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Context to the nugget

Jen speaks about how we should practice pausing in the moment (reactive) and otherwise (proactive) for us to be able to choose responding instead of reacting at various points in time

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Moving to a different theme in the context of building awareness towards what is going on, Jen, you talk about two kinds of pauses, a reactive pause and a proactive pause. Can you talk a little bit about both of these?

Dr. Jennifer Goldman (JG): Well, I talk about both of these pauses because they are both important and the more you can proactively pause, the more likely you are to be successful to pause in the moments where it counts. And that is a reactive pause. An example of a reactive pause is, and this is what all clients always want to know, is like when I am stuck in the moment with somebody, how can I prevent myself from just having a knee-jerk reaction that I do not want to have, either blowing up in anger or crying or hiding and running away if I am someone whose conflict habit is shutdown, like how can I prevent myself from doing those things. And my best advice is, in those moments, you want to stop and you want to breathe and take a pause even if it is just in your own mind where you are counting to 10 inside of your own head. But my own experience and my experience helping thousands of people through this kind of process is that if we do not proactively pause in moments where we are not in the heat of the moment with someone else facing us, it is going to be a lot harder to have that pausing reflex come up in the moment. So the more we can have as a daily practice, even if it is just literally two minutes a day in the morning, you know, two minutes in the morning and two minutes in the evening or just start with one minute or start when you are, you know, walking to the refrigerator to get something to eat, you can build this into your daily life in any way that works for you, can be when you turn the shower on, you remember to take a breath or every time you buckle your seatbelt, you remember to take three breaths. For many years, I had a practice where literally every time I would unbuckle my seatbelt, that was my cue that I just needed to take three breaths before I was allowed to get out of the car. And it really was super helpful to me. I should probably go back to doing it, you know, exactly what stopped it, maybe it was the pandemic where now I do not get in the car every day. So any practice like that where you have a regular proactive practice of pausing will help you when you are then in the moment to remember. Okay, breathe, I can breathe because it is putting that pause that allows you to then respond differently and free yourself from getting stuck on that conflict loop the way you always have.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If this topic is of interest, I would urge you to listen to my conversation with Rich Fernandez (RF) of Search Inside Yourself, a Leadership Development organization incubated in Google. Especially, the segment where he speaks about response flexibility and the notion of meta distress. When I pressed him on how we should all develop response flexibility, he referred to the notion of an integrated practice.

RF: *“What I would say is ritualize it and routinize it so make it a ritual or routine so personally for me it’s the first thing I do when I wake up, I literally get up from my bed, splash water on my face and I go down stair to my office and then I sit in the morning. This is early morning before the sun is up, I mean early riser and before my family is awake, before I check my email or open up the laptop or look at my phone or anything it’s the first thing I do and then second thing I do is I brush my teeth. So, to that level of routinization, it’s to that level of ritualization for me. It’s just the hygiene factor I call it. So, to the extent you can make the formal practice of meditation hygiene factor it will help make it a habit in your life. The other suggestion I have is something we offer in a curriculum which is make it a set of integrated practices. When people think about meditation, they think about having to do exactly what I have just said which is sati side you know x block of time and you know sit in a certain way and close your eyes and protect the space for formal practice. But there is also a way to practice mindfulness and meditation in an integrated way. For example, as you move through the course of your day, integrate it into your day between meetings if you need to walk to the rest room make that a walking meditation. I am actually serious about that. Become aware of your bodies is it moves for space between your office and the rest room. Become aware of your foot fall, become aware of the felt sense if your body. How are you feeling actually in that moment?”*

DJ: Back to what Jen says, I guess it is critical for us to respond and not react when we are in the heat of the conflict and some of these proactive mindfulness practices can help. I guess, It’s a bit like net practice in cricket before the real game.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Rich Fernandez that is referenced: [Developing the meditation habit](#).

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Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Nuggets

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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](#).

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Podcast Transcript [73.05 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Reactive and a Proactive pause](#)

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