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## Context to the nugget conversation

Jeffrey speaks about how being judgmental comes in the way of learning and can drive people away from us. He speaks about how Steve Jobs, Donald Trump and Elon Musk wielded power but as a result had a lot of attrition around them. He also speaks about how we may not have the right to tell somebody else what they ought to do but we possibly have a right or an obligation to tell others how they can get better at doing something.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Let us talk about some of the themes in the book Jeffrey. You speak about the criticality of being less judgmental and instead working from a place of equanimity and say that, being judgmental can come in the way of accumulating power. As I was digesting that piece of wisdom Jeffrey, I was thinking of someone like a Donald Trump for example, and you quote him as an example of somebody who wields power, one would have an image that he comes across as someone with strong judgments in the way he interacts with people. So, I was just trying to reconcile your insight about not being judgmental with some of these leaders that you have as examples of...

Jeffrey Pfeffer (JP): No, I think the leaders are judgmental. If you want to learn, you need to be less judgmental. The non-judgmental is in the service of learning. And also, the non-judgmental, and by the way this is true for Donald Trump, for Steve Jobs, for Elon Musk, all this judgment gets in the way of making critical relationships work. I mean Donald Trump's turnover in his cabinet is enormous. Steve Jobs lost enough people out of Apple Computer when he ran it to have staffed several companies. Many talented people have left Elon Musk's operation. So, I think judgment drives people away and it hurt in the ability to manage critical relationships and judgment clearly gets in the way of learning. Mother Teresa is famous for her quote, if you judge people, you have no time to love them. Walt Whitman, the American poet, has a lovely saying, be curious, not judgmental. And so, when you see things as opposed to getting all excited about them, it is much more helpful to ask how is it. Frankly, people are so excited by or upset by Donald Trump that they get so emotional that they are not able to understand the situation and deal with it strategically. When McKinsey came in, and we can talk about whether McKinsey did the right or the wrong thing, but they provide their best advice to clients without asking. As you know, there is now a big scandal about the fact that they provided a lot of advice to Purdue Pharma on how to sell opioids, and they provided apparently advice to the South African government, all kinds of other things, and I do not actually judge McKinsey harshly for that, part of the job of a consultant is not to say, you should not be selling this product, part of the job of a consultant is to say given that you have decided to sell this product, how can you manufacture it more efficiently, how can you distribute it better, how can you make it safer, how can you make the caps more tamper evident or whatever you need to do, how do you reformulate it. And so, when I look at what consulting firms or accounting firms do, or for that

matter I hope this universe professor does, it is around how do I make you more effective and what you have chosen to do. I do not believe that the Lord or Allah, or whatever supernatural being you believe in, has given me the right to tell people what they ought to do. It has given me the right and perhaps the obligation to tell them how to be more effective at doing what they want to do, but nobody made me ruler of the world, unfortunately.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In this podcast, one of the aha's for me every now and then is when people connect things that you think are not really related in any way. I love the connection Jeffrey makes between Judgment and Learning. Over the last few years, I have been trying to increase how much I learn from the people around me and one thing that helps is accepting the way they are. I find that with every person we meet, there is often one thing that acts like a mole on the other person's face. Once you see the mole, you just focus on it and you sometimes forget the face. They have one element of the personality that we could judge them on but by doing so, we miss out on respecting and learning so much from them on many other dimensions.

Needless to say, this is still work in progress for me and there is a lot of room to improve here. But it has helped not to get distracted by minor mole like irritants people might have. Thank you for listening.

## End of nugget transcription

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### Jeffrey Pfeffer - 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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Podcast Transcript [98.03 Jeffrey Pfeffer - Implication of being judgmental](#)

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