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Context to the nugget conversation

Manjari speaks about some of the situations at work where she had to balance the multiple egos and agendas and find an approach that is tactful. She also goes on to talk about her black and white approach to situations and how she cuts through the clutter.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other thing you talk about in the book ma'am is about balance. You talk about, you know, just getting the right balance between how harsh you are or how lenient you are with the staff. How have you thought about your style and thought about balance in your career?

Manjari Jaruhar (MJ): So, I think, balance is very, very important in one's career, because in the police we are in a very tight hierarchy. So, my decisions will impact the entire force with which I am working, who is working under me. Any decision I make, any harsh decision I have put or want to implement it can affect everybody. Similarly, my behaviour with them has to be proper, correct. We must remember that the constabulary or the junior staff of ours doesn't live with families. Only 14% accommodation is allowed to them. So, they are living without their families and they have their own pressures, letters are coming, now is the time of STD phone, video calls etc., these are all now the modern ways of communication. So, a constable gets agitated if something between the wife and the mother-in-law they are not getting along or the child is becoming a rebellious child and he cannot handle it. So, all kinds of pressures are on that man. And on top of that, you are telling him now go for this duty, go for that duty, oh no, don't have your dinner just now; dinner will be served at five, first finish this examination duty or take this convict to the jail. So, we are doing all kinds of things. So, we have to have a proper balance. And one example, I will tell you, I was a DIG posted in the Bokaro Steel Plant and there was a young ASP, a well-meaning guy and then one day I was told that he was going with his driver in the jeep and in the jeep, he got into some argument with the driver and called him "saala, tumne kyu nahi kiya"? He used the word "saala". So, this driver turned around and he said, "mei aapka saala lagta hun kya?". "Saala" in Hindi also means a brother-in-law. So, he asked him "mei saala lagta hun kya? So, then this guy also got agitated and perhaps slapped him. Now, slapping a constable, or saying this kind of conversation and this is now a paramilitary force in which I am working. Now, this will not be tolerated even in a district police but in those days the paramilitary has its own sense of discipline and hierarchy and everything. So, when I heard about it, I heard that the drivers were very agitated. So, then I called both of them. First, I called the young officer, I said, why did you do it? He said, in the heat of the moment I did it and I said, but suppose in the heat of the moment you called him that and he had driven you very fast and that had led to an accident, where would you have been and where would I have been? What is it that I would have answered my bosses as to why a young ASP has met with such a serious accident? He could have done anything to you. He was at this wheel and you are shouting at him. So, but then it is a matter of

indiscipline, everybody knows ki driver ne officer ko saala bula diya hai. So, his prestige has also to be maintained. I can't hurt him because maybe he will be, he is a young trainee and what will happen to him. So, first I told him I am calling him and you have to apologise to him. So, then that man came, I said, kya hua tha? So, he narrated the incident ki mei chala raha tha, sahab bigad gaye aur humko yeh bola, par tumne yeh kyu bola? You are a constable, are you supposed to say like this to your this thing? Whatever he had said to you, you could have come and complained later on to him when things were quiet. He was also angry, you were agitated. You should not have done; this is wrong and henceforth you will not misbehave with your seniors ever; this is a service and you have to respect hierarchy. After dealing with him, I told him in front of this guy that aaj aapko yeh officer jo hai, yeh aapko apologise karenge. So, he was quite taken aback. So, I had already briefed the officer, this officer also told him ki mujhse galti ho gaya, aage yeh baat nahi hoga. I said, now, close the matter and you now have to still continue working together, because I could have easily transferred them separately. I said, no, you have to work together and find out a way of dealing with him but this saala and calling names and you behaving like this. This young officer was a little hot-headed, he used to have problems, but it was a lesson he learnt and the entire force understood that madam is not going to condone and she is not going to let this constable go free, and she will not let this officer go free. So, that balance you have to maintain in your service and your dealings with people. If your boss has said something wrong to you, you may not be able to tell him and reply to him immediately. Like why did you tell me like this sir, why did you do this to me sir, you should not do it. But at a later time when things have quietened down, you can go to him and explain to him that sir that day you spoke to me like this, it was not right. And I think bosses will also be better in behaving in a normal way with them. And I have written in my book about my SP getting angry with me when that murder had taken place and the dacoity. Somebody asked me later on, because some of the characters are still there in my state that oh so and so was like this, but later on he brought you and told you that the local MLA is asking for you and what did you feel that time? I said, I did not feel anything, I don't have a rancour against him, I just took it that okay it was a bad day for him and maybe, and I was so happy that I had discovered that case and successfully investigated and I did not care what he had said to me. So, that is the way it is.

DJ: Recently in the podcast I spoke to a gentleman who has spent a lot of time studying the Mahabharata. And he talks about leadership and says there are several moments of dharam sankata where there is no one right answer, you need to find a path which, you know, like your example of the hot-headed superior and a hot-headed driver.

MJ: Yes.

DJ: You had to find a middle path where both of them get the message, at the same time you don't want to let them go but you still need to.... so, I guess that's a skill. Is that something that came naturally to you or is that something that how... how do you find the middle path through situations?

MJ: So, it is not always necessary to find a middle path. You have to cut the clutter and say that this is right and this is wrong. And my attitude to work has always been like this. If you ask me that what do I live by? I live very strongly between right and wrong. I like to always distinguish, who is right, who is wrong. And till I reach that conclusion I am very disturbed. This is with me and you may say that it puts a lot of pressure on me and I feel these sentiments very strongly, but I like to see everything in black and white. For me, it is very difficult to see grey areas. I really don't know whether it is an asset or what, but my style of working is clear-cut, black hai aur yeh white hai.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If this topic is of interest, I would recommend the book – Defining Moments by Joseph Badaracco. There he speaks about situations where Leaders often have to choose between Right versus Right.

Thank you for listening. If you want to dig in more, you might be interested in the Curated Playlist, Judgment that you can find at playtopotential.com in the Curated Playlists section.

End of nugget transcription

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- 95.04 Manjari Jaruhar - Dealing with grey
- 95.05 Manjari Jaruhar - Staying positive
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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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