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Context to the nugget

Lynda speaks about having a mind set for building something tangible and substantial over the long term which means something than solving for the here and now. She uses the metaphor of cathedrals versus shopping malls to make the point. She also speaks about the tension between building for the long term and staying agile as we try different pathways during transitions.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other piece that really intrigued in the book Lynda was a quote that you attribute to... Stephen Nachmanovitch where you say if we operate with the belief in long sweep of time, we build cathedral if we operate from fiscal quarter to fiscal quarter, we build ugly shopping malls. It's sort of left me thinking about a bunch of things what the key takes away here in terms of how people think about transitions, choices, capability building I'd love to sort of explore this phrase how do you think about it?

Lynda Gratton (LG): Well Thank you I am glad that you liked the phrase I really loved it as well and I think you know what you are trying to do in terms of thinking about your life thinking forward is obviously you want to make sure term investments you know every day you have choices you have to work out what this choices are but you know it's a mistake to be blind to the future you know to be blind to what your future could be and you know if you want to build a cathedral rather than a shopping mall you have to think in the long term because these things take time to build and they require expertise and focus and so I think for me the big takeaway there is I don't think you should hold your breath and say it's all about the future that's a mistake but I think that you know the delaying of gratification isn't a bad idea and it's not a bad idea at times to say I am prioritizing something because I think in the long term that's going to be good even though right now it's not going to give me any short term benefits you know there is lots of examples of that money of course is one of them. The other one of our mind sites about from writing the book is we really need to save and we needed to encourage our children to save and we need to really build financial literacy so people understand about the choices they are making about money. But even exercise you know I have started excising as a consequence of writing a book and I do cycle training and honestly there isn't a single time when I wished I didn't wish I could stop doing it. I mean I absolutely hate it. But I just know that if my 80-year-old self was sitting next to me right now she would be saying to me Lynda get on that treadmill so I am just really, I am really got my 80-year-old self on my back at the moment.

DJ: Yeah that's the great thought this in terms of framing it imagining your future self and have a conversation with that future self. But back to the point about cathedrals verses shopping malls what I was grappling with was in a world of change, in a word of so much uncertainty about what

lies ahead you know how could one commit to that one thing and invest over the long term because often there is a little bit of anxiety saying you know am I build the wrong cathedral in the wrong place or build the wrong cathedral with the fashion trends of moved by the time I have finished the cathedral you know what I mean in the world of so much change do you see a tension there

LG: Yes Infect I wouldn't I mean maybe that's where the cathedral metaphor starts to break down because actually I think experimentation is more important in the sense that I think each one of us and I certainly would say this about myself there is an unfinished piece of work I mean I don't know that you know I am still investing in myself I am still experimenting that you know I am still wondering about what would I like to do next? What are my interests? Where could I make the largest contribution and that's an on-going question and I try things and I think what I do mostly these days is I try things and I say how did I feel about that and I didn't feel good about it then I tend not to do them again apart from exercise which I never feel good about.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I had recently made a trip to Ajanta and Ellora caves a few months back. These are caves made out of a single monolithic rock. 1000s of people chiselled on these rocks over 100 years to produce these caves which are a mind-blowing spectacle. I felt guilty that it took me so long to go there and see them. I was truly blown away by these caves and it changed my mind on how to think about creating something for the long term. If you live in India and haven't been there I would strongly strong urge you to make a visit there and you will see what I mean when you get there.

But it also gave me some perspective around how to think about the podcast. Very often people come to me asking for metrics on the podcast and the ROI and whether I am monetizing the content. I genuinely believe there is a lot of content that is being created today going after people's attention and solving for virility (Tik Tok, Kolaveri di, Gangnam style) and so on. At least, I have told myself that I am in this long-term journey of creating purposeful content that is of value. How many people listen to it, whether it is monetizable etc are second order questions for me. But having that long-term focus (reinforced by the trip to Ajanta and Ellora) at least gives me some guiding principles to ensure that I maintain the bar or even raise the level in terms of the editorial standards at the podcast. To use Lynda's language, hopefully my 80 year old self will be proud of what would have been created by then!

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

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Lynda Gratton - Nuggets

- 53.00 Lynda Gratton - The Full Conversation
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- 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
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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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