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Context to the nugget conversation

Michiel speaks about the different levels of Self-Awareness and speaks about how we can slowly move up the ladder. 1) Bliss or Ignorance 2) Delayed Awareness. 3) Perceptive 4) Resilient 5) Adaptive. He speaks about the timing of when things come to our attention and our ability to regulate ourselves.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): One of the things that comes up in my coaching work Michiel if I may build on is efficiency versus effectiveness. Sometimes, I come across leaders who are very clinical and want to get on with it but very often by doing that, you are right, it comes in the way of motivation, it comes in the way of maybe exploring new possibilities or deepening a solution or figuring out potential roadblocks and stuff that could take five more minutes but could help you get to a better place, so with you on that. Building on self-awareness Michiel, in the book, you also talk about five levels of self-awareness. I found that interesting. Again, the way you have laid out the ladder of self-awareness across these five levels. So would you be able to touch upon them and just give a broad frame of how you think of these levels?

Michiel Kruyt (MK): Yes, I can. I think the levels are interesting as in there is a development. You asked earlier around how do you develop the skylight, and it is actually a long process, and even if you have it, sometimes you can drop away when the tension really gets high. The phases are, it starts with unawareness, so you are not aware of your inner world, you are not aware of whether you are in adaptive or in a familiar zone. You could call that bliss but it is basically unaware. You are unaware and you might be ineffective. Then, you have this delayed awareness, and we all have had that. So you are in a meeting and then you say something and then two seconds later, you think oh my God, I wish I would not have done that because it came from a very reactive behaviour. So you start to become aware of triggers that do not get the best out of you. You get in fight flight freeze behaviour, but you see it only after the fact, that is step one. Then, you get to perceptive, you are aware in the moment, so you notice it in yourself in the moment, but you are not actually able to do something about it. So it is kind of like, there we go again. And then, the next level is resilient. This is quite masterful in which you are actually noticing in yourself that you are getting a trigger and you can redirect yourself in the moment. So I sometimes have it when I am working with a team and I am getting triggered into something and then all of a sudden, I see myself as oh, I am actually very reactive, I am reacting to someone in the group, I do not agree with him, I am getting into a fight, and I am not listening. And then, I can push the pause button and say, oh, wow, I actually got into a protection mode now, did you guys see that.

DJ: Hmm. And you call yourself out.

MK: I call myself out. And then, it is actually very interesting because then, you can see how you can redirect yourself. And even though it might feel vulnerable, people actually find it quite strong that you can actually get yourself. By the way, they have all seen it, so it is better that I call...

DJ: Pre-emptive strike.

MK: Yeah, and this is still all in the moment. And then, that is the fifth phase which is adaptive. There, you start to identify a number of patterns that keep popping up for you. So for example, I have had a pattern for a very long time that if I did not feel trusted, it triggered my emotions. So I felt insecure and then, I started to make my points very strong and stop listening. And once I started to see that it happened over and over again, I needed to go deeper and start working on that pattern, why do I need to feel trusted before I can actually relax into something, and why do I ask others to trust me first before I trust them. So once I started to work on that pattern, at some point when I had rewired that, those triggers did not show up anymore.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: In my work with leaders, I find that very often, they start climbing the ladder from the bottom. You show them the mirror and shine the light on an issue that is in their blind spot. They move from Level 1 to Level 2 and start noticing it at least in hindsight. Then they do some more work and start noticing it in the moment and move to Level 3 where they are noticing but still not able to regulate. At that time, when they want to move from Level 3 to Level 4, they start telling themselves a story that they are like this only and start wearing that on their sleeve. Like Marshall Goldsmith says in his book, what got you here, won't get you there, they often are reluctant to do the work to move from Level 3 to Level 4 and that can come in the way of them unlocking their Potential.

In this podcast, many moons back, we spoke to Tasha Eurich (TE), a lady who has researched the topic of Self-Awareness for many years. When I asked her about her research methodology, she used an interesting phrase called Self-Awareness Unicorn to describe some of the people she studied.

TE: *"So, we didn't set out to identify this people and I'll define what unicorn is in a second. But I originally thought was all we have to do you know we developed this we developed and validated this very lengthy comprehensive assessment of self-awareness. I thought all we have to do is go find a bunch of people who score high as rated by themselves and someone who knows them well and then I'll crack the code of self-awareness but what I discovered when we started to do that and we started to interview highly self-aware people is a lot of them and I wouldn't venture a guess but I'd say probably most at least in our experience had sort of always been like that you know think about those people that are just naturally self-aware just the way they are wired and when we tried to figure out what they do to stay self-aware they would literally say things like you know what never really thought about that before I don't know if I do anything consciously and we are so frustrated and we were thinking ohh my gosh who are we going to figure this out and then it downed on us that all we had to do was go replicate what I had seen with my coach and clients right find people who didn't start out a self-aware but who were able you know over the course of months and years of commitment and effort to learn to see them self clearly and so that's what we ended up doing we searched the world basically we used no ball sampling which is you ask everyone you know to fill up the survey and then they ask everyone they know and it actually we got all around the world and very very globally diverse sample but what we found eventually were 50 people who not only were highly self-aware as rated by them and someone who knew them well but they and the person who knew them well also basically established that they had improved their self-awareness so they were*

checks and balances built into the system just because you know you start to think about if I one up to hundred and I said hey are you self-aware would you like to be a part of our study. I'm sure we will talk about this later in this podcast but most people are not very good judges of their self-awareness so that was why you know had developed this checks and balances and that was very complicated but once we found this 50 people a couple of observation there were no demographic patterns by gender, age, nationality, job type, industry. We had students, we had Fortune 50 executives, we had say at home parents, we had professionals really just to broad swathe of people and what was so interesting to me about that is showed us that almost anyone can improve their self-awareness if they learn some of the tips and chucks that the unicorns aren't covered for us. So it was just a really fun process and by the way the reason we call them unicorn is my research assistance were joking that like ohh you want us to find self-aware people who didn't start out that way or we might all be looking for a unicorn so everybody thought that was so funny and then you know when we find them we thought you know this is kind of the perfect term for this people. It's hard to imagine that they exist but when we found them there was just so much, we learnt."

DJ: You don't need to be an entrepreneur of a Billion Dollar Start up. Whichever field you are in, are you willing to do the work to be a Self-Awareness Unicorn? Thank you for listening.

End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Tasha Eurich that is referenced: [Self-awareness Unicorns](#).

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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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