



The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the far right, a portrait of a man in a suit and glasses is shown, with a red callout box below it identifying him as 'Podcast Host Deepak Jayaraman'. At the bottom left of the banner, a small note reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget conversation

Dan discusses three phases that we might want to go through when we deal with regret. The first step is going inward with self-compassion while processing the regret. The second step is about sharing it with a few people around us. The third step is about processing the lesson from that episode and moving forward with greater conviction.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The related question that came up as I was reading the book Dan was in your research while you have captured a lot of the what people are saying when it comes to regrets, what have you learned about how people, are there any practices that you have discovered which helps people listen to the regrets, is it journaling, is it meditation, is it something else?

Dan Pink (PC): It is interesting, yeah. There is a systematic way to deal with these regrets, to deal with our retrospective regrets that we have not been taught. So I look at it as inward, outward, forward. So inward is how do you re-frame, you have got to re-frame, how you look at the regret in yourself, that is the first step. And that, what you see is that when we make mistakes, particularly accomplish people like you listen to your podcast, when we make mistakes, the way we talk to ourselves is absurdly cruel and vicious. I mean, you would never talk that way to anybody else. And so, what you want to do initially is treat yourself with what is called self-compassion which is the work of Kristin Neff at the University of Texas in the US. And it basically means treat yourself with kindness rather than contempt, recognize that your regrets are part of the human condition, and that any single mistake is just a moment in your life, not the full definition of your life. But what happens is that if you were to, I mean it is incredible, if you were to sort of put some kind of amplifying device in people's heads and broadcast, the way they talk to themselves and the external world, I think people would be horrified, you would be horrified to hear myself talk. If I talk to other people the way I talk to myself in an organization, I will be fired. So my point is do not do that, treat yourself with kindness rather than contempt. Second thing, really important, is the outward. There is something important in disclosure. When we disclose things, it is an unburdening, when we disclose things, it is actually a way to build affinity. A lot of us fear that when we disclose our vulnerabilities, people will think less of us. The preponderance of evidence shows people actually think more of us when we do that. But the most important thing is this that emotions by their very nature are abstract, they are amorphous. That is what makes positive emotions feel so good and negative emotions feel so bad. So with negative emotions what you want to do is you want to convert them, when you write about them or talk about them, you convert this blobby abstraction into words which are concrete and less fearsome, and that begins the sense making process. And finally, inward outward forward, you need to draw a lesson from it. And this is about our problem-solving skills and while human beings are pretty good problem solvers, we are pretty terrible at solving our own

problems. So what you want to do is something called self-distancing where you zoom out and look at the problem in a way as if it is somebody else's. So you talk to yourself in the third person, you imagine having a conversation with the you of 10 years from now, you do things like, ask yourself what would I tell my best friend to do, there is a great business example of this from Andy Grove, the former CEO of Intel who always, as a decision-making tool, would say, alright, what would my successor do. And so when we ask ourselves at a personal level, I am trying to make a decision what would I tell my best friend to do, we almost always know. Andy Grove said what would my successor do, he almost always knew. And that is because in order to solve problems for ourselves, we need to be zooming out rather than be so enmeshed in the details.

DJ: Actually, in McKinsey, one of the founding fathers of McKinsey was Marvin Bower, and one of the questions that we would be told was what would Marvin do in the situation as a frame of decision making.

DP: Oh, nice. Yeah, I did not know that, that is fascinating. Yeah, that is fascinating. But that is another way to do that and there is so much good evidence of that. And so, when we do these things, you can interrupt. Again, some people wallow and ruminate in their regrets but you can interrupt that march toward rumination if people know what to do. They say, treat yourself with kindness rather than contempt, disclose, convert your language to make sense of it, do some self-distancing to extract a lesson from it for next time, and if you do that, it becomes a ritual, and then, you get improvement, you get that initial jolt of pain from the regret because regret hurts, it is negative, but you have a systematic way to turn that pain into something productive.

DJ: Hmm. And one of the things you spoke about just now, you used a term illeism, I hope I am pronouncing it right where you talk about yourself in the third person. Can you just expand on that? There is one particular community in India in Kerala, in South India which does that in the language as a default, that is sort of the nature of the language when...

DP: Really, so they do not have a first, so first person is an exception and so third person is the default.

DJ: For example, if we were sitting in the room, I would not say would you want some coffee, I would say, would Dan want some coffee when I talk to you.

DP: Okay, so it is not, how would you refer to yourself in that language?

DJ: It is a good question. I have seen that in the context of the second person, probably not in the case of the first person, so yeah, I stand corrected.

DP: Okay but it is still very interesting because it shows, but it shows you like how we, like our language, well, this is a controversial point, but that change in language can produce a change in perspective, that is the thing about the third person. But the thing is if you ask me that question, if you and I are in, I have been to Kerala, I have been to Cochin. Kerala is famous for its Vindaloo I know that among other things. So religiously diverse state in India as well, very beautiful too. But if I were to respond to that saying, yes, Dan would like some tea, that is very interesting. I mean, that is super interesting. And again, so much of this goes to how we construe problems and we want to construe problems both, we want to have the ability, it is almost bilingualism, we want to have the ability to construe problems on both the abstract level and the concrete level, both in the micro and the macro. And sometimes, the linguistic shifts can move us there, but we need to actually, since we do not do that automatically, we need to come up with ways to do that, that is why, what would

Marvin do, is such a brilliant technique, what would my successor do, what would I tell my best friend to do, it is so powerful.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for listening. For more, please visit playtopotential.com.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Regret: Regret is a word that we often use but do not quite understand that well. Jeff Bezos speaks about his regret-minimisation framework for making high stakes decisions. Several people speak about “No regrets” as a way of life. Dan Pink recently wrote a book - The Power of Regret - How Looking Backward Moves us Forward. This playlist has nuggets from our conversation with Dan and some of the other speakers who touch upon this topic. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a [Podcast Whatsapp distribution group \(+91 89914 52129\)](#) where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating “INTERESTED”. Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.