

Deepak Tiwari “D.T.”

EPISODE 33

Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This is an archived edition when our program was called Leadership Landscape TV.

(music)

Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to another installment of Leadership Landscape where we go inside the minds of local community leaders and sometimes legends and allow them a chance to offer some keen insights into how they see themselves and most importantly explore just what makes them tick. I'm Kirt Jacobs host of Leadership Landscape where previous interviews have included former mayors, state politicians, former Miss America, sports legends, and heads of major business concerns, community activists and developers. Today our guest is Deepak Tiwari better known to friends and associates as DT. He is an Indian born American entrepreneur success story. I'm going to read a little bit of his bio for you so bear with me it's quite eclectic and interesting. He was born in India in 1954 and his mother died when he was just five-years-old. He has two brothers and two sisters. His grandfather, father and all his siblings are all physicians. He graduated from high school in India in 1969 and in 1975 DT received a masters in physical education and in 1979 he became the athletic director at Geewagee University, correct me I hope I had that right. In 1981 aged 26 D.T. became the youngest school principal in all of India. However in 1989 his sister invited D.T. to come to America as D.T. firmly believes America to be the quote "land of opportunity." This is D.T.'s ,excuse me, D.T.'s as I call it quote "American entrepreneurial odyssey began" to say the least at this point. D.T. stepped off a plane in Louisville, Kentucky in 1989 with a wife, two young sons, and listen to this a ten dollar bill. D.T. and his wife Pushpa sold all of her jewelry to pay for plane tickets to come to the USA and on arrival they were welcome into his sister's home. But within a month D.T. sister's husband was transferred and D.T. and his family found themselves on their own. They moved into a small and furnished apartment on Westport Road. Work was hard. to find. D.T. landed a job at the now defunct Brothers' restaurant chain quote" my language was

not good” he said. “I had a hard time understanding the Kentucky accent.” I think even some of us native folks have that problem but I digress. “ I started making three dollars and thirty five cents an hour and within three to four months I was one of the best employees.” D.T. added a second and third job to his work and from 1989 until approximately 1991 D.T. worked some 20 hours a day starting at five am and ending at one o’clock A.M. He was even a field hockey coach at Sacred Heart Academy which led to a state championship win and he also was a soccer referee for the YMCA. D T and his wife Pushpa work together and saved during those early years and D.T. began exploring the idea of buying a franchise of his own. And in 1991 he did just that. D.T. loves finding undervalued businesses and building them up/ Today he currently owns and operates 11 subway franchises. And listen to this D.T. tries to combine speed with quality. He says and he said he actually did it today before the interview here that he can prepare 100 sandwiches in an hour. Wow. When buying the Subway in Prospect, Kentucky he recalls finding his job application still in the drawer. When he bought the restaurant that once hadn’t given him a job. I love that. Quote “My training is the best. I start by telling my employees to think of their customers as a guest at their home.” I love this. “When you have a party in your home what do you do? You clean the house to get ready then you make good food for them. Then they come and you greet them and you treat them like a family member. And when they leave you come to the door with them. But when they leave what do you get out of it? Well with something goes wrong a bad name but here your guests come to the door they bring everything your salary my salary so what are you going to do treat them as the most special guest.” I think those are some great advice. With past entrepreneurship experience which included three TCBY franchises, three Noble Roman pizza franchises, a mailbox etc., a Frisch’s Big Boy and a Choice Quality Inn Hotel D.T. has received various awards from Subway for opening stores and increasing sales. D.T. truly enjoys inspiring others to follow their entrepreneurial spirit and starting new businesses. A big enjoyment of his is to observe individuals which he inspires and watching them reap the rewards of their hard work. He always strives to get the most out of his employees teaching them their true potential. Employees are taught to work as a potential owner not as a worker in his stores. I

