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Context to the nugget

Lynda speaks about the kinds of issues that show up in mid-life. She speaks about how individuals at mid-life are grappling with two transitions – one is the mid-life itself. The other is the fundamental social change driven by technology. She speaks about how individuals in mid-life can navigate this passage of play.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): What are some of the key that people in the mid-life you see grapple with?

Lynda Gratton (LG): I think interestingly in a mid-life is always been you know sort of crisis time and that goes, you can read Greek mythology or Shakespeare and everyone will tell you, midlife is a time when you sort of have a crisis but I think what's making that more accentuated in a way is not even the people in their 40s thinking about who am I going to be? What am I doing now? That also living in a time of extraordinary social change so they are living as time when technology is changing the way they work they are now beginning to realize it, they are going to be working in their 70s, I don't know if you know that Deepak but you will be. And also if I mean structures are changing, you know women are working in the men's role and their families are changing. So, I think people in their 40s are navigating both of those things and navigating just the normal midlife crisis but they are also realizing perhaps the trajectory that they thought they were going to have isn't going to working for them quite so successfully so I say the 40s as a real opportunity to think about what is that I want to be and also it's prepared to work into your 70s I think that's going to be one of the big insights it's about longevities, you need to work longer but to work longer you have to prepare for that in your 40s.

DJ: And may be persist with that Lynda one is the point around health so you need to keep your health to stay healthy till the 70s but what else would you put in there in the context of preparing for the 70s in the 40s

LG: Well you know as you and I in the book we talked about three types of intangible assets we talked about Productive assets, Vitality assets and transformation assets and I think really you know in your 40s the productive assets becomes really important because you need to keep on landing you need to keep on building new skills you need to be saying to yourself and to the labour market you know I am still somebody who has gone lot to offer from now until the age of 70s so that's really crucial but also of course transformational assets and those as we said earlier they are they are transformational assets a lot to do with your networks. So if you are 40 find yourself spending all

your time with people just like you then that's not gone help you to transform so you should be looking around and asking yourself am I spending time with people who different from me in terms of the nationality or their mind-set or their age or their gender because in that diversity you can begin to imagine what your possible selves I think 40 is a good time to think about possible selves.

DJ: And Vitality assets are that the one around health or is there something else?

LG: In the 100 year live we saw vitality in two ways really one was health and actually since writing the 100-year life I realize we sort of underestimated in that book just how crucial that is and what an enormous role that exercise will play in long term vitality. But vitality we also put in you know how do you deal with stress? How you think about work life balance? And indeed, you know how you think about your friendships because they are the great source of vitality if you look at the research why is it that people are happy in their 60s and 70s in part they are happy because they have got great friends so that's wonderful intangible assets to be investing in.

DJ: And back to you know the often-used phrase In OB what gets measured gets managed back to assets while financial assets are easy to measure some of these are harder to take stock of to make it lets say may be a little tactical or practical for the listeners have you seen leaders or individuals do anything interesting to take stock of their balance sheet if you well across multiple dimensions?

LG: Well one of the thing that we did and if you go to our website www.100life.com you will see that Andrew and I built a simple diagnostic that helps you to decide for each of those three intangible assets in fact four because we also bring in TANGIBLE. Am I building it? Am I maintaining it? Or am I depleting it? And in it we ask a set of questions which is sort of measurement questions you know so in terms of a productive assets you know how much time are you spending learning you know vitality assets are you exercising three times a week transformational assets how diverse are your networks on that was so these are very particular questions that we think begin to look at intangible assets but in fact I have a column with Am I too slow and one of my columns was on the problems of measuring intangible assets so I haven't got any company yet they says okay I am going to try and measure them .

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I like the way Lynda speaks about assets across 3 dimensions.

