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Context to the nugget conversation

Dorie speaks about how she started with a degree in Theology from Harvard Divinity School and then tried her hand at Journalism, Politics and other fields that has got her to her current role that includes teaching, speaking, writing, Coaching and Consulting.

Transcription

Deepak Jayaraman (DJ): Dorie, in this podcast, we talk about people's journeys and choices and transitions. So before we talk about your recently published book *The Long Game*, I would love for you to talk a little bit about your journey, talk to us about some of the key choices that got you to what you do now and maybe, give us a sense of why you wrote the book and then we will dive into the book.

Dorie Clark (DC): Yeah, well, thank you so much. There is a lot of places that one can start in one's journey but probably speaking, I grew up in a small town in North Carolina, really wanted to get out of that small town. So I went to college early and I ended up going to college at 14 and then graduating when I was 18. I went then to Harvard Divinity School and got a master's degree in Theological Studies. And when I got out of school, I started trying to find my way in the world and like a lot of people, I managed to hit a variety of career roadblocks. I first tried to get into a doctoral program after I had finished my master's degree and got turned down by all the programs that I applied for. So I then decided to become a journalist and I did that for about a year and then I got laid off. So I had to come up with something else. It was very hard to get another job in journalism because the industry was kind of contracting. So I had been a political reporter and I then ended up working in politics for a variety of candidates who kept losing. So it was a windy path to entrepreneurship for me but for the past 15 years, I have had my own business and that has entailed a lot of facets, including teaching now at Duke and Columbia and speaking, writing books and a variety of other activities like coaching and consulting. But broadly speaking the way that I think about my work, having begun my career really at the intersection of marketing and communications and strategy, is helping people and organizations figure out how to get their message heard and their best ideas heard in a very crowded and noisy world.

DJ: Hmm. And if I may persist with this thing, Dorie, if you go back 15 years, you know, theology, journalism, political writer, how did you stumble upon this path? Could you talk to us about just the origin story of your 15-year journey?

DC: The original insight that I had that brought me to entrepreneurship, I had never really thought about that as a career for myself but the most immediate, preceding activity before starting my own business was, for two years, I was a non-profit executive director. And I was always interested in

advocacy and social causes and things like that, which is why I had got into journalism and why I had gotten into politics. And I worked for this small organization, which was actually a bicycle advocacy organization, and about a year into it, I suddenly had this realization that running this non-profit was basically like running a small business. It was almost indistinguishable. I mean, of course, you roll the profits back into the organization, but you still have to run it the same way. And I thought, oh, wait, I have somehow been inadvertently learning how to run a small business. And then I thought, well, I could do that for myself and suddenly, I realized that this whole new opportunity was in front of me that I had not considered before and I realized that might be a good direction to go in.

Reflections from Deepak Jayaraman

DJ: I can so relate to Dorie's perspective around how she got into entrepreneurship. Today I run my Leadership and Transition Advisory practice and the podcast. If somebody had asked me 10 years back, I would not have put money on myself to do something on my own. For people that understand the South Indian archetype, I come from a Tamil Brahmin family, what they call Tam Brahms, which is known for risk aversion and having a stated preference for salaried jobs. I must confess, I quite fit that archetype.

It is just that post EgonZehnder, over the last 6 odd years, I feel, I am operating at the intersection of passion, skillset and opportunity that it doesn't quite feel like I am running a business. It feels like I am doing a set of things I enjoy and it turns out that there is a commercial business case for doing this at an individual level and to me that is good enough to play this for the long term.

I must confess, I am more of a solopreneur or an Independent producer not really going after scale like a typical Entrepreneur would. But I do think there is a space for people to meaningfully contribute to the world by being an Independent producer. One of the books that has influenced me a lot is a book called Small Giants by Bo Burlingham where he focuses on companies that become great rather than large. The focus is on staying close to what gives you joy and being really good at it to add distinctive value.

End of nugget transcription

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Dorie Clark - Nuggets

- 85.01 Dorie Clark - Winding journey to entrepreneurship
- 85.02 Dorie Clark - Prioritizing sharply
- 85.03 Dorie Clark - Beyond retailing time
- 85.04 Dorie Clark - Riding an S curve
- 85.05 Dorie Clark - Infinite horizon networking
- 85.06 Dorie Clark - Value based pricing
- 85.07 Dorie Clark - Metrics to measure greenshots
- 85.08 Dorie Clark - Experimenting on the sides
- 85.09 Dorie Clark - Extending the horizon
- 85.10 Dorie Clark - Being a Lesbian

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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Podcast Transcript [85.01 Dorie Clark - Winding journey to entrepreneurship](#)

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