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Context to the nugget

Tasha speaks about the fact that meditation is possibly not the only path to being mindful. There could be several other approaches that could make you more mindful even you don't meditate. She speaks about comparing and contrasting as one approach that could help you become more mindful.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): In terms of internal self-awareness, you also talk about the distinction between mindfulness and meditation and you say that meditation does not necessarily lead to mindfulness what's the insight here and how does one get to non-meditative mindfulness if there is term like that?

Dr. Tasha Eurich (TE): You bring up a really important issue I would slightly tweak that to say that meditation isn't the only way we can be mindful because you know there are so many of us who are type A people or we are so busy we can't imagine finding 20 minutes to sit in silence and meditation is associated obviously with mindfulness and that link has been really clearly established it's also linked to self-awareness so people who meditate tended to be more self-aware as a whole. But the question I wanted to answer is you know what about the people who don't meditate is there still some way that we can be mindful you know in spite of maybe not practicing that and I go back in forth with meditation sometimes I get on a really good streak then sometimes I fall off the wagon. But what we discovered were several non-meditative mindfulness tools and the way to think about this that made it click for me is what is a really mean to be mindful and there is a lot of nuance to this but at a high level it means noticing what's happening in ourselves in our environment without judgement and what's really important is you are noticing new things you know you are not getting trapped in rumination, you are not going down the spiral of introspection you are seeing what is. So here is one example of non-meditative mindfulness tool that we saw in our unicorns it's called comparing and contrasting. So basically what you do is if you are experiencing a positive or a negative state instead of getting down that introspective rabbit hole here is an example what you can do so let's say you get home from work one day and you are just in a terrible mood instead of saying you know why am I in such a terrible mood you could say when are the other time that I have felt this way in my recent memory right so you might think ohh gosh I remember feeling this way last week and I remember feeling this way couple of months ago and then you ask you self what are those things have in common so you know I tell story in my book about how I felt terrible after coming home from work for enough days in a row that I realize that was my pattern is that two years after I started any job I would just get sort of I would felt disempowered and I wouldn't feel like I was doing good work or I was satisfied with it and that lead me to the discovery as I looked at all the similarities that maybe I am not built to work in a corporation or for someone else. But by not getting to sucked into that feeling and just noticing that state as if it was related to think I can

remember in the past it led to a really big insight so that's just one example of the tools but I think it's the powerful one.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The other habit that I have seen several leaders use to become more mindful is some form of journaling. This is not just business CEOs but leaders from other disciplines. In this podcast, I spoke to Dr Ramachandra Guha, a historian who has spent decades studying Gandhiji, he spoke at length about how Gandhiji would keep a diary where he would reflect and process all the complexity around him and stay mindful of what was going on. Another guest on the podcast – Vinay Sitapati (VS Ep1), another historian who has written the book Half Lion. In the book he profiles the journey of Narasimha Rao, arguably one of the most influential Prime Ministers India has seen. More specifically, he speaks about how Narasimha Rao managed to get so much done despite several constraints around him. He specifically referred to his practice of keeping a diary....

VS Ep1: *“Narsimha Rao’s ability to be introspected to be invert helped him sift the day into what or to put in statistical terms to be able to sift the signal from the noise so I think that is the first thing that introspection taught him that one is it taught him don’t trust anyone except your diary which is a pretty good skill in politics second is that you should be able to shift the signal from the noise who are the people you met every day how many people are being honest? How many people are lying? To give you one example one of the diary entries which I have in the book is from 22nd May 1991 this is the day after Rajeev Gandhi has been killed near Chennai and Narsimha Rao until then basically eased out of the congress and was about to become a Monk in monastery called Kutrallam in Tamil Nadu and was closing his bank accounts he suddenly realising that by virtue of being the least ambitious man in the party he’s prime to be Prime minister of India and the diary shows 22nd May he’s back in Delhi, he’s in 10 Janpath where Soniya Gandhi and Rajeev used to live and the pieces of Rajeev Gandhi’s body there were just pieces, not the full body are kept there and all the congress men around the body pretending to cry some of them were actually crying actually trying to manuhar to see who would succeed him? And he has this wonderful passage about how Pranab Mukherji who was in the boon docs them but would later recovered to become president of India beadies up to him and said we think you should become congress president which is the proxy for Prime minister of India and Narsimha Rao immediately says “I immediately told him that I am not the right person knowing full well the kind of person he is, I also gave him the name of N.D. Tiwari for Prime minister of India knowing even he was that he was even less likely a candidate than I am” and I think the introspection in the diary allows him to do that it allows him to reflect over the day, otherwise somebody else, Pranab Mukherji came up to me and says maybe you should be prime minister of India I wouldn’t stop to ask what’s his anger? So I think the introspection gave him that ability and I think the third thing introspection gave him was to take the long view, often we are so caught up in the movement that we are unable to see short term benefits from the long term cost than unable to separate that for example Narsimha Rao was frequently side-lined from the party, frequently. He never complained, he never protested against Indira Gandhi, he never protested against Rajeev Gandhi and very soon he would be back whereas people like Sharad Pawar or Arjun Singh or ND Tiwari at the first sign that they were out of favour in the Nehru Gandhi court was either form a separate party or sulk or protest, and their careers would end instead of just kind of taking it and hoping that your luck changes which has happened to Narsimha Rao, not everybody is luck changes but I think Narsimha Rao’s ability to take the long view and not make silly short term beneficial decisions also contributed to the kind of career he had.”*

DJ: I guess the key point is that there is many more paths to being mindful than meditation. It is worth keeping an open mind and not giving up if meditation is not up your alley. Some people speak

about reflecting about some of the deeper issues when they are running or swimming. I guess we all need to find our own mechanism that works for us. If this topic is of interest, do refer to Nugget 30.03 with Vinay Sitapati or at playtopotential.com or Nugget 41.05 with Rich Fernandez. You could also listen to the nuggets at the Playlist titled Mindfulness in the Curated Playlists section at playtopotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Vinay Sitapati that is referenced: [The reflection habit - decoding signal from the noise](#).

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Dr. Tasha Eurich - Nuggets

- 49.00 Dr. Tasha Eurich - The Full Conversation
- 49.01 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-Awareness - Meta-skill of 21st century
- 49.02 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-awareness Unicorns
- 49.03 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-delusion versus Self-awareness
- 49.04 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Limitations of introspection
- 49.05 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Mindfulness beyond meditation
- 49.06 Dr. Tasha Eurich - A Prism versus a mirror
- 49.07 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Role of a coach in enhancing self-awareness
- 49.08 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-awareness during career transitions
- 49.09 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Catch 22 of Self-awareness

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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