealand lost the world cup to England despite being level on scores and how Roger Federer dealt with losing the Wimbledon finals despite having two match points earlier in the game. Paddy expands on the notion of focusing on processes versus outcomes.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): What do you see great players do in the way they deal with failure and the way they raise beyond that event?

Paddy Upton (PU): I think those people great players you deal with failure really very well is because they are well if I would go to Kane Williamson who are well known pretty well he is not attached to winning and losing he doesn't attached self-vale, he doesn't attach deep meaning to winning and losing for Kane Williamson it's about doing practicing as best possible serving his team as best as possible needing is best possible getting the own his processes right and if you get all your process right and you conduct yourself in the correct manner in the execution of those processes that's what really important and you really believe, which Kane definitely does believe in. That's set up for the best possible chance of winning and I think that's why a team like New Zealand you probably certainly didn't have this talented team as the Indian team who never made it to the final that probably weren't even more talented than the Sought African team or the Pakistan team they weren't the best team but they were team where you had leader who is able to get the best out of individuals because of their attachment to good process and their un attachment to whether they are won or lost so it's that deeper wiring and that understanding, that maturity that Kane Williamson had that allowed him when they lost the game to be all turn on go we gave out all we were very happy with what happened and it's unfortunate that we lost. If there is a desperation to won the New Zealand team wouldn't have got as far they got they wouldn't got to the final because there would have scammed to the pressure as a result of desperation and importance of winning early on in the tournament and I think someone like a Roger Federer he has won enough he doesn't need to won and he is not terrified of losing he plays his best tennis and he is secure enough for then who he is as a person but he is able to deal with losses fairly comfortably because in our wisdom and its actually now common sense the reality is as an athlete you will lose. As a cricketer you will drop a catch. You will get out when you don't want to get out as a batsman. As a bowler you will get hit for 4 or 6 when you really don't want to get hit for 4 or 6. So that isn't absolute guaranteed so what is the point of getting upset when something that is absolutely guaranteed happens anyway. What's important is that you engage in the best possible process to prevent that happening or to set even better to set up for success and it's the same in the business context you will lose business deals that you really believed and you wanted to get that happens the only value when things go wrong is to

look at ok so what are all the things that I did in the lead up to that that I next time I could learn from the next time I could do better and on the day of execution whether it is Roger Federer in the tennis match Kane Williamson or the business man who doesn't seal the business contract. What are the things that I can learn from that if I am in that situation again next time that I would do differently and we accept the loss number one, process the whatever emotion extract the lesson and then move on because what to do? What's happened is really happened. So that's maturity that Roger Federer had that Williamson had and the best athletes in the world to handle failure well to have that mature and rounded approach to understanding that mistakes happen deal with it, learn from, improve, pick your head up, look forward and move on.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This reminds me of a segment from my conversation with Matt Dixon (MD), a well accomplished Triathlon coach in California.

I asked him about how elite athletes think about success and failure and he spoke about the Systems versus Outcomes orientation of these athletes. He also said something very interesting about the first 24-72 hours after a big failure.

MD: *"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."*

DJ: The point around Leaning into the grief and not debriefing too quickly is a critical one. I guess it is critical for us to realise that we are all human and give ourselves sometime to gather our emotions and our objectivity before we start doing a post-mortem on what happened. For more on this you might want to listen to Nugget 46.06 from Matt Dixon at playtopotential.com. You might also find the Curated Playlist – Resilience in the Curated Playlists section relevant.

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End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Matt Dixon that is referenced: [Expanding the mental reservoir](#).

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

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](#).

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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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