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Context to the nugget conversation

Jeffrey speaks about how we need to be careful about how we signal our warmth vs how we project our competence especially in situations where people are meeting you for the first time.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): The other theme that came up which caught my attention was warmth versus competence. One of the themes I am curious about is how leaders navigate transitions, and one of the transition situations is when you start a new role in a company. Very often, I get into discussions with leaders about how they need to think about, you know, Michael Watkins of IMD, who has done a lot of thinking in this space, talks about the arrival posture, you know, how people perceive you as you come in. What is your take? Amy Cuddy says, warmth first and Bob Cialdini says competence first, so I was trying to make sense of the two and get some perspectives on how you think about the two.

Jeffrey Pfeffer (JP): Well, it is ironic that Amy Cuddy would say warmth first because of course she did the research with Susan Fisk that talks about the trade-off between warmth and competence. I would say competence first. I agree with my friend Bob Cialdini. I think he is wise on this.

DJ: And can you bring it to life for us in the way it plays out in people's lives and the kinds of mistakes you see people making?

JP: The mistakes that people make go to the discussion we were just having. So Herminia Ibarra, now teaches at London Business School, has an article in the Harvard Business Review about authenticity for many years ago in which a woman is appointed to a leadership role in a pharmaceutical firm and the woman who suffers a little bit of imposter syndrome or whatever goes in and basically tells the people that she has now been appointed to lead, that she is not sure kind of why she got the job and she is not sure that she is really going to be good at the job and basically signals a bunch of self-disclosure of 'vulnerability' and of course, it did not work out well for her. Don Quixote is a lovely figure in literature, but to say Deepak, you are engaged in a quixotic endeavor, is not going to be a compliment. People want to associate with winners, people want to associate with success. Nobody says, oh my God, this company is going bankrupt, we need to give them more money, I need to go work for them because I can turn them around. People want to be associated, and you see this again to use name that has already come up with Donald Trump. Many of the Never Trumpers, once he became President, said, oh, I guess I changed my mind. People want to be associated with power and success. And so, to the extent you do not convey power and the likelihood of your success, people are not going to want to work with you or for you, people will leave the organization, etc. So,

it is kind of the, sometimes, this is called the flywheel effect which can operate in a positive or a negative direction, and I am sure in your experience, you have seen both.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Thank you for listening. For more please visit playtopotential.com

End of nugget transcription

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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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