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## Context to the nugget

Lynda refers to the notion of options (as economists think about it) and speaks about the criticality of having multiple pursuits and adapt based on the waxing and waning of intensity levels of the various things we pursue. She also urges us to listen to the head and the heart when we go about making choices around careers.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And back to another theme which becomes important Lynda which is how we make decisions in a world with multiple points of transitions with diverging pathways I guess the piece the other muscle that becomes as important as how we make choices and how we make decisions what's your research shown on how people should think about that or what's a imperative which probably was as important 20 years back?

Lynda Gratton (LG): Well and there is something that you know I think that economist have understood for quite a long time which is the power of options you know and already you can see people you know keep other options open getting married later, starting at having children later, buying a house later and I think that you need to keep your options open so you are not constantly you know fighting with just one possible self but you have got others if I just look at my own life for example I am a certainly a professor at London Business School but I also run my own consulting practice in another place so it feels different I am also a writer so I also sit at home and write and you I speak and advice companies. I feel like any point I have always got options and I think that when you have options you are more able to put together the life you wanted in any point in time.

DJ: And is that may be just to persist with that is that portfolio life if I may use the term an imperative for most people or do you think some people would go there.

LG: I wouldn't even call it a portfolio life actually I would just say that any point in time there are other things happening that you could either dial up or dial down you know an sort of a again coming back to Herminia work is the side projects it's just the you just giving yourself options you are saying if this happens then I can still I'll still have that option.

DJ: I guess in a way it's a bit like VC investors where you sort of sowing multiple seeds and you never know which seed will bear fruit.

LG: Well because I am interested in the world I sow a lot of seeds and that's sometimes I am exhausted but actually that helps me think about what it is that I want to become so for example I

have realized I am not an... as an advisor or on a board because I like to have too much flexibility in time and that want to be drip you know don't want to be told on 4.00 a clock on Thursday you need to be here and here is the schedule for rest of the year so I actually had to go on the board before I realize that I'd never quite never understood it so you know I think just experimenting and just sync how it feels and this is where reflexivity comes and this not just about your head it's also about your gut and I really know one thing is not working for me and its I feel in gut I don't even feel it in my head I actually feel you know almost sick this just not what I should be doing right now and I don't do it again.

**DJ: Is there something to be said about how people should set up feedback loops for themselves rather through an informal board of directors for themselves or mentors have you observe anything in that front?**

LG: Yes absolutely in fact actually this is just a really nice book coming up next year about careers and what that shows is and I and my husband works as a corporate lawyer and we talk a lot about each other's life and that's incredibly important to do that is really important to have someone who cares about you, who you can talk to about the choices that you are making and also it can observe so for example my husband will say to me you doesn't seem to be enjoying that and I'll say actually you know I am not enjoying it I am really because I am sort of bit I soldier on generally. I hadn't really realized that it was making me tired and I wasn't enjoying it so I think mentoring and while coaching and mentoring is really useful. Coaching in the sense that somebody says do you realize that making you unhappy. Mentoring in the sense that someone says let me introduce you to somebody who could help you think differently about that and that's actually one of the things that I do these days is I have whole bunch of people who I think they are extra ordinary and I spend quite a bit of time introducing them to other people to mentor them in the old fashion sense of the world.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I am reminded of my conversation with Dr. Ramachandra Guha (RG), a well-known historian and the biographer of Mahatma Gandhi. One of the questions I asked him was "How did Gandhiji see himself – as a lawyer, as a freedom fighter, as a religious crusader, as an editor or something else. Here is Dr Guha reading out from a passage in his book quoting Mahatma Gandhi.

*RG: "My life is one indivisible whole, I cannot devote myself entirely to untouchability and say neglect Hindu-Muslim unity or Swaraj all these things run into one another and are interdependent, you will find that one time in my life an emphasis on one thing at another time on another but that is just like a pianist now emphasizing one note and now another but they are all related to one another" and this is what I say in the end for Gandhi political independence meant nothing at all unless it was accompanied by religious harmony, caste and gender equality and the development of self-respect in every Indian, other patriots had used the Hindi word Swaraj to signify national independence. Gandhi made Indians aware of its true or original meaning Swa-Raj or self-Rule. So that is Gandhi in his own words and that is also as I told you a little while ago I don't believe in saying this is the most important thing the only cause just a one route to success, Gandhi conducted his multiple careers and saw them of equally importance and at different times different aspects of his work came into the forefront others receded and those came into the forefront and so on."*

DJ: For more, you could tune into my conversation with Dr Ramachandra Guha at [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com). In a lot of ways this ties back to what Lynda says about pursuing multiple things

in parallel and listening to our head and heart on where we are having impact, where we are having fun and calibrating along the way.

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## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Dr Ramachandra Guha that is referenced: [Multiple identities of Gandhiji](#).

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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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