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Context to the nugget conversation

Ayse reflects on the distinction between Life Design and Product Design. She speaks about the fact that in the case of Life Design, there is no “3rd party consumer” which makes it a pure process. We connect the dots with what Stew Friedman says about getting other people into our world.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And given you do both Ayse, can you throw the light on what are the nuances in life design versus product design, in addition to whatever is applicable from product design, are there any elements which start becoming significant when we embark on life design?

Ayse Birsal (AB): Oh, I love that question. Thank you for asking that. One of the things that is interesting about life design is, I call it pure design because it is you, your life and a design process. There is no intermediary of products versus when you are designing products, you are introducing products into that life as an intermediary. And often when you design products, the user is other people, like, we do not think of ourselves, we think of people who could be very different from us, but we try and solve problems for them versus when you are designing your life, this is your opportunity to be very self-centred and to think about you because you are the user of your life. And that is what I remind people, you know, you have one life and user of that life is you. You need to imagine what is the life that really, is your life design that works with your values, that is the kind of life that will bring you joy or that will bring you closer to joy. And then, of course, we are not alone in this life, but once you have that idea, you can bring other people into it. So you can bring your family into it as your collaborators and talk to your spouse or children or your parents about, here is my vision for my life, I need your help, let us collaborate on it together, and you bring other people in.

DJ: That is interesting.

AB: At first, you need to know what you want.

DJ: Even there, if I go back to one of the things I learned from another individual, a lady called Tasha Eurich who was on this podcast many moons back, she talks about the notion of internal self-awareness and external self-awareness, and she says, one is our internal understanding of our needs, wants, aspirations and so on, and sometimes when we get external input, it comes in our blind spot, and it is important to address both before we form a full picture. Any thoughts on the outside-in perspective even at the design stage?

AB: Oh, I like Tasha’s work a lot, and thank you for reminding us of that. I think both are really important. So, the way I try and approach it is, I want to connect people with their superpowers and

their kryptonite's and their values as internal drivers and then, get them to think about their challenges and opportunities and the things that they want to include versus the things that they want to avoid. And so there is a very healthy tension between who they are on the inside and then what is their environment and how they can create a balance between the two.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is an interesting insight. When we design a product, we often do customer surveys to tune into what the customers want. But when we are designing for ourselves, we sometimes may not quite know what we want. When I engage with a leader, I end up speaking to 20-25 people around the leader at work and on the personal front (spouse, sibling, friends and others) who give me a sense of some of the hard wired elements but also give me a sense of what the person is looking for in life. Combining that with the internal self-awareness gives us a good starting point to move forward in the Coaching journey.

I like another point that Ayse makes. She says that once we have an idea about the life redesign, we need to find ways of getting other people in to our world. Stewart Friedman (SW) of Wharton speaks about this where he says that people around us often don't state what they care about. They take positions. It is our job to decode what they really care about and come up with a solution that addresses some of what they care about.

SW: *"Well, putting this part in the program together we borrowed heavily from modern negotiations theory and that's where this notion comes from. So, if you read the great Roger Fischer and Bill Yury (Getting to Yes) which is one of the fundamental work in their field you learn about special positions now at interest the base criteria there is what you want to find out from people as you trying to discover new ways of doing things that are good for both of you or agreements that are and going to work for both of you win wins you have got to get passed the positioning to the underlying interest so what you really care about? Well, I want to be ... more, ok! But what's really important for you? Well, I needed you to be around more, ok! Why is it important to you? So that I know you care about me, that I know you love me. Then you have my interest in mind and then you are going to do everything you can to protect me and to nurture me. Oh OK! Well, let's talk about the different ways then I can make that happen even when I am not here. So, he starts to talk about all kinds of creative possibilities, instead of arguing over when you are home, it's not too much about when you are home it's about where your heart is? And where your mind is? When you are with people who matter most and this goes off course for people that work and in the community as well and so another thing that we found is says not so much seem out of the time that parents spend with their kids that affects their mental health, their emotional health it's the quality of that time. Am I present? And for moms, especially for mothers it was a matter of again not the amount of time they spend with their children and in fact the more time that mothers spent on their own self-care the better of their children were in terms of their mental health and that of course is because when you take care of yourself as a mother you better able to take your kids when you need to."*

DJ: Bringing it back to what Ayse says, these things are never done in a vacuum. We need to be thoughtful about how we enrol the people around us in our ongoing life redesign. That's arguably as important as the thinking we do around the redesign itself.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Stewart Friedman that is referenced: [Managing stakeholder expectations](#).

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Ayse Birsal - Nuggets

- 86.01 Ayse Birsal - Journey to becoming a Life Designer
- 86.02 Ayse Birsal - Nelson Mandela - a Master Life Designer
- 86.03 Ayse Birsal - Deconstruction and Reconstruction - The 4 step process
- 86.04 Ayse Birsal - Life Design vs Product Design
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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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