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KEYNOTE · THE 2.0 CONFERENCE, LAS VEGAS

Building Businesses That Grow Stronger, Not Just Bigger

It is easy to chase scale. The harder thing is building something that becomes more solid as it grows.

By **Ravi R. Iyer, MD**

WHAT THIS ENTRY IS

Delivered as a founders keynote at The 2.0 Conference, Las Vegas, which ran 7–9 April 2026; the exact day of delivery is not yet confirmed. The recording premiered on YouTube on **2 June 2026** under the title "Building Businesses That Grow Stronger, Not Just Bigger | Dr. Ravi R. Iyer | Keynote | USA 2026", which is the title this entry carries. **This is an automatic transcript** of the recording, not a written script. The timestamps have been stripped and the eight-second fragments rejoined into sentences. The machine misheard five proper nouns, all of them in the host's introduction, and those have been corrected at the author's instruction and are listed below, so that the correction is on the record rather than hidden in it. **No other word has been changed**, and the speech is left as spoken, false starts and all. One phrase is left uncorrected because its intended form is not certain: the host names a venture as "the IR Inc.", which the Record will not guess at. The talk is also the subject of **AR-2026-04-002**, the Visionary Vogues account of it published on 30 April 2026.

AS INTRODUCED FROM THE STAGE

Uh let's see. Let's move on to our next keynote. It's easy to chase numbers, but more scales, more expansion, more visibility. But the real challenge is building something that holds up as it grows. Something that becomes more solid, more efficient, and more reliable over time. This keynote looks at how to create that kind of business. So please welcome our next speaker Dr. Ravi Iyer a Harvard-trained physic physician scientist TEDx speaker entrepreneur and global educator with over 40 years of experience in medicine science and leadership. He has led a hospice for nine years and chaired a 225 bed hospital earning global recognition for his contributions in healthcare as a founder of ventures like the IR Inc. and ActivPower Inc.

He builds innovative ecosystems that bridge science, healthcare and leadership. Known for his work in people first leadership, he has also pioneered the concept of Neuroalignment to help individuals and organizations unlock high performance. So please let's make a really loud welcome for Dr. Ravi Iyer.

I'm Dr. Ravi Iyer and I have a present for all of you. I'm going to give you a a magic word. All the CEOs, can you raise your hand? Great. Keep it up. I'm going to give you a word. Your magic word is power. So when I say CEO, I want you to yell power. And I want the people out there in CXO and all of them to know that they are missing out on something good. So, you know, really wake them up. All right. All the founders raise your

hand. Right? It doesn't matter if you're also a CEO, you get to yell twice. Your word is possible.

So when I say founders, you say possible. So CEOs say power. Founders say possible. So CEOs founders. CEOs. Founders. Possible. Come on. Founders. Louder. H possible. Possible. Yeah. There you go. Now, let's make that happen. Now, I run three companies. I run three companies. And these three companies organically grew over the years. And as I developed them, I realized very soon that I'm going to get torn apart if I don't figure out how to make them run seamlessly. So these companies I created do not run individually.

They run on the same track very much like a team of horses. They all aligned and they all pull powerfully. And this allows me to operate with an ease that allows me to accomplish everything that you heard in that little intro that you got. And this was not created overnight, but it was created it. And today, I'm just going to show everyone how you can make that happen for you. Now, obviously, that was the gain. Now comes the pain. Most companies don't fail overnight. They don't f fail when they go right when they go wrong.

They fail when things go right for them. They fail when the customers begin to flow. They fail when revenue starts rising. When the product becomes viral and in demand and you start going up on scale and that's when when you start acquiring your competition, that's when companies begin to fail. Failure happens almost invariably when companies grow. So the problem is how do you survive growth? Because that's what you all want, right? Everyone wants growth. Everyone considers growth as the hallmark of having made it as yeah we got it.

We we are the biggest in town, the baddest in town. But growth comes with its own set of problems. And if you do not set up systems such that you handle growth with the same ease like your everyday operations, then what happens is you only manage by from breakdown to breakdown. what I call crisis management. Now in the past that kind of management survived because things were slower. You could sometimes move from crisis to crisis and manage it. But now things are happening so fast that is impossible to do that kind of thing.

You have to change and you have to learn. So the the thing is that growth really does not create strength. It reveals what exists before growth happened. It reveals whatever was there. And if what was there was not properly aligned, if what was there was not had hidden cracks and failures, growth will unmask it faster than your competition will, faster than your market will. And this city that we are in is the prime example. Vegas all facade lights and illusion but behind it vapor. That literally is a perfect metaphor for a company that has grown without taking care of fundamentals.

