

The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: 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 right side of the banner is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name 'Deepak Jayaraman' in a red box below it. At the bottom left of the banner, a small note reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget conversation

Tom speaks about the notion of infinite potential and how people often fall victim to the end of history illusion where we feel we have become the person we are going to be. He goes onto say that we should stop thinking of ourselves as a fixed identity or that we are at full potential and just be open minded about the idea that we may not be aware of our full potential and be open to something that may come from an unexpected direction.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Lovely. So, Tom as we wrap up, the final question, this podcast is titled Play to Potential. Given the journey you have been through and the perspectives you have, what's your take on playing to fullest potential?

Tom Vanderbilt (Tom): Well, I think sometimes we might not even know what our potential is and we might have an idea in our head but until we actually go down certain paths, we might have that wrong idea. I mean, for example, you know, in this book I took up singing and then I joined a choir which ended up becoming a very important part of my life. And three years prior, I not only was not in a choir I had expressed zero desire to be in a choir, no one I know had ever heard me talk about wanting to be in a choir. This was something that was not important to me at all, I had deemed not to be important. So, but the mere process of trying to learn this thing had opened these sorts of doors as I described it into these other worlds which then brought interesting new relationships, interesting ways of engaging with the world, it changed the way I listened to music. So, I think the psychologist Daniel Gilbert at Harvard talks about something called the end of history illusion where people often think that they, as he describes it, they think they have reached this watershed moment where they are the person they are going to be. And if you think about this from your experience, it probably doesn't make sense because 10 years ago you were probably a different sort of person, you were probably at a different place doing a different version of your job or a different job entirely and you did evolve in 10 years. So, why wouldn't we think we would evolve in the next 10 years? And so, rather than think of ourselves as having this fixed identity or that we are already at our full potential or working towards our full potential, you know, just to be open-minded about the idea that that potential may be something we are not aware of or may come from an unexpected direction and to when you see those closed doors to actually push one of them open and see where it leads even though it might be again awkward in the beginning.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This insight is similar to what came up in my conversation with one of my earlier guests Jennifer Garvey Berger (JGB) who has studied Adult Transitions for several years.

JGB: *“It’s a fascinating result that says that most of us spend most of our lives believing that our major changes are behind us. And I wonder whether there is kind of a psychological health. I don’t know the answer to this question so I am just musing here. I have never seen anything that actually explains the why of it but I have wondered whether there is a... it takes so long for us to develop into the time of our life this sort of self-transforming time of our life when we welcome change and move towards it as opposed to initially resisting at our finding it destabilizing. And so I wonder whether our brains have evolved to trick us into believing it is all going to be okay from here so you can relax as opposed to having us on constant alert our whole lives. So there is a kind of a you have arrived, take a breath, this kind of what are our body and our brains are telling us when really there is no such thing as arrival, the world is going to keep getting more complex, our lives are going to keep changing, the demands of our lives are going to keep changing and therefore we are going to need to grow better and better able to meet those demands. And in fact, I think that it is not even a helpful trick these days, because I think so many people are so overwhelmed that the idea of adult development itself has become like a very hopeful helpful useful notion that gives people the very optimistic sense that it can be different and it can be better than it is right now and that is a lifeline.”*

DJ: Thank you for listening. For more, please visit playtopotential.com. We have recently started sharing nuggets from the Podcast archives on Whatsapp. A couple of nuggets a week. One over the weekend and one in the middle of the week. If this would be of interest, do send a message to +91 85914 52129 stating Interested and do add the number to your contacts list. It will help us broadcast this to you seamlessly.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Jennifer Garvey Berger that is referenced: [Trap 5 - Shackled by the past](#).

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

In Summary – Playing to Potential: This playlist captures the essence of what the speaker is trying to say in their conversation. In a way, it captures the key principles with which they have approached life which has brought them to where they are today. They share their perspectives on the mindset we need to adopt as we navigate through life. 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](#).

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.

Tom Vanderbilt - Nuggets

- 76.01 Tom Vanderbilt - Learning 5 completely new skills
- 76.02 Tom Vanderbilt - How learning works
- 76.03 Tom Vanderbilt - Misplaced pursuit of Mastery
- 76.04 Tom Vanderbilt - Real meaning of baby steps
- 76.05 Tom Vanderbilt - How unlearning works
- 76.06 Tom Vanderbilt - Learning Approach across the Learning curve
- 76.07 Tom Vanderbilt - Role of feedback loops
- 76.08 Tom Vanderbilt - Observing things the way they are
- 76.09 Tom Vanderbilt - Friction in the learning process
- 76.10 Tom Vanderbilt - Depth of learning
- 76.11 Tom Vanderbilt - 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](#).

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.