

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 is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. A small disclaimer at the bottom left 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

Alisa speaks about how with certain Founders, their passion can lead to them turning into a “bully” when they lead teams. Their internal drive and energy can spill over into the team and that can have negative consequences for the organization

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): A related point you make Alisa, is the fine line between being passionate about something and turning into a bully. In one of the sections of the book, you talk about founders policing the passions. You go on to say that if you do not, there is a risk that the passion could turn you into a bully. Can you talk a little bit about this phenomenon?

Alisa Cohn (AC): Yeah, you know, founders are a different breed. And so, founders get into a company and first of all it is their baby. And many founders call their startups their baby and also, most founders have a strong identification with their company, which makes complete sense, so this is their baby. And they want it to go faster than it is going, they want their employees to get it done quicker than they are getting it done, and part of why they built it is they are passionate and also, they are self-motivated, very self-motivated and have a very strong internal drive and can often be highly self-critical. So, if you are not self-aware of all that, what happens is that you may leak all over the employees, sort of let out your self-criticism and to criticism of them, you will be overly eager and overly anxious I would even say to have everything go faster. And then, you really push your employees past the point where they are comfortable, and it is not their baby. They can be really primally excited about this company, they can be super loyal, but it is not their baby, and you have to be aware of that, again self-aware and self-reflective to realize that there are times to push and there are times to be more patient. But always, you do not want your passion to turn into pushing people too much too hard.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I have seen this play out as organizations scale up. When you start out as a team of 3 or 4, everybody is really passionate about building this big thing! That ownership might go on for another 10-20 people but after that you start getting employees on board who are there to do a job and are often driven by If-then-Else kind of incentives. And some Founders can have issues in relating to that dynamic because they believe everyone should eat, breathe and sleep the company but unfortunately, that is not the way it works. As Alisa says, it boils down to the Self-awareness levels of the Founder and the Leadership team in the way this plays out.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Psychological Safety: Insights around what it takes to create a Psychologically safe environment for leaders and teams to feel safe for taking interpersonal risks which is at the heart of learning, taking risk and much more which drives effectiveness in teams especially in an environment of significant complexity and interdependency. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Self-awareness: Insights around what it takes to build a better understanding of self. This includes perspectives around how we can deepen our picture of ourselves through a combination of inner work, mindfulness practices and by gathering meaningful feedback from the world around us. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Pursuing your passion: “Follow your heart” is an advice that is commonly doled out to individuals that are trying to make career choices. However, the reality is little more nuanced. People who have followed their heart talk about how they have weaved it into their lives or in some cases, how they have been pragmatic about taking the plunge. 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 85914 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.

Alisa Cohn - Nuggets

- 90.01 Alisa Cohn - Triggers and Dopamine Hits
- 90.02 Alisa Cohn - Giving away your Legos
- 90.03 Alisa Cohn - Policing your passion
- 90.04 Alisa Cohn - Imposter syndrome as a founder
- 90.05 Alisa Cohn - Stress and Depression
- 90.06 Alisa Cohn - Economics of praise
- 90.07 Alisa Cohn - Handling Leadership transitions
- 90.08 Alisa Cohn - Co-founder dynamics

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.