



The banner features the 'play to potential' logo on the left. To its right are contact details: a WhatsApp icon with the number '+91 85914 52129*', a Twitter icon with the handle '@PlayToPotential', and a globe icon with the website 'playtopotential.com'. Further right, under the heading 'Also available on:', are icons for Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts. On the far right is a portrait of the host, Deepak Jayaraman, with the text 'Podcast Host' and his name in a red box below it. A small disclaimer at the bottom left reads: '*Just send us a Whatsapp with your name, number and email and we will add you to our distribution list.'

Context to the nugget

Pramath talks about the portfolio of initiatives that has today. More importantly, he talks about the underlying principle behind how he has put this portfolio together. He gives us a peek into how he thinks about success using internal and external metrics.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): You wear multiple hats. If you had to talk about the pie-chart of the different things you do, give us an insight into what that looks like.

Dr Pramath Sinha (PS): So, at this point in my life, I think there are three, kind of, legs to what I do. One, is that I am an entrepreneur and I started something called 9.9 Media a few years ago. That takes up some of my time. And we continue to operate in the specialist media space where we have some very prominent brands like Digit, CIO & Leader, IT Next, CFO India. Our business is really focused around those four brands, so I continue to do that.

My second leg is some interesting consulting work that I continue to do, which lot of people here don't know about because my clients are generally multinationals. But I work with Madeleine Albright, former US secretary of state on a firm that she started, called the Albright Stonebridge Group, which advises multinationals on challenges that they face in international markets, and in our case, I lead their team in India. On the face of it, it is consulting but it's very different from the typical McKinsey consulting, where it's really at the intersection of politics, business, policy, and the social sector. So, the problems are very multi-dimensional and the solutions are not obvious. It requires multiple stakeholder management and a fairly holistic approach. There, we don't only advice, but we actually execute a potential way forward. So, that's something that takes up a chunk of my time.

Then, the final thing is the obvious higher education space where I spend time. There, it's really between two sets of things. One, is a philanthropic, more volunteer, set of things, which includes ISB and the two campuses, Ashoka, and something I started a couple of years ago, called the Vedic Scholars Programme. In addition to that, I am now starting to do stuff which is more in helping other people improve or build new institutions. That again is more project management mode, of literally going and doing a BOT or becoming a BOT partner for people who already own institutions or want to build institutions to say, 'Given my experience, let me do something for you which is really high quality, either to improve what you have or to build something new'.

DJ: You have a portfolio of different things, high-impact things, you do. How do you think about impact and success? Is there some sort of a yardstick you set for yourself, in the context of what you are doing?

PS: I think these things are all so different that it's hard to say that there is any one yardstick, but if I reflect on it, there's always an internal metric and an external metric. And there is a very personal metric, which I will come to. So, I think, on the external metric, my yardstick is really and a lot of this came out of the McKinsey experience that are the clients, are the people I am working with, are the customers or people I am catering to high-quality people with the right values and right intents, that I enjoy working with them and we have mutual respect for each other. I think, in all cases, there has to be high aspiration. So, I am not getting into those kinds of metrics: you have to be world class or you have to do something that impacts a lot of people. I think, those can vary and everybody would talk about them but for me the relationship and the quality of people in McKinsey, we used to say quality of client and quality of impact have to go together. So, I think that is a one big metric that I try to use. Sometimes, impact may be small, but they are good people and you want to help them out. So, I think, that's very much something that guides me as I look at what I do externally or who I engage with.

The second is that I also want to do things where I am able to attract good people. I think, in my kind of model, where I am doing multiple things, it's very dependent on having a high-quality set of people. Otherwise, you possibly can't do so many things. So, to be able to say that listen, am I doing things in a way or am I working on things and I'm doing it in a way that attracts high-quality people to me, who, on one hand, I can depend on and can leverage and on the other hand, I can be a mentor to and help them be successful at what they want to do. That, I think, together with the quality of people you are working with on the outside, gives me the measure for what I am doing and why am I doing it.

