

Sakshi Singh Raghuvanshi

Inspirational
Episode 11



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*This episode of **INSPIRATIONAL** features a “True Story” from the life of **Ms. Sakshi Singh Raghuvanshi** (Data Consultant & Corporate Communications at Walmart, Research Analyst, Soft Skills Mentor, MMA Certified, National Level Athlete)*

“ Right after UP Panchayat elections of which I was a part (a fighting candidate from my district for Zila Panchayat member), my family had a huge responsibility coming up. To prepare for the upcoming, much awaited wedding of my brother. This was the time, around the second week of April, when Corona’s horrifying phase was slowly seeping into our lives. And, right after the polling date, my mother fell ill. She had a fever. Around the same time, my father, brothers, and I, too, felt a little discomfort in our respective bodies. We thought it was because of the last few weeks’ campaigning fatigue. We immediately started taking precautions, including steam and kadha (herbal tea). Not just this, we started wearing double masks when at home, too. We thought of observing our symptoms for a few more days before actually getting tested. And, in those days, my parents also lost their sense of smell. A decision was made. My brothers and parents immediately went to get their tests done, both blood and Corona. By evening of the same day, we got the reports. Blood reports normal. Corona reports half normal. Brothers got negative; parents positive. We had to make a quick decision. We

quickly decided we will get the parents quarantined in the upstairs part, and we will stay downstairs. We got the required medicines and oximeter, and did a few changes and arrangements in both the upstairs and downstairs parts, and we got them sorted.

Our journey of my being a caretaker began! We followed all guidelines to-the-point. All of us made sure we and our domestic help (we have a few permanent ones who live with us) are always double masked up. It was the need of the hour. We kept giving the parents frequent healthy food, a lot of hot water, fruits, fluids, medicines, and whatever was prescribed. Apart from caring for them, we also had to take care of ourselves, too, because all of us had colds, coughs, mild fever, body pain, sore throat, etc. We all had to be observant. Things were going normal as parents were responding well on medicines and food, and my brothers were getting better. The most important thing we had to make sure was to keep them positive mentally. Trust me, this disease is majorly about a mental game rather than physical. I have seen a lot of older people fighting the disease with a positive outlook and getting back home while young patients were losing hope soon after they got tested positive. We were going good that way. Until one fine day when we got to know that my elder sister's entire family is COVID-19 positive. That made us, especially parents, a bit worried.

The worst part was yet to come. After 2-3 days of being home quarantined, my sister and Jiju (brother-in-law) got a mild lung infection. They immediately had to rush to the hospital for admission. We all thought it was for better monitoring. Fair enough! But, no. Their situation got a little worse. My sister got 50% of her lungs infected and Jiju was not responding to medicines. When we're getting these updates from her in-laws, parents were still recovering. We decided to hide all these complications from them. By then, we're just two weeks away from my brother's wedding. We didn't know what to do. Earlier, we're totally against postponing the dates and decided we'll get the wedding done with just 20-25 immediate guests. But, doing a normal daily routine becomes tougher when a dear one is in hospital, and we had two, forget about organizing and being a part of, what we say, one of the biggest events of our lives. So many things were going on and fast. Parents were recovering, Didi-Jiju were not, and then a confused state about the wedding dates. All of us decided that we'll postpone the dates. We didn't get time to process the change or grieve about it. Because, of course, much, much more things were important than that. I closely understood that health is the only wealth.

Rest everything can wait. And, after all, we're not the only ones in the country postponing a family function. There are many who are in it together.

Postponing wedding dates, baby showers, honeymoons, housewarmings, etc. have become a new normal. And, it is okay. Totally. At least our dates are just delayed, that's it. My heart sinks every time I hear people, in my very closed circle, grieving the loss of their loved ones. My outlook has changed now. Now, I think in a different direction. I think most of us have started thinking that way. I have suddenly started feeling selfish if I think about my functions, my family only. Our grief has become nationwide. Global, in fact. The Olympics got postponed; similar other big events, too. We can't even imagine a lot of people's employment at such places back then. Big education giants CBSE, UPSC, UGC, etc. postponed several exams, too. Children's and aspirants' future is at stake. And, most importantly, people lost their loved ones, every second, who'd never come back. Even while I write this. And, here we get personal/emotional on our tiny changes. Ah! At least the current situation is teaching us patience, the importance of flexibility, and the value of relationships.

Anyway, we finally decided we'll postpone the dates. Everything was blurry. The only thing that's clear to me was everything about Didi-Jiju. A few days later, we got to know that Jiju has been shifted to ICU, on oxygen. That was it! I remember, on that particular day when I got to know about the ICU part, being completely lost in everything I did. I remember going to the kitchen, with my clothes, instead of going to the bathroom. I remember getting tea for my parents when they were waiting for lunch. And, I am sure, my brothers had their tough times as well. Similarly, my sisters' younger brother-in-law and sister-in-law (Kishan Bhaiya and Harshini), too had theirs. Because, like us, they had not informed their parents about the ICU part. Obviously. So, ideally, all the juniors were making the decisions at home. I remember sleeping with a heart that never felt so heavy. I was still hopeful.

