

In Conversation: Shereen Bhan

AT: Hello there Shereen Bhan! I'm not nervous at all.

Shereen Bhan: Haha I'm Nervous!

AT: You have so many awards and accolades, of course, you're Managing Editor, CNBC TV 18. I was looking at some of the titles you picked up along the year, Best Business Anchor, you've been FICCI Woman of the Year, you've been the World Economic Forum's Young Global Leader...Do you ever get this feeling like, *Hey, cool, I can chill for a bit?* I have a feeling not!

SB: You know, I mean, I don't take any of this stuff seriously, not to say that it doesn't matter, or it is not appreciated, or it's not valued. But I don't. I'm a little detached from all of this. Because I think if there is one lesson that I've learned, to my own experience, as well as watching people around me is that if you start to get very closely involved with tags and labels, and awards and recognition and fame and the glory, you can, you know, end up being in a situation where you trap yourself into this kind of bubble, where suddenly, if something turns or if something gives away, you could end up seeing a sort of House of Cards kind of collapse happen.

So, I've always tried to distance myself, from labels from the awards, etc. **You know, I value them as a recognition of the work that I do, but I don't link that to my identity, I don't link that to my self worth.** And I certainly don't believe in the fact that I'm the best anchor or I'm, you know, so on and so forth. Because I just think that that ends up putting into a situation where you stop listening to other people where you stop seeing what is happening around you, and you start living inside yourself. So in a way, living inside yourself is good. But sometimes, you know, too much of that can also be... not a particularly great thing to happen.

AT: You're someone who's like you said, I mean, you've had it's more than two decades now. Is it 25 years as a journalist?

SB: Yes. 25 years in journalism. 24 years at CNBC.

AT: That's incredible. So I'm also, you know, it just it blows me away, because we've seen so much attrition, right? I mean, from the the sort of CEOs of companies you interview, to the media, do you have any thoughts or reflections on how you had such a long stint? Like, what is the secret sauce? Also to you know, stay on top of your game, because you're still deeply passionate about the news, you're still somebody who chases every story... What's the secret sauce?

SB: Yeah, there's no secret sauce. I mean, I'm deeply passionate about what I do 24 years on, because I don't know any other way of operating.

You know, and I truly believe that if you're, if you're doing something, you're taking something up, and you're either in it or don't do it. I mean, that's always been my philosophy, you have to bring 100% of yourself to the task, to the job to whatever role and responsibility you take on. So that's just been the approach that I've always had.

But you know, on this business of attrition, and, and staying in one place for 24 years, I've always believed that you have to have a sense of ownership, and you have to deeply believe in the brand that you're working with, or the story that you're trying to tell or you know, what you're creating, and for me, CNBC TV 18, has pretty much been, you know, like a startup, you know, and, and something that I've seen, change and evolve and grow over the last two decades, and I've been part of that change. And its evolution, if I could say has sort of, you know, has happened simultaneously...

And what are the reasons for people to leave, you know, either you're unhappy with what you're doing, or you believe that you've been treated unfairly, or that you believe that you should be getting paid better, and so on and so forth. For me, my priority has always been, do I enjoy the work that I do? And I do. I enjoy the people that I do the work with, and that has always driven my decisions. And that continues to be true at CNBC TV18 for me today. I mean, I love coming into work and I love working with the people that I work with. And so, you know, this business of should I look out for the sake of looking out? No, it's just never been interesting to me.

And I also believe that after having spent so much of my time and my youth pretty much, should I plan to take the plunge I would want to do something completely different. I don't want to do the same thing all over again. What's the fun in that? What's the joy in that?

I have helped create a brand that I'm very, very proud of. And so if I were to take on another journey, it would be to try and create something different, something new, something fresh, so which is why you know, I've stayed on and and I continue to enjoy the work that I do.

AT: The brand is so synonymous with you ... I should say, from the other side when I was working at a Tech company, and we'd be working on these amazing content partnerships, almost every single brand representative our team would talk to, for something to do with CNBC or network 18 more broadly, would be like, we want Shereen to do the show. And I was like get in line!

SB: Hahah that's the benefit of being like the furniture...

