



Context to the nugget conversation

Sally speaks about the notion of women “changing the game” rather than “playing by the club rules”. She speaks about the transformation that has happened over the last several years.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And another related question here, Sally, when I sent this list of questions to my friends, one of them is a partner in an advisory services firm, and she sort of looked at the list and said, it seems like the only way to break the glass ceiling is to exhibit behaviors, you know, that play by club rules, should not we aspire to change the game rather than just play the game based on existing rules. I know it is a provocatively worded comment but any commentary around how women could think about changing the game as they say rather than fine-tuning their approach to conform to the current game that is being played?

Sally Helgesen (JG): In my experience, that is exactly what has happened over the last 30 years. I think that women have been instrumental in changing the way the game is played. And what I spoke about earlier that we have really redefined how we perceive of excellence in leadership. I think that that has been in part because women have brought a broader perspective. I have not seen that many women who have achieved extraordinary things who said, well, I just looked at it and I decided I was going to play by the rules and just do everything the way the guys are doing it. I have not seen that much at least in the last 20 years. So you would hear that someone in the 1990s and it was probably, you know, there were not many alternatives but I have not seen that. And I think that particularly today what organizations are looking for are people who have great human skills, who are effective communicators with people across levels, when organizations are looking for people who are capable of motivating employees who have a significant knowledge base so that they can most effectively harness that knowledge base. And I think when organizations are really especially looking for people who can increase the capacity for creativity and innovation within the organization, I think that you really get few points by just saying, okay, I see this is a club and I am going to play by the rules. No, I think women have been instrumental in beginning to change how organizations function and operate in the world because they have not gone wrong with that. So I think that is something that has been happening for some time.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: One of the Women Leaders I spoke to at the podcast included Rama Bijapurkar (RB) - a Board Member and an Expert on Market Research around the Indian Consumer. She speaks about a couple of elements around thriving in a world where men often set the rules.

RB: *"I think women have to fix a couple of things inside. One is, perform don't belong, if you entirely focus on belonging then you are never going to fully belong and you never going to fully perform, so I think if you focus on performance then it doesn't really matter, I am not saying be obnoxious or anything but you know what I mean? I mean, where do you focus your efforts do you focus your performance or do you focus on belonging? By belong I mean belonging to the group let's say if it's the management team or the board team or whatever it is, so belonging what means that I would come in earlier I have the coffees if I didn't feel like it, the network the network before the network after or do you want to write a note to everybody two days earlier that says because we may not have the time at the agenda I want to frame my thoughts on this matter and I think this is what you should do, and belongings means you need the opportunity when you open your mouth if they have decided not to do and if they have decided that they are not going to discuss the point at that point in time then you let it be or you are also vulnerable to people saying hey, you know do we really need to do this right now? But perform is really saying let me figure out, I am here because I will add value, let me, made me little harder to add the value but I would rather spend my time there then spend my time trying to part of the gang maybe because I will never be part of the gang if you like the gang that's great part of it but that's where the real effort is, should you kill yourself doing a lot of stuff? I think that's really important. And I also think about it also as the majority minority community I think women should understand that there is not that the deck is tact against them it's the majority community the rules for themselves, sometimes the stuff can get pretty bad and I think that you should be willing to call it out or sensitize or find ways around it to pretend that there is no gender issue doesn't makes sense. So for example I have had chairman who never let me speak, which is why I were use email as effectively as I like or I will set the process and can say each of us can please have one minute please and so we can roll out for the orders and which you chose to have a speed."*

DJ: I guess, changing the game is not easy. But like Rama says, there are opportunities for each one of us to work around the constraints we have and still have our voice be heard. I don't want to simplify such a deep rooted and a complex problem. As Rama says, focusing on performing versus belonging and finding mechanisms to have our voice heard could be good places to start wherever we are.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Rama Bijapurkar that is referenced: [Women and Leadership](#).

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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 [74.10 Sally Helgesen - Changing the game vs playing by "club rules"](#)

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