So, how do we go past this? And let's peel this curtain back a little and go into a deeper layer. Founders live in what I call content. Now, I'm going to use a couple of these words again and again, and I might as well bring out like a glossery in the beginning. There are three words that I'm going to use a lot. Context, con constructs, and content. Content is the nitty-gritty detail of everyday operations. It is revenue management, funnels, lead generation, margins, hiring plans, decks. All right? And this is what people use all the time.

But and they they believe that mastering this is the secret to success and we all are masters in this domain. This domain of content falls into all the things we know. the domain of knowledge. We have spent years, decades in colleges, schools, and courses, hundreds of thousands of dollars mastering this. But this does not help you manage growth. And the reason why we focus on knowing all this is because we have this belief that knowing will produce the solutions that we need to deal with life. And we all know we know how to do things, who to do it to, what to do it, and when to do it.

But the problem is knowing does not result in doing. For the most part in the really important things of life, knowing does not produce performance. And I'll exam I'll give you examples to prove that. And the reason why this doesn't happen is because performance lies in a domain called BA. And if you look closely at the record of human performance, all the stuff that we know does not produce performance with nearly as much reliability as we would like it to. And by bringing this concept of being, I have taken you all into a into a foreign domain, a domain that most people are only vaguely aware.

And and I'm going to spend a little time on being because being is the essence of actually transforming knowledge into actual doing. The problem is you cannot grasp being. To grasp being is like telling u a woman who has never known pregnancy to understand motherhood. Being is a state of existence. You can teach the mechanics of running a company. You cannot teach leadership. You can only be a leader. And you don't become a leader just by a title. The being of leadership is a state of existence that allows you to do whatever is necessary to lead.

And I'll give you examples that will prove this point. Being, it turns out, resides in something called context. And this is another term that is not very commonly used. Context is this is a great example for context. What is the context of balance? If you take a bicycle rider, the knowing of how a bicycle works, the chain, the sprocket, the pedals, the spokes in the wheel, all of that, and how to sit on the seat and hold the handlebars. Will that teach anyone in this room the ability to ride a bicycle? But if you got on a bicycle and fell down and got back up, fell down and back up, fell down and back up, eventually would you learn to ride a bicycle?

Yes. Because the being of balance resides in the distinction at the muscular level of balance and no balance. And that is an experiential state. But the the mechanics of the wheel, the the way the bicycle operates, you can read a book about it. All of that teaches you how to translate the experience at the muscular level of balance into forward motion. So the mechanics of the bicycle is what I call constructs. the policies and methodology that translate the context of balance into the content of forward movement. Do now do you see the drift?

I love to use this example called the golden egg. And the reason for that is in the previous slide and I'm going to hammer this idea of context over the next six to eight slides because it's so central. So just bear with me. I used a word called distinction. The I use the word distinction in the muscular distinction of balance. So these four words context, constructs, content and distinctions are critical. Distinction is your ability to know what something is and what it is not. We all have distinctions. We use it to survive every day.

That and if you did not have distinctions, you won't live. For example, if you do not have the distinction between a wall and a door, and if you don't have the distinction that there's a little round knob on that wall, which if twisted will convert that wall into a door, you won't be able to escape from this room in the in the event of a fire. So distinctions are critical for navigating life and when you don't have distinctions you make catastrophic errors. You just open the newspaper and you can see the distinctions that were lacking that has landed our nation into whatever situation it is today.

So distinctions reside in the domain of that allow you to understand what being is and being resides in context. Now you cannot grasp at being because being is a state but context emer being emerges out of context. But so you can grasp context. So by proxy you can get a handle on being. Let that sink in for a minute. You can grasp you can't grasp being but you can grasp context. And since being emerges out of context, it is dependent on context. Since you can handle context by proxy, you can create B the context. My daughter I my granddaughter is 9 months old.

And when she was born last year, June 13th, I saw my daughter shift her context from woman to mother. And it is impossible for me to explain how to do that. And I'll give you an example that in overnight in that instant when the baby was born my daughter's life was no longer about herself and her husband. It was about all about the baby. The context for my daughter shifted. and the being of mother emerged. Constructs are all the policies and methodologies that my daughter then used to ensure that there was a safe environment for my granddaughter.

No one had to teach my daughter the constructs. It emerged out of the context. mother. When you have the context that drives why your company exists, you can automatically you will acquire the constructs that allow you to move forward. And content is the end result of all the constructs. In my daughter's case, it was the end result of a happy baby and a good family life. Same with a company, happy employees, motivated. So, you don't really have to come in thinking how you're going to motivate something like someone like some kind of a bribe or a transaction.