AT: Hahah And I think I love the way you said you think of it as a startup, because you were there from pretty much the get go, as a brand as CNBC has grown over the years as well. You've seen your teams grow. I wanted to talk to you a little bit about *Young Turks* because I saw that fab tweet the other day. I cannot believe that it's been 22 years of *Young Turks*. So for those of you who have not seen this show, way before startups were on point and on trend, this was a show where Shareen would go and interview entrepreneurs, business leaders, heads of business and essentially capture their mission, their vision...And that's some staying power. What are some of the things that you think have changed in that business landscape in the way we look at startups now, and in your own journey with *Young Turks*?

SB: You know, I think one of the most fulfilling journeys that I've had at CNBC TV 18, has really been the *Young Turks* journey, because it was a bet that we made, it was an investment that we made, it was a chance that we took 22 years ago, when it wasn't the cool thing to do. Nobody was interested in startups, no one was promoting startups, no one was talking about startups. And, you know, the birth of *Young Turks* was on account of us saying that, look, we have a 24 by seven beast that we need to feed on an hourly basis, you know, we can't keep talking to the same set of people, we have to find new energy, we have to find new faces, we have to find new stories to tell. And they have to be, you know, people around that we haven't focused on that would be interesting to talk to. And that was really the idea that let's look for first generation entrepreneurs.

And we started and it took on a life of its own. I put my passion and my heart and soul into it. And over the years, we've had so many people, we've had great teams work on the show, everyone really sort of, you know, made this their, their sort of pride and joy, and put put their heart soul sweat, tears, everything into making it what it is today. So you know, huge thank you to the teams that have worked on the show over the past 22 years. And it also, you know, as I said, sometimes an idea is somewhat ahead of the curve. But in our case, we got ahead of the curve.

But we were also fortunate and lucky that the economy changed. And you know, we did start to see the internet boom translated into a crop of new companies being created. And, you know, first generation entrepreneurs, taking the risk taking the plunge to create new companies, to create new institutions. And so it's been a very happy convergence of our aspiration, of wanting to create a community of entrepreneurs, and the opening up of India's economy where we've seen this birth of entrepreneurial energy. And so it's really been fascinating to watch that.

And, you know, to, to talk about the change... when we started it was it was an ecosystem that was just about being built, it was starting to be built, and people were obviously looking at, okay, what's happening in the US? What are the ideas that are working there? What are the kinds of companies that are being created there, and creating an Indian version of those companies or those ideas or those brands, but what I've seen over the last, say, you know, 10-15 years is that there is now a lot of breadth and depth in the Indian startup ecosystem, there is, of course, a significant amount of more money as well.

But you also have Indian companies now, you know, doing interesting things in space tech, for instance. I mean, I think that that is such an exciting area. A couple of years ago, we wouldn't have thought that we would have seen the first private rocket launch happening here in India, and you know, talking about taking on Elon Musk, and so on and so forth. So I think there has been a plethora of ideas that, that address India's challenges. And when I say India's challenges, they also then become relevant to the world because, you know, we have, we have complex challenges, and even if you can solve for that, then you can solve for anything outside as well. And the global aspiration that's been really interesting. I mean, we were just in the Valley and we've been doing this Valley trek for 10 years now. And so many Indian origin entrepreneurs who have actually moved from India set up companies in the US because they are addressing a global market. And you know, whether it's SAS or you know, now AI, or just doing cutting edge stuff. So that has been the big change. **I think, as I keep saying it's the audacity of ambition, the audacity of aspiration that I just seen so dramatically. And that's really wonderful to see.**

AT: And I think our attitude towards it absolutely has changed... the audacity of ambition. I saw one of the clips of your interview with John Chambers, I thought it actually gave me the idea, because he flipped the script on you. And I was like, let me follow up on that.

SB: He did flip the script!

AT: And I think it's interesting, because you see so many people now in India who want to build in India for the world, it's not just this earlier...

SB: Now, now, you're, as I said, you know, in the Valley, we spoke to so many companies that are now building from the US with significant operations here in India, for the world. **So you know, it's not just making India for the world, but it's make globally for the world with an Indian, you know, soul and an Indian heart and Indian roots.** I think that's so very interesting. And I think people realise that, look, if you want to address the US market, you want to address markets that are large, and you will need to, you will need to focus, and you will need to have significant sales teams outside of India. And you know, of course, R&D continues to be a significant part of a company's plan and operations here in India. But I think that realisation that look, you need to be where the customer is, is also something that I've seen change over the years with companies saying, okay, one foot, your one foot there, but you know, that's the market that we're going to chase after.

AT: That makes a lot of sense. So let me ask you something –I don't even know if you'd be able to guess at how many people you've interviewed at this stage? 25 years in 1000s, obviously, but do you have any sense of the number?

