



The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the far right, a photo of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, is shown with the text 'Podcast Host Deepak Jayaraman' overlaid. A small note at the bottom left of the banner reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget

Matthew speaks about how some of the songs of The Beatles (such as Yesterday and Let it be) were conceived of in Paul McCartney's dreams. He also speaks about the role of sleep in the context of building complex motor skills (learning an instrument, flying a plane, performing a surgery etc.). He says that practice makes it perfect only when it is combined with the right doses of sleep.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And actually one of the stories in the book really appealed to me, thanks to my father, I'm a big fan of The Beatles. I also learned the instrument, I play the guitar and I was learning the song Yesterday a while back and it's a song that's been voted as one of the greatest songs ever right, number one pop song of all time by MTV and Rolling Stones and so on and I also couldn't help notice the connection that you are from Liverpool. So, tell us the story of the link between the song yesterday and sleeping.

Matthew Walker (MW): So at the time Paul McCartney was actually down in London he was staying at a residence on Wimpole Street in London, and he was filming a movie down there and he recalls that in his bedroom he actually had a small upright piano in the corner and he woke up one morning with this beautiful tune, this beautiful melody in his mind and he immediately understood the chords and the progression of those chords and he went straight over to the piano and started playing them and he penned down this music and he thought this is just beautiful, it's so lovely this progression that you know of from Yesterday And he thought where have I heard this before, I don't recognize it, but it must be from someone else and the more he thought about it the more he realized that in fact it wasn't a tune that he had heard, it had been a set of music that had been gifted to him in his sleep and it was that chord progression. It wasn't the lyrics there, but it was the chord progression. The other song that is fantastic also one of the highest rated Beatle songs is Hey Dude and in that there is a description that says "Mother Mary, in my hour of darkness, Mother Mary comes to me speaking words of wisdom".

DJ: Let it be.

MW: Sorry, Let it be. Yeah, I'm sorry not Hey Dude, Let it Be and Paul McCartney describes that that was actually inspired by a dream and there's been suggestions that Mother Mary would, you know, the religious overtones that it could be Mary Magdalene but it's actually not, it's his mother, his mother was called Mary McCartney and he had a dream one night when he was struggling with his professional career and his mother came to him and just said, don't worry, continue what you are doing, everything will be fine, Just Paul let it be and that's why the lyrics are described that that in his hour of darkness Mother Mary, his mother Mary comes to him speaking words of wisdom, let it

be and so a beautiful inspiration sleep inspired creativity and we see that lots in artists and scientists as well.

DJ: Wow, and just may be sticking to that theme Matt in terms of learning an instrument in the book you also talk about research around the criticality of sleep before and after you go and learn an instrument. So to make it tactical any... for somebody learning an instrument, whether it's the piano, the guitar or the drums any tactical inputs on how they should think about sleep in the context of building muscle memory?

MW: So we've done a lot of work in this area and it's a topic that we call motor skill memory or motor skill learning and it's applicable for learning a musical instrument as you described, but it's also applicable for other areas learning a new sport, flying a plane, doctors with surgical procedures. These are all critical complex motor skills. And what we've discovered from a highline headline perspective is that practice does not make perfect despite that phrase being offered to us. In fact, it's practice with a night of sleep that makes perfect because what we discovered is that when you practice you do learn and you do improve but what we also learned is that once you stop practicing the brain actually will continue to learn in the absence of any further practice. However, that delayed learning that offline learning occurs exclusively during periods of sleep and not across equivalent time periods whilst you are awake. So, it isn't quite practice that makes perfect as I said, it's practice with a night of sleep that ultimately seems to lead to motor skill perfection.

DJ: Hmm and is there may be just another question on this before we move forward anything to do with the timing of sleep in learning an instrument? Is there some research that talks about let's say a certain time window within which you fall to sleep after you learn an instrument or vice versa, has there been any study around that?

MW: There has and we have done some of this work and others have contributed to it as well. We seem to see a stronger association with sleep in the last couple of hours of your night. So, for these types of motor skills memories we have been finding that it's a lighter form of non-dreaming sleep what we call stage 2 non-REM sleep and particularly these remarkable electrical bursts of activity that occur during stage 2 non-REM sleep called sleep spindles. And the greater the amount of that sleep that you have in the last two hours and the greater the amount of these sleep spindles during that stage in the last for example, quarter of your night, that seem to most accurately predict the degree of improvement both in your speed of performance as well as your accuracy of performance.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for listening. If you are finding this conversation purposeful, you might also like to tune into my conversation with Matt Dixon a Triathlon coach in Silicon Valley, who specifically speaks about the role of rest and recovery when you train for triathlons.

If you are deriving value from the podcast, please consider paying it forward to Antarang Foundation, an organization I work with closely. 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 want to 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 about how you can make a difference, do visit the Pay it forward section at PlaytoPotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Health and Wellness: As one of the guests at the podcast - Lynda Gratton - says, we all will live much longer given advancements in Health and Medicine. Given this, how we manage our health is a big part of our equation. Here, leaders share their perspective on the various elements of staying healthy. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Innovation: Leaders discuss how they have adopted “out of the box” approaches in various contexts. They also discuss how they have balanced commerce with creativity. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a **Podcast Whatsapp distribution group (+91 85914 52129)** where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating “INTERESTED”. Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

Matthew Walker - Nuggets

- 55.00 Matthew Walker - The Full Conversation
- 55.01 Matthew Walker - Sleep - The Swiss army knife of wellness
- 55.02 Matthew Walker - Morning Larks and Night Owls - a hard wiring
- 55.03 Matthew Walker - Dealing effectively with Jet-lag
- 55.04 Matthew Walker - How much sleep do we REALLY need?
- 55.05 Matthew Walker - REM and Non-REM sleep and criticality of each
- 55.06 Matthew Walker - Sleep, Music and the Beatles
- 55.07 Matthew Walker - Deleterious impact of Devices on sleep
- 55.08 Matthew Walker - Getting back to sleep when wide awake

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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.