Productive assets – Skills and reputation

Vitality assets – Health and friendship

Transformational assets – Self-awareness, Diverse networks and open-ness to experience

I do think we live in a world with an abundance of choices and the career paradigm has shifted significantly. 50 years back, a career was entering a long tunnel. My father worked with the same company for 40 years before he retired. I worked in 3 organizations (KPMG, McKinsey and EgonZehnder) for 15 years before embarking on my current journey. The future will possibly look more and more like a maze with several twists and turns along the way. And in that context, the bar on self-awareness will be much much higher than before.

One of my earlier guests Rama Bijapurkar (RB), who is an expert on Consumer Insights, spoke about this at the podcast. I asked her about the paradox of choice that we often face in our careers. How do we make sensible choices in that context?

RB: *“One of the young man actually I know who said to me, and he was a student of IIMA and I said to them that you were very lucky because you could do whatever you want but my generation was told that if you made your bed sleep in it, so my brother went to IIT for two years, hated it was told to finish it and then he went to the Indian Army after that into the public commission so he said mam but you don’t understand my anxiety, he said my father has told me you can do anything you ever want to do and he said I am always looking around the corner to see is there something better and I absolutely what you are saying the fear of missing out but I think the more there are choices the more you have to be centred to the world is complex and volatile and I think more complex and volatile which is the more you have to understand your centre and your core, going back to the earlier discussion we were having, you have to really understand, so if you are anchored then you can with stand being buffeted it’s a same for companies too. I tell companies that if you are going to competitive busting and whatever the competitive came up with you are going to reengineer it reverse engineer it and do better, when you have 20 competitors who are putting our 20 products because they also don’t know all ready far end then are you going to bust 400, how do you know which 20 of the 400 to bust? So you eventually have to have a deep understanding of who you are and what you are trying to do with your customers and take it from there so if you don’t have that who you are understanding or at least the navigational principals, I mean I am willing to sacrifice money for glory or listen I want a certain amount of balance in my life and I think you then figure out that even if the answer is that I have to do this thing because I have to do then though I believe something else, I am saying as long as you know that’s what it is you will be able to deal with it better but knowledge is and absolute master what is inside of you.”*

DJ: We have been hearing about the criticality of self-awareness over the years. But what has fundamentally changed in the last few years is that the career model has moved from being a tunnel to being a maze and self-awareness is the compass that will help you navigate through the maze.

To know more about how to build self-awareness, do tune into my conversation with Tasha Eurich. She has written a book Insight, which is all about how you can widen your self-awareness. She has studied several people that she calls Self-awareness unicorns and has researched what they do differently from the rest. Do visit playtopotential.com to tune into that conversation.

Thank you for listening. If you are deriving value from the podcast, please consider paying it forward to Antarang Foundation, an organization I work with closely. Akash and Arman, the editors at the podcast are alumni of Antarang Foundation. They do everything from cleaning up the audio, editing it, sequencing it, overlaying it with music, doing the visual elements and much more. Antarang Foundation is a not for profit that works with 1000s of young adults and helps them play to their potential. While the world of human potential, I believe, is uniformly distributed, the world of opportunity is unfortunately unevenly distributed. We may not realize it or acknowledge it, but the reality is that a lot of us are beneficiaries of the ovarian lottery that sets us up very differently. To know more, do visit the Pay it forward section at PlaytoPotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Rama Bijapurkar that is referenced: [Careers - Paradox of choice.](#)

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Lynda Gratton - Nuggets

- 53.00 Lynda Gratton - The Full Conversation
- 53.01 Lynda Gratton - 100 year life
- 53.02 Lynda Gratton - Mid-life today: a double whammy
- 53.03 Lynda Gratton - From 3 stages to multiple stages
- 53.04 Lynda Gratton - Specialization versus Generalization (T to Pi)
- 53.05 Lynda Gratton - Cathedrals vs. Shopping malls
- 53.06 Lynda Gratton - Independent producer’s vs. Entrepreneurs
- 53.07 Lynda Gratton - Choosing the intensity of work
- 53.08 Lynda Gratton - The Power of Options

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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