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Context to the nugget

BJ speaks about why several people cognitively “get” what they need to do but struggle to move the needle in that direction. He links it back to the early success some of them experience in their journey and why that leads to a certain “fixed mindset” that comes in the way of them experimenting with new ideas that could potentially be a failure. He also talks about how we need to work on minimizing our expectations for new behaviours to take root and grow.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And just as we wrap up BJ, I am curious about this gap between knowing something and doing something right, and your work one could read a book but in your experience over the years of dealing with tiny habits, where do you see the maximum gap between knowing and doing in the people you work with where they get it cognitively but struggle to incorporate it behaviourally and any piece of advice for the listeners in ensuring that these don't stay as thoughts but we are able to translate that to new habits.

BJ Fogg (BJ): Yeah, so I don't have data on where the biggest issue is here but I have coached over 40,000 people and habits personally. So, I have a ton of experience. I have more experience coaching personally than anybody, I think... I can imagine... I've really done more like 50,000 or 60,000. I just stopped counting at 40,000. So to answer your question, my sense of things is the biggest gap is with smart people, people who like to read, people who like to get information, people who in the past have succeeded because you have consumed information and remembered information, and my Stanford students are a lot like this and they are often afraid to put things into action because they are afraid of failing, because they are used to succeeding. So, they will procrastinate, they will delay, they will find all these reasons that they are not going to get started on changing or started on writing a paper or whatever for those two reasons. One, they are very good at consuming information and remembering it and two, they like to succeed. So, if something might cause them not to succeed, they either deliberately or not really realizing it will procrastinate it. So in response to that it's funny you had asked this question, it was last night, I don't tweet that much but every so often I just like if somebody calls me or I am answering an email, I am helping somebody create habits, I say people need to know this. So, I tweeted something like this. The key... I wrote it... for the vast majority of people the key to unlock behaviour change is not increasing motivation instead it's lowering your expectations and just getting started and being nice to yourself all along the way. And Twitter went a little... my followers are a little crazier and then they loved it. I wasn't sure what was going to happen. But so many people... so I woke up this morning and I looked at some of the comments and there are people like I am screenshotting this, I am printing it, I am putting it over my computer. This is exactly what I needed to hear right now. So I totally hit a nerve where I am telling people like I do in the book Tiny Habits if you have tried to change in the past and it has not worked

that is not your fault, you just didn't have the right way to do it. Now here's the right way. And so for people to have the relief of like here's a behaviour scientist at Stanford telling me lower my expectations and don't feel bad about the motivation thing that just helps so many people get and then notice it's not just lower your expectations, but it's to lower your expectations and just get started, like do it now and then really important be nice to yourself along the way. Don't beat yourself out, don't shame and guilt and feeling bad has no role in the tiny habits method and it's not the best way to change in the long term. And that is such a new almost well for some people shocking but for most people surprising insight that that they react like that on Twitter or they are like oh my gosh, that's what I needed, I am printing it. So I... there was a lot of retweets and a lot of likes and all that kind of stuff and that's how I kind of know okay, I had hit a nerve and this is really what my book is about and I would love to say yeah, buy my book people you would have known this but that's not what I am going to say on Twitter. You got so many characters and I try to be as helpful as possible within that framework.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is such a profound point that BJ makes and I couldn't agree more. Something like this shows up in the work I do as well. In the Coaching and the Transition Advisory work I do, I encounter several people who have had a very good first 15-20 year run in whichever field. But as they take stock of where they are and the choices they need to make, I urge them to start experimenting and trying different things. But they struggle. Because the past successes come in the way of them taking risks. The previous guest at the podcast, Jennifer Garvey Berger, spoke about the 5 traps we often find ourselves in and one of the 5 is the trap of being shackled by the past, which in essence is very similar to the point BJ makes here.

As Marshall Goldsmith says, "what got you here, doesn't get you there". But the sad reality is that several people who have had a successful start just stop after they climb the first mountain and they can't climb it any more. They struggle to walk around figuring out the foothills of the next mountain that they could climb because they don't want to take the risk.

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End of nugget transcription

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Habits: Habits are routine behaviours done on a regular basis. They are recurrent and often unconscious patterns of behaviour and are acquired through frequent repetition. Guests on the podcast share their experiences in baking habits in their lives. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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BJ Fogg - Nuggets

- 58.00 BJ Fogg - The Full Conversation
- 58.01 BJ Fogg - The ABC of tiny habits
- 58.02 BJ Fogg - The MAP of behaviour change
- 58.03 BJ Fogg - Prompts - the low hanging fruit of change
- 58.04 BJ Fogg - Action versus Context Prompt
- 58.05 BJ Fogg - Build ability to beat motivation cycles
- 58.06 BJ Fogg - Celebrating to wire in a habit
- 58.07 BJ Fogg - Tiny habits to big change
- 58.08 BJ Fogg - Untangle (not break) bad habits
- 58.09 BJ Fogg - Getting out of screen addiction
- 58.10 BJ Fogg - The knowing-doing gap

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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