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## Context to the nugget conversation

Dan speaks about why people find it extremely uncomfortable and awkward to talk about people strengths when they are around while when somebody passes away, we are generous with the eulogy. He speaks about why there should be a barrier in us having a “eulogy like” feedback conversation with a person when he/she is alive.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): I wanted to pick up on one of the things you said, right, you spoke about transience aversion, in the book, you also talk about eulogy delay as two things that come in the way of us leveraging the power of this, could you talk to us a little bit about the eulogy delay please?

Dan Cable (DC): Absolutely, the eulogy delay, so what a eulogy is, it is that thing that we seem to do, lots of cultures do it actually, where you wait till somebody dies and then you say what you appreciate about them. And usually, that is a very somber moment, there is a lot of tears and they cannot hear you, ironically. And that is ironic, that is interesting that we, not every culture but most cultures kind of wait until the people cannot hear you to say that. And that delay reveals something interesting about our society that we do not feel comfortable, or another way to say this, we have made it uncomfortable to share that. And what my research is showing is that people are very reluctant for that reason to do the highlight reel. You know, I do it in all my classes and I have done it, I guess we have done that for 14,000 people now. You know, it is something that I know quite a lot about. And I can tell you that most people on the front end just have that aversion. They have that sort of like, oh, that is weird and guess what, it is, it is strange, we do not do it but that does not make it wrong. You are not going to randomly do a highlight reel because it involves stepping outside your comfort zone and asking people for their memories of you. I mean I hope that the listeners would give it a go but just to reinforce it if you do not want to read the book, there is a lot of science suggesting. And I mean like University of Chicago published in one of our best journals Psychological Science showing that not only do the letter writers enjoy writing that, meaning their heart gets bigger and they feel a lot of warmth and love while they are writing those memories but there is research that shows that it improves your own life and it improves the relationship. And so, you know, after all this research, and I mean I have done I guess six studies on this now but there is probably 20 studies out there now, there is no downside other than that weird awkwardness. And, you know Deepak, I liken it to an optical illusion where, when you look at an optical illusion, you often see that like straight lines look wavy and then you hold up a ruler to them and they are straight, they are parallel, there is complete, but your mind fools you in the thinking they are not straight, and that that is what happens with this stuff. It is like because we have these sort of cultural oddities, you know, the cultural decisions we have made, it feel like it is going to be really weird to ask and that is just too much. But then after 14,000 people have done it, like 97 percent of them,

and I mean literally almost every person says, I just wish I had asked more people, I just wish I had done this earlier in my life, you know, I cannot believe we are not doing this as a species. And you have to be on that side of you, you have to hold up the ruler, you have to check the science to see that that is an optical illusion, it is holding me back from my potential.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This reminds me of the quote by William Arthur Ward, which goes something like this. Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it. I guess the point Dan makes is along similar lines. Feeling something positive about somebody and not telling them is like having something gift-wrapped and not telling them. Of late, I am trying to be spontaneous in letting people know if they have touched me in some way. There is another quote which I have heard – People forget what you did or what you said but they will never forget how you make them feel. I guess the corollary to that is if somebody does something that makes you feel a certain way, especially, if it is a positive emotion, it is possibly a crime if we don't let the other person know. May be your sharing how that person made you feel might change the other person's life!

## End of nugget transcription

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- 75.03 Dan Cable - Eulogy delay
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- 75.10 Dan Cable - When strengths become derailers
- 75.11 Dan Cable - In Summary - Playing to Potential

### **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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