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Context to the nugget

Tasha provides some context to why self-awareness is arguably the meta-skill of the 21st century. She discusses why it is possibly the foundational skill that helps us across various domains of life. She makes the distinction between internal and external self-awareness and goes on to say that they are not as closely correlated as one would assume.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): And you call it the Meta skill of the 21st century and I was curious about you know why the Meta skill is and why is it more relevant now than ever before?

Dr. Tasha Eurich (TE): So, let me just give you snapshots of some of the improvement that people who increase their self-awareness typically see. So, what we know scientifically is that people who are self-aware are more promotable they perform better and their jobs they are more confident they are communicators, better influencers, significantly better leaders there is even some evidence that leaders' companies rather who are made up of a large number of self-aware employees and led by self-aware leaders or actually more profitable than companies who aren't and so the benefits are pretty clear and a business that... and then they also follow us our own life. We know that people who are self-aware are more satisfied in their romantic relationships, they are more satisfied with their friendship they raise more mature less narcissistic children which I think for everybody in the 21st century is pretty helpful so if you just look at all of this things in sum total there aren't very many skills that if you dedicate yourself to improving you are gone see that wide range of benefits but the reason I call it the meta skill and this is really important is that particularly in the work place our self-awareness to going to set that upper limit for our success. In other words, you know think about the best communicator you know or the best leader you know or the person who is just the most effective on a long term basis they are only as successful as they are self-aware because if we are not able to see our self clearly we can't come from a place values based behaviour we can't question our assumptions, we can't identify how we are impacting others and change our approach if we need to so I really see it is kind of the foundational skill not just to be successful at work but really to be someone lives meaningful, successful and draw able life.

DJ: What are some of the misconception you see around how people think about self-awareness?

TE: I found over the years that self-awareness is a very similar term and in some way is that the term communication we could have ten people talking about communication and all ten of them could mean something different so it's sort of inherently vague not just in the meaning but in the way people use it and even more confusing I have known people to talk about self-awareness in terms of the negative a lot more than the positive right if you hear people say what that person just

isn't very self-aware but to paint the picture of a self-aware person obviously to your point it's really important to start to understand how we can develop it we got to know what it is and just a kind of to back track a little bit when I first started this research program I have this really naïve vision of what it would be and I thought myself get a research team together we might need to do work over you know 6 months or 8 months but I'm sure we will learn a lot in a really short time period and what we discovered really quickly was this was such a complex topic and it took us almost a year to just to define what self-awareness really was and actually we have reviewed almost a thousand empirical general articles we interviewed thousands of people around the world and we found people who dramatically increase their self-awareness and here is what we came up with just to save everybody the time so self-awareness it's pretty awful right. Several awareness is made up of two type of self-knowledge. The first is something we named internal self-awareness which essentially knows who we are on the inside. What do we value? What are we passionate about? What are our aspirations? What are the pattern of behaviour that we exhibit across situation but equally important is something called external self-awareness and in a nutshell what that means is knowing how other people see us and what was fascinating at least to me in our research was that we found that those two types of self-knowledge which are required for us to really be self-aware but they are not related to each other which I was kind of surprised by I was thought you know if somebody kind of knows you they are from the inside of course they would do the work and find out how they were seen on the outside and vice versa. But we discover that they are you sort have to think about the... independent skill set within the self-awareness area.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: What really caught my attention was the point Tasha made around the low correlation between External and Internal Self-Awareness.

This, in a way is amplified when people are at cross-roads in their journey. As it is meaningful workplace feedback is rare in most organizations. Even if it exists, it is often hard to separate the signal from the noise. This is all the more amplified when you are not sure about what career-path to pursue given where you are. You are seeking feedback on the dimension of "where to go" or to frame it differently "what is a pathway that makes the most sense for me given my skills, attitudes, passion and what I care about". And on this dimension, I see a lot of people have done some inner work but they often draw a blank when I ask them about whether they have validated this from the outside.

One of my earlier guests, Roopa Kudva (RK) who is now the India head of Omidyar Network an Impact Investing firm. She spoke about how she transitioned from being the MD of CRISIL to Heading Omidyar Network in India.

RK: "There was a friend who gave me a really good advice when I had decide to leave Crisil but had no clue about what next and she said to me go out and talk to people and you will be surprise to hear how people perceive your, when you go out and start talking to people just to understand what is out there, you will be astonished and then you will have clarity and I actually did that, because there were so much time and I was doing the succession and because in Crisil, I was just fortunate to have a set of clients who were all either policy makers or regulators or CEOs of company and I had the platform to interact with them and everyone knew that I was going to leave so they all called up and said lets chat etc. and so I would go and have a cup of tea with and I did this with about 45 people and over the 9 months and it was just amazing as my friend have told me the insight that I got and I think the first clarity what I got was what I did not want to do and I think that itself become clear to me through these conversations where people said why don't you do this or we think why don't you

join us? And that gave me clarity on what I did that helped in the elimination process in my mind I don't want to do this and after that I think it became much simpler I knew there was a small subset of themes that I wanted to look at and that small subset of things was where can I use my skills and capabilities and apply them on a wider platform to bring about some kind of change and didn't know what kind of change it would be in India, so I just knew that part of it and I came through to that realization through these conversations and a process of elimination and then it was serendipity Omidyar caught."

DJ: You can see Roopa systematically building her external self-awareness as she was transitioning from one context to another. When I work with leaders in transition, I like to talk to the people that know them well and ask them the question "given you know this individual, their strengths, their values, their attitudes, their operating system and their objective function – what is the canvas that they would flourish in"; And that question often opens the door to a very interesting conversation and a new possibility.

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End of nugget transcription

Nugget from Roopa Kudva that is referenced: [Transitioning to a General Management role](#).

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Dr. Tasha Eurich - Nuggets

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- 49.01 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-Awareness - Meta-skill of 21st century
- 49.02 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-awareness Unicorns
- 49.03 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-delusion versus Self-awareness
- 49.04 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Limitations of introspection
- 49.05 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Mindfulness beyond meditation
- 49.06 Dr. Tasha Eurich - A Prism versus a mirror
- 49.07 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Role of a coach in enhancing self-awareness
- 49.08 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Self-awareness during career transitions
- 49.09 Dr. Tasha Eurich - Catch 22 of Self-awareness

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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