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## Context to the nugget

Jen speaks about how we all need to be cognizant of the values of the person we are dealing with. She goes on to categorize the values on the other side as ideal values and shadow values. Ideal values are those that are visible and those that the person is willing to acknowledge. Shadow values often are those that are hidden below the surface and the person may not publicly acknowledge those.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Jen, in another section of the book, you talk about the role of values in the context of conflict. What I found interesting was you talk about ideal values and shadow values and I found that distinction quite interesting. Could you talk a little bit about what these are and the role they play in conflict situations?

Dr. Jennifer Goldman (JG): Ideal values are the things that we typically think of when we think of values. These are things that we really care about in life and that we are proud to say that we care about. So things like love, adventure spirituality, leadership, these are things that I personally value and that I am proud to tell you that I value. In contrast, shadow values are things that we really care about in life that we are not proud to say that we care about. And if anyone suggested to us that we cared about them, we would deny it. These are typically things like status, power, control, autonomy, financial security. The interesting thing to me about shadow values and ideal values for that matter, these can vary widely from person to person. So I have seen people who have put love on their list of ideal values and then other people in the same group of people who put love as a shadow value. So typically the way that we develop our shadow values is that it is something that we have cared about probably for most of our lives but we have been told, somewhere along the way in our lives, we got the message, this is not something that is an appropriate thing for us to value. Just take love as an example, some people, we grow up in an environment where love is not something that is shown openly, not spoken about, there is not a lot of, you know, physical expression of love and so that can show up as, you know, I really do want to express my love for other people but this is not something that has been acceptable in my world. And so the way that shadow values can get us into trouble is that we care about something but it is unspeakable, it is taboo. Like, for example, I might care about being recognized for a job well done but have no language to use to tell you, my manager, that I care about being recognized for a job well done. And so I will do all kinds of things to try to be recognized for it. I will go out of my way to do an extra extra extra great job and then what might happen is that I will inspire jealousy on behalf of my colleagues who are wondering why is she, you know, brown-nosing the boss and like that. And so these things can cause all kinds of unintended consequences for us because we just do not have the language to use to say this is something that I care about. And so what can be really helpful is for us to acknowledge for ourselves

what our shadow values are and often to find some language to describe them if that is possible. This can also be helpful to do with regard to other people. So sometimes, someone's behavior can be so grating, right, it can be so frustrating, we do not understand why are they doing this thing, that is so frustrating to me and then if we ask ourselves what might be a shadow value that might be driving this person's behavior that could explain it in some way, we do not have to come right out and ask them, you know, do you really care about being recognized and is that why you seem to be, you know, sucking up to the boss, we do not have to say that but when we are doing our analysis of the situation, we can think to ourselves, you know, maybe this person really cares about being recognized and she does not have the language to describe it. But I suspect that might be what is going on here and so again, just like we were talking about one of the insights that can come out of the mapping exercise, the mapping practice out of the shadow values exploration, we may be able to drop some empathy for other people in a way that we were not able to have before and it may not take away the pain that we experience from having to deal with what they are doing but it can give us the language to say, okay, I understand where it might be coming from and that can create an opening in a relationship with another person that was not possible before.

DJ: Got it. And in the context of values, you also talk about, you know, the AND versus the OR to use Jim Collins's words, you know, Tyranny of the OR versus Magic of the AND, can you talk a little bit about that and why that might come in the way of conflict resolution?

JG: Yes, so I can be proud to tell you what my ideal values are that I care about leadership and I care about spirituality and then I might want to hide away the fact that I care about recognition and status and power and control. The truth is all of those might be things that are important to me at the same time and just because I care about love and adventure does not mean that status and power are not also important to me and vice versa, that just because control or power or status are important to me does not mean that leadership or love are not important to me. And so being able to acknowledge that all of these are sitting side-by-side within me and that they probably have been for a very long time even though I did not have the language in the past to describe that, there is something that I think can be very freeing for people about recognizing that. And that none of us are all shadow and or all ideal or one or the other, you know, we typically have these sitting side-by-side and to acknowledge that can be very free.

DJ: And can you bring that to life with an example maybe just to make it relatable to the listeners?

