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PRIYANKA CHOPRA

BE FEARLESS

<https://youtu.be/aDG1T0kJnd4>

Thank you. Thank you. So, my father used to always tell me something which I want to share with you, that why do you want to fit inside a glass slipper? You know, like we were told, like Cinderella did, why do you want to fit inside a glass slipper when you can shatter the glass ceiling? I want to tell you a little secret. I'm not very fond of this phrase, breaking the glass ceiling. Why does it annoy me? Because it takes the context of everything that I have done. All my achievements, all my hard work and puts it into a box as if my ambition was that I want to find a glass ceiling and break it. Not at all. To be really honest, I was never on a mission to break, to shatter anything. All I wanted was to chase my dreams, my ambitions.

I wanted to evolve. I wanted to become the best version of me, that I could be. And of course, in Priyanka Chopra style, along the way, I wanted to smash and break every obstacle that came my way, which I did. But that does not mean that the glass ceiling doesn't exist. Of course, it exists. And countless of women and men, mostly women run into it in their professional and personal lives. And I'm sure a lot of you can vouch for that right now. The Oxford dictionary definition of the glass ceiling is an unacknowledged barrier to advancement in a profession, especially affecting women and members of minorities from rising beyond a certain level in a hierarchy. And this metaphor was first coined by feminists in reference to barriers in the careers of high achieving women.

So, why did I choose it as my topic for today if I hated it so much? Because I hope through my experiences, I can present to you the tools to live your dream and to not make that glass ceiling that is defined by society, largely patriarchal, as your goal. I want you to aim higher, because you know you can, and it's honestly all I did. Every step of the way, all I did was set a higher standard. How did I get here? By being fierce, by being fearless, and by being flawed, completely and utterly flawed. I'm not perfect. Like, none of us are. So, tonight I'm going to try and break it down for you a little bit in a slightly different way. I present the twelve sure shot, sure fireways of becoming Priyanka Chopra. Would you like that?

Sorry, I was just kidding. Because as millennials, we don't like to be told what to do. So, this is a gentle nudge in the right direction. Presenting PCs twelve rules of becoming the best version of yourself. So, here are a few of my favorites from my list. There's only one you, okay, because there's no one like you. And I don't mean the superfluous, superficial parts. I'm talking about the core of you, who you are inside. Your values, your beliefs, your flaws. And once you understand who really that person is, you would have taken the first step in finding your unique self. And that is the best version of you.

Who am I really? Most often, we don't allow ourselves the ability to dream beyond our imagination. We don't allow ourselves to think about the future because we are afraid of change. We are afraid to move away from what is familiar. Either that, or sometimes, you know, we are too rigid to let our dreams evolve. Loosen up, you know, shake it off a little bit.

Change is the only constant thing in life, and you are never too old or never too experienced to learn something new. Believe that you have everything already as your Brahmāstra in your will, to be able to be and achieve your dreams. Be fearless. I know I wanted to become an aeronautical engineer. What am I today? I'm an actor. I'm a singer. I'm an author. I'm a producer. I'm an artist. How did I go from becoming an engineer to all of these things? I made choices, the choices that I wanted for myself.

So, that is my rule number two, let your dreams fly. Give them wings, be who you want to be just by being fearless. Now, opportunities, that's another important part of being fearless. They are very funny thing, these opportunities, they don't come very often. They come far and few in between. But when they do, do we recognize them? Our job is to recognize them and make the most of them.

I look back on all the things that I've done, and I marvel at the opportunities that came my way. Miss India, Miss World. When I was in Bareilly in army school, my first film offer, my first music single, the first film I actually produced, there was never a plan ever, more like the universe sort of guiding me towards these opportunities. All I had to do was recognize them and make sure I worked so hard that I squeezed every drop out of these opportunities. This, ladies and gentlemen is called drive. It's called ambition. So, no matter where you are in life, rule number three is you have never arrived enough to explore new opportunities. And there's nothing wrong with being ambitious. Ladies, listen to me.

Now for all of you guys who like everything in life, I don't think there's anything wrong with wanting to have the whole cake and eat it too, nothing wrong. I want everything, *I want everything*. And there's nothing wrong with that. As long as you're not harming someone or doing something wrong, don't be scared to want more for yourself than you ever thought you could.

I'll give you a small example. A few years ago, I was shooting a film called Don 2, you have heard of that, right? So, it was chosen to be shown at the Berlin Film Festival, Berlinale and my entire team was flying for the premiere. And it was very exciting time. But at the same time, I was invited for the first time to attend the Grammy Awards in LA. So, now when I was doing music, it was this big choice, both the events were literally taking place one day apart in completely different time zones, Berlin and LA. My team and everyone around me told me, no, it can never happen. You have to choose what is your priority? And you know what I did, I made some insane connections, Mumbai to London, London to Berlin, Berlin to Amsterdam, Amsterdam to LA, LA to Mumbai in three days. And I made it happen.

I went to both events and I looked great at both events. Even though I hadn't slept, it took a little bit of extra makeup, but I was fine. And that's not the only time I've done it. I've done it so many times over and over again. Why? Because I don't want anyone to tell me I can't have everything. I want to dream of everything, and I'll have everything. So, rule number four, be greedy. Be greedy for your ambitions. Be hungry for it. Don't live on someone else's benchmarks.

