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Context to the nugget conversation

Manjari speaks about some of her insights around how she would settle into a new role. She specifically speaks about how her approach changes depending on the context in that situation.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other theme I wanted to move to ma'am was about transitions. One of the themes we are curious about in the podcast is transitions, especially how people transition into a new role, especially the first 90 days, first 100 days, often very often set the tone of the person in that role. And you speak about quite a few experiences especially I think one of them that stood out for me was ASP at Danapur, you say that you wanted to send a very clear signal and you take some actions in that context. Can you talk to us a little bit about how you have modified your approach to transitions depending on the context?

Manjari Jaruhar (MJ): Okay, okay. So, when I start my career, the DG is not ready to, at that time there was an IG, they were not ready to accept me, they did not know what to do with me, they were not ready to post me, everybody was sort of saying that they will get Kiran Bedi's file and then they will decide what to do with me. So, when I am now getting posted in a subdivision, the subordinates are also there, they are curious and the bosses of course are unhappy. My experience is that subordinates accept you much faster and they only want two things from you, whether you are just and whether you know your job. So, these two things you must equip yourself. In any job, you must know the job which you have been asked to do and you must also equip yourself by being just to everybody around you. In the corporate sector, if you are posted somewhere, you must know what is your job content and who are the people around you, maybe if you have an EA or you may have an assistant or a clerk or whatever works in the corporate sector your subordinates, you must be just with them, fair with them. What I mean to say is fair with them that if they ask for something, then if you are giving them a benefit then give to everybody if you think they deserve, or if you think that this one is a little better than maybe give her something more. But be fair to people and also know your job very well. So, giving a clear and in my own scenario, I am going as a leader of that subdivision. I am always in a leadership position wherever I am going as an IPS officer. When I am in the field, I am going as a leader. I am not going at that time as being in the Intelligence branch or the CID branch or something where I am working with the whole team. Here, I have to take decisions. So, how do I take my decisions. So, then the most important thing is to understand what is... very quickly understand what is the problem of that district and in the corporate sector what is the problem which you have been brought here to deal with? So, understanding the environment is very important, what you are going to work, what is expected of you. And very quickly you have to give a message. If you have to clean up, then the message should be that I have come here to clean up. If you look at my own career, and Bokaro... in Danapur, I am trying to get accepted because I am

a lady, nobody is ready to accept me, so I am giving a clear-cut signal that I am meaning business, if you are ready to work with me, I am going to work hard and we will sort of things. But when I am going as a district in Bokaro, I am already told that the previous SP has gone under a shadow, there was a fight and they did not even give him a farewell and the constabulary was all behaving as if they belonged to a union. So, there my message to them is from the day 1 is that I am a very strict disciplinarian. I am not going to tolerate this nonsense of misbehaving and beating up people, constables beating up people and all. When I arrive at some other situation, I have this Bhagalpur blinding behind my mind, then I am DIG Patna and this SP is going on bumping of people and all then I say, I will not tolerate this. Call all the inspectors and tell them on their faces that I will not do this. So, people may not like it, but you have to be very straightforward with people, understand the environment what is needed. Sometimes, you know, you need to be very calm with them, something very troublesome has happened so then you know you have to take everybody along and say that, okay, I am here, I am going to do things in this way, we will improve things, we will improve the organisation, and we will try and move forward. So, there your job is more to take people along with you. But sometimes when you arrive there, there has been a bad situation with the constabulary and the men and they have fought and then the message is that no, I am not going to tolerate this. So, that understanding the environment and taking the people along and people will take you seriously only if they know that you know your job. So, knowledge is really power, which everybody says; I believe that knowledge is power. So, knowledge is required for them to know that you know your job. If they knew... if they think that you don't know your job, they are not going to tolerate your whether you are in the corporate sector or in my sector.

DJ: They need to find you competent for that job.

MJ: And then you have to be fair. The minute you, the message goes, oh, you are fond of this one and then also the complexities start in the office and the dynamics change.

DJ: You spoke about scanning the environment?

MJ: Yes.

DJ: What would you do? Just what are some of the things you would do to understand what you have been brought in for, what were some of the mechanisms for scanning the environment?

MJ: Yes, yes, that is a good question you are asking me. The first mechanism is that if I have somebody very senior there then you have to go and ask him that sir, I have come, I have been told that there are these problems, what do you think? Can you tell me what are the problems here? Ask upfront what are the problems I am going to contend with and what do you think I should do? So, he will tell you a lot of things from his own perspective. Now, it is up to you and your own experience which of the things which he is telling you is making sense to you and which are the things you are not very sure of because you can't... he has been there for a long time and he is looking at things in a different way. You have just arrived; you can't become very hostile to everybody. So, he is telling you that you have to be very strict and all but how can you be strict when you have to take work from them and they are also gauging you. So, the thing is that understand what the problem is and then use your own mind and your own training to deal with the problems in the right way, of course, always keeping in mind your own value system that what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unfair. That is the only way you can move forward in a new situation.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Building on what Manjari says, one thing that is paramount for a leader settling into a new context is the way he or she listens to the context and the wisdom of the people in the system. Ravi Venkatesan (RV) one of our earlier guests, speaks about how he discerned the Theory of Change when he took on the role of the Chairman of Bank of Baroda.

RV: "So, as you know about 18 months ago, I took on a completely new role as the chairman of a public-sector bank. Now, I know nothing about banking and I know even less about public sector, but yet Raghuram Rajan and Jayant Sinha felt that it was important that I take it on, so I did. Now, what do you do in this situation? And you know that the place is filled with landmines and you can step on anything without realizing it and get blown up. So, what you have to do is listen intently, and I did. I made a very conscious effort to listen to a bunch of people. The retired chairman of Bank of Baroda so helps me understand from your perspective, what I should do, what the issues are, how would you handle them. And you get a certain perspective. I went and spoke to [Narayanan] Vaghul of ICICI and P J Nayak of Axis Bank, because they've been around and seen the evolution of the banking sector. I met a lot of our own employees and so forth. So, from this, you begin to piece together, first, the situation and then, out of that emerges a theory of change, which is, what interventions are really going to make a difference and who are going to be the important allies in this. If you don't listen and you come in with a point of view, you start jumping into action right away, you're going to make a lot of mistakes, because you haven't built this nuanced and reasonably accurate picture of the landscape."

DJ: If this topic of interest, you might find the Curated Playlist – Transitioning into a new context of value. You can go to www.playtopotential.com and find it in the Curated Playlists section.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Ravi Venkatesan that is referenced: [Listening intently during Transitions](#).

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Transitioning into a new context: You can access the playlist [here](#).

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Manjari Jaruhar - 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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