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## Context to the nugget conversation

Harish speaks about him taking a sabbatical 25 years into his career. He reflects on the fact that he was in a good place in his career and there were enough forces that were urging him to continue. He speaks about what he gained from the pause.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And going back to one of the things you said, Harish, around 2012, it was probably around 25 years post-graduation, you said you took a sabbatical to write the book. Was it easy? You know, one of the things I notice is, people, you know, just the notion of taking a pause, it is sort of countercultural to a lot of people, so talk to us a little bit about this notion of taking a pause and what it did to you.

Harish Bhat (HB): Yeah, so it was not easy. You know, I was the Chief Operating Officer of the Watches business in Titan. Then I took a sabbatical. I had to actually move out of that role because it was an important business for the company, and it needed to be spearheaded by a very dedicated person who would give 24x7 to that role. And I had to step aside from my line operating role to write a book. The question is why did I do it. And that is because, you know, it was an urge within me, and it became an irresistible urge that there are these inspiring stories and I think I need to tell them. You know, sometimes when such an urge seizes you, there is no stopping it. So I spoke to my boss at that time, Bhaskar Bhat in Titan, I spoke to Mr. Gopalakrishnan who at that time was leading the brand functions at Tata Sons. And I must credit the Tata Group with having permitted me to take a sabbatical of a few months to write my first book. That is one of the other things that I love about the Tata Group. I think they permit you to nurture what you think you are really good at. Well, I had many voices ask me, you know, why is he stepping away from a Chief Operating Officer role to write a book, is that the right thing to do when he is virtually at the peak of his career. I think those voices will always be there. It is important to pursue what you think is right. And if you are doing it with good intent, it always works out well. Taking a pause helped me reflect on my career until then and taking a pause to write this book also helped me see the Tata Group in its entirety. In many ways, I think, you know, in my current role as Brand Custodian, the writing of Tatalog, my first book which happened many years before I became Brand Custodian, in retrospect, it laid a very good foundation for my current role because I understood the Tata brand very well while writing that book. A pause in your career helps you to reflect, a pause in your career helps you to give window to a passion, which you have had in your life and your career until then, a pause also helps you to rediscover yourself. I am not suggesting that everyone take a pause in their career, but if you are really passionate about something alongside your career, it could be music, it could be writing, it could be travel, it could be any of these things, sometimes a pause is really helpful. But you have to look at

your circumstances, you have to look at, are you ready mentally to take a pause, and then you have to deep dive into it.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If there is one thing I have learnt about transitions at a senior level, pausing is almost always required for us to get to a better place. There is a trade-off between efficiency and effectiveness and very often we veer towards efficiency, which is landing something quickly.

Herminia Ibarra of London Business School speaks about Divergent Exploration and Delayed Commitment and the benefit of pausing to reinvent. You might like my conversation with her if this is of interest.

James Clear, author of Atomic Habits speaks about the notion of the Plateau of Latent Potential where he says that some things need to happen for a while for us to notice some perceptible outcome. Unless we create the mind-space and some runway, it is difficult for us to invest in a new direction. Look up my conversation with James Clear if this is of interest.

Like Harish says, taking a pause can help us let our hobbies or passion bloom or even rediscover our Why so that we can recommit to the same direction with greater conviction.

## End of nugget transcription

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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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