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## Context to the nugget

Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi speaks about how we sometimes limit the learning opportunities by trying to look “within the box”. He suggests us to surrender to the teacher/coach/guide/mentor and the process to derive the value from it.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And on a related point in the book you talk about the notion that teachers don't come to us on our terms. That got me thinking and you go on to say as long as we insist that the lesson plan has to proceed along our expectations nothing a teacher says or does will make a difference. Could you talk to us about the wisdom in these lines?

Tenzin Priyadarshi (TP): Well, it's basically to shatter our expectations that we have of ourselves and that we have of the world around us. This consumer mindset has taken over to the point that even learning has become a form of consumption. What am I going to get out of... even day before yesterday I had to do a media interview and they asked me what are the takeaways from your book? And I said, what's the point of takeaways? Why do you think that there should be takeaways? Why don't you think that there should be just letting go that if you read the book, you might actually shed some traits, you might actually let go and dissolve some of your tendencies rather than takeaways. So, this idea of consumer mindset is so deeply ingrained in us that we have to recognize that the rules of engagement in spiritual life are quite different. So, this is what happens is we seek a spiritual teacher but we have expectations. We have expectations from what the teacher should appear as, what the teacher should speak in the language and so on and so forth. When we follow a book, when we read a book, it is the same thing meaning that all we are doing is looking for validation and affirmation. And this is the difference between having a spiritual teacher versus reading a book or watching a video. A book or a video is not going to push your buttons, it's not going to bring to your mind truly what is at stake because all we do when we read a book is, we seek resonance. When we listen to a teacher with expectation, we seek resonance but we seldom ask what in me is seeking that resonance? If it's the same unfiltered ego that is seeking resonance and seeking validation then what's the point of even treading spiritual life, what's the point of seeking a teacher? You can constantly just validate your own perspectives on things. So, this is the distinction that we have to recognize that it is not always set lesson plans, it's not that you know in eight weeks or six months you are going to meet the desired goal. You know, it's like when a car salesman in U.S. when they are selling you a car and you ask them what's the mileage and they say well, the mileage may vary depending on the use of it, and spiritual life is very much like that, the mileage may vary and each user is unique in that regard.

DJ: The other element you talk about in the book, page 153 you say you quote “a teacher may see your potential in ways that you can’t see yourself and may recognize conditions that are right for a change and strike a note that you didn’t realize you were ready to hear”. I am curious about how you think about teachers unlocking the potential of the other person that the other person can’t see yet? What’s been your experience with this?

TP: I think sometimes, you know, we all have blind spots and sometimes things that are so close to us or we have held so closely our belief systems, our mental dispositions, hurdles, obstacles that they fall in blind spot and sometimes we just need another thoughtful individual to be able to see them and point out that that’s hazardous. You are continuing to do this, you are not looking at it, that’s hazardous. And I think we should look at obstacles in that particular manner that when a teacher points out something it is precisely that. The second thing is the trappings. The trappings in the sense again that we may get trapped in a particular story line or a particular narrative of who we are, what our life’s purpose is and so on and we all, we don’t need religious upbringing to have that. That’s deeply sort of tied into our human nature in some way. And simply help by pointing to the idea of is that all you are, is that the purpose that really drives you or sometimes even asking a simple question like are you happy, do you feel a sense of freedom, have you been kind today? You know, simple things of that nature can trigger a kind of reflection, a kind of thinking that I think would be rather useful and that’s the joy of teachers which is that it’s they say things or they point to things at the right moment, at the right time. And sometimes they all have tremendous patience; they need to point to things several times before we can see our blind spot. And that’s just how, that’s just how this whole discipline is in some ways.

DJ: And in that context in your journey have there been one or two instances of people pointing you towards something or asking a question and you realizing the value of that several years later?

TP: Oh, yes, yes, many, many such incidents. Many, many such incidents. One, I mentioned of course is this story of one of my very dear Japanese monk teacher Reverend Sasaki and the conversation with him, the way he lived his life that at times were very puzzling to me and not by the book, which made me recognize whose book, you know, whose book is it that we want to live by. Buddha gave guidelines but are those guidelines still useful if they are simply fabricating more ego rather than dismantling the ego. So, those are the things that years later you come to recognize. You are lucky if there is an instant recognition of certain shortfalls, it’s literally like the light bulb going on, but sometimes the light bulbs take time because you have to go through those experiences because at times even if the light bulbs go on meaning you have that insight, it’s not that you take ownership of the insight, the insight is not embedded in your mind stream, it doesn’t change anything and it’s years later that that insight might push you in certain ways that it changes things. So, there are many things like that. Mother Teresa, a simple questioning of you have read a lot about compassion, you have meditated on compassion, how about manifesting it? Simple thing but very to the point it was there but it was a lesson that has changed my entire perspective on how I approach life altogether.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In my own limited way, I realize that in the Coaching and the Advisory work I do, very often the development of the leader occurs in his or her blind spot. They might come in with a pre-set expectation that they want to work on A, B and C but often we realize that the real unlock lies somewhere else. And if I look at the leaders that have made the most progress, it is those that have been open to this process of discovery and have accepted what emerges without trying to validate the findings with their past world view.

If I look at my journey, some of the biggest breakthroughs have come from my blind spots. When I was evaluating choices post McKinsey, I was evaluating options such as strategic planning, private equity, venture capital etc but one of the Partners – Ramesh Mangaleswaran looked at me and asked me “have you thought about executive search”; That one line input changed my life completely.

I guess, all of us are busy with the rough and tumble of our daily lives. When we find a guide, I feel that it is imperative that we surrender to the teacher and be open to wherever the learning comes, not just in the places where we seek the learning. We might be confining our growth by the limitations of the way we see the world and ourselves.

## End of nugget transcription

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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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