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## Context to the nugget

Venkat shares his perspectives around how we can raise kids with a concern for the world around. She shares some thoughts on how we can engage with the child when he/she asks us uncomfortable questions. He also illustrates the criticality of reflection in slowly building compassion in the child.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Venkat, you have also spent in the context of spreading the word around giving I am sure you have interacted with enough philanthropists, the older generation, the younger generation. As a parent of two young children I am curious about what have you seen some of the people do who have amassed a lot of wealth, but when you see that they have raised children who are sort of quite giving and grounded? Are there a few things that stand out in terms of how they manage that? Because one of the concerns I have is are we bubble wrapping too much, right? So, what's been your insight around this?

Venkat Krishnan (VK): Yeah, no, I think, easily the best examples of great parenting in that context upbringing responsible kids etc. is people who have not bubble wrapped their kids, they have kind of applied this, what I need for myself principled to the kids as well. So, given the kids all the comforts they want, so kids do get Nike shoes and all of that kind of stuff. I don't have to go and buy a cheap canvas shoe or something like that but also saying but this much and move further. So, limited pocket money, limited access to resources and saying no to the child a lot of times. I think these are very important things that these people have done in helping the child learn that the world is not an endless stream of resources. That is number one. The number two thing that they have done is they have all involved their children in philanthropy. So, a lot of people that I have seen have been involving their kids in their giving whether it's taking the kids along. Sometimes it's done consciously, many times it was done even unconsciously, right? So, a lot of people when I talk to about their own giving journeys now talk about how they saw their parents doing it as a child, right? So, somebody saw their parents that postman aata tha to usko ghar ke andar bulake chai pilaate the, you know, these themes. Because Stephen Covey, again, I am sorry I go back to him often, says this wonderful thing. He says your actions are so loud I can't hear a word you say, right? And I think kids are ridiculously intuitive on that, they pick on your actions, your behaviour far more than any amount of preaching and storytelling that you can do. So, I think, that has been another very important thing where I have seen people bring up compassionate children, it's often by creating opportunities for their kids. So, it could be celebrating their child's birthday with some other children in a less privileged place, taking them along for the various philanthropic activities that they do, talking to the child a lot about the issues, getting the child to reflect, you know, reflection is a great, great, great tool. The more we can get people to reflect including children it is a huge way to help build great thought for the children so.

DJ: I think when you said reflect are you talking about a particular any particular process?

VK: No, I would say, like one of the best things about LEM as a course, Sunil Handa used to tell us to write reflective notes, the way the course was graded we had no exams. He said, thrice in the term I'll just put a pause, I'll say you learnt something over the last four sessions, now reflect on it and write a three-page note or a five-page note. There was no limit, you could write one page or write 18 pages and then because he had to give a grade, he would give us a grade for those notes. But, I think, it was a phenomenal idea because a lot of time learning kind of stays superficially in our brains and it gets deeply internalised when you reflect upon it. I think that if you could get... and reflection makes you think a lot, lot more than you normally do. We are getting today so much stimulated with all our Netflix's and Primes and all of that kind of stuff, our attention spans are down, we can barely read a book. I think reflection can slow you down and bring stillness into you and it can actually help you think through a lot of things a lot to the extent that we can get children. So, for example, you take your kid out for a walk, kids comes back, will typically say something, right? Woh aisa kyun baitha tha bhikhari itne gande kapde pehan ke or something like that, right? And most of us will have one or two responses or the tendency of the parent will be to answer the question ki woh bechaara gareeb hai, kyun gareeb hai pata nahi or some other person might actually have a very different view on it and say piyakkad hai, saara paisa daru pi ke isliye aapko daru nahi pina chahiye. So, there is a teaching opportunity for the child kind of a feeling etc. And, I think, it's a wasted opportunity, wonderful opportunity to actually ask the... not answer the kid, right? I think when the kid is 3, 4, 5, 6 you would probably need to answer a lot of their questions. I would say even as early as 4 or 5 can we at least start throwing back their questions to them and asking them why do you think he was there like that. And trust me I think the kid will learn a lot more if they are given that opportunity to exercise their brains and stuff like that. I think people will reach compassionate conclusions much faster if they think.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The point from Venkat around our actions speaking louder than words is a profound one. Something similar came up in my very first conversation with the Tennis legend Vijay Amritraj (VA). When I asked him, how he thought about his journey towards Giving back after he had achieved all the successes, here is something he said.

*VA: "Here is the great anecdote from my late uncle my father's elder brother who was a professor and a teacher and so on and didn't have a much way of money but a little nephew came and said to him one day can I borrow ten thousand rupees from you? And I will give it back to you in six months as a loan he didn't have it he barely had it to be able to give him that money eventually he pulled it together and he gave him the ten thousand rupees and he said don't give it back to me but when you get older and someone comes and ask you for it make sure you give it to them. Now that is the very good lesson that I never ever forgotten it always at the back of my mind where you are blessed with the people who are able to do things for you. And the question is if you have to get into that capability of being able to help others, would you be able to do it?"*

DJ: More than story telling or lecturing our kids, leading by example, I guess is a profound way of impacting the child's beliefs.

The other piece worth noting is the benefit of reflecting and journaling. One of my earlier guests Rich Fernandez (RF) speaks about the benefit of journaling quite succinctly.

RF: *“When you write something long hand like when you journal you actually have to articulate the entire thoughts in your heads and they become encoded in your memory in a much stronger fashion. Basically, you are programming yourself in another sense of the word when you journal you are programming your brain to perceive a situation through a certain lens or perspective and it becomes much more real and concrete and, in some ways, you start to live your way into that if that make any sense.”*

DJ: Going back to what Venkat says, I guess it is never too early to get your child to start reflecting.

## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Vijay Amritraj that is referenced: [Achievement Orientation to a Giving Mindset](#).

Nugget from Rich Fernandez that is referenced: [Benefits of Journaling](#).

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### **Venkat Krishnan - 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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