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Context to the nugget

Alan speaks about how Bill got his Coachees to believe in themselves and how he often he had greater faith in them than they had in themselves. Alan goes onto talk about how Bill would play the role of a cheerleader in public settings to give a boost of confidence to the people he worked with.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And the other thing that comes up in the book is Bill being an evangelist for courage, right? You talk about the fact that Bill believed that his coachees could be greater than what they themselves believed. I am curious about how that showed up in the way he connected with people and the coaching relationship played out.

Alan Eagle (AE): As I said before, many of these things that he did are quite simple; it's just that we don't take the time to do those and also many of these things... our thesis of the book is that the best coach of the team is the manager of the team. So many people when they hear us talk or read the book they say, oh! I need an executive coach like Bill Campbell. Well, first of all there is no one like Bill Campbell and he is not with us anymore and there are other fine executive coaches but if you are the manager of a team to be the most effective leader you can also practice some of these coaching principles. Sometimes you need to take off your management hat, put on your coaching hat and one of these is this idea of this evangelist for courage. This was a quote we got for Shona Brown which was... or was it with Porat? No, I can't recall. I think it was Shona but her point was Bill would make you believe in yourself almost more than you believed in yourself and as a manager Bill wanted managers to make their people be an evangelist for courage for their people. In the workplace, in any place people tend to be risk averse, they don't want to fail and so it's the manager's job to actually push people to be more daring, to be more courageous so to become an evangelist for courage, push people to do more by making them believe they can do it and usually they can. So that's a lot of what we want from a coach is someone... yes, we need people to tell us, correct us when we do something wrong and help us learn but sometimes you just want someone to cheer, say, man! You are awesome, keep going and so one of my favourite anecdotes from our book is we were talking to Clay Bavor. Clay is a VP here at Google, he oversees our VR and AR products, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality products and at the time that this story took place Clay was a Products Manager and he was just starting to work on AR products and he was showing an early product to the Google Board so he was kind of nervous. He is up in front of the Google Board and he is demonstrating this thing and they are all wearing the goggles and trying them out and he is trying to walk people through this down and something went well and he hears this clap from the back of the room like boom, boom, boom, boom and like loud cheering and it is Bill Campbell cheering him on and Clay said that moment gave him such confidence and such a boost and think about how often when you are in a meeting if something goes well someone on your team does something

well, you say, good job or something like that of course but how often you are like, yeah man, stand up and clap, you don't, cause it doesn't feel right but that's what Bill would do. So that's part of being an evangelist for courage is really cheering people and celebrating their successes and there is an interesting tactical component as well. When we were talking to one of the Apple Board Members I don't recall he talked about how Bill would do this in an Apple meeting as well about how Bill did this when he was showing the Apple Board the Apple Play Store for the first time and how Bill was like cheering and saying this is so awesome and it also gets the momentum going in the room if you want to make a decision that way. It is pretty hard to decide against or argue against something when someone has literally stood up and cheered for you. So, you know, there is a tactical aspect as well and mostly this concept of being an evangelist for courage it's just this idea of growing confidence in the people, just trying to boost them up, make them think they can do more than they think they can do.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: When I was at McKinsey, we would often use the term insecure over-achievers to describe the people that do well in The Firm. Now, in the context of my work as an Executive Coach I realise that achievement part is often taken care of if one works on the insecurity part. It is often about work with the Coachee on his or her belief in themselves and ensuring that the Imposter Syndrome doesn't get a hold of them unnecessarily.

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End of nugget transcription

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Alan Eagle - Nuggets

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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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