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Context to the nugget conversation

Ethan speaks about the role of his father in shaping his interests. He speaks about his father's interest in the Bhagavad Gita and other elements of Eastern Philosophy and how he would encourage Ethan to go inside to find the kernel of truth if something bad happens. He speaks about how some of that might have percolated down to him and his career choices.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): In this podcast, we talk about people's journeys, Ethan; before we dive into your book *Chatter*, I would love to talk a little bit about how you got here. So, can you talk a little bit about your journey to doing what you do now?

Ethan Kross (EK): Sure, happy to. The journey began in Brooklyn, New York and it started probably around the age of somewhere between 3 and 5, when I first started talking to my dad about life, because he liked to talk to me about such things and my dad was a really interesting character. On the one hand, he fit the stereotype of a classic, I would say, middle class New Yorker growing up in the 1970s, when he did, and he loved watching the New York Yankees and he was aggressive when he drove his car and uttered all sorts of expletives when he did, even though I was in the back seat. So, on the surface, he had this very gruff exterior, but in his spare time he would love to read about eastern philosophy and so, like one of his favourite texts was the Bhagavad Gita. And he was deeply, deeply immersed and I should say he was not an academic, he didn't graduate from college, he was a salesman, but he was enamoured with the science of mind. And he used to talk to me beginning from around the time I was 3 about what he was reading about and learning. And one of the first lessons he shared was he would say to me, hey, whenever something bad happens, go inside, find the kernel of truth and try to get to the bottom of it. So, go inside was this little phrase that he would utter to me throughout my childhood and adolescence. And I found this terribly embarrassing, when I was growing up, my dad would talk to me about these things like often in front of my friends when they would come over. But like so many things in a young child's life, the things we hear our parents talk about and talk to us about have an interesting way of penetrating our consciousness, and although I didn't realize it at the time, those conversations he was having with me played a role in shaping the kinds of things I would become interested in later on in life. And so fast forward, I get to college and I take my first psychology class at the University of Pennsylvania and about halfway through the semester, we get to the topic of introspection, the science of turning your attention inward and regard to that topic, I thought, finally this is the stuff that I spent so much time talking to my dad about, I have got this, but what I learned in that class was that a lot of people do exactly what my dad told me to do and they are struggling, didn't try to turn their attention in order to try to find a solution to their problems, but they often end up stumbling instead they don't get better. In fact, these attempts to go inside make their problems worse. And so, for me this

became a real puzzle, why did my dad tell me that this was so helpful. I had my own positive experiences with introspection as many others have as well, so why did it work for some people some of the time, but not for others at other moments in time. And that paradox, that puzzle really energized me, let me to go to graduate school to learn and use the tools of science and neuroscience to try to answer it and that is what I have been doing ever since.

DJ: Wow, and a couple of things, right? One is the fact that your dad was having these conversations from the age of 3 or 5 you said, it's fascinating, it's never too early. I mean, my kids are 8 and 12 so it's an early reminder...

EK: Get, get, get going... you might want to not do it when their friends come over wanting to play.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: It is just fascinating how much of who we are gets shaped in our early years. As a father, this is a helpful reminder to be intentional about how one engages with children and how much, without our realizing, we end up shaping their beliefs and their approach to life.

Thank you for listening. If this topic is of interest you would like the topic Parenting & Formative Years on playtopotential.com in the curated playlists section.

End of nugget transcription

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Ethan Kross - Nuggets

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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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