

Transcript: Dr. Raman K. Attri

Corey Andrew Powell [00:00:02]

Overcoming physical challenges and poverty. In his native, India. Dr. Raman K. Attri became a top performance scientist, author of multiple books and a professional conference speaker. He joins me today to discuss his remarkable journey of beating the odds and living a successful life. I'm Corey Andrew Powell, your host. And this is Motivational Mondays.

Corey Andrew Powell [00:00:23]

So, I am joined today by Dr. Raman, who's one of the world's leading authorities in the science of speed, professional learning and performance space. He also has an incredible personal story of what he calls going from disability to desirability. So thank you so much for joining me today. Dr. Raman and welcome to Motivational Mondays.

Dr. Raman [00:00:42]

Thank you so much Corey. My pleasure of being on your show.

Corey Andrew Powell [00:00:44]

I want to begin with a little bit of a back story, just to give people an understanding of who you are. So, years ago, you were in a government job, financially secure but the environment, as you say was toxic with a lot of bureaucracy and mediocrity, incompetent leadership as well. And you decided to leave just three months short of receiving a five thousand dollar bonus for being there for 10 years. So tell me what finally gave you the push to leave that job and pursue an entirely new career path.

Dr. Raman [00:01:15]

Very good question. Thank you so much Corey. So yeah, you're right that I saw ten years as a technology scientist in that organization. And being a scientist, was my dream ever since I was in my primary school. So I thought I was in a dream job and I want to be there probably for a longer while. But then, you know, in those organizations, what happens is that, sometimes your talent may not be valued. And at the same time, you would also say, you know, something is missing. Something is not right? And I figured out at that point of time, that something that was missing was the connection back to my passion, which was learning. As you said, you know, I was kind of a disabled since childhood. When I was six months old. I got polio. So my only way to get through my life was learning. So at that particular turning moment, then I thought I should be going into the learning domain. That's my core. That's where I think I can help more people, rather than being a technology scientist. So that's the kind of Turning Point that happened in my life at that time.

Corey Andrew Powell [00:02:20]

That's quite a big change and you mentioned the idea of, when you feel that something's not right at your core as a person, then you don't have a very contented life. So the change you made, it gave you a more contented life and then you went on and you become a scientist and you have all these accomplishments, you become an author. I think you mentioned how you went from not being able to afford books to being an author of 20 books. It's an amazing story of resilience. I want to ask you though, about the speed learning construct. Now, you teach it mainly to corporations, I know and professionals but because, of course, our audience, many of them are college students. And so they get so much knowledge they have to learn every semester. I'm curious to know if you can explain how a lot of those practices that you teach could apply to a college student, who has also a need for some fast learning during a short period of time.

Dr. Raman [00:03:15]

Oh certainly, certainly. I personally have gone through that journey, I earned two doctorates and over a hundred international credentials. So, I was in their shoes sometimes going through all those degrees and credentials. So I

had to go through all the challenges of absorbing a huge amount of content and information and be able to make my way through. And at the end of when I did the research and I mostly focused on professional and corporates, I realized one very important thing— that there are certain foundational things which we can apply everywhere, whether it's academic, whether you're young in your career, or are you actually a corporate professional?

Dr. Raman [\[00:03:58\]](#)

The thing is that most of the time we learn content and that's where we spend a lot of our time. But in today's business world, the way success comes to people is not because of content. It comes because of context. Context is how you apply your wisdom and reflection into certain situations. And how do you use the skills? So skills in context are more important than content alone. So we need to shift our thinking process so that when you are learning something, you're going to need to learn for a goal. It has to have a purpose. And once you are very clear about the purpose, you need to go backward. And then you say, okay, in order to reach this goal. What are the things I should master?

And you will be amazed what you see when you take that approach. You will get a need to master a lesser number of content, skills, content or as compared to when you start from this side where everything looks like you don't know. So it's the approach, the goal-directed approach because ultimately what happens when you choose a goal directed learning it always keeps you on the track. And once you are on a streamline track, you are always going to go there faster.

Corey Andrew Powell [\[00:05:11\]](#)

Wow, I love that idea because what I'm getting from that is you're saying if you are to streamline up front and say, okay, I want to go into this field for example, what do I need to know, specifically about that field? How to work in that field? Who can I meet to help me get into that field? Just you fine-tune the things you need to know as opposed to just trying to absorb all of it and not knowing what content is actually the more pertinent that is necessity and what's just sort of fluff, that's there that you might not need. Correct?

Dr. Raman [\[00:05:47\]](#)

That's absolutely correct. I just want to add one more point to that one. There are two or three pieces here. One thing you already said is once you start with the context where you're going to apply it, you pretty much know. Okay, these are the only things I'm going to need to go there. Now, you sequence it in a way that it's a lean sequence, you cut all the fat away. The moment you cut the fat away it becomes slim and trim, and it's much easier and much faster to master it. That's number one. Number two. Is that, do you really need to read? And remember everything, now? Probably not?

Dr. Raman [\[00:06:24\]](#)

Because if some knowledge or a skill you're going to need to use six months later, you don't need to master it now. You're going to need to master when you're going to need it. So that means you're going to need to use your ecosystem, which includes your peers, your friends. Your mentors, coaches, your managers and technologies as well. So once you use your ecosystem and all those things together, then you will know that you're going to need to master this content. Whereas the automation is going to take care of this particular content. And your peers or your mentors are going to help you in this area. So that's how you basically integrate everything together to learn faster.