JG: Yeah. So I am thinking about a family situation that a student of mine once brought. And it was a conflict that she was experiencing that involved her husband and also her husband's mother, so her mother-in-law. And she had experienced her mother-in-law as classic situation as really meddling in their lives and she could not stand how the mother-in-law was just always telling her and her husband what to do, how to raise their children, how to make their home, what kind of food to serve, you know, just went on and on. And so she went through this process, this practice of identifying her own ideal and shadow values and her mother-in-law's, tried to take her best guess what might be her mother-in-law's ideal and shadow values. And, of course you are always just taking your best guess unless you have a close enough, trusting enough relationship with someone else that you could have this conversation where you might even ask them, you know, what do you think some of your values might be and you could walk them through this process, I think that is very very rare though. Even in a situation where you have a close relationship, these can be very tough things to talk about, so you are usually taking your best educated guess. And what this student identified about her mother-in-law is that her mother-in-law both probably had an ideal value of love. She loved her son, she loved her daughter-in-law and she also had a shadow value of control and a recognition. She wanted to be recognized as someone who had advice to share and she wanted to control some aspects of, you know, how they were raising their children and what they

served for dinner. And so all of that could be true for her mother-in-law I think was a very powerful notion that the mother-in-law could both be loving and also need recognition and also have some sense of wanting to control things. The control part I think was not as easy to take action about for my student but what my student was able to do once she recognized that the mother-in-law could not come out and say I want to be recognized as someone who has advice to share. But my student was able to go to her mother-in-law and say, you know, I want to acknowledge, like I want you to know we really respect how much experience you have had over your lifetime and it means a lot to us that, you know, you would let us know your recipes from your grandmother or whatever. So it helped raise my student's empathy for her mother-in-law and also enabled her to say things and treat her mother-in-law in a way that would engage their relationship in a more positive way.

DJ: Sort of proactively address some of the of, not the emotions but some of the needs that the person might have that the person may not articulate.

JG: Exactly, even when they are unspoken which they so often are. In these intransigent conflict situations, there is usually shadow values at play that may need to remain unspoken because just to call them out and to name them could be so incredibly painful. And in fact, they have been pushed so far down in people's unconscious that...you know, even if my student would have wanted to say to the mother-in-law I think you really want to be recognized, the mother-in-law genuinely could have responded, no, I do not because she genuinely was not aware that she wanted to be recognized for her expertise and advice. So having that kind of conversations like not going to really get you anywhere. You are just going to be meeting someone's defensiveness because it is all unconsciously held. So really being able to work with that unconscious part of them in a deft skillful way can be really transformative.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It is interesting to hear Jen say that shadow values might be things that you might aware of but not acknowledge publicly. But I feel, these could also be things that are in your blind spot. Others might see it but you may not. In my work with leaders, one of the pieces they often find valuable is the initial assessment piece where I try and uncover not just their strengths and development areas but some of these deeper elements like their values, principles, what drives them and so on. Unfortunately, we never get structured data based feedback on these areas and we often don't unearth these.

I tell leaders especially in transition to pause and throw light on some of these elements that are in the shadow. The only way to do that often is for me to do a series of deep dive conversations with the people around the leader in the professional and the personal domain and across time, without restricting it to the here and now. My question to leaders often is "how 360 is your 360"?

One of my earlier guests Tasha Eurich (TE), somebody who has researched Self-Awareness for several years, speaks about it here.

TE: *"Several awareness is made up of two type of self- knowledge. The first is something we named internal self-awareness which essentially knows who we are on the inside. What do we value? What are we passionate about? What are our aspirations? What are the pattern of behaviour that we exhibit across situation but equally important is something called external self-awareness and in a nutshell what that means is knowing how other people see us and what was fascinating at least to me in our research was that we found that those two types of self-knowledge which are required for us to really be self-aware but they are not related to each other which I was kind of surprised by I was*

*thought you know if somebody kind of knows you they are from the inside of course they would do the work and find out how they were seen on the outside and vice versa. But we discover that they are you sort have to think about the... independent skill set within the self-awareness area.”*

DJ: If this is of interest, you might like my conversation with Tasha Eurich and the Curated Playlist on Self-awareness which has perspectives from people across different walks of life.

## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Tasha Eurich that is referenced: [Self-awareness: Meta-skill of 21st century](#).

## RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

**Self-awareness:** Insights around what it takes to build a better understanding of self. This includes perspectives around how we can deepen our picture of ourselves through a combination of inner work, mindfulness practices and by gathering meaningful feedback from the world around us. You can access the playlist [here](#).

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## Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Nuggets

- 73.00 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - The Full Conversation
- 73.01 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Understanding the 4 default conflict habits
- 73.02 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Why some conflict patterns are common
- 73.03 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Listening to understand the nuances
- 73.04 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Engaging our senses
- 73.05 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Reactive and a Proactive pause
- 73.06 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Downsides of too much empathy and collaboration
- 73.07 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Role of ideal and shadow values in conflict
- 73.08 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Real meaning of "take a walk"
- 73.09 Dr. Jennifer Goldman - Pattern breaking behaviour and Camp David

### **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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