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Context to the nugget

Alan discusses some of the failures of Bill Campbell as an Executive and his perspectives around Bill being open to input from his Coachees. He speaks about the style of Bill's intervention where he would not give specific suggestions but share stories and let you come up with your own conclusions.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): I think just going off script a little bit Alan I was curious the book really talks about all the successes and the people that he impacted positively and clearly it was written as a tribute to Bill but I was curious if... I was curious about how Bill received feedback. How did he take in feedback as a coach and did you come across any failures or places where he wasn't effective? I was curious.

Alan Eagle (AE): Yeah, we don't want to make him out to be a god and that everything was perfect. I don't know, again I didn't work directly with Bill most of what I know about Bill came through all of our interviews. I don't know if you could say that Bill whether or not he took feedback or not because most of the people we talked to were coachees of Bill. But I think that he would take it very well, I mean, he really appreciated authentic conversations and I am sure it worked both ways, I am sure it worked both ways. So, I think he himself was highly coachable his entire life and as far as failures, again people... we would ask people did Bill ever steer them wrong and the answer was no. And often times this was because Bill wasn't exactly telling people what to do and this maybe a slight difference between business coaching and team coaching. Team coaching, sports coaching someone will say hey, move a little to your right and take a step back and bend your knees more, I don't know, whatever, you know, whatever the sport is it can get very into the details. Bill's approach of business coaching and most executives coaches I think I like is more about telling stories like listening and saying okay, well, I have a situation like this one so here's what I did and here's what I learnt from that and so let's go back to your situation, what do you think is the right thing to do. Often times in these coaching sessions Bill would not come out and tell you what to do. Bill would read stories and then you would reach your own conclusion of what to do. And so, it's hard to pinpoint when he was wrong in that approach, I can't think of any. There is a well-documented case of failure in Bill's career which was the company GO which he was the CEO of in the mid-90s and GO was an attempt to build a handheld computer, personal organizer and computer. So, it was the precursor to the Palm Pilot and really today smartphones bit it was ahead of its time technology wise and it failed. So, he was the CEO of this company that did not succeed and I am sure there were mistakes made along the way there, I can't numerate them I can't recall them but there was a book by Jerry Caplan called Start-up. Jerry was the co-founder of GO that gets into those. So, he did have one notable large business failure which was GO but in the coaching realm no, nothing that I can

think of. One thing we talked about in the book we go into some detail on decision making and one of the guys we interviewed was John Doerr and he had interesting things to say about decisions which were that you never know if you are making the right decision and often times there are multiple right decisions. So, go through the right process and then make the decision and sometimes that's the wrong decision but you can always run the right process. So, you can get to the wrong decision and still be running the right process.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In my work as a Coach, I realize that I am able to build an authentic relationship with my coachee only when I position my interactions with them as a two-way learning exchange and seek feedback from them along the way on my approach and style. Given that the value in what I do is often in the small intangibles, feedback from the Coachees upfront and along the way can be immensely powerful in building trust and in my fine-tuning my approach so that what I am doing is fit for purpose in the context of what they are solving for. Something similar came up with my conversation with an accomplished Triathlon Coach in Silicon Valley – Matt Dixon (MD) – who coaches some of the accomplished CEOs, Investors and Founders in Silicon Valley. He spoke about the notion of the Coaches being Coachable.

MD: *“quite often as you say people come to coaches and think that they should have all of the answers and so the coach ends up in full confidence often standing up almost like the Wizard of Oz and saying this is how you should do it but the truth is that the coach is get into water if as soon as they start thinking they have all of the solutions and so the first part of it is a coach's quest to really try and surround yourself in experts in particularly as a field that you can draw from to help your own personal growth. In the same ways if leaders need leaders and then coaches need coaches and all the time I apply and realize hang-on it's not my role to be an expert in every domain of performance. So in my role that might be nutrition or sleep or time zone on adjustment physiology or strength and conditioning whatever the components might be its much better for me to learn and evolve and draw from experts in that field and going toward to the leading neurologist so that I can draw and understand more about sleep quality so that then I can fill and try to apply and putting context for my athletes and CEO's so there is that part of personal growth but a second part of growth also comes from the people that you are leading and probably the most valuable lesson that I have received as a coach is from observation and from understanding and from listening to my athletes and CEO's and that comes from me personally in two areas and that thing called wisdom in coaching. But as a coach you can only grow and learn through observation and listening. If you are listening and if you ask questions and so effective coaching for me isn't just telling people what to do and that's why I come back to that collaboration stand point. You have to have the courage and the vulnerability which I think is actually a strength to ask questions to see how they feel to find their perspective and to look and observe and grow and so the only way to be an effective leader or coach is to always be in the cursive of learning even all ultimately you are the one who is setting the path”*

DJ: Whether it is this podcast or my coaching work with leaders, I find this as a privilege to learn from them and grow as an individual. Even speaking selfishly, I find it is a lost opportunity if I don't seek to be coached through the coaching process.

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End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Matt Dixon that is referenced: [Coach Coachee relationship](#).

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Alan Eagle - Nuggets

- 50.00 Alan Eagle - The Full Conversation
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- 50.06 Alan Eagle - Being an evangelist for courage
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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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