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## Context to the nugget conversation

Bob speaks about the notion of a Chief Life Officer, and how each one of us can play that role for ourselves as we go through life. He also makes the distinction between what is valuable and what is priceless and urges us to think about the distinction as we think about choices as we often move from being a warrior to a king to a sage in our respective journeys.

## Transcription

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Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Lloyd. One of the pieces I wanted to pick up on Lloyd was one of the other thinkers in the podcast earlier was a lady called Lynda Gratton of London Business School who has written a book 100-Year Life and she says, we are moving from a world where we had established phases, right? You study, work and retire now and if you knew somebody's age you knew their stage, but now we are moving to a anytime life kind of a transition. So, how do you think about this notion of halftime in the world we are in and how has that evolved over the last couple of decades you have been doing this?

Lloyd Reeb (LR): I think she's right and perhaps this pandemic, this current pandemic that we are just coming out of is pushing it faster in that direction with so much mobility and our days are sliced and diced and so, our years and decades are sliced and diced. The risk with that is you just become spaghetti, there's no kind of architecture or structure to your life. And so, the onus is on each of us to think in terms of being chief life officer. If you are going to have to zig and zag and reinvent yourself more than just twice, you know, used to be, I had 20 years of preparation, 30-year career, 30 years of retirement. If you look back even further, the average life expectancy was 48 or 49 just a 100 years ago; that was the average life expectancy here in America. So, you didn't even have the last 30 years. You basically came to your 50s and you retired worn out, you were a manual worker not a knowledge worker, your contribution dropped off with your energy dropping off. Today, so many talented smart people in India, their contribution can continue well into their 80s. And very many of them have global exposure because India is such a part of the global supply chain. And so, it's true that they are going to have endless opportunities going forward and the more opportunities you face the more important it is to know who you are, what you care about, why you do what you do and to have some metrics along the way and then to revisit that plan. One of the things that Peter Drucker challenged Bob to do early on was to create a life decades exercise. And that was to start with the current decade and define it using a single word or two. And that takes a little bit of difficult thinking, right? To put a... to describe the current decade of your life with a single word or two and then to go back to the decade prior, when you were younger, and describe it with a single word or two and how you spent your time, and then go back a decade earlier, pretty soon you are in your teen years. But the power of the exercise is as you look forward and you describe the next decade of your life with a single word or two and then two decades after that and all the way into

your 80s or 90s and what happens is it starts to provide a trajectory in your mind and you start to realize that you have agency, you have responsibility to be planning and thinking about the future. So, we have so many options, comes the responsibility to learn, both the leadership and the intentionality and the skills to be an effective chief life officer. You can no longer rely on your company to map out your life for you. And chances are if you come home from your company and you have given it all you have got, and you have nothing creative to give to your spouse or your family or your neighbors or your community that you will end up largely disappointed in the second half of your life or the next season of your life. So, I think, she's on to something. You know, it's still important to think about life in terms of a first in half and second half because there are some fundamental changes that happen as you age. And one is that if you have chosen to have a family, they leave and they go off to college like you did, you know, imagine the day when you went off to ITT.

DJ: IIT.

LR: IIT, yeah, right. And then you went even further to London Business School, right? Your mom, you know, just think about those days in her life after you had left and even in your dad as well. It created a pivotal moment for them and the same is true for many people. Now, you and I if we live to 85 or so, you know, between 50 and 60 we would do some things and we will probably want to change that between 60 and 70. And historically, people have moved from warrior to king to sage. And if you think back thousands of years and I have seen some of the history and some of those amazing archaeological sites in India and it takes you back thousands of years, doesn't it? And you see faith interwoven in thousands of years of Indian history and you realize that these people they went from warrior to king to sage and in our lives the transition from king to sage is the most difficult transition because you give up all the perks, you give up the sort of the levers, the levers and you are left with influence if you are lucky. So, that's why I agree with her and I think it puts the onus on you and I to really learn how to be chief life officer.

DJ: And maybe just picking up from that, Lloyd, the term chief life officer, it will be good to spend a couple of minutes and flesh that out. As you look at leaders, especially kings to use your metaphor, people that have achieved a certain level of success, have power, what elements of life do they often end up missing out on when you look at the range of leaders that you spend time with?

