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## Context to the nugget

Vijay talks about how he took stock of life at key inflection points during his career in tennis and beyond. He also talks about the distinction between being pedigreed and learning from one's own experiences through the journey of life. He also talks about how he dealt with the "Astronaut syndrome" (a phrase that Tony Robbins often uses). You have accomplished whatever you wanted to. Now what?

## Transcription

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**Deepak Jayaraman (DJ):** Give us an insight into how you recalibrate what success means, when you had that kind of meteoric rise, how did you really redefine for yourself, what the goal post would be at that stage?

**Vijay Amritraj (VA):** I think it's hard to look back and see what you felt at that particular moment, but I think the more important thing is what it teaches you, that's where the education starts to take priority over success. In that case for me my entire Tennis life has been an education it's not a question of success or failure but it's more of an education of teaching me things that I never dreamt I would get, oh would have gotten from any form of a school or education system so on and so forth.

So I think when you look at it from that angle, I feel that I have been extremely well educated. Not necessarily with the high power of degree or so on and so forth but I think if you look at it from the stand point of what it is taught me about People about Places about History about Civilization about Culture about so many different things that I never would have dreamt of having an option of to be able to go visit or see or be a part of and that doing at that level that was probably measurable today, that was what I take away from that and when you look back at that particular match at thirteen and half year before my fourteenth birthday actually and to playing a guy who's 18 19 20 years old and coming back from two sets to lock down at such a young age and so on, I think those kinds of moments stay with you through life because you are reaching so deep into yourself that you didn't think you had and I don't mean it in just a form of a inspired anyone but more importantly it is an education to yourself it teaches you about yourself and your character and what you are capable of doing, ohh may be I can do more with myself than just kind of or to scale 1 to 10 how was my day today? Was it a 5 or 8 or a 12 and why should it be a 12? And can dig deeper to make it a 12 and I think those kinds of things come when you play a match like that and then it is sort of stood me in good stead all the way through my career.

DJ: Did you have that sort of feeling at that point saying, I never dreamt to come this far now I am here now what? Give us a sense of how you took stock of life when you were playing at that very top?

VA: For me the sport was always very much path or way, more of a journey than reaching any pinnacle of the sport or any of that I think it was more a question of, in the early stages it was my health then once I had my initial jump to belief in myself at the age of 13, 14 years old that I could possibly do a lot better and then of course becoming India's No. 1 and Asia's No. 1 and then eventually making it onto the world's stage all of them came fairly rapidly but obviously through a lot of hard work and all of it that people put into time and effort into my talents and tried to reach to the potential that hopefully I reached but I think the more important for me is the fact that yes as much as I was trying to be the best that I could possibly be in this sport at that time every 10 years period was sort of an important aspect for me and I had to be a particular way in first 10 years and then the second 10 years and then the third 10 years, of every decade of my life and then get the best out of it. From a stand point of being both the best I could be plus also educate myself as much as I possibly could from that particular decade, you can't be in your thirties what you are in your twenties and so on and so forth.

So, as it taught me a lot I knew that I was continuously living in a non-real world but it was also giving me a platform to be able to be better and better as life progressed at a latest stage in my life to be able to use these experiences to be better at that time it might be in a different profession it might be in a different life it might be a different calling, I don't know but hopefully I would have prepared for that through this 20, 22 years of the Tennis circuit.

DJ: That's fascinating you talk about the notion of keeping the learning engine on irrespective of where you are and that's sort of being...

VA: Constantly I think that's the important factor of life, whenever you talk to a doctor he always tells you he is constantly learning irrespective of what specific surgery he does or he is a general physician and so on and so forth he constantly trying to be better because of whether its technology which is improving the profession or whatever else it might be you are constantly learning and every generation starts to pick up more things and every generation starts to be a little more different and how do we be able to be agile and kind of move with the times even if you are in your 40s 50s or 60s it doesn't really matter the question is how do we adapt to what the world is changing to?

## Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: Couple of things stood out for me in this piece. One was the notion of adapting oneself irrespective of age all the more relevant in the VUCA world we live in. Second was the notion of taking stock of life whether it is baking in time at the end of each day to take stock of how it went and what one learnt from it or looking at life in decades and taking stock. In my work with leaders, I find that it's often the inner reflection that's so critical for us to grow and evolve but ironically enough it gets crowded out by the here and now of life. Thank you for listening. For more, you could follow the Twitter handle Play to Potential.

## End of nugget transcription

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### Vijay Amritraj - Nuggets

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### 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](#).

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