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## Context to the nugget

Atul speaks about how he straddled the two worlds concurrently – one in which he was running an IT business, the other where he was an emerging comedian. He speaks about how these two ecosystems were very different and how he moved from one domain to another. He also speaks about how doing more stand up made him better in his IT job despite getting busier.

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** I was just saying so talk to us about what those six months looked and felt like. In terms of your time and attention you had a business to run. So how did you... I am curious about how in a way how do you water a new plant where you are sitting under a tree, right?

**Atul Khatri (AK):** It was actually not even six months, I would say because from 2012 to 2016, I did both my job as well as this but yes the initial six months were very, very exciting, because I am telling you the first open mic I did, the laughter which you get and the claps which you get, you don't get sleep for sometimes 3-3 days, those resonate in your ears, I am generally telling you. So, suddenly from that first open mic I became damn energetic, I used to probably wake up earlier, do my job even better my IT job, because I knew in the evening I had to go for a gig or attend a gig because I started liking this. Now I started knowing which are the other open mics happening, where comedy shows are happening, other comedians started knowing me, they used to say hey, I have a gig in Bandra next Thursday, do you want to come and do 10 ten minutes, I said, yeah, sure man, thank you so much for the opportunity. Then that next gig you are preparing for it, obviously not during your work time but when you are driving to work, when you are coming back from work or when you are exercising or you are going to the gym, when you are on the treadmill that 45 minutes to 1 hour what you get. I used my walking time or my jogging time a lot of for my thoughts or my cycling. I used to go for cycling also a lot. So yeah, so it's a different kind of a drug altogether and so that really kept me going, just the excitement of going again on stage, maybe bombing, maybe not doing well, coming back again. So that really kept me this and as I said right from the beginning thanks to also again I am saying to Wipro and now again why I am going to Wipro is because at that time Wipro in 2010 started this Six Sigma quality project, this was a Motorola-driven quality, I am sure you and some of the... so it's like I think finding six defects or I think 3.67 defects in every 1 million operations that six are...It was a Japanese thing, a Motorola or some Japanese company...

**DJ:** Motorola started it and then GE also popularized it with Six Sigma.

**AK:** Yeah, but I think now they have said it is a failed concept, it doesn't work any longer, I don't know whatever. So I used to take part in a lot of Six Sigma projects and one of the projects which I took on was on time also like how quickly you respond to mails, how quickly you respond to an

inquiry for, so you do a lot of these projects and as channel partners of Wipro we were also told to take projects because we were more or less the extended arm of Wipro. So, for me time was always very, very and like till today every meeting of mine everything or the... I think time is the biggest resource, it is the most expensive resource we have; we should not waste it. So, like I really look down on people who come late on their appointments, or who don't call up, or I'll call you back in 15 minutes, they never call you back I like I judge them telling you. So, and because I am stickler for time. So thanks to this sticking for time and probably right from an initial age, I used to do a lot of I would say I used to run both the horses, ride both the horses so... like I remember initially I used to get gigs like in Delhi, for example, initially when you are starting out you get a corporate gig in Delhi on a Friday, but hey, I have a job, I run the company, how can I leave on a Friday morning? So, I remember I used to take the 4 o'clock flight out of Bombay to Delhi, reach Delhi at 6:00 6:30 and then rush to the show, then wake up early morning next day at 5:30, take the early morning flight from Delhi back to Bombay straight into office and work there whole day and again in the evening probably go for some other gig in Bombay. I remember, I mean those were the days where I used to not see my children for like four-five days altogether because by the time you come back late, they are already sleeping because they have school or college the next day. So all these things used to... so I think time really helped me, I used to really manage time well and when you look at it honestly even in comedy when you look at it, time is very, very important as I said earlier that... so, people who don't know stand-up comedy, when you go to watch a comedy show, there are three artists. Each of us is given a time, ki okay you have got 30 minutes on stage. Now, believe me if you go from 30 to 31st minute also, if you overrun your time by one minute also a professional comedy club will reprimand you, will scold you that why the hell did you go for one minute extra, because they said dude they were enjoying one minute doesn't make it... no dude one minute makes it difficult because your one minute somebody else adds a 2 minutes, it's a 10-minute extension to a show, people have plans, they have come with a plan, the show must start on time, must end on time. It's not about you, it's about the entire show. So, time is very, very crucial in comedy. Which lot of unfortunately some of the junior comedians still today don't appreciate or don't understand the value of that. So, I think time played an important role. So the six minutes... the earliest... coming back to your question the first six months from April to I would say October were a lot of excitement, it's like a new baby and you are so excited you want to, it's a new car you have bought and you want to ride it every day, drive it every day, sorry. So it was that kind of a drugs or nasha what you call it, waking up, writing new material, going and performing, seeing it's not working, working, it's a different life I saw. Because 25 years you have your own set of ecosystem, your orbit as you call it, your orbit of your suppliers, your vendors, your Wipro, your principal, your chartered accountant, your income tax, your employees, that's the thing. Now, I was getting into a different orbit or different ecosystem where there are comedians, there are comedy club owners, there is an audience who is paying you, there is... yeah, there are the light man, the sound guy, those suddenly become very important to you than anybody else. So that was a... also you have to realize that most of the comedians even today, the average age I think of the stand-up comedians in India must be I think 24-25, but they were half my age... at that time they were even younger so I mean I used to work with comedian sometimes as old as my children's age like. So hanging around with them, going for dinner after a show with them and the night before I have this joke which I say the one night before I am having dinner with my 40+ CEO friends and when the bill comes, we are having a fight, take my card, let me pay, let me pay, we are all throwing our credit card and so on. Next day I am having dinner with all these young comedians and the bill comes and we have a different kind of a fight ki, no, sir, I had only two rotis, this is my 60 rupees, I had one scoop of dal, this is my 10 rupees, so I won't pay GST, why should I pay GST, why should I pay service charge so all these things used to happen. It was a very funny riding both things... but I am so glad, it gave me a new life, I started, I probably... my wife started feeling I am becoming more a happier person because I used to wake up with a lot of excitement, so yeah.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I really liked the point Atul makes around him becoming better at his business post stand up. Let me play that piece again.

(REWIND)

*AK: "I used to probably wake up earlier, do my job even better my IT job, because I knew in the evening I had to go for a gig or attend a gig because I started liking this."*

DJ: I do think we lead an integrated life and how we do in one domain impacts the other. One of my earlier guests, Stew Friedman of Wharton who has researched Work Life Integration for several years, speaks about the notion of psychological spill over where we take our mood and energy from one domain to another. Do tune into the podcast conversation with Stew Friedman if this is of interest.

Thank you for listening. If you are enjoying this conversation, you might also like my conversation with Papa CJ, another stand-up comedian who transitioned from a career in Management Consulting to discovering Stand up. You might also like the way Amish Tripathi transitioned from a career in Financial Services to writing or how Atul Kasbekar transitioned from studying Chemical Engineering to becoming a Photographer and subsequently a producer. You might also like the playlist reinventing self where several leaders speak about how they thought about their journeys when they were at cross roads.

## End of nugget transcription

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### Atul Khatri - 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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