



JEFF BEZOS

AMAZON IN INDIA

<https://youtu.be/da2N4KMGuFo>

Shah Rukh Khan: Tell me have, you seen any perceptible change in India apart from the traffic, when you came last?

Jeff Bezos: Apart from the traffic. You know it's interesting. So, I guess the first time I came to India was about 11 years ago. I don't know that I have seen perceptible changes of integrate magnitude. The thing what I would actually say is that, I notice there are certain things that seem to me to be the same and I love those things. One of the things I notice every time I come here is that, there is so much energy here and dynamism and color. The word I would use for it is, the whole place seems so full of life. And everywhere you go every single thing you do and the diversity of India.

When I come here, I've never seen a more diverse place. Everywhere I travel in the world nowhere more diverse than India. So, the energy, self-improvement. Every time I come here, I find that the people that I talk to are focused on and interested in being better tomorrow than they are today. Everybody here seems to be focused on self-improvement.

Zoya Akhtar: Did you think online retail would get this big?

Jeff Bezos: Oh no. So, you know when I started Amazon, it was 25 years ago. I started Amazon in 1994. When I went to see investors the first question I had to answer is, what is the internet. None of my investors had ever heard of the internet. And the idea that I had in mind was to build a bookstore. I realized that we could build a store, which would have every book ever printed in any language, in print or out of print and we could do that online. It would be impossible in a physical store and that was the founding idea of amazon.

But did I expect what would happen today. No, you know we started, I've been at Amazon when it was one person, me. When it was 10 people when it was a hundred people when it was a thousand people. And today it's you know more than 700,000 people and approaching 70,000 people just here in India. So, no I did not predict that and actually I think if anybody had predicted that they would have needed to be immediately institutionalized in a mental facility. Because it's not a normal thing to have happen. My dream when I started Amazon was that one day, we might be able to afford a forklift.

So, it's been a very fun journey for me, and by the way I still tap dance into work. I'm having so much fun.

Zoya Akhtar: Is there anything you don't sell on Amazon?

Jeff Bezos: Anything we don't sell.

Zoya Akhtar: Or anything you tried to sell and didn't work? Anything that you decided not to go?

Jeff Bezos: There are things we tried to sell that didn't work, we tried to sell a phone, call the fire phone. We worked on it for four years and no one bought it. I think my mother bought one and I don't think she was that happy with it. But no, there are things that we deliberately don't sell. We don't sell guns; we don't sell tobacco. There are things we don't sell, but that we make deliberate decisions about. But other than those things we try to sell everything that anyone might want to buy and we're trying to make it as convenient as possible for people.

You know in the early 21st century we're all busy. Everybody in this room is busy, and if you can save people time let them spend more time with their families and with their friends and doing the things that they really enjoy, then you're doing them real service.

Shah Rukh Khan: Most of the people here Jeff are from lots of them I see are from the film industry. It was very heartening when Amazon started creating original content. So, we don't think of our films as just products, you know. So, there's a very clear demarcation. You know, some of them think, 'we do a film for the creative fun of it, for the artistry of it.'

Oh, yeah, this one is for business. We don't look down upon it, but we clearly demarcate it. So, we know this girl, this boy artist, we won't make the money, this one is for money. Now you are into original content the company's into original content in a big way. What's your stance on it? Are you still that person who says, no? I'm going to do this for the creativity the artistry forget the mark - the business, no, I'm doing this only for the business? Or, is it a mix of both and you say just put on lots of stuff let someone come on the story and find whatever they want?

Jeff Bezos: I think this is a great question. It's actually something we debate, and I think, if you look at the very best things in the world, they do both. I think this is a golden age of television. So, when you look at you know TV series today the really good TV series are in terms of quality, they're as good as the very best movies have ever been. And you now, you're getting the best storytellers to come to television you're getting the best actors to now come do television. We're one of the great storytellers is right here. Thank you for the help.

Zoya Akhtar: Thank you.

Jeff Bezos: And this is a big deal. When you can get the very best people, because this is one of those businesses where the viewer is always looking for something a little fresh. And so, you can never find a formula, because as soon as you find a formula it's not fresh anymore. They're always looking for something a little new. So, it really takes human ingenuity; it takes people the storytellers have to be in touch with the zeitgeist. What I want Amazon studios to be all over the world, I want us to be known as the most talent friendly studio in the world.

The reason you need to do that, thank you, is because at the end of the day it is the talent that makes those stories. Storytelling is the oldest thing that humans do. We've been doing it for thousands and thousands of years long before there was written language before there was any medium to convey it. People sat around and they told each other stories, and it's how we teach each other things. We learn

from stories; we learn from fiction. We learn from fiction because we get to live an alternate life, in that moment you watch this and you're learning.

So, it can be fun, it can be action, it can be funny, it can be comedy. But the very best things take those elements and teach a little something. There's something in there that you walk away with and you're inspired by it. It doesn't matter if it's drama, comedy, anything, you're going to walk away with something and there needs to be lightness. You know you can't watch something that's just all heavy and you're like, 'Oh my God, I want to kill myself now.' There also has to be that gesture there has to be somebody who brings you out and lets you breathe a little bit. So, and this is so hard to do.

That's why there is so much bad, so many bad movies and so many bad TV shows. Because it is one of the hardest things that humans do is tell riveting, engaging, inspiring stories. But when you get it right it's a lever that can change the world.

Zoya Akhtar: Are you a competitive producer?

Jeff Bezos: Am I what?