LR: Well, very often it's the softer, what you would call the softer side of life. The cultivation of relationships, the ability, for example, to have an intimate relationship with friends or with the spouse, or with the children very often gets truncated because of busyness and the pace that they go and not being available very often. Their spiritual development, if they are coming from a faith perspective, sometimes it gets truncated, sometimes their own personal development moves towards hubris or towards arrogance and you never end up with a rich and fulfilling life if you become more and more arrogant or hubris. People don't even enjoy being around you and so we can see that sneaks up on people and then sometimes their spouse if they are ignored, they choose, they accept a lifestyle in exchange for the intimacy that they really wanted. I was speaking at a YPO event, Young Presidents Organization, they have chapters all throughout India. If you are a CEO of a company or President of a company below the age 40 you can qualify to apply for being a part of the YPO and you probably know them, right?

DJ: Yes, some of them, yeah.

LR: And so, this was a dinner of nine CEOs. It was a weekend retreat that I was leading with them and I always bring my wife Linda to those and they wonder why do you bring your wife? Well, first of all, I like being with her and they are a little bit surprised that... and then I know that they will want

her advice sooner or later and sure enough this particular night they said to me, do you think Linda would join us for dinner if we asked her nicely? And I said, yes, and so she came and so imagine this, it's on a back, a piazza overlooking the golf course, the 18th hole and there's nine CEOs with gray hair and blue suit jackets and I mean pretty intimidating for Linda. But she came along and we sat down and in this beautiful glass conference room overlooking the golf course as the sun was setting, and she picked up her fork to dig into her meal and the CEO at the end of the table said, Linda, I have a question for you. I have spent the last 33 years busting my butt so that my family and my wife could live like princesses. And you spend a lot of time with these people and particularly with their spouses and I wonder do you ever sense any kind of gratitude? Now, if you think about that Deepak, that is a deeply felt question, it's a hard question to hear, it's coming from a pretty painful place. But Linda was so gracious, she looked him in the eyes and she smiled and she said, yeah, sometimes I sense gratitude, but very often I sense that they accepted the lifestyle you provided in exchange for the intimacy and the cherishing that they really, really wanted. So, one of the things we give up is what's priceless. So, one of the exercises to do is to make two lists on one sheet of paper. On the right side, write down everything you have that's valuable. It's buildings, it's properties, it's stocks, it's a car maybe, it's a house maybe, who knows what you have. On the left side, write down everything you have that's priceless and then ask yourself what am I doing to protect the priceless things? Now, when I did that first based... my mentor Bob Buford encouraged me to do it, asked me to do it, I found that many of the things that were in the priceless category were completely unprotected. I wasn't paying attention to my health because I was so focused on making money. I wasn't really deeply investing in my marriage. I could do a better job understanding my children's strengths and learning style and love language and so my reputation was largely unprotected, but it's priceless to me. And I went back and I worked on protecting the things that are priceless. So, if you are in your first half and you are on an all-out quest for wealth my encouragement to you is, work hard, do what you love and wealth will come along but don't ever trade something that's priceless for something that's merely valuable.

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I guess Mastercard used this insight when it came up with the line "There are some things money can't buy. For everything else, there is Mastercard". The way I see it, the challenge in bringing it to life is that for the valuable items, it is very easy to put them on a scorecard for yourself and for others and then the whole "you manage what you measure" takes over and you drive it. The priceless often is the small intangibles that are often hard to put on a scorecard.

One frame that I find helpful is that we often make lists of what we do and what we own. Priceless moments are often in the realm of being; Being a good father; Being a compassionate human being; Being a caring spouse and so on.

I guess one crucial element is for us to raise our awareness and slowly gravitate towards Being Metrics and not just doing or owning metrics as we go through our journey.

In the work I do, I realize that it is critical for me to engage with a person as a whole. If I can't help a leader being an effective Chief Life Officer in his journey, it is no significant use me trying to help him or her being an effective Executive at work. I try and keep that front and center when I engage with the people I work with.

If this is a topic of interest, you might like the Playlists around "Views on Success" and "Work and Life". You can go to [playtopotential.com](http://playtopotential.com) and find them in the Curated Playlists section.

## 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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