



The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the right side of the banner is a portrait of Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and 'Deepak Jayaraman' below it. At the bottom left, a small note reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget conversation

David speaks about how we can quickly get embroiled in a conflict situation and we need to wade past the swamp to move to a better place. Running away from it rarely yields meaningful outcomes.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And I loved one of the quotes in the book David, I am going to quote from the book you say when problems are complex and intertwined things can feel messy. Imagine there's a muddy swamp and you need to cross it to get to the high ground on the other side, at first you carefully look for rocks to step on so that you don't get mud on your shoes but halfway across the rocks end and you have a choice. Do I go on and wade through the swamp or should I just turn around? Can you say more about this phenomenon since you spoke about risk?

David Bradford (DB): Well, let me tell you my experience. So, let's say I am raising an issue, okay, I won't say with say with my wife Eva and who I love dearly and I raise one issue and I say gee honey when you do X, and she says oh, as a matter of fact the reason I do X is because I get really bothered when you do Y, and I say, well, the trouble is that the reason why I do Y is because of I don't know about this and about that and then she says there's that. And all of a sudden what seemed like a very simple piece of feedback is now a pretty muddy swamp because there are at least five different issues all building on each other. And they are probably built to each other because we haven't raised them early enough, very much is frequently a problem with all of us. The temptation at this point is to say, oh, it is nothing and to get turn around and go back away staying on the rocks. And I think what you need to do is you need to say, there's a lot here and it is pretty messy, but let's stick in it and see what all these issues are and rather than using the issues as bludgeons to justify ourselves let's take it apart. And it may be a longer conversation than you expected and it may be a conversation that can't be resolved in one sitting but can we go through the swamp and clean those up? Okay, I see that when I do X, that's how it bothers you and you are saying I lead you to do Y, so what can we do about it? And now, we can get into problem solving. Remember, feedback starts a conversation, it doesn't end it. We wish it would end it, we wish that I could say Deepak, would you do X, this is the impact on me and you say, yes, I have got it, that's it and we walk away. And there are some issues like that but in most cases, it is intertwined and we need to work it out and problem solve various ways of doing it. And what we say is, can you take the risk of sticking in there, not getting into the blame game, but focus on behavior and the impact on you?

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I am reminded of my conversation with Jennifer Goldman Wetzler (JGW), a lady who has studied conflict habits in some detail and rigour. She says that people often gravitate towards four default modes of conflict. It is helpful to understand our default preference and ensure that it doesn't come in the way of a meaningful outcomes.

JGW: "So there are four conflict habits. One of them is one that I mentioned before which is that some of us in our quest to win a conflict, we might feel competitive and this can be a healthy thing. But when we take it to an extreme and we habitually want to win a conflict, it can get to the point where other people end up experiencing us as blaming them. And so we will kind of go on the attack and blame other people. In contrast, others of us habitually blame ourselves, we may blame and shame ourselves. So again, we may do this with good intentions. So our intention may be to learn from a situation and do better next time. But when we habitually do this, sometimes we end up stewing in our own negative self-talk which does not free us from any kind of conflict whatsoever, it just keeps us stuck in that conflict situation. The third conflict habit is shut-down and that is where we may again well intentionally avoid a conflict situation which can be a helpful way to deal with conflict when, for example, the issue is not that important to you or the person you are dealing with is not that important to you and so avoidance can be useful. But again, when that is the only way that we know how to deal with conflict and we are avoiding issues that are important or were avoiding people whose relationships are important to us, then it becomes an unhealthy way to deal with conflicts. And what typically happens is that the conflict, you know, we will avoid, avoid, avoid, avoid, the conflict is kind of bubbling slowly, simmering, simmering, simmering and then boom, you know, it explodes at a point when we least expected and then we have to go deal with that and we are not prepared. And then finally, one of the other ones that we talked about before is relentlessly collaborate. And that is where we have been taught often like we were saying before from a young age that the way to deal with conflict is to offer other people options, think about what their interests might be, come up with creative solutions, work with them to come up with those creative solutions. And again, that is a really excellent toolbox and skill set to have. And for so many millennia, people did not have that way of thinking about dealing with conflict and we got into all sorts of messes because we did not have that that skill set. But even that, people can get so tied and committed to using this collaborative skill set that we end up pouring energy, time, resources, money into trying to work things out with someone or a group of people who just are not interested in collaborating or cooperating with us."

DJ: The key takeaway for me is that sometimes avoiding conflict can often lead us to an OK relationship but to take the relationship to the next level, we need to embrace the messiness, engage in the conflict in a healthy manner and then move forward. Knowing our conflict preferences can help us be more tactful in having a productive conflict that strengthens the relationship than a conflict where things fall apart.

Thank you for listening.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Jennifer Goldman Wetzler that is referenced: [Understanding the 4 default conflict habits](#).

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Managing conflict: Conflict – How we manage conflict is an essential life skill and no one teaches us how to handle conflict productively. Multiple perspectives around how we can engage in healthy conflict that can lead to better outcomes. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a **Podcast Whatsapp distribution group (+91 85914 52129)** where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating “INTERESTED”. Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

David Bradford - Nuggets

- 97.01 David Bradford - Markers of an "exceptional" relationship
- 97.02 David Bradford - Healthy feedback - not crossing the net
- 97.03 David Bradford - Idea to behavioural change
- 97.04 David Bradford - Building an emotional vocabulary
- 97.05 David Bradford - Deepening the trust in a relationship
- 97.06 David Bradford - Nuances in giving good feedback
- 97.07 David Bradford - Leaning into the messiness to move forward
- 97.08 David Bradford - Repair and restoration of relationships
- 97.09 David Bradford - Personality vs Behaviour - Understanding change
- 97.10 David Bradford - Helping kids learn interpersonal skills
- 97.11 David Bradford - Displaying the right kind of vulnerability

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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this

transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.