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## Context to the nugget conversation

David speaks about how there are three realities in any conversation between A and B. 1) A's intent 2) A's behaviour 3) Impact of A's behaviour on B. A can see 1 and 2 and B can see 2 and 3. The challenge often happens when A makes up a story about 3 or B makes up a story about 1. David likens this to how we play tennis and urges us to stay on the same side of the net (2 being the metaphorical net in this case).

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Let's talk about feedback David, I think, as I read your book this whole notion of over the net really caught my attention. I think, when I was at McKinsey, we were taught the SBI model of feedback: Situation Behavior Impact in the way you sort of communicate feedback. But I love the metaphor of playing a racket sport across the net and not crackling. You have heard commentators say you can only control your side of the net. I really love the way you sort of map that to the process of feedback. So, can you sort of bring that to life for us this notion of over the net and not crossing the net?

David Bradford (DB): Yes. We start with the assumption, in fact, we say this in the book, Carole and I believe you can say almost anything to almost anybody if you stick with your reality. In fact, we add after two glasses of wine, we drop the almost because sort of in our heart of hearts think you can say anything to anybody if you stick with your reality. But being academics, we cover ourselves. So, what do we mean by three realities? In interacting, I only know two realities and you know two realities. So, let's take Deepak you and me. Reality number one is my motives, intentions which leads to my behavior. Reality number two, my words, my nonverbals, my tone etcetera. The third reality is the impact on you, how does it affect you? So, the model is similar to the McKinsey model but we, I think, elaborate little differently and what we say is I know two realities. My motives and I can see the behavior, you know two realities, you can see the behavior and you know the effect on you. But you don't know my motives and I don't know the impact, but I need to know the impact if I am to be effective. So, we then envision a... and we actually envision two tennis nets, but I am going to talk about one. The first one is between my intentions, motives and intentions and my behavior. The second net is between behavior and your effect, but let me focus on the first. As in tennis, you can't play in the other person's backcourt, we often get into trouble so frequently and conflict gets worse because you the recipient of my behavior don't stay on your side of the court. So, think of how much feedback is so commonly used in organizations. We say to somebody else, will you just still want to be a team player, you just want to push your own area, you don't care about me or my area, you just want to dominate. Well, you are over the net because you are making statements about my motives and intentions that you don't know. It is a story you are making up. And so, when we say stick with your reality you could say anything. Let's imagine that you are now feeling a little tuned out because

you are experiencing me as giving you more information than you want. So, if you were to say, well, David, you just want to show how smart you are, I am going to get defensive, but the other problem with that is I can just say no, I don't and it has little impact. But if you stick with your reality and you say David, I am feeling bothered and I am feeling a little tuned out because I am experiencing you as going on and on and talking too much. Now, I can't say no, you don't but I am over your net. I am likely to say, well, I am sorry, that's not my intention, and I am trying to be helpful. And you can say, well, I am glad you are trying to be helpful and I would like you to be helpful but the way you are now acting isn't helpful to me. And now we can have a conversation of how I can be helpful. And so much of conflict is accusations, making up these stories and people not sticking with what they knew, no, which is this is how I feel, this is how your behavior is impacting me. And this is how it is interfering with our relationship.

DJ: And staying with that, if I may David, and staying with that tennis rally that you just sort of outlined, you sort of spoke about staying on the same side of the net and what would be crossing the net. Is there something around the how we come across the emotional state, the regulation, the listening; can you sort of paint a little bit of context around the manner in which we frame these responses?

DB: Well, the better the relationship the more variance we can have, but I think that I don't have to be super careful or pussyfoot around as you say in the States. So, I am not experiencing this, so I am going to make this up Deepak, so please. So, I think, if you did some stuff that bothered me, I think, I could say, hey Deepak, come on, I am really feeling bothered about what you are doing and it is getting in the way of this interview. I think, I can be forceful like that. I am talking about myself, I am bothered. And it is hurting me and so when you are concerned about the relationship it's hurting you too. That's very different than me attacking you or making suppositions about your motives or intentions.

DJ: Got it. Got it.

DB: And I want to stress this because you don't have to be so careful and so nice particularly if my concern is for you as well as me and for the relationship. If I am really, if something is getting in the way of us working together, I can say Hey, I am really upset about what's going on. And you are like, you will say, what is it? If I can stick with the behavior and how it is impacting you. Now, I am going to come back to the whole notion of self-disclosure. One of the ways we tend to protect ourself is not to let ourselves be vulnerable. Now, we have to be careful about vulnerability, but if we are interacting it often helps. If I am feeling hurt or if I am feeling put down or if I am feeling envious, just say it. If I could say, hey Deepak, I really felt hurt by that. Now, the worst thing you could say, which I don't think you would is well, that's your problem, David, and I will say no, I say that doesn't help me, hurts still a bit more, but it hurts both of us, it is not just my problem as this is a consequence. And you see how honest a conversation we could have this way if we each stick with our reality.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I love the simplicity of this framework of Intent, Behaviour and Impact and staying within the two out of the three realities that you have visibility to. Thank you for listening.

## End of nugget transcription

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- 97.03 David Bradford - Idea to behavioural change
- 97.04 David Bradford - Building an emotional vocabulary
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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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