SB: Well, you know, on *Young Turks*, it's certainly a couple of 1000 people that we've been able to, to sort of reach out to over the last 22 years. I mean, on CNBC, I don't know why, you know, in a day, sometimes you could be doing, like, just on Counting Day, you know, I think we have at least 100 Plus guests through that day. I'm not keeping score!

AT: Of the 10s of 1000s of people you met?! Not a tough question, I promise you, I want to ask you a couple of questions based on the people you've interviewed...it's been a range of people as well, because the other fascinating thing is, I think it feels like you also keep challenging yourself, you don't just keep doing the same, you know, same old kind of journalism in a way, right? Because you have to keep reinventing yourself as a journalist, you have to keep things interesting for yourself. So you've interviewed, I was just, you know, this is not at all exhaustive. But you've interviewed Nobel laureates, Prime Ministers, foreign leaders, of course, India, Inc, the who's who at Davos every year, I think, for decades, so many changemakers. Right. And I think, you know, the initiative you have right now, *Future Female Forward* also is really fascinating to see, because you're constantly passing the mic and trying to share, you know, other people's stories. I want to ask you two questions about this. **What are some of these stories that really stay with you so many years on what keeps it fresh? And who are your favorite people to interview?**

SB: You know, I mean, favorite people to interview ... Gosh, it's, I'm also starting to lose, lose my memory. Over the years, there have been just so many organic conversations that have happened, which have taken me by surprise, there have been conversations that I thought would have would have been sort of the conversations that would be the most memorable, that haven't turned out to be like that. So I've, you know, I think it's, I mean, **I have to say people like Benazir Bhutto**, and it's also when these conversations have happened, at what point in your career these conversations happen. I was very young, you know, and just at the start of my career, when I got the opportunity to interview someone like her, and it was just such an ... experience that I will always remember because, you know, she was articulate, she was a woman leader...it will stay with me the kind of impression that that she made.

People like Richard Branson, people like Warren Buffett, Narayana Murthy, Sudha Murthy. I mean, you know, there have just been so many people who I have had the opportunity to engage with... Bill Gates and you know, Ratan Tata. And it's just, I mean, for me, I try and take away some hopefully something from each each of those conversations, each of those interactions and my hope is that they take away something from from that, I mean, they go away with a memory of, oh, I enjoyed that engagement or join that conversation or it wasn't a bore or it wasn't a chore to have gone through this, this interview. But yeah, over the years, just so many... . But yeah, hard to remember...

AT: But what I love that's what I love about journalism though, right? Like you are learning something every day practically with every conversation, and I love that you don't get bored of it. That's something we'll come back to. We're going to take a short break, but much more with Shireen pan when we come back.

AT: And we are back with Shreen Bhan. And I was just talking to you, Shereen about, you know, the kind of people you've been interviewing, I do want to ask you a little bit because you know, leadership is really front and center for me these days thinking about what makes a good leader. We're in this age of ascendant AI. You know, there's a, there's a theory that human centric leadership is going to be very, very critical. What are some of the qualities and attributes you think, make a good leader? And how do you try to sort of implement that in your in your day to day life?

SB: I mean, for me, especially, I think now, when we talk about technology being the sort of bedrock of everything that we do, and so on, and so forth, **I think human centric leadership is going to be critical**. And I think the decisions that leaders take, as as individuals with, you know, a heart and soul and a conscience and empathy will be extremely important and extremely relevant as we move forward. Because we don't know, you know, what we're getting into, we don't know what the boundaries are going to be. We don't know what the guardrails will be, we are in many ways, entering uncharted territory. And I think that's the case that everyone is grappling with, at this point in time, whether it's the government or regulators or corporations, and at the end of the day, as individuals, what is any of this going to mean, for us, but you know, for me leadership to start with, and this is something that I've learned over the years, and through my own experiences, and learning from people that I've interacted with.

To start with it, it really is about having the courage of your conviction. You know, I think a leader needs to stand up for what they believe in, stand up for what they want, stand up for the vision that they have, and have the ability to articulate that very clearly communicate that very clearly and consistently, and fairly and transparently so that you can get people to go along with you. I'm a firm believer in the fact that, you know, if you're a strong leader, it means nothing, if you don't have the ability to take people along with you, because then what are you doing, you're pretty much walking by yourself, you're pretty much walking solo. And I think, you know, leaders who walk solo don't really get the job done.