teach everyone to work hard, observe and learn. I use myself as an example to inspire, excuse me, inspire individuals to do great things. His can do attitude is reflected in his motto quote “wish will and determination are the law of success.” D.T.’s wife Pushpa has been a great partner in life and business. She had no business experience when she came to America. Yet she has become a wonderful businesswoman. Pushpa handles all the day-to-day operations of our Subway franchises and his family has played a critical role in their success. Listen to this today, D.T. and his family live in a seven thousand square foot home in Prospect Only in America folks this is a great story D.T.’s notable quotes are many. Quote “the lion sitting in the forests wishes for food. It doesn’t just come to him. He decides what he wants and then he gets up and goes after it.” D.T. is a strong advocate of franchisees for immigrants a common mistake many immigrant entrepreneurs make is to open a business to meet the demands of their native community in their American city. If you open an Indian grocery store for example there are only what one thousand Indians in Louisville but an American franchise appeals to a broader base of customers. Quote “If I were to lose everything now what I lose he says with a laugh. He noted back to what he had when he came here ten dollars. Well he married his wife Pushpa in 1981 and they and his two sons Joy in Paris live in Prospect. Wow D.T. Welcome to Leadership Landscape. It’s a great story. I mean you know. Maybe a lot of people don’t know you but are they may have eaten your sandwiches if you prepare 100 sandwiches a day. it’s quite a quite..

Deepak Tiwari: Not a day.

Kirt Jacobs: Not a day?

Deepak Tiwari: An hour

Kirt Jacobs: An hour, An hour. Excuse me that is even more impressive. What drives you? I mean it’s a remarkable story of aspiration to come to America with nothing literally. What drives you to do this?

Deepak Tiwari: Most of the things you already covered. I mean everything I had to say I mean there are a lot of things you really very

nicely you cover everything about me and it is a true story and this is everything I've done with my hand and with my you know ability which is that you read it in front of everybody and. The drive is every day if you say that I get all the bill and loan and have to pay and get me up in the morning to pay is not but really is a passion because I like to go and learn everyday different things because there are so many problems to solve every day. And I look I enjoy what I do. and I like it when I go and try to help other people because they're doing it and what I have done which way it is the best way possible to execute that goal in all. And the and this is a reason why it makes me every morning early morning get up and try to plan What is that a lot of people has a little own problem. Family problem because the people I'm dealing because they are getting up. They have a very small job. They just live day-to-days with their life and I want to stay longer with me and be a good boss and being nice and becoming family like a family member to them. To help them as long as I can. I'm a human being I try to be a person and those all my team really they do a lot of good job that inspire me to get up and help them frankly. So am I have some time I have to I feel when I get up I have to play chess. Who's going where. What is going to do. Who's going work? Mother is the. God's sake and the Father God sake can see our child. Daycare did not show up and I get you know along with them. And I try to say don't worry because these are the problem is always there and I try to.. and that's the reason I get along with that everybody. And it is in the morning I like to take those challenges and then fulfill them.

Kirt Jacobs: You know it's been almost 20 years since you landed in America D.T. Do you believe.. this is a two-fold question. Do you believe that A you still have the passion that you did in 1989 and do you believe someone could come to America today with a ten dollar bill and apply themselves in the way you did and still achieve the level of success? Do you think that's still possible?

Deepak Tiwari: I tell you one thing. It's only in America.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Deepak Tiwari: Anybody who can come with a little money or

more money doesn't matter. It is all is hard work. You know if you work on honest and hard work and you put your total effort to the work. But some time your goal has not to be only meant to money. I always when I started working let me tell you where the inside thing you ask me and it's a great question I mean I tell you you just you just touch me with this question. When I came and I was looking for the job I think this is behind the story you read about me.

Kirt Jacobs: Right

Deepak Tiwari: And nobody hire me because I told you that accent.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Deepak Tiwari: So when I landed to this sort of druthers at the prospect store and I told my manager who was coming out not my manager but he was a manager to the store. He was coming out and he had he asked me what you like. I said like a job. And he said you want to work Wednesday? I say no no no I don't have the time. I want to work Tuesday because I wanted to multiply my time into money. That's what my goal but it's not goal that I like to enter break in at least some job. And he said what kind of job you can do? I say look you give me any job but I'll be number one and I'll show you. I'll prove you. And he said Ok come on Wednesday. No I'm coming tomorrow. He said OK come tomorrow. He said he's coming tomorrow. And then I I ended at the place where I don't know what hamburger means what cheeseburger means and all these other things. But I started working in the kitchen and they left me alone in the kitchen the first day. And then now and nobody's there to teach me and there was customers coming and I said how do I learn. So I use my brain because there were a lot of hamburger they already made it. And I open it and I will tell you that I saw it and I made it myself and put it back. So there was there was already there's already a thing done but you have to use your brain and this is how I learn a lot of thing. I don't have to ask people and then also I was working. I did not work for the money. I was working my hours as many as the hours I can work and money was automatically coming. So when you believe in that part that

you are only not working for the money but you are learning also. Which direction you want to go and that education will give you a benefit when you grow up later in the life and this is the reason what happened was all people they use me for doing a cleaning of the dishes. Cleaning or washing the floor. Sending me to the dumpster. Cleaning the parking lot. I did everything. I said I can do only one job at a time. Eight hours working you send anywhere. But they were my very good professor. They were my teacher

Kirt Jacobs: Teachers

Deepak Tiwari: They made me so strong. They're still there and I'm here> because they're still working in the same places as you know.