Zoya Akhtar: A competitive producer and I don't mean business wise; I mean creatively. Like, would you see a film or a show on another platform, like what you described which is brilliant and be like, 'why don't I have this?'

Jeff Bezos: Well, I have regrets. I mean we've turned down things that later were so good. I wish we hadn't turned them down. But we've also picked up things that other people turned down and we've made them great. So, the truth is the storytelling is infinite. If I tell a good story it doesn't make your story bad. These are not substitute products, you know. So, it is I don't feel like you get the best results with storytelling by trying to make sure that other people's stories are worse than your stories.

This is one of those things where you can, there can be a lot of good stories in the world. You're really competing not against others; you're competing against this just the complexity of how hard it is. That's why, you guys have all seen this. If you're in the entertainment business, there are movies and tv shows where you know the people involved, and every one of those people is talented and still the final product is bad. It happens. And because there's a little bit of mystery to it, we don't know how to do it perfectly. And that's what makes it so fun. Because there isn't artistic element to it. It is not science.

Shah Rukh Khan: Is there something you think is a sheer waste of time?

Jeff Bezos: Look there are a lot of things that are a waste of time. You know, when you think about your life, I think I often tell people that I work with. If you can get, because people have very high standards for how they want their work life to be. I said, 'Look, if you can get your work life to be where you enjoy half of it, that is amazing.' Because very few people ever achieve that because the truth is everything comes with overhead. That's reality, everything comes with pieces that you don't like. You could be a supreme court justice and there's still going to be pieces of your job you don't like.

You can be a university professor and it's still going to be... you have to go to committee meetings, and you have to do. You know there are every job comes with pieces you don't like and we need to say, that's part of it. And not resent those pieces or try not to, but also try to minimize them. I tell senior executives; you should have the least stress. You know there's this weird I think false idea that CEOs, I'm a CEO. There's this false idea that CEOs are under the most stress. Well, I look at that, I'm like why, you're in

charge. Why don't you delegate the stress? It's your choice. So, you have to figure out how to set up your life in such a way that you can minimize the things.

I find people don't dislike hard work; what people dislike what is being out of control. Like, they can't control their life, they can't control their environment. This happens to me when I get over scheduled. I hate being over scheduled. I want some time to be able to think and free myself, we all have the same amount of time in the world. Nobody has more time than anybody else. And when you become a very successful person one of the things you start to get over scheduled.

You have this event, you had to agree to do this and maybe last night you were like, 'why did I agree to do this.' I have to go on stage tomorrow, I wish I were really with my family and you know or I hope maybe not this case. Let's say that you like this one, but in general that kind of thing happens. So, you have to guard your time and try to say a little bit flexible. So, that's for me it's not a waste of time, but I like to have some freedom of movement rather than having every minute of every day scheduled.

Zoya Akhtar: What is your one hot tip for somebody on the onset of their career?

Jeff Bezos: So, a young person starting their career, I think there are probably a lot of things. Some of them are very well known and people have heard them many times they're still true. One of those that you should always focus on a young person should find something that they're passionate about to do. And that's not going to surprise anyone, it's a clear thing to do. It's very hard, if you don't love your work, you're never going to be great at it. I think the other thing I would suggest to any young person even before they start their career is to really think about their choices. Because I find young people, when I was young I had I made this mistake too.

You can get very fixed on your gifts, so everybody has gifts. You know you have gifts and you have things that you didn't get gifted. Maybe you're extremely beautiful, maybe you're extremely good at mathematics. Maybe you, there are a lot of things that you can be given. But those things can confuse you because they're not the things that construct your life. It's your choices that construct your life, not your gifts. You can celebrate your gifts; be proud of them be happy of them. Actually, don't be proud of them, be celebratory of them. You can't be proud because they're gifts, they were given to you, you didn't earn them.

You can only be proud of the things you earn and so as I got older, I started to realize I wasn't proud of my gifts. I was always good at school; school was always easy for me and I was always proud that I was a great student. I got A's in all my classes; I was good at math all of that. And I thought that's who I was, but it's not true. Those are the things that are gifts what was hard for me is deciding to work hard, deciding to use my gifts in certain ways. To challenge myself to do things that I didn't think I could do. To put myself in uncomfortable situations.

We all get, I would say to a young person you can choose a life of ease and comfort or you can choose a life of service and adventure. Which one of those when you're 90 years old, are you going to be more proud of?

Shah Rukh Khan: I want to know Jeff, where I started from actually. Is there a job, if it wasn't Amazon if it wasn't business related? Is there something else you started all over again at this age and stage and you took on a different profession? Would there be one that is close to your heart?

Jeff Bezos: I would be very curious today, if I were a young college student today, I would be very interested in biotechnology. I think biotechnology is a just a fascinating arena that probably in the near in the next 10 or 20 years is going to be a golden age of biotech. One of the golden ages that's happening right now before our eyes is also artificial intelligence and machine learning. So, that's another arena that I would be very interested in. My backup career is I'm a very good bartender. So, if all else fails, you'll see me at the local bar, and I'll be making drinks slowly but they'll be good.

Zoya Akhtar: If there's one thing you could have more of, what would that be?

Jeff Bezos: One thing I could have more of, I mean the obvious answer is time. You know it is time to do, I like time. I'm not efficient with my time, because efficiency there's an embedded assumption when you're being efficient. And the embedded assumption is that you know where you're going. I like to wander, because it's wandering that allows you to invent and to explore and to follow your curiosity. But wandering is very time consuming, and so if I could have one more thing it would just be more time.

Shah Rukh Khan: So, wonderful. A big round of applause for Jeff and for Zoya. Thank you so much.

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