And I think for me, personally, you know, my biggest, what's what gives me the my kick, or what gives me my high is to see that this is the vision that I laid out. And I've had people buy into that, because I have spoken to them about it, because I have been able to communicate to them, what this means for them what this means for the brand, what it means for the organization, and then see that collective work towards making that happen. **That's when the magic happens.** You know, and I just see, to see people embody that to see people live that on a daily basis, that's when the magic happens. I'm not a believer in hierarchical structures. And I was watching this interview that Jensen Huang of Nvidia just did, and you know, he's sort of breaking down this whole notion that we have organisational structures where it's all hierarchical, and so on and so forth. And I've never believed in that I do believe in, in having much flatter organizations, because I believe that that really gives you the ability to, you know, pick up from different places to co create to ideate. And it has a different energy. I'm not suggesting for a moment that look, there is no one in control. You have to have someone take responsibility, and you have to have people being accountable. But that doesn't mean command and control to my mind, that means to collaborate and work together. You know, so so that is that is my that's been my leadership style. That's been my leadership philosophy.

And, you know, I think, again, this probably goes back to the way that I was brought up because I grew up in an environment where I watched my father go out on an Air Force Base and fly a fighter jet every day where duty and responsibility drove every decision, right? I mean, you couldn't be having a bad day; you need to show up at work and so if I'm having a bad day, I show up, but I, I'm I but I am mindful of the fact that I will give a colleague my time and my shoulder if they're having a bad day. So I'm not suggesting that you create this culture where you can't talk about having a bad day or you you're not there for each other...I think we need to create a culture that allows people to bring their true selves, their authentic selves with all their warts and everything to the table. But I do believe that, for me, as a leader, I, you know, I need to show up for for the people that I work with, for the organization that I work for. And there are days when I don't feel like, you know, I'm up to it. But I will still persevere because I feel like I'm responsible for a larger group of people.

So I still, I think I do sometimes tend to tend to pressure myself, because I feel like I owe the organisation and my team. And I think that I've now learn to balance that a little bit. But that really has been a learning and also something that I have, sort of, you know, grappled with over the years, how much is too much? And I think that that is something that I've learned to deal with. But you know, **leaders have to have heart.** (I don't buy into) this notion, or this idea that, you know, you have to be tough and authoritative. **For me being gentle, you know, is is the biggest strength. I don't believe in this very masculine kind of idea or notion that we've been fed of leadership, I think, you know, the femininity has so much strength, and why should we as women have to adopt masculine**

attributes just to be able to position ourselves as leaders? I think that's great strength and gentleness, and I'm all for that. And you know, that's just me at my core.

AT: And you still hit your goals and targets and there's nothing that stops you from doing that... that's what it's about, right?

SB: I mean, it's the outcome that matters. And if you're doing it in a way that people around you are happy or doing it in a way that people feel supported, and people feel uplifted, and people feel inspired. And people want to come into work every day, you know, then you've done supposed to do?

AT: Yeah... So you know, we've actually... for those of you listening, we were colleagues back in the day, she didn't, I should have started with this. I was at Network 18 for almost a decade. And you know, apart from sort of being in your orbit and seeing you operate, I'm going to share an example that hopefully doesn't embarrass you, but I think really speaks to what you're saying.

I was a young like super green anchor. And I came into the Green Room once and I was having a meltdown because my boss who shall not be named and bless his direct messaging impulses, was literally like, this is terrible. You haven't like, you're just looking terrible on air, something about the wardrobe... And all of this we're not going to get into, but basically, I was having a full-fledged meltdown.

And I remember the next day I came and I wasn't sure what I was supposed to do. Because you know, again, like I think what's fascinating to me about a newsroom is – unlike all of these corporates, I've, you know, spoken to or worked with even – now there's no concept really of mentorship, right? No one's there to like, hold your hand and you kind of sink or swim.

The next day I came in, and Anita ji, bless her, who was the heart and soul of the Green Room, was like, *'Come here, I want to show you something'*. And she had like, 20 Blazers for me or something. And I was like, where's this come from? And she was like, Shereen ma'am was there, she heard everything. And she said, *Just give her these*.

