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Context to the nugget conversation

Dorie speaks about the time horizon with which we operate and says that if we are able to operate with a longer time horizons, the number of credible competitors around us drops significantly.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And moving forward, you talk about, back to time horizons once again, you say that if we operate with a three-year perspective, there are many competitors but if we take a seven or a ten-year view, then the number of competitors we see drop significantly, how have you experienced this in your journey and in some of the people that you have coached?

Dorie Clark (DC): Yeah, well, ultimately, we need to have some kind of directions, kind of flag that we are planting and what I have seen is that a lot of people are actually very hesitant to articulate and sometimes even to just form for themselves long term goals because they feel like somehow, they are not entitled to do it because they do not know how they would achieve it. All I cannot possibly do blah blah blah, I would not know where to start, I would not know how to do that. Well, the great news, the great thing about a truly long-term goal is of course you do not know. It would be almost preposterous for you to have this 20-year goal and be like, oh, I know exactly how I am going to fulfill that. The world is going to be so different in 20 years. No, you do not, you just really cannot predict, our political systems can be different, half the world can be underwater, I do not even know, but it is going to look different in 20 years. And so we do not need to understand how we are going to do something. All we need is the long-term vision, just something we want to do, something we are interested in, guess what, it can also change incidentally. So it is not like you are locking yourself in forever, but you need to know that long term goal and you need to know the first step, that is it. And you will learn more in taking that first step that enables you to figure out what the second step is, and you just keep going from there.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Building on What Dorie says, I do think there are two or three strands to this that I am beginning to appreciate.

1. First is that I am realizing that most natural systems in life cannot be rushed and have a natural clock of their own. The compounding curve is a lot more prevalent than I thought. Whether it is building trust with the people around, building capability, developing speed as a guitar player or Improving my pace while running, I notice that the gains often come in the tail end and are not linear. For instance, if I have to play a piece of melody at a tempo of 150 in a week, I realize that if I

can get comfortable with it at a Tempo of 75 to 100 for about 4-5 days, then moving it from 100-150 happens quickly in a day or two. I feel a similar principle applies to some of the other spaces as well where the returns compound and are visible in the tail end

2. The second piece here is that I have started focusing more and more on Input metrics than output metrics. Initially, when I started doing the podcast, I would sweat over the number of clicks, repeat visits etc. But over time, I realized that I was losing my focus on creating good quality content and changed my attention to the quality of the content I am creating. At some level, like most things in life, this has been covered by Bhagawad Gita. Amish Tripathi (AT), my very second guest, brought it to my attention in the context of how he has approached his writing.

AT: "When I write I don't even care, even now when I write am not really thinking about how it will be received by the readers, critics, publishers or anyone else frankly. This is how I wrote my first book and this is how I write today as well, I can't say it was a conscious choice when I was writing my first book because I wasn't thinking that it would get published. I guess without realizing it I was following what lord Krishna tells us in Bhagwat Geeta "karmanaye vadhika raste, Maa Phaleshu kadachana" - that you have a right to your Karma, not to the fruits of your Karma and we in the modern world have interpreted this wonderful philosophy to mean something fatalistic which is wrong, what lord Krishna was telling us, what he was telling is actually if you detached from the results of your Karma, if you are detached from success or failure then actually you are unstoppable, if you are doing something simply because you love doing it, simply because you enjoy your Karma so much who can stop you? Failure can of course be demotivating because it feels sadness, grief, demotivation in your heart and it stops you but success can be as dangerous, you will find so many people that are one of the eight wonders because success filled pride in their head and they lose their way but if you are detached from success or failure then actually you are unstoppable because you will just keep doing what you love doing"

3. DJ: The third piece, I feel is around keeping the focus on Systems rather than Goals. One of my guests, James Clear (JC), the author of Atomic Habits, spoke about this quite clearly. He says that we don't rise to the level of our goals, we fall to the level of our systems.

JC: "that phrase we do not rise to the level of our goals, we fall to the level of our systems what I am really trying to get at with that is the distinction between our desired outcomes and our daily habits because a lot of the time where it's an individual or an organization that I work with when they want to change their behaviour they often start by trying to set a larger goal, let's double revenues quarter or I want to lose certain amount of weight in the next three months or whatever it is and we think well, if I just had bigger goals, if I try and take massive action then I'll get these massive results. But the truth is the goal was actually the easy part and it's also fairly common among people in your particular industry to have the same goals. Like if a 100 people apply for a job presumably every candidate has the goal of getting the job or if 30 teams compete in the league for the same championship presumably every team has the goal of winning the championship. So, if the winners and the losers in that domain have the same goals the goal cannot be the thing that makes the difference and that doesn't mean that goals are useless, goals can be useful for setting a sense of direction, evolving clarity, understanding where you want to focus but once you understand where you want to allocate your attention and energy it's useful to put the goal on the shelf philosophically speaking and focus almost exclusively on the system. I would define the system as the collection of daily habits that you follow and take you toward particular goal. So, ultimately what we are looking for of course is to align the desired outcome, the goal, with a few daily habits, the system but whether you have the goal or not and this is why I think it's so useful to focus on the system, your habits will carry you to a place whether you want them to or not alright? So, I think, like for example, a useful question to ask yourself is can my current habits carry me to my desired future and what you

find is that a lot of the time they cannot. If you just keep repeating the same habits that you have today where you end up or you want to end up and what that is getting out, what that is showing you is much more powerful the system is than the goal. Whenever a system runs it inevitably moves towards some destination and what you want is to make sure that that destination is aligned with this system that you have that your desired outcome and your daily habits are in alignment but if they are not the goal is not the thing that wins. If there is a difference between the system and the goal the system always wins."

DJ: Personally, I have started focusing more on direction than distance milestones. That has been quite a liberation in terms of enjoying the journey that one is pursuing.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Amish Tripathi that is referenced: [Staying relevant over the long-term](#).

Nugget from James Clear that is referenced: [Staying relevant over the long-term](#).

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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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