

**Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History**  
**Usha Srinivasan Interview**

1

00:00:01.280 --> 00:00:06.879

Interviewer (I): Good morning, Usha. Thank you

2

00:00:04.400 --> 00:00:09.280

I: very much for agreeing to do the

3

00:00:06.879 --> 00:00:12.000

I: interview for the

4

00:00:09.280 --> 00:00:12.960

I: 'Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral

5

00:00:12.000 --> 00:00:15.120

I: History'.

6

00:00:12.960 --> 00:00:17.199

I: I am Mantra Roy from the Dr. Martin

7

00:00:15.120 --> 00:00:20.320

I: Luther King, Jr. Library at San Jose

8

00:00:17.199 --> 00:00:22.720

I: State University. Thank you once

9

00:00:20.320 --> 00:00:24.400

I: again for doing this interview.

10

00:00:22.720 --> 00:00:27.039

Usha (U): I'm happy to be part of it, thank you for

11

00:00:24.400 --> 00:00:29.760

U: inviting me.

I: So we'll start with the

12

00:00:27.039 --> 00:00:32.559

I: first question: So tell us about yourself

13

00:00:29.760 --> 00:00:33.600

I: and describe your journey up until now.

14

00:00:32.559 --> 00:00:37.840

U: Okay.

15

00:00:33.600 --> 00:00:40.800

U: So I was born in the southern city of

16

00:00:37.840 --> 00:00:42.800

U: city of Hyderabad in India in Andhra Pradesh [now Telangana]

17

00:00:40.800 --> 00:00:45.680

U: and I spent the first 20 years of my

18

00:00:42.800 --> 00:00:47.680

U: life there. I came to the US when I

19

00:00:45.680 --> 00:00:49.360

U: was 21 to pursue

20

00:00:47.680 --> 00:00:51.039

U: a graduate program in electrical

21

00:00:49.360 --> 00:00:52.160

U: engineering and that was the first time

22

00:00:51.039 --> 00:00:54.399

U: I'd ever

23

00:00:52.160 --> 00:00:56.559

U: left my family. It was the first flight

24

00:00:54.399 --> 00:00:58.399

U: that I had ever taken in my life.

25

00:00:56.559 --> 00:01:01.039

U: I went to upstate New York. I

26

00:00:58.399 --> 00:01:02.559

U: actually enrolled in the PhD program but

27

00:01:01.039 --> 00:01:04.559

U: then very soon

28

00:01:02.559 --> 00:01:06.080

U: realized the cold

29

00:01:04.559 --> 00:01:06.880

U: was something I could not handle so I

30

00:01:06.080 --> 00:01:09.119

U: just

31

00:01:06.880 --> 00:01:12.799

U: finished; I graduated early with the

32

00:01:09.119 --> 00:01:13.600

U: Masters and then I went to Dallas, Texas

33

00:01:12.799 --> 00:01:18.320

U: in

34

00:01:13.600 --> 00:01:20.880

U: at the age of 22. This is back in 1991.

35

00:01:18.320 --> 00:01:22.320

U: I got engaged and

36

00:01:20.880 --> 00:01:24.400

U: married and

37

00:01:22.320 --> 00:01:26.640

U: worked for four years in Dallas as an

38

00:01:24.400 --> 00:01:27.920

U: application software engineer, got my

39

00:01:26.640 --> 00:01:29.920

U: green card,

40

00:01:27.920 --> 00:01:32.000

U: and then decided that you know I wanted

41

00:01:29.920 --> 00:01:33.600

U: to kind of switch gears and do something

42

00:01:32.000 --> 00:01:35.360

U: different. You know, engineering wasn't

43

00:01:33.600 --> 00:01:38.720

U: really my thing, you know. It was a great

44

00:01:35.360 --> 00:01:41.600

U: way to lift myself out of poverty and

45

00:01:38.720 --> 00:01:43.680

U: you know make a career for myself and

46

00:01:41.600 --> 00:01:45.280

U: build a future but it wasn't where my

47

00:01:43.680 --> 00:01:47.200

U: heart was. So

48

00:01:45.280 --> 00:01:49.200

U: I

49

00:01:47.200 --> 00:01:50.479

U: came to Stanford; I applied and came to

50

00:01:49.200 --> 00:01:54.479

U: Stanford for

51

00:01:50.479 --> 00:01:58.960

U: my MBA and I came here in '95 and I've

52

00:01:54.479 --> 00:01:58.960

U: been here since. So I graduated in '97.