And I cannot tell you Shereen, what that meant. And you know, now sitting at 43 It sounds like such a small thing. But it meant the world to me that you know, you didn't make me feel embarrassed. You didn't get in on the sort of, you know, emotional train there, you saw something happening. You're like, I can fix this. And you did it. And we weren't, I wasn't even on your team! And I just remember this is one of those moments where I was like, she's such a kind human being, she's so empathetic. And it just makes you feel like, you know, there's a human in there... like for all of us, right? There's always something we can do for someone else. So anyway, sorry for embarrassing you here.

SB: Thank you for sharing that story. I mean, now I remember that. I mean, we are human beings at the end of the day, and I keep telling people that just because we you see us on TV, and just because we have the ability to talk to people on television, and we have a microphone and you know, we get you

know, we get on on television night after night. It doesn't make us special. You know, that doesn't make us special. **What makes us special is who we are as people what we do and and how do we make other people feel?** I mean, that's that's, you know, which is what goes back to the first question that you ask them. Why don't I take any of these awards and all of that seriously because you know when, when it's all done in dusted, the awards are a nice thing to have... But if I'm not going to have my family and my friends and people like care about, you know, they're with me celebrating my success or holding my hand through the really dark days, what's the point of the awards, you know, the rest of it?

AT: And that's something you learn right with, I mean, through experience also through life as we go through. I think we're friends shooting in the sense that those of you listening shoot, like when you have a really cool friend who's like, super impressive...

SB: Not cool at all, haha

AT: very cool. And hopefully, hopefully, you know, we can we can continue this conversation a little bit, I want to ask you about something else I noticed of late, it's also because I've not really been very active on some of the social media, like Instagram, but and I'm gonna bring this back to again, another overlap we had, we both studied philosophy at college. Shout out to Dr. Tanka and Mr. Nanda and Dr. Shankaran...

We didn't overlap there. But I got to know this several years later. And I was I don't know why this struck me when I saw some of your Instagram captions. Like I've seen such beautiful quotes that I would never have guessed, if I didn't know you, or even with knowing you actually, you know, I think I saw Rumi, who I saw recently, I saw Camus... Tell us a little bit about this other side, there's poetry, there's quotes, there's prose, there's always something more profound than you'd expect, on an Instagram caption. Tell us that side of Shereen.

SB: I'm not trying to be profound to start with, I mean, I not a social media person at all. In fact, I have been very hesitant to, to engage on social media, it's been like a lot of my producers browbeating me to say, Look, you have to in this age, you have to be on social media, you have to have some social media presence.

So I finally gave in a couple of years ago, and I don't do a lot. But I think, again, I'm not trying to be somebody that I'm not, you know, so I think that's, that's what you see, of me on Instagram or Twitter. You know, Twitter is completely work and news. And you know, and I'm a little bit more sort of, I would say, cooler on Instagram, because it's really an extension of of the other side of me. But it's, it's, I put out what I enjoy, I put out what makes me think... I put out what make moves me, you know, if there's, if there's a piece of poetry that moves me, I think, Okay, let me share it. I know it might move somebody else or not.

But you know, that at that moment, it made me feel something and I'm like, Okay, I would like to share this. So that's really what that's about ... it's not strategic. I'm not like... I don't have a plan. I'm not thinking it through or anything. **It really is, in the moment.** When I see something or I read something, I feel a certain way. And I've and you know, and sometimes the universe or the universe of

algorithms has such making it all come together. But you suddenly see this piece of poetry that resonates with exactly how I'm feeling at that point in time. And I'm like, Okay, this is, this is great.

But yeah, so I think, you know, again, I know it also has to do with with with, you know, as we get older, and in my case, I think like turning 40 was like a switch in many ways.

I think before that I was still far too encumbered by public scrutiny, what are people going to think? What are we going to say, you know, and so I was holding myself back in many ways, because I was like, okay, you know, I don't want to put out anything personal, let my work speak for itself, and so on and so forth.

As I have, you know, over the over the last few years, specifically, I think I'm less and less concerned about what somebody else has to say, or about me or not say about me, or how they view me or how they judge me. And I think, I think big realisation there is that, **look, we're too small** in the scheme of things. We overthink, we give ourselves too much importance. I mean, nobody is going to spend five minutes of their day thinking about what I may have said or done or what I look like ... when even if they do is going to be last for 30 seconds, and then we'll move on. How does it matter? **I think this fear, especially for women, this fear that we have because of the way that the environment has been... being scrutinised or being judged off of being evaluated for everything that we say or do or wear, or how we speak and how we look... I think that in many ways creates the sort of self limiting impact and I think it really has been about just letting some of that go just learning ... just learning to breathe**, learning to be, you know, myself owning, you know, myself and reclaiming some of myself.

