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So, yeah, I genuinely feel a little out of place here. But yes, I think five years, one month and five days is what took me to come to this side, standing here from there where I was a couple of years back as an engineering student. Well, I can only say I can stand as an example for the fact that in India, we only become engineers first to figure out later, what we really want to become.

So, yes, I am an engineer, software engineer if you ask me.

Yeah. Woo. Software, software. Yes. Well, if you ask me, why did I do engineering? Well, no matter how weird it sounds from a girl's mouth, I loved mathematics.

Yes. And I kind of managed to score like those 96, 97 marks in 12th Board thinking, yes, I have to be an engineer. This is it. This is the only thing I should be doing. Well, I entered engineering. It was quite a task because I missed out from quite a few ranks and numbers to be able to make it to the most prestigious institutions, BITS also didn't really take me. But then, no loss, no gain. I'm still standing here.

So, yes. I mean, as I told you, we all become engineers first and then decide what we have to do. Right. So, yeah. So, that's my journey. When I started off, yes, I became an engineer. But during those four years, a lot changed. My first year, I was trying to figure out is this really where I see myself after four years, sitting and coding. Like, with all due respect to people who do it, my best friends do it as well. But I couldn't really see myself doing it within the first year. Second year onward, my attendance went down. I started doing other stuff, like made my own only female dancing group of my college, where, you know, in engineering, girls is like a scarcity. So, you have...

So, you have like 10 girls dancing team, from an engineering institution was itself a huge achievement. That is one of my, like the biggest achievements. Trust me, the kind of things I suffered making those girls stand together as a group and then making them win all the possible competitions of that year. Well, I like to boast about myself, I'm an actor. So, yes. So, from there, it started.

The second year, yeah, it was a little difficult for me to digest that this is not what I really want to do, but I'm already in it. So, now what do I do? I have to get through it. I didn't want to leave things in between because that's not how I handle my life. So, I went ahead, completed my second year.

Third year someone said, Oh, you kind of look nice. Why don't you try modelling? And I was like, okay, so what do I do next?

Yeah. Thank you for that support. Yeah. Thank you. I believe I look nice. And then, yeah, of course, I got my portfolio shot. Five, six months, I did some crazy campaigns for the biggest of brands in Delhi because my dad didn't allow me to go out of Delhi because he said no night outs and no out of Delhi for you, because I'm scared you're not going to complete your engineering.

So, yes, in third year I managed to do five, six months of modelling. Well, after that third year, yes, I finished a few assignments of modelling and a lot of people started calling me up for movies, especially from South, because they happen to find this round cute face with very nice smile. So, they thought I could act. Okay. So, I was like, okay, well, I don't know the language. That's okay. 90% of actresses here don't know it, we teach them. I said, okay. So, you seem pretty confident more than me that you can make me act. Okay, so I said, let me think about it later because I need to complete my engineering. Otherwise, daddy says no going out of house.

So, I was okay. Fourth year actually was the most difficult to pass because my HOD gave me a warning. Or I think most of you must be familiar with that challenge. I'll see how you pass this year because this final year project is in my hands. With your kind of attendance and with your kind of going all over the places, all your public speaking, dancing, modelling, these are blah, blah, blah. And your red hair, which I had at that time. They thought...

Yeah, you understand the importance of that in an engineering institution. Let me just stress on that again and again. So, yeah, so all that. He was like, let me see how you pass this fourth year with your submission of the final year project as you all must be knowing. So, I along with two other friends of mine who got similar warning, not for the red hair, but for other things, they along with me decided, let's just make something that these people won't be able to even question us on. And we ended up making an iPhone app at that time. I'm talking about, say five, six years back, an iPhone app of, which is called Font Swap, first of its kind, which could help you change all the four fonts that are available on iPhone. We used objective C and our professors had no clue about it. So, we submitted that project.

Yeah. We submitted that project and ended up winning the university's second-best project, I guess, because again, even there, they couldn't really understand what we exactly did. So, yeah, we were the most fancy ones, the iPhone app people. So, we walked away with it. It was strange because this particular application was used by Dhanush, now everyone knows about him.

And when I was working with him in my first ever Tamil movie, he's like, he was making fun of me. Oh, you Sardarni coming from Delhi, you think you can do a lot of stuff. You're making this app, and I said just click the about button. And he clicked that and there was my name along with my friends. And that was a big shocker for him. And that's the kind of shock I keep getting on people when I tell them about this. Half of them look at me, disbelief. Really, okay, you were an engineer. Oh, everyone is an engineer in this country. You made an app. So, nothing was so fancy about it, I think for a lot. But that app kind of raises eyebrows in good way for me.

Well, talking about my entering into movies, well movies happened to me because I gave my CAT exam after my fourth year exams, ended up getting like not so good, but good for many, 88. 88 percentile for me was not so good because I wanted to just cross 90 and didn't want to aim for IIMs. I knew my reality.

So, I was like, just let me go through some decent college of Delhi, Bombay. Don't want to go and do some remote area. So, let me just give it again next year. Next year means one year of sitting idle. By the way, I forgot to mention, I was placed in Infosys in my third year, first on on-campus placement that happened.

Yeah. And that was not because I wanted that job. It was only to prove to my father that I'm capable of getting a job. Now it's up to me to join it or no. So, it was purely for that. So, I did that. I got my job and after my CAT exam failure, I should say so, one year I thought, okay, let me just prepare for my CAT again. I'll give it next year. What to do this one year? I don't want to sit idle. I'm used to multi-tasking, you can't make me sit at one place for long. As you can see, I've been just walking and strolling around. Well, so yeah, that's what I did one year. And I ended up becoming a part of the, you know, the six national award-winning movie Aadukalam for Tamil. That was my first movie.