53

00:01:59.040 --> 00:02:03.840

U: I spent the first

54

00:02:01.600 --> 00:02:05.040

U: almost 15 or 16 years after my

55

00:02:03.840 --> 00:02:07.360

U: graduation

56

00:02:05.040 --> 00:02:08.640

U: working in Silicon Valley high tech in

57

00:02:07.360 --> 00:02:11.520

U: various

58

00:02:08.640 --> 00:02:13.040

U: product management related jobs.

59

00:02:11.520 --> 00:02:16.319

U: When I left

60

00:02:13.040 --> 00:02:18.239

U: my corporate gig there I led

61

00:02:16.319 --> 00:02:20.319

U: the Entertainment Technologies division

62

00:02:18.239 --> 00:02:22.800

U: for a company that is now called Rovi. It

63

00:02:20.319 --> 00:02:25.120

U: used to be called Macrovision and it was

64

00:02:22.800 --> 00:02:26.000

U: -- it were approximately 100 million

65

00:02:25.120 --> 00:02:27.520

U: dollar

66

00:02:26.000 --> 00:02:29.680

U: revenue business.

67

00:02:27.520 --> 00:02:32.080

U: And then -- this was because, you know,

68

00:02:29.680 --> 00:02:33.440

U: I by then had two kids fairly late in

69

00:02:32.080 --> 00:02:35.680

U: life and

70

00:02:33.440 --> 00:02:38.160

U: my husband's job had him traveling quite

71

00:02:35.680 --> 00:02:41.120

U: a bit -- and so I decided to make a lifestyle

72

00:02:38.160 --> 00:02:43.200

U: change. Like two kids and I was doing

73

00:02:41.120 --> 00:02:44.720

U: consulting, really consulting with the

74

00:02:43.200 --> 00:02:46.239

U: same companies that I've worked with

75

00:02:44.720 --> 00:02:47.440

U: before and I had a very lucrative



76

00:02:46.239 --> 00:02:48.959

U: consulting

77

00:02:47.440 --> 00:02:52.000

U: practice. And

78

00:02:48.959 --> 00:02:55.760

U: then about in 2013

79

00:02:52.000 --> 00:02:58.879

U: is when I became very interested in

80

00:02:55.760 --> 00:03:02.080

U: exploring my own identity here

81

00:02:58.879 --> 00:03:04.959

U: like as an Indian-American, trying

82

00:03:02.080 --> 00:03:08.400

U: to think a lot about -- you know what is

83

00:03:04.959 --> 00:03:10.239

U: my place here because by then I had

84

00:03:08.400 --> 00:03:12.480

U: been away from India for

85

00:03:10.239 --> 00:03:15.040

U: you know almost

86

00:03:12.480 --> 00:03:17.440

U: 23 years and I --

87

00:03:15.040 --> 00:03:20.560

U: but it wasn't until I had kids

88

00:03:17.440 --> 00:03:23.280

U: and I took kind of my foot off the

89

00:03:20.560 --> 00:03:25.760

U: gas pedal, if you will, from my career

90

00:03:23.280 --> 00:03:28.319

U: that I even pondered these issues.

91

00:03:25.760 --> 00:03:30.799

U: And I think part of me felt like somehow

92

00:03:28.319 --> 00:03:33.319

U: home was still India, right until

93

00:03:30.799 --> 00:03:35.680

U: I would say probably the

94

00:03:33.319 --> 00:03:37.680

U: mid-2000s and then slowly you kind of

95

00:03:35.680 --> 00:03:39.440

U: realize that the India you left only

96

00:03:37.680 --> 00:03:41.760

U: exists in your memories.