AT: I love that. Am I bummed that it was not on Twitter when I was at Twitter? Yes, a little bit, I will say. (Laughs) I can feel you like, you know, just exhaling like in some of these, I saw the other thing that was fascinating to me, I didn't realise like you were into -- your yoga is like another level, like, tell me a little bit about this like, and I don't know, we'll check with you if we can use some of your stills, you know, for the video of this, but it's amazing. So you've done aerial yoga, which was the first time I was like, What is she doing? It looks very acrobatic. And then you have like, these yoga videos now, how important has yoga been to your journey and what's going on there?

SB: So as I keep, as I keep joking with people, I'm I, you know, we're pretty much in a circus, I'm actually practising to be part of the real circus, that's my plan B. (Laughs) But no, you know, yoga, for me has, has been life-altering, it has been life changing in many, many ways. And I was just not the sort of person who was into any kind of, I've not been a sports person while I was in school or college, you know, it was just not part of who I was. And so for me to have discovered this fairly late in life and taken to it, you know, it has been very, very special. And, and it happened completely by chance, you know, a former colleague of us, and this is before COVID. And she, she, you know, she was chatting in the newsroom. And she said, Oh, I have this pass, for this yoga class. And I don't think I can go and I don't know what what happened. I don't know why I sort of say, Okay, give it to me, I'll go.

And I it was, you know, I said, Okay, let me go give it a shot. And I went, and I kind of just fell in love with it, I think, again, it was the universe's way of, of presenting something that I believe I needed at that point in time.

And I am a firm believer in the fact that things and people happen to you when when they need to happen to you when you want them to happen to you.

And I think I needed that. And it's given me, it's given me not just the physical sort of strength and physical ability. And, you know, I discovered a new side of me that I didn't think existed, or I didn't think that I, you know, I could do some of the stuff that I do today. So it's, it's been life-altering in in that way, but I think it's emotionally, you know, it's helped me center, it's helped me be much more self-aware, it's helped me, it's also helped me see things in perspective, you know, sometimes you get so overwhelmed and caught up with things and you think it's the end of the world, and nothing's ever going to be the same again, and so on and so forth. But, you know, you realise, again, as I was pointing out a short while ago, they were a tiny speck in the larger scheme of things. And I think this is really my way of being able to detach and disassociate from everything that I live for, and live with 24/7. And this is like, my two hours away from all of that. And it's like, digital detox, it's all other kinds of detox.

And it's been a, it's been a great learning. And, you know, it's a, it's something that I look forward to, because it's a new challenge. For me, it's something that I, I, I'm sort of, you know, I finish, I finish something and I'm like, *Whoa, I didn't, I didn't think that I could do that.* And so in it, so it's just this sort of, you know, it's this feeling that I haven't felt in so long, where, you know, at the end of a good show, at the end of a great story, you, you know, you will get that kick off that ride. And so suddenly, I'm feeling that all over again. **So it's, it's really a, it's, it's great motivation. But it's also my way of, of reinventing myself. And that's been a big part of my journey.**

I mean, you know, you talked about Future Female Forward. And, and this is a commitment that I made to myself fairly early on in my career. **And I said, every quarter, I'm going to try and do something new, I'm going to do try and do something different. I'm going to create something as a special, it could be a show, it could be a series, it could be a one off,** it could be... But that was very clear to me that every quarter and you know, it's pretty much worked out that way that I would invest my time, my energy and my bandwidth in creating something that was not a part of my everyday 24/7 news cycle. So it was something outside of that. And that for me has been a big learning experience. Because that challenge of creating something you know, where you have to anticipate change, you've got to think ahead of the curve. You've got to you've got to think of what will work what will resonate. I think that's been a wonderful learning for me over the years and I think you know, we've created some pretty special brands along the way. Young Turks is one, Future Female Forward is another ... what women really want was another you know, there's so many shows and so many series that we've created over the years, because it's very, very, very clear to me that you know, unless you push yourself to want to learn or to want to improve... **My whole philosophy, my trip in life is to do better, you know is to do better every day in whatever you do...** professional, personal just to do better is what I'm hoping for what I'm striving for. And, you know, that's, that's really part of my journey.

