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Context to the nugget conversation

We all are familiar with the phrase –No regrets! Dan speaks about why it may not be a good idea to say that we do not have regrets. In the book, he actually speaks about an individual who got a Tattoo that said “No Regrets” and subsequently regretted that! He compares Regret to a photographic negative and says that it might have useful information around what we truly care about.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Let us dive into the book Dan. You call this the photographic negative of the good life one could lead. That phrase just kept percolating through my head ever since I have read your book. Talk to us about what you have in mind when you say this.

Dan Pink (DP): Well, I am glad because, you know, the thing is Deepak you understand what a photographic negative is. People who are under 25, do not. I am not even kidding around about that. People whose only notion of photography is digital photography truly have no idea what I am talking about.

DJ: It is a good point, did not occur to me.

DP: Yeah, I have to say, in the book, I kind of felt like an idiot because as you know, like, I wrote a couple of paragraphs about what a photographic negative is and the only reason I did that was for readers, you know, basically 25 and under who would have been mystified by what I am talking about. Anyway, so what I meant by that is that, my view is that if you understand what people regret the most, you understand what they value the most. And what I did is that I went out and collected a lot of regrets from around the world. We have now, at this point, you and I are talking in early March, we have now over 19,000 regrets from 109 countries, it is unbelievable. And what I found is that around the world, people ended up regretting the same four things. But when people tell you what they regret, they tell you what matters to them. And so, if we understand these regrets, we understand what people say makes life worth living. And that was the kind of thing where I was trying to, going back to your initial question again, like one of the things I like about being a writer is being surprised, and that came as a little bit of a surprise to me because I was trying to make sense of this emotion of regret going through all of the academic research on regret to say, okay, how does this emotion operate, what does it mean, what does it do for us, how prevalent it is. I also did a piece of quantitative research here in States, a very large public opinion survey to try to get American attitudes about regret. And then, essentially, for storytelling purposes, for emotional texture, I wanted to collect a bunch of regrets from around the world. I got way more than I ever anticipated, and those ended up revealing something that surprised me which is exactly what you say which is the photographic negative.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I love the way Dan frames it as a photographic negative. Having regrets is often framed as not being content with what you have or not coming to terms with the past. I love what Dan says here. It is such a useful piece of information that helps us truly discover what matters to us and that information can really help us develop a more robust compass for the many twists and turns we might have in the journey ahead.

If you want to dig into this notion of developing a compass you might find the playlist Navigational Principles of value. Just visit Playtopotential.com and go to the Curated Playlist section and find the playlist Navigational Principles. Thank you for listening.

End of nugget transcription

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Dan Pink - Nuggets

- 89.01 Dan Pink - Lawyer to Leadership Thinker
- 89.02 Dan Pink - Regret - The photographic negative
- 89.03 Dan Pink - Four Core Regrets
- 89.04 Dan Pink - Regrets and Choice
- 89.05 Dan Pink - Counterfactual thinking
- 89.06 Dan Pink - Goldilocks balance in handling regret

- 89.07 Dan Pink - Inward Outward Forward
- 89.08 Dan Pink - Regrets and Transitions
- 89.09 Dan Pink - Rifts and Drifts

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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