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## Context to the nugget conversation

Thomas speaks about how we can teach reframing to kids, something that we don't explicitly discuss with children. He speaks about the fact that children, often, are better at this than we adults think they are.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Building on this Thomas, you have been thinking a lot about how to teach reframing, if that is a mindset, one of the questions that emerges for me is, how does one as a parent think about inculcating that with children as they grow up so that it becomes a way of life so that they, over time, build the mindset of asking the right questions?

Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg (TW): I have seen many approaches to this, with a note that I am not a parenting expert, but I think there are parents that work deliberately with having children ask questions. So they say, not what did you learn today but what questions that you asked today. And kind of going in and thinking in that sense, this is broader than just reframing, its around curiosity and questioning skills. Having said that, I want to share an anecdote because I teach this normally to leaders in companies, but I was invited to teach my reframing workshop to a bunch of kids aged 5, 6 and 7. A friend of mine runs a, what is called an elementary prep school here in the U.S., and he knew of my work, so he said, come up and let us do it, and I was like, okay, we will try it but I am not sure how well this is going to work. To be honest, I do not work with kids normally, so I did not know their abstraction level. It was really interesting to see. So two observations there, one is that kids can actually understand this better than you think, like, when I taught the session later, they sent me some footage of some of the kids explaining it to their parents, oh, here is this thing with problems, blah blah blah, and I was like, wait, they actually understood that. So first observation is you can probably start guiding them fairly early whenever they have a problem to try to understand why it is a problem. And then, a second observation that struck me here. We tend to think that if you are asking me here like, hey, what kind of problems do kids have, most people say, well, it is about the bedtime or it is about homework or it is about the iPad that they cannot spend enough time with and so on. What I saw in that session was almost none of the problems that the kids chose to work on had anything to do with parents. Parents think that oh, it is the iPad because that is my biggest problem. But in actuality, the problems that the kids raised had to do with their friends, their brothers and their sisters. Those were the problems that really took up their thinking type. Kids have basically accepted that we are evil dictators and they are okay with it. So that is great news but fundamentally, it struck me because even with people we live with, we tend to think too quickly that we understand what their biggest problems are. And in fact, you have to ask, you cannot just assume what somebody's problem is, even if you have known them literally their entire lives.

DJ: It is a great insight. It is about really putting yourself in their shoes and understanding the world from their perspective and not from your perspective.

TW: Exactly.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: A related insight came from Venkat Krishnan (VK), one of the guests on the podcast was Venkat Krishnan, Founder of GiveIndia, a non profit that connects willing donors with deserving non profits. I had asked him about raising compassionate children and this is what he said.

*VK: "We are getting today so much stimulated with all our Netflix's and Primes and all of that kind of stuff, our attention spans are down, we can barely read a book. I think reflection can slow you down and bring stillness into you and it can actually help you think through a lot of things a lot to the extent that we can get children. So, for example, you take your kid out for a walk, kids comes back, will typically say something, right? Woh aisa kyun baitha tha bhikhari itne gande kapde pehan ke or something like that, right? And most of us will have one or two responses or the tendency of the parent will be to answer the question ki woh bechaara gareeb hai, kyun gareeb hai pata nahi or some other person might actually have a very different view on it and say piyakkad hai, saara paisa daru pi ke isliye aapko daru nahi pina chahiye. So, there is a teaching opportunity for the child kind of a feeling etc. And, I think, it's a wasted opportunity, wonderful opportunity to actually ask the... not answer the kid, right? I think when the kid is 3, 4, 5, 6 you would probably need to answer a lot of their questions. I would say even as early as 4 or 5 can we at least start throwing back their questions to them and asking them why do you think he was there like that. And trust me I think the kid will learn a lot more if they are given that opportunity to exercise their brains and stuff like that. I think people will reach compassionate conclusions much faster if they think."*

DJ: Coming back to what Thomas says, if we build empathy and curiosity in our children towards others lives and perspectives, hopefully they will do a better job of defining problems and be open to different framings.

Thank you for listening.

## End of nugget transcription

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Nugget from Venkat Krishnan that is referenced: [Raising "Giving children"](#).

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## Thomas Wedell-Wedellsborg - Nuggets

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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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