Kirt Jacobs: Well let me let me ask you this question D.T., whom do you credit most influential in your life? It can be professional or personal. In this case I guess you could be India or here in America.

Deepak Tiwari: I mean when I was in education line like you've already mentioned about this and I was a principal I had no idea about the business. I got married in 1981. I got to wonderful beautiful wife. And it was arranged marriage. I saw my wife only for one hour and then they decided to get married. And I said to my parents and here within 20 days and we got married.

Kirt Jacobs: Wow. That's how it works over there.

Deepak Tiwari: Yes that's how it works over there.

Kirt Jacobs: Different world over there man.

Deepak Tiwari: So so I got married and I found that I was so lucky. That she's so beautiful and so so good family. And as soon as I got married my father-in-law had a partner he died. So he asked me to leave this old education line and join him. So I joined him and you will not believe my father-in-law. When this is the north side of India he was living and there was a ten thousand feet high on mountains. He used to do marketing over there and walk on his foot and without any cane because there was no cane. We called

to go and they had to take all the donkeys and then supplied to those people and the remote areas and some time I have seen him that 11, 11 months he was away from his house. And he come back with money. Nobody knows. We don't have a cell of cell phone. We don't have any communication there. No e-mail or anything and then he come back with the money. And I say Oh my God this guy is not educated and he just school there and work. He doesn't eat any kind of food he has food and then I realize there's no substitute of hard work. You know this is all about it. You are you get as much as education you want to do and as good as much as hard work is same thing. And then he influenced me so much after that. He teaches me a little business I didn't learn but as soon as I came America everything followed me. Everything came out in my brain and I did same thing. And that's the reason why I tell people the you know. The hard work he said and the same thing I teach my student and my my son and my wife and everybody and one of my..

Kirt Jacobs: Let me ask you this D.T. What is the most defining moment of my life? Do you have one?

Deepak Tiwari: Most defining moment of my life...

Kirt Jacobs: Or most important. I guess there's a few ways you could couch that questions.

Deepak Tiwari: I guess the very important thing I can say that I came to America. I landed in this country and that gave me really opportunity to give a fun full life to my kids. And you know my son is in medical college in Louisville.

Kirt Jacobs: Let me Let me ask you a question and I know this is going to be kind of a raw question. Was there ever a moment in 1989 when you know you're in that and furnished apartment, your family's gone, and you're in a city with basically no relatives the way I understand your bio. Was there ever a moment where you basically said what the hell have I done?

Deepak Tiwari: Oh wonderful man you are too good. You're really

good. You know what very few people thought about it. And your first one asked me this question. I could I could cry for that you know but...

Kirt Jacobs: That's OK That's what the show's about. It's about leadership. What you did is it's not only inspirational It's remarkable and then to be successful. Well I've lived in my town my whole life I don't have a home in Prospect. You know where I am getting at?

Deepak Tiwari: I understand so when I went to the my apartment I want to give you this and your friend even my family don't know today they will find out what happened. And I had two rooms so I went to another room and I told my wife I have two suitcase and my two children and I went there and I shut the door and I fell right on the floor. Upside down worse and I started I started thinking God where I am I can't walk. I don't have a car. Where do I go? Who do I talk? Where I can get the money? Why did I do to my children and my family? What I'm going to do now? So I was just thinking and there was like somebody dropping from parachute and I drop in the island where not nobody knows anybody. Then suddenly my wife knock on the door is what you're doing inside? And I got up I said I don't want to show her my face because you've seen see this face. Which I brought her in a such a way in a fashion that I was going to be as America. And she will see me as she will be broke you know so I don't want to do. What I did I got up and I opened my eyes and I say I'm going right now. And I know you say where. I say I'm going to find a job. And that day nobody stopped me. After that I don't sleep too much because that darkness give me a nervousness. I don't peek my eyes so I go I stay open till two o'clock till I fall asleep and I get up in the morning at six o'clock and I'm up. So more time I want to utilize for my work. However..