AT: And that you know that that ancient Greeks, we would have studied at one point would say **the life well-lived**, that's a good goal to have. It all lines up, there's so many things I'd want to pick up you're your yoga is amazing, the challenging yourself. I'm gonna limit myself to a couple more questions and when we're super famous, Shereen, we will come back and have this conversation, you know, when this podcast goes places!

I wanted to talk to you a little bit about the aging thing. But we're going to come back to that because I think you're right, there's so much pressure on people, right? Now you have pretty much grown up on TV. I think we've seen -- if you look at your earlier Tweet again, the Young Turks clips are really cute. Oh, my God, you practically a baby, when you started

SB: Haha yes, I have cheeks!!

AT: What's your message to your younger self? Because you must have seen some I mean, there's so many ups and downs, right? Obviously, like any career, like anyone, there are, there are crises, there are challenges, you have to keep reinventing yourself. But things also happen. Do you have a message for your younger self or any of your younger viewers?

SB: Yeah, I think, you know, as I said, for me, really my biggest learning has been to, to not let other people's opinion, other people's views other people's perspective, or what you should or shouldn't do, decide what you do or make the choices for you. I think it was Nelson Mandela that said, you know, fear should not dictate our choices.

And I think that, you know, through our 20s, and even to our 30s, you know, a lot of our choices are dictated from a sense of insecurity, fear, competitiveness, and, you know, we don't want to show our vulnerabilities we don't... You know, it's all we want, we want to put out a nice tidy package, right? I mean, because that's what the world wants, right? everything neat and clean and, and well presented. **And I think that I would tell my younger self that it's, it's okay to, you know, it's you don't have to be you don't have to strive for perfection, and you don't have to worry so much about what the world, you don't need the external validation as much as we think we do.** And I think that's really been my biggest realization. I think the internal validation today is so much more significant. It's so much more important. And I know, I know, I mean, I finish a show, I know if I've done a good job or not, I don't need somebody on Twitter to tell me. I know, I know, immediately. So you know, I think that fine tuning your company, and fine tuning your own radar to pick up the signals, I think is far more effective than anyone outside can do for you.

AY: And it's beautiful, because it comes full circle, you started this podcast, you know, you were saying that you don't get your self validation and self worth from external trappings, like accolades and awards. So that's really lovely.

Last question for you. What are you reading right now? What are you listening to? And are you into pop culture at all? I can't believe I never asked you that. But I don't know.

SB: You know, one of the casualties of being in this business, unfortunately, you know, because you're just reading so much work related stuff, that that reading that you want to do is just become inconsistent and patchy, I mean, I'll pick up a book, and then I'll read a few pages, and I'll put it down.

So I think that is my next goal that I have to restart, reading, you know, in, in, you know, in a structured way. I mean, I want to give time and attention and not have to look at my phone every three minutes and then go back to go back to the page that I was reading.

So I think that is certainly something that I want to do. I love all kinds of music. In fact, it's interesting that you bring this up because I think I'm starting to revisit the kind of music that I would listen to when when I was in college or the kind of music that I enjoyed ... I mean out of the blue suddenly like I I don't know why I had like Jewel, you know...I haven't heard that in 20 years and so I revisited so it's really been it's really been reconnecting with the kind of music that that I enjoyed, but I have to say I mean I you know, I deeply respect and admire Taylor Swift so I am now a Swiftie. So yes, that that is my that is my pop culture

AT: That is on trend. onpoint fabulous. I think she's absolutely ... and my god someone wrote some super misogynistic article about her... but we will not take off on a rant. We end with the queen. Taylor Swift.

But thank you so much again for taking the time. I'm gonna give you I guess about six months (on the reading) because I should have a book coming out. So I'm going to put that on your new year's list for next year. And I really appreciate you taking the time. I know.

SB: I remember reading the first one!

AT: First one. Yeah. So this is a novel like seven years in the making. So hopefully it's worth it. But I do remember, yeah, you're the best... I think, just you know, preparing for this interview, I was just thinking of all the ways you have walked the talk. And I want to say thank you so much for taking the time out. I know how busy your schedule is. Thank you for sharing a peek of, the other side of Shereen Bhan as well. And thanks for being you.

SB: Thank you Amrita, thank you so much. And it's always fabulous to spend time with you and I wish you all the best with the new book. And I will certainly read that...That will be my go back to reading! Yeah, that's I think six months is a good enough window for me to be able to like get ready to to get back.

AT: I love it. Okay, thanks so much. Talk to you soon.

SB: Bye.