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## Context to the nugget

RG speaks about the role of the leader bringing in adequate open-ness and a prototyping mindset to the way he or she sculpts his or her ideas. If he or she has the habit of “baking it too much” in his or her mind and then present to the others as a sales pitch it might be bad for business and for the leader’s trust quotient with the ecosystem around.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And the other point you talk about in the book Gopal is leaders having a certain level of porosity to co-create a good outcome. I found that phrase quite interesting as well. Talk to us a little bit about what you mean by porosity and maybe if there are a couple of examples just to embellish the point?

R Gopalakrishnan (RG): You know, when you get into leadership position I talked of brain damage, one of the things that it does to you is to give the feeling that you have the answers to all the questions and answers to some things where people don’t even have questions. You get into that sort of mindset and so you have decided on a particular course of action, this acquisition should happen or this capital expenditure should occur and you are merely selling it to people. You are like a salesman who has taken a soap made in the factory and you are just determined that he should buy that soap. That’s a wrong attitude. In some cases, it is fine but in many cases that’s wrong because co-creation means I take and show him that I can make this type of soap, I can make that type of soap, you know we do market research in consumer business to find out do you want a freshness soap or do you want a beauty soap or do you want a skin softening soap. He said, oh! All these things are possible, I would rather have a bit of that and a bit of that and you come back and co-create the soap and decisions in the CEO or in the board room have to be often co-created. If there’s a crisis obviously I am not asking for you to do, you still try to build the elements of co-creation and when I use the word porosity if he has made up his mind and he is merely selling it, very often CEO say, I have to sell this idea to other people, please understand if you have reached a stage where you have to sell, if it is the odd idea yes, I understand, but if your permanent mode of operation is that you made that decision and you are just selling it to people then you are going to have a bad market. That’s what I meant by porosity.

DJ: Very interesting. Sort of make interactions a two way exchange and not just a sales process, right?

RG: Yes, you know, it is like an automaker would make a prototype or a model and then the model will be shaped, he will put it into an auto show and people would make comments, he will increase

the flares a bit, he will bring down the hood a bit, increase the headlights. If you can't do that as a CEO then I think you have got a problem.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In my coaching work, I find that this piece is often a derailer for a lot of Type A leaders who are often outstanding in problem solving. It is like transitioning from unlocking the power of your CPU to leveraging the potential of cloud computing. They require very different approaches. While the education system we go through helps build our CPU, it doesn't tell us how we unlock the power of cloud computing of all the wisdom around us. The only piece I would add to what RG says is that when you come across with the right level of porosity, not only do you get to a better answer or a solution, you also end up building better relationships with the people around you, which sets up a virtuous cycle for the future.

One of my earlier guests Jennifer Garvey Berger (JGR) speaks about the notion of listening to fix or listening to win rather than listening to learn as being a potential trap, especially when we lead in a complex world.

*JGR: "I have us look for what certainty feels like and begin to notice that as separate from a cognitive process like what does it feel like when you feel certain. You can often notice some things your body does like I move forward in my seat, I start thinking ahead to how I am going to defeat the disagreement or the perspectives of others, like I have a sense of righteousness in me. Now when I notice those things I am able to say oh wait, wait, wait, this is an emotion, this is closing me down to new possibilities, new data, and I could totally be wrong here. So asking myself what is it that I am really believing right now, not what's true but what I believe is true and then how could I be wrong about this allows me to listen in a new way not to defeat the other person, not to listen to win or listen to fix their ideas, but to listen to learn from them to hold my mind open as a practice, as an intention or practice as opposed to just going with this emotion that bowls over my capacity to learn."*

DJ: Are we listening with adequate porosity in our minds is something worth thinking about as we go about our lives, more so when we are transitioning into a new context.

Thank you for listening. If you find this of value, do take a moment to visit the podcast archives at [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com). You might specifically be interested in my conversation with Michael Watkins on how leaders can settle in effectively in a new organization. You might also like the theme "settling into a new context" where we learn from leaders across different walks of life on how they navigated the first few months in a new environment including someone like Gandhiji when he moved back to India from South Africa.

## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Jennifer Garvey Berger that is referenced: [Trap 2 - Feeling right doesn't mean it is right.](#)

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## R Gopalakrishnan - Nuggets

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## 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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