Then, finally, it all really comes down, I think, as you grow older in life, to what is the sense of satisfaction and sense of purpose that you draw from these things you do. On one hand, it may seem that I do bunch of unrelated things which have a myriad of very different outcomes, problems, and context. But underlying all of this, is that, for me, Pramath, and not for you or other people what seems fulfilling, satisfying, purposeful, taking into account some of the practical realities of life that I have to earn some money or take care of my future. That's really what determines success or what you want to do.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: The key takeaway for me here was the way Pramath articulated his yard stick both from an external and an internal lens. I find that often in India especially when you come out of the Indian competitive system (if I reflect back on my peers from IITM and IIMA), you are often driven by external metrics - Salary, Title and so on and suddenly when you hit mid-30s and beyond, I find several people not being able to articulate what their inner yard stick is. Having that clarity around what you are solving for, what gives you energy and what good looks like for you and only you can be immensely clarifying as one navigates options especially when you hit the mid-30s and beyond.

Thank you for listening. For more please visit playtopotential.com or subscribe to the podcast on iTunes, Stitcher or one of the other Podcast apps.

End of nugget transcription

RELATED PLAYLISTS YOU MIGHT LIKE

Managing time: Money is a renewable resource, time is not. Leaders share their wisdom around how they have thought about their time and gravitated towards initiatives that yield the maximum Return on Time Invested (ROTI). They also discuss how the pie chart of time has evolved with changes in context. You can access the playlist [here](#).

Social Impact: Leaders across domains talk about how they have thought about Social Impact and where the seeds of giving were sown. They discuss their approach to philanthropy and the underlying principles they have used to get to what they are doing now. You can access the playlist [here](#).

SIGN UP TO OUR COMMUNICATION

Podcast Newsletter: Join 1000s of leaders who benefit from the Podcast newsletter. Not more than 1-2 emails a month including keeping you posted on the new content that comes up at the podcast. High on signal, low on noise. Sign up for the podcast newsletter [here](#).

Nuggets on Whatsapp: We also have a [Podcast Whatsapp distribution group \(+91 85914 52129\)](#) where we share 2-3 nuggets a week from the Podcast archives to provoke reflection. If that is of interest, please click [here](#) and send a message stating "INTERESTED". Do also add this number to your Phone Contacts so that we can broadcast our messages to you when we share a nugget.

Dr. Pramath Sinha - Nuggets

- 14.00 Dr. Pramath Sinha - The Full Conversation
- 14.01 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Current portfolio of initiatives
- 14.02 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Consulting (McKinsey) as a career option
- 14.03 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Transitioning out of consulting (including views on entrepreneurship)
- 14.04 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Authentic leadership
- 14.05 Dr. Pramath Sinha - What consulting doesn't prepare you for
- 14.06 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Vedica Scholars Programme — Nurturing women leaders
- 14.07 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Educating ourselves (and link with leadership of the future)
- 14.08 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Building leadership capability in entrepreneurs
- 14.09 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Personal board of advisors
- 14.10 Dr. Pramath Sinha - Reflecting on the past and the future
- 14.11 Dr. Pramath Sinha - In Summary - Playing to Potential

About Deepak Jayaraman

Deepak seeks to unlock 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](#).

Disclaimer and clarification of intent behind the transcripts

This written transcript of the conversation is being made available to make it easier for some people to digest the content in the podcast. Several listeners felt that the written format would be helpful. This may not make sense as an independent document. Very often spoken word does not necessarily read well. Several of the guests have published books and the language in their books might be quite different from the way they speak. We request the readers to appreciate that this transcript is being offered as a service to derive greater value from the podcast content. We request you not to apply journalistic standards to this document.

This document is a transcription obtained through a third party/voice recognition software. There is no claim to accuracy on the content provided in this document, and occasional divergence from the audio file are to be expected. As a transcription, this is not a legal document in itself, and should not be considered binding to advice intelligence, but merely a convenience for reference.

The tags that are used to organize the nuggets in the podcast are evolving and work in progress. You might find that there could be a discrepancy between the nuggets as referenced here and in the actual podcast given this is a static document.

All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, or stored in any retrieval system of any nature without prior written permission.