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Context to the nugget conversation

Stephen speaks about some elements to look out for before extending trust to somebody. He speaks about three things in this context 1) Job to be done 2) Risks and stakes involved 3) Credibility of the person on the other side

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And you use the term smart trust Stephen, what are some of the guardrails we need to have along the way just so that we are pragmatic in the way we live the trust and inspire paradigm?

Stephen M. R. Covey (SC): Yeah, two domains, first domain is as you look at the trust you are going to extend, then we will talk about how you extend it, so when you decide to extend trust, start with the propensity to trust the bias, the inclination that flows from your heart, I want to be trusting as a leader. But by itself, you could trust too much and maybe give people too much responsibility and they are not ready for it, they are not skilled at it, they do not have the capabilities yet, there is too much risk, so you can go too far and I acknowledge that. So, you are trying to use good judgment, you are trying to set everyone up to win. And so, you start with the heart but then you balance it with the head. So, the propensity to trust balance with the analysis or the assessment and I am assessing three things. First, the opportunity, what am I extending trust on, that is the job to be done. Maybe, I am going to say, people, you can work from home or work remotely or in a hybrid thing and I trust you or maybe, I trust this person, I trust Deepak to lead this team or to lead this project, what am I extending trust on, what is the opportunity. Second, what is the risk involved, what could go wrong, how likely is that, what is the cost and consequences of that. And third, what is the credibility of the person or the people involved, how ready are they for this. And look, if certainly there is lower in risk and the person is very high in credibility, you can be very abundant in trusting and give a lot of trust. If certainly there is a lot of risk involved and the person is brand new and their credibility is not established, you are going to be far more measured and give a smaller amount of trust. It would not be smart to just completely trust someone on a huge risky situation. If I needed brain surgery, I would not ask my family doctor who I trust to perform brain surgery because they are not a trained surgeon, they are not skilled, they are not in that, even though I trust him as a family doctor, that is beyond their expertise, that would not be smart. So, I am just trying to scope it, size it up, good judgment, it is not a one-size-fits-all. And so, I am trying to make sure, as I extend trust, I am doing it in a smart way, setting people up to win, including our team, myself and them. That is the first domain, good judgment in the extension of trust. The second is then a good process in building the agreement together because whenever you extend trust, you want to make sure you always do it with clear expectations around the trust being extended and within agreed-upon process of accountability to those expectations. Collectively building the agreement around the trust being extended, with expectations, with accountability. And if you do that

well so that it is not dictated, it is not you just top-down command and control saying, here is the expectations and here is the accountability, I am going to come back here and see how you are doing, instead, it is a two-way process of, here is what we are trying to do, what do you think, does this seem fair, does this seem realistic, you build it together, it does take a little bit of time but you go fast later. You create the expectations around desired results, around guidelines, around resources, what we have to work with, guidelines, within what limits, desired results, what is it that we are after, then we build a process for accountability, how will we know how we are doing. And you can move it from you judge them to the judge themselves against the expectations that we built together. They can evaluate themselves and report back to you, they feel far more ownership and then, you can be informed and still in control but not through micromanagement, rather through an agreement you built together and then, you also talk about consequences involved. So, expectations and accountability, so smart trust is always, whenever I extend trust to people, there is clear expectations and agreed-upon process for accountability. So, some is working from home, I trust them because we built the expectations of going to get the results, here is what we are trying to do, here is the guidelines, resources, here is the accountability, report back in these ways. You build it together, they are committed to it, they perform better around it, they become more creative, and that is so much better than dictating it, saying do this, do that, do this because then, you become responsible for the results, not them, if you are telling them the methods they should use. And so, you get more creativity, you get more growth and development, you get better results and outcomes but you have got to build the agreement together, that is how you extend the trust. And we go deep in this in the book as you know from building thought and stewardship agreement around that trust being extended.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: If this topic is of interest, you might like the book Give and Take by Adam Grant where he speaks about how we can be a Smart Giver. While it is a slightly different topic, some of the themes are similar to what Stephen discusses here.

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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