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Context to the nugget conversation

Lloyd throws some light on a question that a lot of leaders grapple with – What should be my role in the Social Sector? He speaks about how we should think about our contribution towards Social Impact as we move from Success to Significance.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other theme you talk about Lloyd is defining the position you best play in a team. Can you say more about that? One of the things I notice often is people zero in on a cause that moves them but often wonder what's the play here, should I be an investor, should I be an operator, should I be a guide or should I just contribute time? What's your... what's been your reflection around figuring out the role in the team?

Lloyd Reeb (LR): Yeah, well, first of all, it's a big, it's a big, it's an important thing so you don't just default to whatever role the nonprofit or the organization asks you to play, because they are not necessarily skilled at knowing where you fit in and they are most likely to put you in a role that is their highest pain area. And so, they might ask you to raise money and it may not fit your skills. Or they may ask you to be an outside spokesperson and you may be shy and introvert. And so, it's up to you to tell them, these are my strengths. Now, when you craft a mission statement, your mission statement should include three things: what you do at your best, what you care the most about and the difference you want to make in the world. And so, the place to start when you are looking for your best role is to share your mission statement, even if it's rough, even if it's too many words, it really doesn't matter but because it gives the organization that you are working on in finding a good role, it gives them a sense of who you are and what you care about. And so, now in terms of roles that we have seen people play, let me just kind of run through some of them that are classics. The first one is a Board role but frankly very few people's best contribution is in a board role. Another common one is as a giver, giving money and being a what we call a donor. Now, you can make a big impact as a donor or as an investor, but you probably have to add your skills to the money. You probably want to ask tough questions. Don't just write checks, but be engaged, ask them what are you going to do with it, what are the results, how are you going to measure it, how are you going to report back to me? Don't make big commitments without saying okay every month I need to see results or every six months I need to see results or funding based on results, right? That's a wise donor. But now let's think of a wide variety of other roles you could play. Let's suppose you are a lean manufacturing expert. If you are an expert at lean manufacturing or Six Sigma, believe it or not almost every nonprofit every compassionate ministry needs that help. They need systematic ways to continuously improve. And so, I have two guys right now that are helping JAARS, Jungle Aviation Research, it's the supply chain to foreign mission agencies that bring the Christian faith message to other countries and they are using their supply chain expertise from big corporate experience that

they had over long careers to help them get better at their work in supply chaining development and relief to the most remote areas of Nepal and Africa etc. So, that's an expert role. Another way to look at it is as a silent partner. Very often executive directors they have no safe person to talk with. They are bored, they feel like they can't be open with their board, they can't be open with their staff because it would discourage their staff of the things they are wrestling with so they suffer in silence. Imagine if you were a silent partner and you just were one of those safe people that was under a signed confidentiality agreement that they could talk their confusion out loud and you could help them. I mean Deepak, you would be great at this, right, because of all your years as a consultant.

DJ: A trusted sounding board kind of a thing.

LR: Yeah, exactly, a sounding board or maybe a project leader or maybe you take a staff role, those are all different kinds of roles and maybe you are an ambassador, you are a rainmaker, right, and you are out front telling the story. So, you want to just look across the whole spectrum and ask yourself, what are the current functions that they need help with that fit my strengths.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If you are interested in knowing how different leaders have transitioned from success to significance and thought about their role in the Social Sector, do go to playtopotential.com and look up the playlist Social Impact.

One of the conversations I found inspiring was with Ashish Dhawan (AD) where he spoke about his journey from founding ChrysCapital to his journey in Philanthropy and Social Impact. He spoke at length about how he picked Education as an area to invest behind and how he has put his weight behind Ashoka University and several initiatives that this organization Central Square Foundation pursues. When I asked him about how he thinks about the journey ahead, here is what he said.

AD: "Yeah, so, I think of the things I have been thinking about Deepak is how do I... I think, in education I am still going to be very focused on it for the next few years till at least my... I am 51 now till at least 55, but do I have a sort of slightly wider portfolio of initiatives where I am going beyond education, so that's for me is maybe the next move. I have already started seeding that in some ways. I set up a foundation to focus on air quality, I have got a couple of initiatives been seeded, that are around talent development in this sector, I have set up the China India Foundation that looks at learning from China not looking at geopolitical issues which obviously are very controversial. So, I have floated a few of these new things really because I have multiple interests and what I have learnt from how I can drive impact in education, can I do it in a more leveraged way in a few other sectors is something that's of interest to me."

DJ: Its fascinating to see how he is taking a portfolio approach where he is placing a few bets and seeing how they play out and then probably doubling down on a few along the way. If you are curious about this topic, I would strongly encourage you to read Working Identity by Herminia Ibarra who was also on this podcast earlier. She speaks about how we can act our way into a new way of thinking rather than think our way into a new way of acting.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Ashish Dhawan that is referenced: [Planting seeds for the future](#).

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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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