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Context to the nugget

Alan speaks about Bill Campbell's journey and the various transitions he has been through – from being a Football Coach to becoming a Business Executive to Leadership Coaching where he worked with several luminaries such as Steve Jobs, Founders of Google, Eric Schmidt, Sheryl Sandberg, and Al Gore. He also speaks about how Bill transitioned from one canvas to another and what stayed the same across these stints.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): I'd love to may be level set little bit for the purpose of the listeners, why don't you tell us a little bit about Bill Campbell and possibly some of the lives that he is impacted?

Alan Eagle (AE): Sure, let me just start by talking you know Bill was a renowned executive coach here in Silicon Valley he was instrumental and the success of Google as well as Apple and several other companies Intuit and several other companies he actually passed away 3 years ago. He grew up in Pennsylvania, went to Columbia University in New York and he played football there and he was the member of their last Ivy League champion played back in the earlier 60s and anyone on become a football coach American football of course coach that Boston college almost the head coach at Columbia in the late 70s. So, he started his career as a professional sports coach he wasn't super successful. The Columbia teams did not do well so at age 39 he left coaching and started his business career. He first went to work for an Ad agency then worked for Kodak through that he met a guy named John Sculley. John of course in 1983 came west to take over a CEO of Apple and so when he came to Apple, he called Bill and Bill came over to run sales and helped with marketing at Apple. So that started at very successful business career that saw him rise to become an executive at Apple, then CEOs of Claris software, GO Corporation and eventually, Intuit and that was the second phase of his career as business executive and then around 2000 he stepped down as CEO of Intuit and became really a full time coach. He was introduced to Eric Schmidt by John Doerr... who is a well know venture capitalist here in the Valley. Eric was just taking over as CEO at Google and John suggested that may be that Eric could use some caching and so Bill becomes Eric's coach. Bill had also become very close with Steve Jobs over the years when you know starting when he initially worked at Apple and then when Steve returned at Apple in 1997, I believe it was to become the CEO of Apple and really resurrect that company. Bill was the first board member he invited to come on board. So Bill while he was helping Steve Job's rebuild Apple he was helping Eric, Larry and Sergey, Jonathan and others build Google and went onto our remarkable career coaching many many executives here at Silicon Valley.

DJ: And for the purpose of the listeners do you want to share some of the prominent names just for us to get a sense of the level at which he was operating?

AE: I have mentioned Steve Jobs of course he worked with others at Google I am sorry Apple ... here at Goggle besides Eric Schmidt he worked with other co-author Jonathan Rosenberg who ran product... at Google worked with Alan Eustace a head of engineering, worked with the founders Larry and Sergey worked with the CFO... so that just those two companies. Other people we have interviewed you know Bill sat on Apple Board for many years and so he worked with many other Apple board members... former Vice President of the US was one of the... some of the other names. I don't nearly told who was the founder of... he continued to work Intuit and of course with Brad Smith a CEO of Intuit who recently stepped down and the list goes on and on Sheryl Sandberg of course I should note who was he started to work with us as a CEO when she was an executive at Google and of course as she continued on at Facebook and you know the list goes on.

DJ: Lovely. Just picking up on a different theme Alan. I was curious about some of the transitions that Bill made right from transitioning from being a college football coach to becoming a business leader, to becoming a business coach to some of the largest tech companies. Give us a sense of how he adapted himself along the way and what stayed the same as he transitioned across these different contexts.

AE: Well, since I didn't know Bill at the time and he didn't really talk that much about his own history it's hard to fill in the gaps on exactly what he was thinking or how he approached it. The consistent theme though was the concept of team and team as a community. If you think about when you are working on a sports team you really want everybody to come together, put aside individual differences, play their role, play their part and help the team win and you really want people that care about the team winning. I think that is true in sports and that was his approach in business. All about coaching individuals and helping the team win and that's what he expected out of people. So, I think that level of consistency and I do know just from anecdotes from both his coaching days and his business days are that he really felt there is a community. When you are talking about team as community it's not just in the workplace and people working together but it is also getting to know each other, getting closer as a team. So, he always felt it was really important for teams to get to know each other, to work together, to socialize a little bit and get past your... every team does their common team building stuff in the occasional offsite but Bill would get a little deeper than that, overly got to know people as people and I think that was another consistent thread throughout his career and one that he brought in to his coaching work here at Google and other places.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I was recently reading the book Late Bloomers by Rich Karlgaard where he says that we live in a world that celebrates precocity. With lists such as 40 under 40, 30 under 30 and so on, there is a lot of celebration of early success but not enough commentary around late bloomers. To me Bill Campbell seems like a great case study of a late bloomer. One of my guests at the podcast, Lynda Gratton of London Business School speaks about the notion of 100 year life where we need to be thinking about our journey differently. I see several people in their 40s and 50s often burnt out and checked out. While they might have ticked the financial milestones for themselves, they still have a big chunk of life to lead and make a difference. So, to note that Bill Campbell moved from the world of sport to the world of business at 39 and from being a business executive to Coaching at the age of 60 is a reassuring thought that we could find a new canvas where we could make a difference. And our best days might just be ahead of us.

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End of nugget transcription

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Alan Eagle - Nuggets

- 50.00 Alan Eagle - The Full Conversation
- 50.01 Alan Eagle - Sports to Business to Coaching
- 50.02 Alan Eagle - Building trust as a Coach
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- 50.04 Alan Eagle - Dealing with aberrant geniuses
- 50.05 Alan Eagle - Having difficult conversations
- 50.06 Alan Eagle - Being an evangelist for courage
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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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