Kirt Jacobs: That's great. I get goosebumps man just thinking about that. What is your biggest professional triumph?

Deepak Tiwari: You know I have a lot of. Some time I want to tell you about here what happened when I was in a French ID system Subway. They had called recall me that they just franchisee he ran

away he doesn't want to do a store up in Rising Sun, Indiana. And it's a 1500 people town this nothing. And he told me that also in the form that the town is not many people and I said I take it. I take it. You know I'll do it. And he said you have seen the location? I said don't worry about because he said how you do it? I just really really really really well I said I believe in me. And then I get told my construction guy go and do everything and I send them money for equipment and all this stuff and they build the store. And then I went when the store was half done. And I'm looking at the location first time. I'm seeing that small town. I'm seeing that license in Indiana next to it and beautiful down small town and everybody's keep asking where you're going to open? I tell you the day I opened. It was the biggest opening in the system. I mean it looked as course you know and people didn't believe where the people came from. All the people live on the river camping area that people come in the truck loaded truck and they don't buy one sandwich. They buy like a whole family 40...

Kirt Jacobs: They don't actually live there. They're driving in from camping.

Deepak Tiwari: Heard from 35 miles away from the camping and nobody knew.

Kirt Jacobs: Only in America.

Deepak Tiwari: Only in America. Nobody knew. And I'm looking at my brother was there. When I was standing this is not happening in Louisville what is happening here. And then I it was like 80 miles away so I was driving every morning six o'clock coming back 12:00.

Kirt Jacobs: Do you still have that store there?

Deepak Tiwari: No I give it to a local lady there and I sold it to her.

Kirt Jacobs: D.T what do you find exciting about all this? I mean it doesn't appear that your passion is waned. You know we're pushing 20 years here in America. You're an American success story. I mean it's all proven. It's not made up.

Deepak Tiwari: Is that excitement is to solve people's problems. And come to the to the my system and and talk to my you know family and then work out with everybody. And this excited me most of the time that I learn every day. And that excited me that another thing is not a one day is gone that I do not bring something from my brain because you know that we even a child for you when a bad person even a good person they have one quality. And I want to learn that quality out of it.

Kirt Jacobs: OK.

Deepak Tiwari: Today I'm sitting and I'm learning your quality believe it or not. And fantastic. I mean it is gaming education and I'm not I'm so flexible that I'm not a hard headed guy that I have know I know everything. I don't know anything yet. I don't know anything. I'm still a baby and learning every day.

Kirt Jacobs: You're a sponge. You're an open book.

Deepak Tiwari: Open book. And that excite me.

Kirt Jacobs: Can.. You know this show's called Leadership Landscape. Can you define leadership in one word? It can be more in one word so..

Deepak Tiwari: One word. One word I can say is believe.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Deepak Tiwari: And then others say my leadership I always trying to tell people that if you don't believe in you then it's very hard. You have to be a so positive about things you're doing good. I wanted to do a first Subway and everybody told me that me that you go bankrupt. And I said it was like you said that I lose the banker what I'm going to lose? Nothing. I didn't bring anything. I have made anything here. So thing is I was believing in me. I did not made any sandwiches before that and there were never went to Subway before that. And I did it because I was only trusting

myself. And my my trust brought me today to this level. And like you were telling me other thing that I joined a first you know \$3.35 I work.

Kirt Jacobs: Yeah

Deepak Tiwari: and I was making \$165 per week and this is how my family was surviving. I was poor you know. But look at that today. As your leadership as your what you doing it and the retail business I provide 95-200 people a job.

Kirt Jacobs: Was going to ask you have about 100 people on the payroll.

Deepak Tiwari: I feel so good about it because you're out of those even it 10 people like to become inspired with me and become owner. I think that I blessed. I'm richer than anybody else.

Kirt Jacobs: I like that. That's great. D.T. if you could change one thing be it in life, your life or in general, what with that be? You can interpret that anyway you want.

Deepak Tiwari: I think.. I want to reflect that question. I like I live in a customer and I tell people look on that counter we get attorney. You get a doctor. We get students. We got..

Kirt Jacobs: Every walk of life.

Deepak Tiwari: People coming from the hospital.

Kirt Jacobs: I don't know anyone who doesn't like a Subway sandwich.