Corey Andrew Powell [\[00:07:01\]](#)

When I look at that, it almost seems like it's also a metaphor for life. Not just how you learn, right? It's almost like going through life, you can make your life a lot less hectic, If you eliminate a lot of what I would call the foolishness—as my mother would call it, you know, it's just getting rid of the things you don't need or maybe segmenting them until you need them at a later time. Now one thing that I find so fascinating about you, you did mention you were disabled, 6 months old, you were disabled because of polio. You also are from an impoverished area of India, you lost her ability to walk before you could actually learn to walk as you've stated it. And what's fascinating to me about that is those are some very difficult circumstances to begin life with. That's a lot of adversity to overcome, the poverty and the illness.

Corey Andrew Powell [\[00:07:51\]](#)

Yet, you have this Theory. I just was reading earlier and I call it the 'Wall Window Theory.' I had to sum it up that way and you make a statement about how you can be so focused on trying to break through the wall to get ahead, I gotta get over there. You have this streamline focus, but you can be so focused on breaking through the wall that you're missing the windows of opportunity that are right in front of you. So I think in a way, are you saying that your disability and things that were limitations — quote, unquote actually made you re-envision what your life would be and find other areas in which you could Excel. That is how I understand that. Am I correct in that assessment?

Dr. Raman [\[00:08:34\]](#)

Yeah. That's absolutely correct. Thank you so much, Corey, for making that observation. You are absolutely right. That at one point of time. I felt very helpless just like anybody else. And I'm pretty sure that when anybody faces adversity, they do feel that way. We feel contained or constrained within some sort of imaginary or real. Walls can be real also, for example, I couldn't walk. So that was a very real wall for me. I definitely couldn't do it. But then the thing is that most of the time motivational gurus tell us to break the wall, use your willpower. Move forward. Nothing can stop you.

And I believe that when we use that kind of approach, we kind of eliminate a lot of other possibilities in our life and because we're so focused on breaking the wall as you said. And then back, then when I figured out that, you know, all right, this is there, it's going to be there. My disability is going to be with me forever. But what is the advantage I'm getting? So, I figured out that I could contain myself in the room. I had no mobility. I had no spoiler friends who wasted my time. So, I had plenty of distraction free time at my disposal which [inaudible] didn't have.

So that became my advantage or X factors over others. And that's how I kind of learned that there are always some windows of leverage or opportunities within our walls. If we are able to use those, we might be able to leverage them so beautifully and strategically that we can go ahead enough in our life. Nothing can stop us really. So that's where that concept of windows among our walls came about physically. So yeah, you're right. That's my philosophy.

Dr. Raman [\[00:10:15\]](#)

With that history of adversity, there's a long time between childhood and that realization. So, that's a long time for you to have to keep yourself motivated and inspired to not give up. And not say, well, my life is just relegated to this. So I'm really, really curious to know about that optimism, about that motivation, about what kept you going and knowing that your future was not necessarily where you began. And that's a very interesting point Corey. I think I want to add here, that in the beginning. I read lots of motivational books. I thought that you know motivation is something that is going to push me forward. I went to all the reading, lots of inspirational stories.

But then very soon I realized that this whole concept of motivation and inspiration is very short-lived. It fumes out in the air very quickly, the moment you face the next hurdle it's going to go. And then you're going to again look for the sources of motivation or inspiration that's going to push you. So essentially, the chase for motivation or inspiration, I think is fruitless. It leaves us nowhere.

Dr. Raman [\[00:11:26\]](#)

Very early on I realized one thing, that the most important thing I'm going to possibly need in my life is, first thing is obviously, the acceptance. Because acceptance is very important. And more often we accept, but it's not true acceptance. It is a compromise, meaning we accept something, yea you know, I accepted this is the way it is gonna be, like nothing can be done about this. But that's not an acceptance. That's a compromise, because we are still complaining about it.

Dr. Raman [\[00:11:55\]](#)

So the first thing was acceptance. Once I passed that phase then came the phase of clarity. Clarity was the biggest thing that propelled me forward. And I kind of developed this philosophy that you got a need to have two dimensional clarity in your life if you really want to pass through and during that first phase of my life I used those two dimensional clarities. One was, "why" — that's your emotional drive? Why do you do these things? Why do you want to really get into something? And the second one on the other spectrum, is "what for" — what's your purpose. What do you want to gain out of this one?

Dr. Raman [\[00:12:31\]](#)

Most cases, people focus only on the why. And why is the emotional drive, but what happens is they lose their focus on the goal. So once they have these two clarities, then the in-between journey becomes easier. And you get constant sustainable fuel to move forward in your life. So that's how I think I passed that most difficult phase of my life.

Corey Andrew Powell [\[00:12:52\]](#)

You have a great quote that discusses the aspect of learning. And it's the idea that sort of learning happens when people want it and you say learning does not happen unless someone needs it badly and asks for it hungrily. So explain that concept.

Dr. Raman [\[00:13:07\]](#)

I think more often, we bring people to learning. We think that they need learning, and we start coaching them. And that's one way of looking at learning, but in my own life and my journey while I was struggling with things as I depended heavily on learning and as you see that I became a learning scientist. And then I am also a learning leader at Fortune 500 Corporations. So this entire experience has given me lots of observations as a scientist as well as a business leader in regards to learning and the biggest piece I have seen is that people will want to excel.

They want to excel in their life, but they wouldn't Excel unless they are hungry for it and people learn faster when they're hungry because then when they feel that their cup is empty, they're gonna feel it somehow. And the mind works in all directions. All their senses are involved in learning at that point of time. I think this hunger is very important.

If you're going to coach today, somebody who really really wants to learn something, you will see that person possibly can learn in a much shorter time and that's my philosophy that we have to create the need for learning first, before giving them some avenue of learning.

Corey Andrew Powell [\[00:14:26\]](#)

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by The National Society of Leadership and Success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts. I'm Corey Andrew Powell and I'll see you again here next week.