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## Context to the nugget

Marshall speaks about the 6 questions that he often asks the leaders he works with. 1) Did you do your best to set clear goals 2) Did you do your best to make progress towards achieving your goals 3) Did you do your best to find meaning 4) Did you do your best to be happy 5) Did you do your best to be fully engaged 6) Did you do your best to build positive relationships

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): One of the pieces I was curious about Marshall was the art of asking good questions. You speak about having some go-to questions, which really provoke reflection of the coachee. In your experience, what wisdom would you have for people or coaches who are...?

Marshal Goldsmith (MG): I am going to give everybody my first six questions that I challenge myself with every day. If you just do nothing, but ask these questions every day and fill out the form you will get better. Let me ask thousands of people than research you will get better. One question is did I do my best to set clear goals today. Now I have a program I am doing called the LPR 50, these are amazing people. I mean, let's see who's in our group. We have got the Head of the US Olympic Committee, we have got NBA All Star, National Football League All Star, Academy Award winner, and we have got President, Rockefeller Foundation. I mean on and on CEO of all these big companies. We do, we go through this every week, they evaluate themselves every day and then once a week, we have a dialogue about this and in meeting groups of say 6 to 10, 50 people meeting in groups of 6 or 10, I spend seven hours every weekend on this. It's amazing, they love it too. The first question is did you do your best to set clear goals? Do you think they all are going to get a 10? No, some days I woke up, I did emails, I got on a phone call, and the day was over. Next did I do my best to make progress toward achieving my goals, some days I get distracted, I forgot what I was doing, right? Did I do my best to find meaning? I have had a guy who has a heart surgeon who gave himself a 3 out of 10 on finding meaning. It's not what you do; it's how it relates to your life. Now the next term we are going to spend time on did I do my best to be happy? Yesterday I did this with a guy who for millions of people would be a god. Rich, good-looking, young, famous, critically acclaimed four. Okay Deepak, 1 to 10, 10 is high, 1 is low, what would be your score on the average day that I do my best to be happy? Did I do my best to be happy, 1 to 10, give me a number?

DJ: 6 or 7.

MG: 6? You will say 6.5. The average in the world is 5.5, yeah. I did this for three medical doctors: Jim Kim, Raj Shah, John Noseworthy and they are there in my book Triggers, three of the smartest people I ever met. You have World Bank, Mayo Clinic, Rockefeller Foundation and they are not dumb, right, all medical doctors. All three said it, never try to be happy. So, I said, well get it done or

you are going to die. Figure that out, death. I said, yeah, yeah. In medical school they cover that topic, death that we're going to die, yeah. Well I said you think it's a silly question. I forgot to ask I was too busy achieving things. I forgot to ask I was too busy achieving things. How old are you?

DJ: I am 44.

MG: I am 71 years. Here's 71, I mean, you look back on your life and say on the average day I got a 6.5 on trying to be happy, you know, what you think about Deepak? Dumbass, dumbass. You think the 71-year-old you would think that was impressive or not too much. Now Deepak, we are all going to be equally dead here. My advice is be happy. And by the way, if you think you are going to be happy when you write the book you achieve the status you get that success. The guy I talked to yesterday if there was a when, he was way beyond any when. The answer is not out there, the answer is in here. Now, I don't know if you ever heard of something called the Bhagavad Gita.

DJ: Of course.

MG: Yeah, the Bhagavad Gita, what does... it was Arjuna and Krishna. What does Krishna say? Look, don't get fixated on the outcomes, focus on the process, you do your best and you make peace. Deepak, have you ever got fixated on the outcomes?

DJ: Often.

MG: Yeah, re-read that little poem. Yeah, there's a reason that poem is still around after all those years. It is what it is. You are where you are, you make peace, you come up with a strategy, and you do your best, that's it. One of the happiest people I know is Harry Baxter who is the CEO of Baxter, Harry Kraemer, CEO of Baxter and just a good guy. Have you met Harry? He is a great guy. Anyway Harry, somebody said, how do you sleep at night because you have to fire people, you have got to lay people off, how do you sleep? He said, two questions, that I do my best, that I do what I thought was right. If I was right and did my best I would sleep at night, that's all you can do. It's only all of us can do.

DJ: Thank you, Marshall. Marshall, the...

MG: No, wait, the last two questions are did I do my best to be fully engaged and did I do my best to build positive relationships. Now, Deepak, single or married?

DJ: Married, with two kids.

MG: Married, oh very good and what's your wife's name?

DJ: Kamini.

MG: Very nice. Now, do you believe customer satisfaction is important in life, the customer satisfaction part and should we ask our customers for input about how we can improve? And should we listen and try to get better? Have you been asking your lovely wife what can Deepak do to be a better partner in this relationship?

DJ: No.

MG: Now Deepak, I am very confused, very confused. Now who is more important? Those customers that don't know your name and could care less if you died or your wife who seems to love you on occasion? Who's more important?

DJ: Clearly wife.

MG: Why haven't you asked your wife how you can be a better husband? That's a question.

DJ: Probably comes down to courage, not having the courage to...

MG: Just say, my name is Deepak.

DJ: My name is Deepak.

MG: I need help.

DJ: I need help.

MG: I am a coward.

DJ: I am a coward.

MG: You see, we are all cowards. Why don't we do this stuff because it's hard, it's embarrassing, it's humbling, and it's painful? You don't want to know the truth, it's hard. Why do I have someone kick my ass? I am a coward. Why does Pau Gasol have a trainer, I am a coward, Twyla Tharp, I am a coward. We all talk about will power, as if somehow we have all this willpower, Nah. Willpower is grossly overrated. None of us have that much willpower, which we can?

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

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## End of nugget transcription

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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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