And thank you so much, but I didn't win any of those national awards out of those six. I think I was the only one who didn't win there. It's okay. I have a deal with that director that I'm going to come again in his movie and probably win one soon. So, yeah. So, that happened. And before that movie released, I was probably one of those very few newcomers who was changing, I mean, character between the Telugu actress and a Tamil actress simultaneously because I was working on one Tamil, one Telugu movie side by side. And had three movies signed already before my first release. And it was just like crazy money flowing in, increased appreciation for God knows what, because as far as I know, I never knew acting.

So, there was something that directors kept on telling me that you have something which you need to work upon, will be great if you do. You have a certain kind of screen presence is what they called it. And I thought they're just making me feel nice because they don't want me to feel out of place amongst all actors. But yes., I mean, I would like to believe so, they really saw something which I couldn't. Because a few years down the line, after three years you can say, I completed like 15 movies in three years.

And in South it's a huge, it was a huge. Because in one year, I remember I had seven releases, so I was really thinking, okay, what am I doing. Morning I'm going for one movie's shift, evening, I'm going for another shift. I'm barely sleeping. What exactly am I doing? Is this acting. Do I really know acting? Am I really enjoying it? After three years imagine, because I didn't have a single day to sit and introspect that is this what I really want to do. So, because as you know, my journey was, I wanted to be an MBA. Post-grad, I'm suddenly 15 movies down in three years. So, this was pretty difficult thing for me to digest. This kind of introspection happened when I got Chashme Baddoor, my first Hindi movie.

And luckily, again, I was just sitting and I got that offer. I didn't really go for any auditions. Thank god, otherwise, I wouldn't have tried to trust me. I'm telling you this one truth that I haven't told media, I have never passed any audition of mine till date. I haven't.

I haven't. So, well, I mean good or bad, it has always worked in our favour because the kind of movies that have rejected me, I don't think I want to name them. I don't think you want to see them or you've even seen them. So, let just it be. So, yeah. So, after three years, I realized it because I did this indie movie and I thought, okay, now the whole country knows me. Now I can't really take a step back. It's no more just South. So, then I sat down and thought, okay, now let me just change the whole strategy. Let me try to plan something.

So, the planning was just to take it slow, just to do the kind of stuff that I really am enjoying. A lot of times, you know, people guide you when you don't come from a movie background. People guide you, oh no, you need to be rolling in the market. So, you need to keep doing four or five movies at a time. You need to keep churning out movies where actresses' life span is really less and really short. So, you need to keep doing movies continuously.

I mean, all these things I kept on hearing and kept on saying yes to movies, which I should not have. And I'm sure all of us do that. It was, one thing was for sure, I never did it for money because I remember my dad when I was leaving to work in this industry, he told me that never ever think that you need to earn money. That's why you are going for this industry. Do it till the time you enjoy, then come back. We always have something else ready for you to go ahead with. And I'm sure. I mean, even I was confident I could have done anything else. Why here only for earning money?

So yes, I slowed down my pace of doing movies and I selected a few ones. Things turned out like really good for me because last two years, whichever movie I've done, be it a guest appearance role, started becoming a huge hit in all the three languages. So, that I thought now, you know, something that has started really working on in my favour. Let's just keep it going. Side by side, since I have lot of time in my hand, let's start up something new, something which is going to be with me beyond this acting career.

So, yes, so as I said, I had some time in between my acting after I slowed down my pace of doing movies, is when I thought I need to come up with something, which is totally disconnected from my acting career, which I will continue once I'm done with my acting. Yes, I believe I'll be done with my acting because this is not something that I want to do for the rest of my life. I want to enjoy it till the time I'm enjoying it because I have switched professions so quick that I believe that a day might come where I want to switch to this profession as well.

So, then came this wedding planning venture. One of my best friends, she was working under a wedding planner for like four or five years. And she was handling the basic creatives. My sister, who is sitting here, Shagun, she was working in a production house, handling their events. And I thought that I had probably, you know, enough creativity to add on. And the contacts, of course, that comes along with being an actor. So, three of us together started this venture.

Before we could officially launch it, we had a few friends of ours who got to know about that this particular venture. And they were very much interested in giving us a shot. So, a few actor friends of mine for their birthdays and for their anniversary parties or something, we did a few events for them. The decor and planning for their events. It turned out to be really successful. We launched the company officially a few months back, it's called the Wedding Factory.

And three girls, yeah, three of us run this company. So much so that when we went for one of our client meeting, they were not very sure we can actually handle the wedding. Three girls out of which two are unmarried. I'm not sure they can handle the wedding. It might sound a little weird, but no, we do handle weddings. We have an upcoming wedding season coming up.

This is something that, you know, just again happened with the flow. I never planned it because I wanted to do something which is going to be totally different from my acting because I don't want any strings to be attached when I'm done with my acting.

And I'm starting some new life because I really want to start a new life after some time because I like to live so many lives in one life, which is actually an actor's life's definition. But I don't want to limit myself to one profession, is what is my personal belief. That's the reason why I started this particular venture.

So, I mean, just to sum it up for you all, my life, I mean my journey, it was not really a planned plan, or should I say, I've been a Destiny's child or my plan A has always been planned by the destiny. But the plan B was always in my hand and I made sure it was a strong one. That's why I could go out and venture out and do some crazy things in my planning.

So, that's what I would like to tell all of you, please go ahead with your plan. I mean, don't think about your planning. Go ahead with whatever you are getting, go and explore opportunities. But make sure you have your plan B in place, which is going to be the backbone when you go ahead and explore your planning. That's all. Thank you.

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