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Context to the nugget conversation

Rajiv speaks about some of the coachees where he has been able to make a difference and speaks about the commitment of the coachee to the process. He also speaks about the pros and cons of working with people “like you”.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And, Rajiv, zooming out of the book and back to your journey as a coach over the last 15 plus years, one of the things I am beginning to realize, I am still early in my journey, it is five odd years, but I realize that if I look at the situations where I feel I have made a difference, it is often more to do with the attitude of the coachee, and what the person I am working with, the mindset that he or she brings to the relationship, if you were to talk a little bit about some of the coachees that stood out for you, without getting into the specifics obviously, but, what have you seen about people deriving value from the relationship and what about them stands out for you?

Rajiv Vij (RV): Yeah, firstly, the key to me of any healthy coaching relationship is, number one is the commitment to the process. And by commitment, I do not even mean that they have to be super excited about the coaching journey and they could be positively inclined, even marginally, that is okay, but they are committed to giving it a real shot and commitment not only in the physical time space but also in the sense of mental bandwidth because for us, to embrace change, change is difficult for any of us, and for us to embrace change, we have to step out of our comfort zone, and that requires little bit of mental emotional energy and we have to have that in that moment. If we are just doing it while we are running around, it is like you do not want to be trying to change the tire of a running car, it is just way too hard. So, they have to be willing to slow down, create the time and space for this, so that is number one. The second thing I would say is the comfort with candid sharing. I mean goes without saying, obviously, as a coach, you can only work with people with what they bring to the table and the conversation is only as rich as what is out there. So, commitment and comfort with sharing are the two things. I would say, besides that from a personality point of view, I have now had the privilege of working with people with very diverse personalities, some more like me and some completely unlike me. And there was also sometimes comfort in working with people who are a little bit more like me. It is kind of, you can relate to them faster, empathy etc. comes easily, but people who are completely different, but that is my own personal journey, to be able to understand, to stay in that non-judgmental space and explore what is it that will help this person, does not matter what their personality make up, what will help this person move towards their goals. And in fact, sometimes, I may have grown more as a person, as a coach, working with people who are very dissimilar to me because it has forced me to get out of my own comfort zone and explore and search in my own mind of questions that are going to help move this person forward. So those are some of the things I would say that I have seen people who are very open, very

comfortable with sharing, very committed, and yeah, those are the people who seem to benefit the most.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If there is one thing I have learnt over the last few years, I feel “Houston, I have a problem” works better than “Houston, he or she has a problem”. I have found that there have been several instances where the investor comes to me and says, this Entrepreneur needs a coach. Or the Company comes to me and says this leader needs a coach. Unless, the leader is willing open up and work on some of the themes, I realize that there is not much value for me to add.

I had the opportunity to speak to Marshall Goldsmith (MG), a legend in the field of Coaching and here is what he said about Client selection.

MG: “The client I coach that I spent the least amount of time with improves the most; the client I spend the most amount of time with didn’t improve at all. So, I made a chart. On one dimension time spent with Coach Marshall Goldsmith and the other dimension is called improvement. There seem to be a clear negative correlation between spending time with me and getting better and I thought that this is kind of a humbling chart. I go and talk to my client who I spend the least amount of time with who had improved the most, Alan Mulally. Alan was CEO here in the United States. Unbelievable, probably the best leader in the world in the last 20 years, at least corporate leader. So, I said Alan, of all the people I coached, you improved the most, I spent the least amount of time with you. I showed Alan my chart. I said, Alan, how this chart looks, you never met me, you have really been good. So, I said Alan, what should I learn about coaching? He said Marshall you got one challenge customer selection. You pick the right customer, you always win, pick the wrong customer, you are never going to win. And he said don’t make coaching about yourself and your own ego and how smart you think you are, think about the great people you work with and how proud you are of them and he said the CFO in my job wouldn’t act different, I don’t design cars or build cars or sell cars. I meet great people and every day I tell myself leadership is not about me, it’s about them.”

DJ: I think it is a healthy reminder for all of us coaches out there. It is not about me; it is about them!

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Marshall Goldsmith that is referenced: [Choosing Coachees and link with ROI](#).

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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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