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## Context to the nugget

Lynda says that in the earlier paradigm, people made two transitions. Study to work and work to retire. And they made it in lock step, with the herd (peer cohort). In a multi-stage life, she says that we all make transitions at different points in time and that can be unnerving. She also speaks about the need to focus on recreation to ensure re-creation of our professional journeys.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And back to transitions Lynda given that we are moving from three stages to multiple stages what's your advice to people on how they should think about transitions and I am deliberately asking it in an open-ended way but how long are these when should I start getting nervous? How open ended should I be? I guess it throws up a bunch of questions uneasy questions so what's been your observation about how people should grapple with transition in these journeys?

Lynda Gratton (LG): Well you know I think one thing to realize isn't the three-stage life a full time, full time education, full time work and full-time retirement. There really was only well two transitions and both of those were done in lock step and what I mean by that is you know when you got your first job everybody around you was also getting their first job when you retire do you looked around that everybody was retiring so these did not require deep insight because you just followed the herd and I think what really interesting about the new lives that we have forging is A) there is a lot more transitions and B) you doing them on their own and all though others can help you these transitions as Herminia has shown are not easy and if it is easy then it means you are not making a transitions so you know as Herminia says "People who make transitions first of all start to do side projects to help them understand what they are interested in. They begin to shift they networks and then they take the leap but without that it's really difficult to actually take the leap I think you know one of my areas of interest is at the moment is why don't people don't take time out. Do you know to do paternity to spend time with their kids to understand themselves and I do think it's very wise at a period of transition to take time out, to just to take a breath really?

DJ: And back to Jimmy the person of the midlife one of the phrases that really caught my attention was you talk about moving from recreation to re-creation right and how we think about spare time so talk to us about the insight here and may be if you could embellished this with a couple of examples of people that have done this to move forward in their journey?

LG: Well you know what we have tended to think about is that you are either working or you are in some sort of you know you are looking after the house so you are engaged in domestic labours we would call it or you are somehow doing leisure and recreation and I think that part of being a human

is about learning and exploring i.e. recreating yourself and that one happens at many points of time and one of the very interesting survey questions is when do you learn? A most of us say I learn I am not working I mean obviously work is a place of learning but actually not working is also place of learning. So one of the questions that I am asking organisations is why aren't you doing more to give people time to learn. So I am a great advocate of the four-day week for example because I think that gives people an opportunity to learn.

DJ: And again, to make it real are there a couple of examples of leaders that you have worked with or you have observed coming to your programs you have sort of used this to leap frog into a different orbit in the journeys?

LG: Well you know that book that Andrew Scott and I have just gotten and I just finished writing at the moment is partly about social pioneer and actually you know if I am in a class like I was last week and say how many people who have taken a year off to think in a class of forty may be three have so there are people right now who are doing exactly that taking time out stepping back thinking again relearning and I think that very important that we do that.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The point that Lynda makes about the fact that today we are making transitions that are not in lock step with our peer cohort. That is a profound one. That also means that the question, "should I make a transition" is a question to be addressed to. In the work I do with leaders, it is often a combination of solving the where to go and how to grow. Given the paradigm that Lynda just mentioned, every leader is concurrently asking both questions quite often and that can be quite challenging to navigate alone. The other point that Lynda makes about recreation as an opportunity for re-creation is an interesting one too. One of the earlier guests at the podcast, Vinita Bali (VB) a senior Board member and a business leader spoke about how that got shaped in her childhood.

VB: *"I think the most significant part of thinking about since in multiple dimensions or not in a single dimension or thinking about things systemically I think comes from my exposure and my interest, I think it was my exposure which lead to my experience to a lot of things when one was growing up. In school I used to do sports, I used to do dramatics, I used to for a long time I was a student of Indian classical dance which I pursued in the evening outside of school, so I was interested in doing everything you might say and not that I thought about it but I was also the school selector, junior school captain and head girl and so on and so forth, and those roles in a strange way come with their own responsibility which seems like a lot when you are a school kid, So I think it was the combination of all of that and my exposure to the world of theatre to the world of classical music and dance, I think refined in many ways, my aesthetics or my thinking about things across a continuum rather than fragmenting that this is cool and this is extra curriculum in my life everything moved off from one to another, the school finished we stayed back and then we did dramatics and then played hockey and then so I think in its own way that was quite formative that was quite formative in terms of looking at issues from multiple dimensions in terms of a sensitivity and sensibility which things like the arts and when I talk about arts, I talk about visual arts, I talk about performing arts, I talk about theatre I think those things enabled you to touch something which the rational objective world of valuations and NPVs and IRRs doesn't allow you to, and I think both are important I don't want to undermine one versus the other but I think if we can create a greater sensitivity and sensibility and a respect for the bigger environment in which businesses operate I think it would change things a lot and I think it would help a lot, I think we have become too unidimensional in our thinking."*

DJ: The more we look at life as a continuum of experiences across domains, I guess greater the odds of us leading a full life and transitioning effectively.

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## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Vinita Bali that is referenced: [Early childhood wiring](#).

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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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