I remember the days when my brother used to recite Sundar kaand (one of the parts of Ramayana) in the Pooja room. I knew something was complicated or he didn't receive any good news, which is hidden from me now. I couldn't gather courage to ask him, then. I just kept praying on the inside. And, amidst all these, parents' quarantine period got over, too. They came downstairs on the 4th of May. We did aarti and tilak and thanked our stars for their recovery, but we couldn't celebrate it as we felt hollow inside. For Didi-Jiju. Now, it was getting harder to pretend in front of them as they were around, not upstairs. I remember one

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day discussing the complications with my youngest brother; we were a bit tensed. Suddenly Daddy came to our room with something funny that he saw on WhatsApp. My brother and I gave each other a look and pretended to laugh. That's hard!

The day after that was most crucial. Because they were planning to get Jiju shifted to Medanta/Apollo through an air ambulance. My hands are still trembling and tears rolling down my eyes as I write these lines. Can't even imagine what it would have been like for Kishan Bhaiya and Harshini. Both of them are younger to my sister and were ill, too. But, as they say, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. They behaved pretty calm and composed, although they had chaos all over on the inside. Juggling between management of the house, two critical patients in the hospital, and numerous calls from loved ones staying far, far away, while keeping their emotions under check, aren't easy at all. They kept doing all of it with hope yet cried in their own lone spots thinking about the worst. After all, we all are humans. But, hats off to you two!

Three days later, a miracle happened! Our ancestors' and parents' good karma worked, plus we got lucky. My brave Jiju responded to medicines. Did lunch and Yoga on his own. I remember receiving the message from Harshini that day, "Didi, don't worry. Bhaiya will be fine. Can you believe he did lunch and Yoga on his own!?" Deep breath! More. And, more. And, more. More, more, more! I suddenly felt light! We all must have been. My parents had sensed that things weren't that easy because Didi had stopped calling, which she usually does often. Parents for a reason!

After another 2-3 days, Jiju was shifted to the private room, where he was earlier with the love of his life, my sister. The both of them kept it all strong, too, I must say. The only mistake they made, especially Jiju, was that they kept refusing to eat because they didn't feel like it. And, in this time, as I have experienced with two patients at home as well, a nutritious diet is working miracles. The medicines are hard, so people reading this blog - make sure you are having protein-rich food, everything moderately hot, fruits, dry fruits, fluids, along with steam, in case you've someone in that condition, God forbid.

Well, Didi-Jiju got discharged on the 11th of May, fortunately. However, the memory of those days wouldn't fade this easily. I still get hangovers. Afterall, we had crossed one of the major days of our times. I remember talking to Harshini the day after they got discharged - despite laughing on a lot of matters (on a few funny incidents that happened there during those days),

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we kept taking those deep breaths in between. Silently! I am grateful that we got that chance. To rejoice post the pandemic that was personal. Not everyone got lucky in the second wave. Not even my closed ones. And, I want to tell them that the void is real, but I am there. Whenever, wherever needed, as always! If you are reading this, accept my virtual hug. A tight one! Once the pandemic is over, I am most certainly meeting you.

All of us, remember that whenever things around you feel a little more overwhelming, just try being a little less harsh on yourself. Go one day at a time. One task at a time. One thought at a time. At least, that's what I did. It certainly helped me despite the fact that I was managing all the above while working full-time in an MNC. The scenarios in the last few weeks have taught me to always see challenges or struggling days as not only destructive waves but also constructive waves. It is this period when you can learn what that has come to teach you. We are allowed to grieve and be worried. But, with hope. With contentment. With resilience. With 'Shraddha and Saburi'. Faith is extremely powerful. After all, if you are desperately eyeing for something, why not have grace in waiting? That helps us grow towards a better and stronger, and ever victorious selves! That's what we are now. My family. Yours, too!

Also, when it's a family grief, where your parents are involved, too, then take lead! They have done enough for us, especially the good karmas, which we can never pay back. At least use such days as opportunities. Become their parents to pacify them, although you can cry under the shower or get pillow-choked when alone. But, keep smiling in front of them. Pretend, if you have to. Because they will smile only if you do. Think about it. This is the time. This very moment!

Along with that, this situation also taught me that this is the right time to invest in good karmas. Show humanity. Save mankind, in whatever way possible, who is dealing with a global pandemic that is one of a kind. I think people should stop investing in money or power for their future generations. At least for now. Money and all they can earn with their hard work when their time comes. But, the investment of your good karma will prove them miracles. That's what happened in my family "that day"!

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Before I end the blog, I would like to share a simple yet powerful quote here, which I'd read in a book:

“This storm is making me tired”, said the boy.

“Storms get tired, too”, said the Horse. “So, hold on!”

This is my inspiring journey of building resilience and keeping myself gathered in such testing situations. I'm really proud of myself for being poised (at least on the surface) in such unfavourable circumstances, which not only benefited me but also my family overall. For now, I am just grateful for what this day is. With my family members around, healthy and sound. Touchwood! With more people getting vaccinated. With more people coming forward, individually and as a group, to save mankind. Along with these, I'm ready to face the days as destiny has planned for us.

I am not thinking of anything ahead but today, one day at a time, for the experience was challenging yet inspiring. Gratefully and gracefully!

Stay safe and positive, all of you! Love, care, and wishes. ❤️ Sakshi Singh Raghuvanshi ”

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