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## Context to the nugget

Alan speaks about Bill's role during some of his key transitions in his stellar career at Google. He speaks about the fact that despite his clarity of thought on the business front, when it came to making decisions for himself, there was an element of irrationality. Alan goes on to speak about Bill's role in ensuring that Eric made sound choices at those crucial moments.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And just a last question. In this podcast I also try and talk about the various transitions and how people deal with transitions. In the book you talk about Bill's role in two very crucial transitions at Google. One was when Google wanted to bring in an independent Chairman of the Board and second was when Google and Alphabet were formed. Any insights around what he did around those transitions specifically which stood out that.

Alan Eagle (AE): You know one thing that surprised me consistently through talking to people and doing the research for the book which is that people at senior levels in the company are still humans. I mean of course that's obvious right but you tend to think okay, they are very wealthy, they are powerful, they are extremely successful, they have got a need right. Why do these things matter that much? I mean yet they do. People have egos, more so of course the higher level you go in organizations people have ambitions and so this transition, the one transition you are talking about well there are two interesting anecdotes that Eric wrote about in the book which is one, when Google was going public the Board asked him to step down as Chairman. They wanted him to stay on as CEO but they wanted him to step down as Chairman and someone else would become Chairman and this surprised and hurt Eric and Eric decided he was going to quit. Now this was before the company had gone public this would have been an extremely bad decision from a personal standpoint but he was hurt and in helping him write this section it sort of struck me that you're hurt, your feelings are hurt and that's why you are going to quit, that's completely irrational and you are Eric Schmidt but it didn't matter. He was hurt by then and Bill kind of helped talk him off that cliff and said, look you need to do what's right for the team and what's right for yourself and stay on as CEO and don't worry you are the right person to be Chairman and the Board will figure that out and you will come back as Chairman and that's what exactly happened. Later at the beginning of last year, 2018, Eric stepped down as Executive Chairman and really felt kind of lost and again when we were writing this section of the book I was so surprised, this is Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google, very wealthy man, what's the problem and yet he is human and he didn't have in that case Bill was not there to help him through it and so again it doesn't matter where you are in the company, it's the human... when you are making a transition like that people need people, doesn't matter what level they are at, they need someone to talk to and someone to help them through the transition and someone to really understand that they are people, maybe their feelings are hurt, or

maybe they are nervous about the future and really to help them through that. And again, that's what an executive coach can help do.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: We often use the term; it is lonely at the top when we talk about CEOs, Founders, Promoters and other Leaders at the top. In my work I realize that these individuals are even lonelier when it comes to them solving for themselves. XYZ the CEO often has access to some of the best Advisors – Consultants, Lawyers, Bankers etc. when it comes to Business Decisions. But XYZ the person often doesn't have anybody to go to solve the wider jigsaw of life which includes himself or herself, the family, career, community, their aspirations and so on. I realize that people often navigate some of these choices in a reasonably lonely manner without any adequate structured support from somebody who understands the nuanced context.

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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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