You just have to find be rooted in your context and distinctions allow you to make the distance difference because you can you know when you are falling out of context and going into constructs and when you are going from construct to content and you can immediately allow through distinctions to find out. You can allow yourself to find out where you need to be in the whatever is needed in that day in that operation of your company. Give you an example how distinctions are so important. The Kalahari desert the Kalahari Bushman is an expert tracker.

Now this Kalahari Bushman from a dimple in the sand will be able to understand what animal made that depression. What is its health? Is it limping? Is it moving? Is it even to the extent that he can tell you a lot about what he learned from that little impression on the sand? everything that about the animal that is hunting for me that depression means nothing. I don't have the distinctions necessary to make meaning out of it. But if I took that Kalahari Bushman to New York and I put him in behind the wheel of a of a car in New York, that Kalahari Bushman will grab the rear view mirror and try to steer the vehicle through it with it.

And what happens when you try to steer a car through a rear view mirror is that you get a lot of accidents. You have a lot of accidents and you have a story about it that life is tough or you have a story that life is tough and I am tough or some other nonsense like that. But you see how we go through life bouncing from breakdown to breakdown with accidental breakthroughs because we don't have distinctions. Context answers the questions that your team is already living inside. Your company does not have a context. You are the context.

Now context also decides what is possible for your company. There are certain context that will not allow certain outcomes. The context of a desert will not allow the outcome of a lush swamp. So if you have the context of a desert and you are lusting for the lush richness of swamp vegetation, you are out of luck. You can keep hammering away and throwing resources at it, but you ain't going to move one inch closer to developing a swamp. And it's like gravity. It does not care about what you believe or what your ideology is.

It's going to smack you in your bottom just as mercilessly and a as impartially as gravity. And you you can take all these examples that I'm giving and apply it to your own historical knowledge of companies when the context was not consistent with their goals. I told you I'm going to hammer the idea of context again and again so that you it's impossible for you to unsee or unforget this. The context of a coin carries within it both the heads and tails of the coin. It also carries within it all the constructs of the monetary policy that allows for 5 cents, 10 cents, 50 cents and 25 cents and and on so on so forth.

So the heads and tail is the content with the moni monetary policy of coins being the constructs but it's all residing within the context coin. The context company has the content growth and

profit. See profit a lot of companies will say let's grow and we'll get profit sometime. They profit is not something that you will get after series B. A lot of companies do this. They'll try to grow with rapid acquisition and scale. And we will if we don't have and the idea is coming out of something that I call us versus them a resource scarcity idea that somehow if I don't have any competition then I I own the place and I'll win.

You cannot grow if you neglect profit. You cannot have profit if you don't have growth. The two of them work together. Having hammered this idea so far and now I'm going to ask some questions here. And this example is for any one of you to raise your hand and tell me where is the context in this orange tree. Which part of the orange tree would represent context? Soil and roots. the constructs. Yeah. The leaf, the the branches, the trunk and the content being the fruit. The beauty of the golden egg, it is it allows you to ex to analyze companies very well.

Costco is a great example and I love it. See, Costco's example is their context is employees first. They put long-term value first. They literally will not make more than a 14% margin. They resist Wall Street on that. And the end result is they have constructs such as industry-leading wages, internal promotion as a rule, minimal tight SKUs, only two or three versions of a product and a very simple store structure. As a result, they have employee retention, fewer errors and very minimal supervision of their employees because all the employees know what their context is.

They don't have to be told. And the bottom line, the content is stable profits, economic resilience, uh, and they outperform the market all the time and absolutely high engagement and low burnout. You know, on March 5th, 2026, Costco reported for this quarter earnings per share of 4.8 $4.58 per share with a revenue of 69.6 billion. and they that beats the uh the analyst estimates of 4.54 and they had a 9.1% increase in net sales, 7.4% rise in comparable sales and their upcoming earnings report is a projected earnings per share of 4.89.

And they did this after a year of devastating tariffs. and they raised their employees salary to $30 per hour, which is pretty high in that particular market. So now I since I've hammered the idea of context far enough, I'm going to talk about how do you create context? It turns out that something that we don't pay too much attention to. Everyone of us we live in something called language. Yes. 5 minutes. Everyone lives in language and context exists in language. Context you speak context out is literally your word.

And the classic example was the kind of word that John F. Kennedy did when he put men on the moon. And We shall send to the moon 240,000 m away a giant rocket more than 300 ft tall on an untried mission to an unknown celestial body and then return it safely to Earth. We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things not because they are easy but because they are hard. Because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills because that challenge is one that we're willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone.

