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Context to the nugget conversation

Stephen speaks about how a lot of us grow up in the context of scarcity in our early years but as we grow to leadership levels, we need to embrace a very different paradigm of abundance to lead by trusting and inspiring. He speaks about how we might have scarcity of resources but we all have access to an abundance of possibilities.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And if I bring it back to the context in an emerging market like India where there is also, you know, if I look at my early years and a lot of my peers, we grew up in a context of scarcity, scarcity of the number of colleges to apply to, scarcity in terms of the number of jobs, so, in a way, a lot of our instinctive muscle memory is built around knowing things and signaling that as a differentiator. And suddenly, you keep motoring along, it works for you for a while and then suddenly, you hit a point where suddenly, you are asked to completely switch paradigms. In the book, you talk about what happens when by mistake, you hit your finger with a hammer and you go back to your mother tongue and you liken that to the command and control being muscle memory, instinctive when under crisis. I find that it is a little more pronounced in a market like India where a lot of us grew up in that paradigm. So, can you talk to us about how we can overcome that years of muscle memory to build a new set of connections to move to trust and inspire?

Stephen M. R. Covey (SC): Yes, and I think that this represents one of the challenges most of us have because we grew up in command and control, we know command and control, we are good at command and control, we have had mentors and models in command and control, it is our native tongue. And so, as we transition to new role or new style of leadership, these kinds of transitions, we want to say, I am going to lead in a new way, trust and inspire because, by the way, here is a way I am thinking about this, think of Marshall Goldsmith, what got us here would not get us there. The style of leadership that got us to where we are today is not necessary the style that will take us where we need to go tomorrow, so we need to transition and that is trust and inspire. And yet, we know command and control so well, so when the pressure is on, it is easy to revert back. So, I think we need to rescript ourselves when we have been deeply scripted in scarcity for example or in the idea that you have got to really control people instead of unleash people. We have to look at our paradigm and challenge it, challenge the assumptions behind it. And our paradigm is a mental map or model that is trying to describe the territory but the map is not the territory. And you could have a bad map of the territory, an inaccurate map. And I think scarcity might be good economic theory. The scarcity is lousy leadership theory because while there might be a scarcity of resources in certain situations and contexts, I acknowledge that, there is an abundance of what we can create together of everything that truly matters. There is an abundance of respect, of caring, of compassion, of empathy, of

understanding, of trust, of inspiration, of commitment, of creativity, of innovation, almost everything is good. There could be an abundance of those things. So, we have got to challenge our paradigm and that is hard when we have been deeply scripted in a model. And most of us have been scripted in that. We learn it in school, in sports, in all kinds of things. It is a win-lose, you know, winner or loser, there is scarce resources, you have got to fight for them and I acknowledge there is some context in which that is the reality but there is leadership context in which abundance is the more accurate map of the territory.

DJ: I love what you said.

SC: That is the idea behind it. And so, here is how I phrase it in the Trust & Inspire book. I go through fundamental beliefs of a trust and inspire leader that collectively, those beliefs comprise the paradigm, the mindset and for this one, I put it this way, this is a fundamental belief of how I do leadership. I believe that there is enough for everyone. So, if I buy that belief, my job as a leader is to elevate caring above competing. Yes, let us compete in the marketplace but let us care and collaborate in the workplace. There is enough for everyone, there is an abundance mentality. Look, I am not naive. There might be a scarcity of certain resources at a certain time but I have most everything that is good through leadership, creativity, innovation, commitment, empathy, understanding, trust, there could be an abundance of that. So let us elevate caring above competing. This is part of how Satya Nadella revitalized Microsoft. He had a growth mindset for everyone, not just for some, not scarcity, abundance for everyone. And he inherited a workforce that was very cutthroat competitive internally with each other and they had competed and he says that we have got to change that mindset to caring and to collaborating and to coaching as opposed to competing so that we can compete outside in the marketplace but it starts with the paradigm, the fundamental beliefs. And until we shift those beliefs, we are still operating in a command and control model that can abuse people as, you know, just economic beings that where some have greatness than most do not, you have got to control them and where leadership is their scarcity and leadership is you are right as a leader and instead of the idea that there is abundance and leadership is not about right, it is about responsibilities, about stewardship, completely different paradigm shift.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: This is a topic that comes up really often in my work with leaders, a lot of them are Type A and have seen success for the first few years of their life with what Stephen calls Enlightened Command and Control. Suddenly, they are asked to shift the paradigm and they really struggle especially when they need to transition from a CXO to a CEO role. As Stephen says, unless we really work at the level of beliefs, it is hard to transition styles at the surface.

Thank you for listening.

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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Podcast Transcript [101.03 Stephen M. R. Covey - Trusting despite scarcity](#)

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