We are told so many times in our life: *'No girl should do this, or you are elder boy in house, your responsibility is this, this is who you should be.'* Who can tell you who you should be? Don't let anyone or any situation dictate to you who you are and who you can be. I know it's very much easier said than done.

I know that because I've done it but fight for your dreams because no one else is going to fight for your dreams, except you. I've turned down so many roles, opportunities because they did not fit into what I thought at that time was the right thing for me. So, today my path is just my own. It belongs to no one. My failures, my successes, all of it, mine, my journey, all of it is mine. So, rule number five, do not compromise. Do not settle on your dreams.

Now who likes to fail? What, what, at least *15 people raised their hands*, I'm really confused with this audience right now. And you like to fail, well I'm not talking to you guys then. I'm talking to those guys who hate to fail because I hate to fail. It's really as simple as that, it takes tubs and tubs of ice cream, lots of tissues, lots of tears, lots of dramebazi, my mother, my best friends, my family, everybody making me feel better about it. But the one thing that is as certain as night and day, ladies and gentlemen, is that you will fail. It's just how it is. And there's nothing that you can do to stop that. It's what you do after that will define where you go. When something I've invested...

Thank you, thank you.

When something I've invested in my heart and my soul, which I do with everything that I actually put my mind to, if that fails, I don't just wallow in self-pity. I roll myself in it. I roll around in it. I wrap myself in it, head to toe, self-pity, self-pity, self-pity, it's not a pretty sight, I can tell you that. My mother who's sitting right here has witnessed it many times. But then I get up, cry a little, dust myself off and dive straight back into life. Because the only way to push failure aside is to move ahead, not ignore it, analyze it and learn from it. Always remember, you will never truly enjoy success until you have tasted failure. And trust me when I tell you, it tastes like shit, really does.

So, rule number six, fail, fail, fail again, and then rise like a Phoenix. Now what is life without a little bit of a risk, right? No, I'm not an adrenaline junkie. I'm not telling you to go off roller coasters or anything. I've always believed that you have to take risks, calculated, educated risks to evolve. Because if you've not truly explored the full extent of your possibilities, you'll always remain stagnant. People have written me off several times in my career. Sometimes they didn't agree with my choices.

When I played a negative character in my film *Aitraaz*, very early in my career, I was told I'll be a vamp and no one will cast me as a heroine. When I took on a female centric film called *Fashion*, again, very early on in my career, I was told that was not norm. When I signed a US TV show at the height of my film career in India, each time the risks were huge, the stakes were high and the repercussions could have been, to say not the least, career ending. Thank God they weren't and I'm still standing in front of you. I really appreciate God. I don't know what will happen going forward. But as of now, I can say that my risks and the gamble was worth it. You know why? Because I backed up those risks with my hundred percent. So, rule number seven, be bold and take these risks.

Now, friends, family, the people you work with, the people around us are our greatest influences in your journey to success. So, you have to choose very wisely. Rule number eight, surround yourself with the right people, who do not stab you in the back. Now who's into Social Media. Who's on social media. Raise your hands. Yeah, we like it. I like it. We can raise our hands. Alright, it's almost everyone.

Now keep your hands raised if you have ever been upset by like a bad comment that you may have read on a photograph or like on Facebook or when you have posted something. And sometimes, you know, you are just like, why do people have to be mean? Yeah. So, there's a lot of you, right. Guys, please let me

just tell you this. No matter what you do, someone will always be unhappy. Always. Especially in this age of social media, it's so easy for us to be confused between the voices that actually matter, and the opinions of faceless people writing behind the anonymity of what the web offers. They don't matter.

So, rule number nine, you can never please everyone all the time. And the biggest favour that you will all do to yourselves will be to laugh, at yourself, at situations. Find a moment to appreciate every single day, this funny thing called life. And that's my most important rule number ten, don't take yourself too seriously. We're not making rockets. Alright, calm down, have fun. And just enjoy this beautiful journey that we've been put on. I do that. In the meanwhile, hi. I am here, *not going anywhere, two rules are still left.*

It's really not that hard in my experience to be kind, to be compassionate, to be human. You will never know someone else's full story. So, don't be quick to judge. My mother who's here tonight with the rest of my family, this entire front row is very Chopra and Akhori right now.

She taught me when I was very, very young, that there is always someone who will be less fortunate than you, always. So, give back wherever you can. There's a huge reason I started my foundation, I lend my voice to UNICEF, Girl Up and causes that I'm associated with, because we have one world and it's ours and we need to heal it. And that starts with us. So, that is my rule number eleven, give back. And finally, the most important one, always remember where you came from. It's truly what defines you.

So, I'm a proud Indian and army's *daughter*. Daughter of two doctors with a middle-class upbringing and ginormous families, who I love on both sides. We've seen good times; we've seen bad times. We've seen hardships, we've seen pain, laughter, sadness, but that is what has made me who I am. And I wear that with pride every day and everywhere that I go. So, last and definitely not the least, rule number twelve, don't ever forget your roots and where you came from.

I hope you take some of what I have shared with you today and go into the new year with maybe a different perspective on life and start 2018 with being fierce, fearless, and flawed. Yeah, that's it. That's it. I read this somewhere and it kind of stuck with me and I hope it will stick with you. Life's journey is not to arrive at your grave site safely, in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, completely worn out and say, holy shit, that was a ride. That is how I want to go.

So, to sum up this incredible journey that I have been on, I stand before you today, weathered by life, but happy and raring to do so much more. I'll see you on the other side. Namaste.

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