And therefore, as we set sail, we ask God's blessing on the most hazardous and dangerous and greatest adventure on which man has ever embarked. So we had a pandemic four years ago and our context at the IR clinic was we will create a world that works for everyone and we created out of that the ability to treat a 100,000 cases test 100,000 patients treat 10,000 positives without anyone getting sick. And during that time, we actually produced a 300% rise in revenue at a time when everyone were going out of business. But the wrong context can destroy you.

Blackberry found this out. They went from 45% of market share because they had this idea that they were a email and messaging context and they never saw Apple's idea of using a phone as a mini computer and they could not shift their context. So the framework you need for context for translating context into actual performance are three things. integrity, authenticity, and

commitment to a purpose greater than yourself. Integrity, it turns out, is nothing but being your word. Now, a lot of people talk about integrity as being your word from a moral standpoint.

They think being your word is, you know, is all about honesty, that it's a good thing to be your word. Actually integrity is about workability. It is about knowing how to be ex promise. Whatever promise you do, do it and exe execute on that. But more important than that, when life throws you a curveball that makes your promises break that breaks your promises and makes you a liar, you have to be able to acknowledge it. So the first thing you do is honor your word. See, everyone is nervous about promising because they know that they will have situations where they won't be able to fulfill.

But if you can honor your word by simply acknowledging the break in your word, yes, I broke my word. I was late. I said I would come at 9. It's 9:30. I'm late. How can I clean up whatever mess happened? and you are willing to clean up the impact and then you recommit to your original word or you commit to create a new word. You say, "Oh, you know what? I miscalculated. I really can't fulfill on what I originally thought I could but here's what I can do." And that allows you to restore integrity. And when you do this integrity loop all the time without trying to look good, it is not about looking good.

Integrity has nothing to do with looking good. It has everything to do with workability. What happens is you get this performance pentagon. And the performance pentagon is the context that we talk about that is driven by supportive autonomy where you support your employees in executing whatever they want but don't take over their jobs like the teacher shared suffering which is what the Navy Seals do. Every man suffers together. So when there's a breakdown, everyone in my clinic cleans up. The person who makes the breakdown is not the only person doing the cleanup.

Everyone cleans up. Recognition, which is public, not private. that produces engagement and leadership in this Pentagon is all about creating the Oh, I I jumped two things here. I don't know. So now that you have this slide essentially captures everything in that construct. The big purpose which is your why the con that is drives your context the constructs of integrity and authenticity that allows you to pro provide content and the recognition and all the other elements that produce performance. And if anyone of you want to scan that QR code, you'll get the download of all these slides.

Context produces engagement. Supportive autonomy produces in initiative. When people know that they are supported in executing, they will take the steps to lean forward. Recognition produces validation and shared suffering produces ownership and leadership produces the context. So the thing that we did in during the pandemic that allowed us to perform our context was the all principle which is the three musketeer policy all for one one for all and in that we basically stated that everyone's actions are guided towards the success of their team member or their customer not their own.

It was basically taking a line out of the Bible. You are your brother brother's keeper. And when we did that, we created a world that worked for everyone and kept everyone safe during a death pandemic that killed 1.1 million people in this country. Now, here's your lesson. Growth is your pandemic. Except it doesn't come once in a century. It comes every five years. and you can just put your company into this triangle and it'll work for you. Now, I was actually having a $100 Belagio coin for someone to give up their growth failure story, but she's not going to let me have you get this prize and I'm richer by $100 now.

But profitability isn't what happens after growth. Profitability is what emerges from context and it is what allows growth to be survivable. Thank you.

CORRECTED FROM THE AUTOMATIC TRANSCRIPT

- **Ravi Ay** → Ravi Iyer 3 occurrences
- **hybrid trained** → Harvard-trained 1 occurrence
- **TEDex** → TEDx 1 occurrence
- **active uh power inc** → ActivPower Inc 1 occurrence
- **neuro alignment** → Neuroalignment 1 occurrence

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ravi R. Iyer, MD is a physician-scientist, entrepreneur, author and five-time TEDx speaker who has spent four decades exploring a deceptively simple question: what makes human beings, and the organizations they create, perform at their best? A Harvard-trained physician, corporate strategist and the founder of multiple healthcare and performance ventures, he is the creator of Neuroalignment, a framework for building high-performance organizations around the realities of human cognitive diversity. His work sits at the intersection of biology, leadership, technology and human behavior.

THE AKAASHIK RECORD

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