Deepak Tiwari: It is not a sandwich is you learning those people .I don't really make sandwiches. I'm not there. But I do see this whole things is coming you know how much experience you are getting out of this people. One job experience but then I see my people the team which is working with me. We always cry and say hard work hard work. This is a hard it's hard. And I always said why

don't you become part of the work. You see if you will become harder and you become harder than one of them work become easy. You know what is hard then? And it's this kind of thing I want to change don't say every day when I'm dying I'm dying I'm dying. You're not dying. You're living but you are telling yourself so you already die then you can do anything. So big become a harder to every job become easier for me. And I like these inspire also the people. Those young people they like to really come in this kind of business and do like me what I did. And I want to give them opportunity if they come not my door I would always help them.

Kirt Jacobs: Do you think that you'll ever retire?

Deepak Tiwari: That's a tricky questions. I don't I don't want to retire.

Kirt Jacobs: You'd probably be a great consultant in charge of [inaudible].

Deepak Tiwari: Exactly. Exactly.

Kirt Jacobs: I don't think that is unrealistic at all.

Deepak Tiwari: I was going to say this but I have a story I want to tell you.

Kirt Jacobs: Go ahead. We have a few minutes left.

Deepak Tiwari: Ok so get this guy this guy I don't want to name somebody and he had the same franchisee in big business and I was working 30, 40 years somebody can die and he was my boss also in one case and. I know him personally because I used to talk even to president of the company CEO of the company think so. So what happened he wanted to retire because he sold his company got money he was going down enough so down he was living in the stress of his life. So he went to North Carolina. He bought a nice house. He told his wife he was retiring and he liked one house and then he went to the bathroom is a true story and he went about a month and all of a sudden what happened. He collapsed

there. He died. And you know why because you don't want to live out of stress. and once you're living in stress stay in that process otherwise this what happened. You know I heard a story out of that no I will do the inspiration and consultants.

Kirt Jacobs: This is a surprise question we like to ask all our guests. It is not a rough one. If you were granted two weeks today. And I know you can run your own show. You know a mini vacation from life. You know no computer. no T.V. Let's say Subway corporate say you know you're such a great guy get lost for two weeks. What would you do with those two weeks? you can have your family with you or not.

Deepak Tiwari: Oh oh first of all that is a good dream you're showing me. Its a good dream.

Kirt Jacobs: Well 100 sandwiches an hour. I'm sure two weeks off is a good dream

Deepak Tiwari: I would get out I'll go do some Caribbean country have on the beach. Sit down.

Kirt Jacobs: You're not going to have sandwich making withdrawal.

Deepak Tiwari: Nothing talking to my family. And then I will stay with my family and have a quality time. Do nothing and reboot myself.

Kirt Jacobs: I like that. This is a question we ask our guests D.T.. You know a remarkable story. When the great day comes how do you want to be remembered? When it's time to pack it all in you know God forbid something happens and you leave here today but how would you like to be remembered? You've touched a lot of people's lives.

Deepak Tiwari: Exactly I mean I wasn't going to say that as long as they does the way the first couple is they will release tell me that hey this guy lived too long. I'm just kidding. But I think I want that remember me a good friend.

Kirt Jacobs: OK

Deepak Tiwari: And the wonderful person and do his people have touch I think and plus my family to remember the good father. I should remember good husband. And because I mean lot or lot of stuff good things and she will carry on with me. That's how I feel you know

Kirt Jacobs: That's awesome. That's great. You know I'm just going to throw out a recommendation I think you should write a book about your life story. And I think it's a great story. Just my two cents

Deepak Tiwari: Find me somebody like everybody tell me to find me somebody to do it for me.

Kirt Jacobs: You know usually I say it's quite a pleasure and honor to have a guest on Leadership Landscape but I want to tell you it's quite an inspiration to have you on Leadership Landscape

Deepak Tiwari: Thank you thanks

Kirt Jacobs: It's really a pleasure having you here. It's quite an honor as well.

(music)

Kirt Jacobs: Thank you for listening to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This episode was archival audio from when we were known as Leadership Landscape TV. If you have any feedback, general comments, or a recommendation for a suitable guest feel free to email me at kirt@moxietalk.com or catch us on Facebook under MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs, or on Twitter under [@kirtjacobs](https://twitter.com/kirtjacobs) or our extensive website at www.moxietalk.com