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Context to the nugget conversation

Ethan suggests that our Mind is often functions like a lens when it looks at a situation while our Inner Voice functions like a Zoom button. We have a choice of whether we want to stay Zoomed In our Out when we deal with a situation.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And in the book, you use a phrase which stayed with me, you say that we can think of the mind as a lens and our inner voice as a button that zooms it either in or out. I just thought that notion of the voice is the one that sort of controls how close or how remote we are to a situation and I thought, when I read it, it felt agentic, the fact that we have control over, do we want to be zoomed in or zoomed out?

Ethan Kross (EK): I think this issue of control is a really interesting one, and individual differences are bound on people's assessments of the extent to which they have such control. There is actually research, which has looked at a), is there variability in whether and how much people think they can control their emotions; the answer to that is yes, there is tremendous variability. But then the work shows well does it matter if you simply think you can control your emotions for bringing about positive outcomes. And compellingly, the answer is yes, which makes a lot of sense to me. One of the first things I learned in graduate school is the ability to manage our emotional lives has two pieces or two core components. There is motivation and there is ability, and you need both of those pieces to be successful. You can know about every single tool that is out there, but if you are not motivated to use those tools, nothing is going to happen. On the flip side, you can be super motivated to manage your emotional life and believe it's possible, but if you don't know what the tools are, you are not going to be successful. So, you really need both of those pieces and I think they are easily attainable.

DJ: One of the other guests on the podcast was a gentleman called BJ Fogg of Stanford who actually talks about this almost like an indifference curve, where you have got motivation and ability and how you sort of in the realm of habit-forming you need to ensure that you are sort of operating on the right side of the curve. Got it.

EK: Yeah, BJ, I am familiar with BJ's work and I am a great admirer of it and I believe this motivation ability distinction factors heavily into his model of habit formation; he has an additional element of triggers but I think at its core it taps into something very fundamental and also easy for people to remember. And I think that is also... one of the things it's important I was going to close a thought, a lot of the science that we are talking about today and I talk about in my book is science that has been built on the shoulders of decades of very complicated, deep, nuanced research, but often the

take homes from that work are really, really simple. And I think that is in many ways great because I think for communicating this work for folks like there are some simple nuggets to use your phrase that we can remind ourselves of when we are experiencing adversity and that is not always the case in science. Sometimes you have really complicated research that is also really complicated to describe, and I don't think that is necessarily the case in this story.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Building on what Ethan says, one of my earlier guests, BJ Fogg (BJ) of Stanford who has authored the book *Tiny Habits*, speaks about the role of Prompts in addition to Motivation and Ability.

BJ: "So, I knew motivation ability how they work together and I knew that making something super simple would let you be consistent in creating a habit but then it was like, how do your prompt it? How do your prompt it? And then that just happened like a lot of breakthroughs, you know, literally it was getting out of the shower and it's like, oh my gosh, it's after you figure out what this comes after and use you the preceding behaviour to remind you of the next thing this new habit that you want. And so, then it was, then it all clicked and then I knew I had all the pieces in place because it always comes back this motivation ability prompt and then I knew I had... here is this breakthrough way of habits where you are hacking three things. One, you are making the behaviour super tiny, so you don't need much motivation. Two, you are prompting it through something you already do, an existing routine that we call an anchor in tiny habits. And then three, you manipulate your emotion, so your brain takes notice and goes, wow that feels good, I want to do that again in the future. And so, you don't leave that to chance, you deliberately celebrate and cause that emotion to fire off which then changes the regulation of dopamine in the brain."

DJ: He goes on to speak about different kinds of prompts, whether internal or external that could help us get things done. To know more you can go to playtopotential.com and visit the Guests section and look up the conversation with BJ Fogg.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from BJ Fogg that is referenced: [Prompts - the low hanging fruit of change.](#)

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Ethan Kross - Nuggets

- 96.01 Ethan Kross - Going 'inside' as a child
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- 96.03 Ethan Kross - Rafael Nadal and Rituals
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- 96.05 Ethan Kross - Time travel, Distancing and Awe
- 96.06 Ethan Kross - Inner voice - Zooming feature of our minds
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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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Podcast Transcript [96.06 Ethan Kross - Inner voice - Zooming feature of our minds](#)

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