

Podcast Transcript [71.05 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Intellect and clarity of thought - correlated?](#)

Also available on Apple Podcasts | Google Podcasts | Spotify

www.playtopotential.com

The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are three contact options: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the far right is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with a red name tag below it that reads 'Podcast Host Deepak Jayaraman'. At the bottom left of the banner, there is a small text note: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget

We often get confused with the notion of intellect and thinking clearly. Hari shares his perspectives here. He also speaks about how laziness might be a preferred attribute with founders as being busy could lead founders spending time and getting caught up with the wrong things.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And just moving along you talk about a couple of elements in the context of founder skillset and intelligence? One is you talk about founders graduating from smart and hardworking to smart and lazy. I know we shouldn't take the term lazy literally to sort of allude to the notion of prioritizing so that was something that caught my attention I wanted you to expand. And the other was also the distinction between intellects and thinking clearly, you know, and the reason I ask is pedigree is often an indication of intellect but how do you discern your thinking? So, I was curious about your take on both these two things: smart hardworking and smart lazy versus thinking clearly an intellect. I am sort of throwing two questions in because they are sort of around a similar zone so I thought I would club them?

TN Hari (Hari): See smart and hardworking to smart and lazy I think that is really about prioritizing. It is a beautiful way of saying that being able to prioritize is important. I think multiple frameworks have always existed. For example, this framework around urgent and important. We were all told many, many years back right at the start of our careers that there are urgent things to be done, there are things which are not urgent, there are important things are not so important. So, I think what really suffers is the important and not urgent stuff usually gets postponed and what gets picked up is the unimportant and urgent stuff. So, I think, how do founders figure out ways in which they can drop the things which are not important but urgent and focus on the stuff which is important but not urgent. I think that really is the thing. And many founders are unable to drop the stuff which is not important and maybe urgent because it gives them a sense of hustle, it gives them a sense of being busy, lost in activity traps; activity sometimes begins to mean progress, which is not necessarily true. But many people fall for that, which is activity means progress and gives them a sense of accomplishment. So, how do founders learn how to drop those things which are not important? Maybe delegate them or maybe completely ignore them, which is really about being saying can you be smart and lazy, can you prioritize, can you focus on things which are important but may not be urgent but they will become urgent later on if you don't do them well today, So, this is really about being able to find time to do the right things. And the other thing you talked about I think the question was about thinking clearly and intellect. I think, I have understood this over the years. It took me a while to figure this out, which is that I have seen several people who one can classify as intelligent by any means by which you measure them, but I found that they clearly are

Podcast Transcript [71.05 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Intellect and clarity of thought - correlated?](#)

Also available on Apple Podcasts | Google Podcasts | Spotify

www.playtopotential.com

unimpressive in meetings because they are unable to remove clutter and intellect isn't therefore being able to figure out what drives that outcome, what are the independent variables that drive a particular dependent variable, what are the interconnections, what are some of those patterns but many intelligent people fail to figure out which is the interconnection and which is the driver of outcome which is important. So, again the several drivers that impact profitability, several drivers can impact a particular metric but which is the one which is important, which are the few that are important, how can we take those and how can we figure out that those bottom 10 are not important? So, I think, in some ways it is also about being able to prioritize, it is about being able to draw the right hypothesis to be able to test. So, instead of just boiling the ocean to figure out a few obvious things, can you use all your past experiences to then figure out which are the things that matter and which are the things that don't matter? And you can see them in meetings very clearly, you know, people who cannot think very clearly which come across as very cluttered, they are unable to figure out the same thing and they go all over the place and pay equal importance to the most insignificant driver of a particular outcome, spend equal time on everything rather than spending time on the most important things, identifying the right kind of hypothesis, figuring out whether it is true not true, I think, that is the way I would see it.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If there is one thing I have realized, the education system we grew up, or I grew up in rather, focused on teaching us how to solve the problems that were presented to us. But didn't quite teach us to figure out which problems to solve which arguably is a higher order problem to solve that could possibly unlock much more value. Which problems to solve at the level of life, business, home etc is something that we learn as we go along. But just keeping that distinction in mind is helpful.

Hari also speaks about the trap of being busy. I feel leadership is as much about how people operate in the realm of being as in the realm of doing. How are you showing up with your colleagues? How are you showing up at home? It is worth reflecting on this as you go about your journey. One of my earlier guests Ramesh Srinivasan spoke about this eloquently when he spoke about his lessons from Bower Forum, McKinsey's platform for CEO learning. You might want to look up that conversation for more context.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Context-based leadership: You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Podcast Transcript [71.05 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Intellect and clarity of thought - correlated?](#)

Also available on Apple Podcasts | Google Podcasts | Spotify

www.playtopotential.com

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a **Podcast Whatsapp distribution group (+91 85914 52129)** where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating “INTERESTED”. Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Nuggets

- 71.00 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - The Full Conversation
- 71.01 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Journey and transitions till date
- 71.02 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Three rhythms of a scale up
- 71.03 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Being deliberate about culture building
- 71.04 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Getting senior leader transitions right
- 71.05 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Intellect and clarity of thought - correlated?
- 71.06 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Founder development and role of coaching
- 71.07 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Founder CEO or Professional CEO?

About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock the 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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.

Podcast Transcript [71.05 Sanjeev Aggarwal and TN Hari - Intellect and clarity of thought - correlated?](#)

Also available on [Apple Podcasts](#) | [Google Podcasts](#) | [Spotify](#)

www.playtopotential.com