



The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with '+91 85914 52129\*', a Twitter icon with '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the right side of the banner is a portrait of a man in a suit and glasses, identified as 'Podcast Host Deepak Jayaraman'. At the bottom left, a small note 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

Raj speaks about how we all could think about solving for happiness given the strange times we are in. He speaks about three broad clusters of people and how each of the clusters could cope with the evolving situation with Covid-19.

## Transcription

\*\*\*\*\*

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Lovely Raj, I don't want to end with a very open and a big question but maybe since it's relevant for the times we are in. Given coronavirus we started with it right and a lot of us are homebound, especially in India we are in a lockdown and we are not sure about the future. Any headline thoughts on how we can cope with the current situation happily given everything that is unfolding around us.

Raj Raghunathan (RR): Yeah, so, I mean this is a great question and believe it or not the Deans at my school they want me to talk about this. So, I am putting my thoughts together on this and I think that one of the things I am going to do is I am going to send out an email to my Coursera students to ask them what are the set of challenges that they are facing with this virus thing. And I just want to know the lay of the land a little bit better before I offer any tips or suggestions for people. So, I think that it is going to come down to like two or three groups. There is certainly one group that is suffering a lot because they are facing personal loss, maybe they themselves are sick and that is one group and then there's a second group for whom it's highly anxiety-provoking because the future is uncertain now, okay, maybe the job security issues for them, if not for them directly for somebody that is part of their family. So that is another group and then there's of course the third group for whom this is going to be as far as we can tell kind of a bit of a temporary hiccup. Even though it's long lasting assuming that all of this passes over and one year from now, certainly two years from now we just think of this as an event that happened without having any long-term consequences really on the say economy and things like that, that group right for whom this is at some level, if you put things in perspective, it's a kind of a bit of source of frustration and irritation perhaps but nothing much bigger or deeper than that. So, I can see that there are at least these three groups and each of these three groups has differing levels of I would say stress, anxiety provoking things elements in this and each of these three groups needs an entirely different set of suggestions I think on how to deal with it. And I don't even want to begin to claim that I understand how people who have actually lost somebody or are in a situation where there's a big prospect of that happening, they are personally also suffering health-wise, what they must be going through, it must be hellish, and I don't know what I can offer there. For the second group that is facing this job loss prospects and huge amounts of uncertainty and stress maybe even cash flow issues things like that, again, I am not in that situation myself, but I've certainly dealt with that kind of situation in my life and there are other situations not the pandemic but other situations in which that's relatively commonplace that

