



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 is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. A small disclaimer at the bottom left 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

Jennifer speaks about 5 traps that leaders often find themselves in as a result of the disconnect between the operating systems they have and the way the world works. 1) Our preference for simple stories 2) Perceived rightness 3) Need for agreement 4) Desire for control 5) Shackled by who we are now than who we could be.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And you talk about five traps in the book that leaders find themselves in. While I wanted to explore these in little bit of detail, it will be great if you could maybe give the listeners a sense of what the headlines are here around the five traps and the gist of the idea and I wanted to sort of go deeper in some of these ideas later in the conversation.

Jennifer Garvey Berger (JGB): Yeah, super. So these are the five traps I find most sneaky and dangerous when we are faced with complexity. The first one I think about is what I call the rightness trap, right? It's actually the way our minds trick us into believing we are right, even when we have not enough evidence or thought devoted in this direction. As people have been studying this phenomenon, which is widely studied that's like why do humans think they are right so much when they are dealing with things that they couldn't possibly be right about even, and why is it that we have so much confidence in our own capacity to be right about a crazy variety of things, researchers started to find that rightness is this sort of sense of certainty or feeling of certainty is actually an emotion, it's not in fact a cognitive process, it's not the result of a thinking. And so we get trapped by this sense that we are right and that disguises data from us. The second one is simple stories. We humans have grown to live in and love the narrative, it connects us, it makes our communities, our societies, our organizational cultures more possible, but it also tricks us into thinking that pretty much everything can have a beginning, a middle and an end, that pretty much everything can be connected in a straightforward linear story way and that there are heroes and villains and dragons out on our landscape then we are always trying to fit those archetypes which are very unhelpful in a complex world. So we get really trapped by our connection to narrative and to a narrative character. So that's the simple story trap. Then there's this way that humans have been... in many ways we have evolved to live together well and to know who our people are and who our people are not, and one of the ways we seem to have done that is by focusing on agreement, what is it that you and I both agree on and it turns out that we both get a hit of dopamine whenever we find something about which we agree actually feels delicious to agree with somebody else, we have a sense of recognition and happiness there that comes from that. And similarly it causes the same... in a brain scan you cannot tell the difference between physical pain and social pain and so to our brains, to our neurology it really is the same whether we have been injured or whether we have had our feelings hurt. So this means that we have created all sorts of ways for us to escape conflict and disagreement

with those to whom we are close and at the same time to amplify conflict and disagreement with those with whom we disagree and this creates all kinds of unhelpful dynamics and polarization that we could all point to and the great political spheres of our world as well as the organizational ones. So that's the third idea that we are trapped by our need for our desire for agreement. The fourth one is about control. We love feeling like we are in control. Actually feeling like we are in control of things has all kinds of positive health outcomes and at the same time in complexity you cannot control any outcome that matters. Nobody can control complexity, it's one of the defining features of complexity is it emerges from the interaction of a variety of interconnected forces or people. And so often we are unsettled by this and we try harder and harder to control a thing that's uncontrollable and as we do that we tend to create very perverse outcomes and often times oddly opposite the outcomes that we were hoping to go for in the first place, that's the fourth one. And then the last one which is quite connected to this adult development idea earlier is that who we are today often requires us to kind of protect or defend that person, that way of being and we have some significant energy bound up in making us feel okay and look okay with the person we are today and that gets in the way of growing into the person we will be, it's sort of that question we were on earlier about do you leave the shore behind. You have to believe that the shore behind is worth leaving, that there's something else out there for you to leave the shore that you are on and so there is a way we get trapped by our own egos, by the person we are being gets in the way of the person we could be becoming, so those...

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If you found this nugget of value, you might also find my conversation with Arun Maira (AM) interesting. He was the former Chairman of Boston Consulting Group in India and was a member for the Planning Commission. You might specifically find the nugget "Leadership in an Open system" of particular relevance.

AM: "I say in an open system leadership has to emerge and the leader must acquire the right to lead from the people and exercise that power not through authority over the people through and also budget giving and money rewarding powers over the people so in an open system people are all like in a chaotic situation and you must get followership and thus become the leader and to remain a good leader always capable of leading in that open system as it changes you mustn't get overused to using your authority power because those muscles otherwise becomes the strong ones and the other muscles if you had them and you are like a god given planted as a leader are will atrophy."

DJ: He refers to some of the principles in systems thinking to share his perspectives on how we think about driving change as one of the participants in the system like Mahatma Gandhi did when he brought us independence.

Thank you for reading. For more content across 50+ speakers, 500+ nuggets painstakingly curated across 65 odd themes, please visit playtopotential.com. You will also find the podcast on apple podcast, Spotify, Google podcast player and most other podcasts.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Arun Maira that is referenced: [Leadership in an open system](#).

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Leadership development: “How do I grow” is a question that all of us grapple with. The recipe for success is also changing as we move from an Industrial paradigm to a Digital paradigm. This is all the more pronounced in a start-up context where the job outgrows you very quickly. Successful leaders talk about the role of mentors, coaching, listening and more in scaling up one’s capability. 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.

Jennifer Garvey Berger - Nuggets

- 57.00 Jennifer Garvey Berger - The Full Conversation
- 57.01 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Stages of human development
- 57.02 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Transitions in mid-life
- 57.03 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Humans - an outdated OS
- 57.04 Jennifer Garvey Berger - 5 traps that leaders fall into
- 57.05 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Trap1 - Looking for simple stories
- 57.06 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Trap 2 - Feeling right doesn’t mean it is right
- 57.07 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Trap 3 - Desire to agree
- 57.08 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Trap 4 - Controlling instead of influencing
- 57.09 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Trap 5 - Shackled by the past
- 57.10 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Actively listening to your body
- 57.11 Jennifer Garvey Berger - Leadership in a post COVID world

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.

p