kind of thing happens and I can certainly talk about some things that one can do there. And for the third group I can offer a lot of suggestions and advice. And for the second group just very quickly, I just mentioned that it comes down to understanding and dealing with uncertainty, that's the crux of it. I think that uncertainty is aversive for us, as human beings we would like to have control, we like to be able to predict things and any situation that causes a huge amount of uncertainty is hugely stressful for us. And in this case if it's going to actually have an impact on our lifestyle even access to basic needs, some of the families are actually suffering from that right? It just cut off their source of income like daily wage earners, for example, even in the U.S. plumbers for example, things like that. It's going to be hugely stressful, but so long as you have enough to tide this over and assuming that this is not going to be too long lasting I think that if you have a better attitude towards uncertainty you are going to come out better in the end, not just come out better in the end but also not feel as negative in the process. And dealing with uncertainty it goes back a little bit with that dispassionate pursuit of passion, are there doors of opportunities that are opening up because of this negativity that would not have opened up had this thing not happen. And if you look at it from that perspective, I think that you will actually, I am pretty sure that almost anyone can discover something in this situation that's a bit of a silver lining. And so, the idea is to focus on that, expand that, and make it bigger. If you are a plumber for example and you don't have this daily opportunity to earn a daily wage, maybe learn up about how to create an online website; maybe come up with an idea where you can walk people through to fix their plumbing on the phone. Just try and be creative to the extent that you can as best as you can. So, things like that so that's what I would offer. And for the third group where really I mean they can see that nothing big is going to happen, their jobs are secure and it's just that they're having to deal with family members 24/7 all the time in cramped up spaces and things are starting to kind of boil over a little bit. I think it's a great learning opportunity to practice some of the things that we know are very, very important for long-term happiness, including leading a healthy lifestyle. Maybe you can all as a family practice a few healthy things, make healthy food, try new recipes every day. I myself, I work out at the gym every day if I can but now that's not possible and so I do a 20-minute kind of intense workout routine. I follow this lady called Pamela Reif, I think that's how you pronounce her name and she is awesome. It is pretty intense; I do the intense workout for 20 minutes in the evening and in the morning, I follow somebody else called SarahBethYoga. Sarah Beth is her name and she's got nice 20-30-minute routines, nice kind of easy-paced yoga in the mornings. I do that and as a family what we have done is now that we spend so much time together we have created this big board and on the board we basically have rows being days of the week and the columns being different times of the day like morning, afternoon and evening and everybody gets to dictate or plan for the rest of us, everybody in the family an activity. So, for example, we have an international student staying with us for the whole year. Her name is Ligna, she's from Germany. So she decided that yesterday evening we were going to spend between 5 PM and 7 PM taking photographs, you know, this is Spring in Austin and we have lovely wildflowers and there's a field right opposite our home where all these bluebonnets come up and it looks really, really picturesque and she said let's go out there and wear blue so that it matches with the bluebonnets and we are just going to take photographs. And so, for two hours we just took a bunch of photographs which came out really well. It's really interesting when you allow people to say okay you get to choose, you decide whatever it is, everybody has to not just participate in the activity but actually be enthusiastic not be a wet blanket, even if you don't like the activity just pretend like you like it, just be a force of positivity rather than negativity and just amazing what kinds of things that people have come up with. My daughter, she let us through a dance routine, she's only 12-years-old, but she's been dancing for I don't know, I mean eight years so she's very good at Ballet and things like that. So she just taught us all these things and when you look at this dance, it just looks so simple and you think I can do that, but once you start to actually do it you realize man, I mean, this is tough, this takes a lot of balance and coordination. My son he held a table tennis competition, I've made them watch this Free Solo I talked about it some time

back. My wife, she came up with this idea of all us are going to create a cartoon strip. I thought there's no way that we're going to be able to do it in two hours but now with technology, there's this I forget the name of the website, but you just go there and then once you have a story line, you can actually pick characters and literally cut and paste them into these panels and you end up...

DJ: **Very interesting**

RR: Yeah, it's just awesome. So just be inventive, just what is the saying, when life gives you lemons make lemonade? So yeah, I think in the end it boils down to feeling good from the inside out. If you feel good from the inside out you are more resilient, you are more creative, you come up with ideas and you make good things happen even in bad situations. And I think that that's the overarching kind of piece of advice or suggestion that I have for the third group. I hope that that's useful Deepak.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for reading. For more please visit [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com)

## End of nugget transcription

\*\*\*\*\*

### RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

**Coping with Covid-19:** Leaders share their perspectives around how we can navigate through the Covid-19 situation that we are all going through. 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.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Raj Raghunathan - Nuggets

- 56.00 Raj Raghunathan - The Full Conversation
- 56.01 Raj Raghunathan - The journey till date
- 56.02 Raj Raghunathan - Defining happiness
- 56.03 Raj Raghunathan - Achievement and happiness

- 56.04 Raj Raghunathan - Abundance mindset and happiness
- 56.05 Raj Raghunathan - Time scarcity and generosity burnout
- 56.06 Raj Raghunathan - Why we lose the plot with happiness
- 56.07 Raj Raghunathan - Navigating mid-life
- 56.08 Raj Raghunathan - Dealing with negative outcomes
- 56.09 Raj Raghunathan - Pursuing flow than chasing superiority
- 56.10 Raj Raghunathan - Raising happy kids - love versus discipline
- 56.11 Raj Raghunathan - Coping with COVID-19

### **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.