97

00:03:39.440 --> 00:03:43.440

U: You know, a lot of my my family had

98

00:03:41.760 --> 00:03:45.280

U: moved here already

99

00:03:43.440 --> 00:03:47.040

U: and India had gone through such

100

00:03:45.280 --> 00:03:49.680

U: tremendous changes, especially my

101

00:03:47.040 --> 00:03:52.400

U: hometown. It wasn't recognizable

102

00:03:49.680 --> 00:03:54.879

U: anymore: the way of life, the landmarks,

103

00:03:52.400 --> 00:03:57.280

U: the culture, everything had kind of

104

00:03:54.879 --> 00:03:59.040

U: moved on. And so I was starting to

105

00:03:57.280 --> 00:04:02.000

U: kind of grapple with

106

00:03:59.040 --> 00:04:03.920

U: being between worlds but I also

107

00:04:02.000 --> 00:04:05.840

U: realized that for my kids, you know, this

108

00:04:03.920 --> 00:04:07.599

U: was the only world, only country they

109

00:04:05.840 --> 00:04:09.040

U: know. And so I was trying to kind of make

110

00:04:07.599 --> 00:04:11.439

U: sense of this.

111

00:04:09.040 --> 00:04:14.000

U: So in 2013

112

00:04:11.439 --> 00:04:16.799

U: I started this organization called

113

00:04:14.000 --> 00:04:19.040

U: Sangam Arts. And the idea then was

114

00:04:16.799 --> 00:04:21.359

U: just kind of bring together arts from

115

00:04:19.040 --> 00:04:23.440

U: the Indian diaspora, focused mainly on

116

00:04:21.359 --> 00:04:26.800

U: classical music and dance,

117

00:04:23.440 --> 00:04:30.000

U: and provide those arts with a more

118

00:04:26.800 --> 00:04:32.720

U: expansive platform for quote-unquote

119

00:04:30.000 --> 00:04:34.800

U: mainstream America. So I was still very

120

00:04:32.720 --> 00:04:38.080

U: much thinking about I have something

121

00:04:34.800 --> 00:04:40.720

U: great to offer, my culture is so rich and

122

00:04:38.080 --> 00:04:43.680

U: varied, and I think that other people

123

00:04:40.720 --> 00:04:45.360

U: deserve to learn about it and

124

00:04:43.680 --> 00:04:47.199

U: and enjoy it. So I --

125

00:04:45.360 --> 00:04:48.320

U: that's how I started Sangam but then you

126

00:04:47.199 --> 00:04:50.400

U: know

127

00:04:48.320 --> 00:04:52.720

U: moving forward I kind of realized that

128

00:04:50.400 --> 00:04:53.600

U: the Indian-American, the Desi experience

129

00:04:52.720 --> 00:04:56.080

U: here

130

00:04:53.600 --> 00:04:58.400

U: is different in its particulars.

131

00:04:56.080 --> 00:05:00.880

U: Obviously, you know, we as the community

132

00:04:58.400 --> 00:05:01.840

U: came here and probably in larger numbers

133

00:05:00.880 --> 00:05:04.720

U: post

134

00:05:01.840 --> 00:05:07.520

U: the Hart-Celler Act in 1965

135

00:05:04.720 --> 00:05:09.520

U: but we're just one among many diaspora

136

00:05:07.520 --> 00:05:11.120

U: communities that also have their own

137

00:05:09.520 --> 00:05:13.039

U: rich and varied

138

00:05:11.120 --> 00:05:15.360

U: history and

139

00:05:13.039 --> 00:05:18.960

U: thanks to travel and the world shrinking

140

00:05:15.360 --> 00:05:22.080

U: and communications being a lot cheaper,

141

00:05:18.960 --> 00:05:23.360

U: these communities have very rich

142

00:05:22.080 --> 00:05:25.120

U: arts

143

00:05:23.360 --> 00:05:26.800

U: and cultural expression thriving within

144

00:05:25.120 --> 00:05:28.720

U: their silos.

145

00:05:26.800 --> 00:05:30.479

U: It just kind of occurred to me that we

146

00:05:28.720 --> 00:05:32.000

U: are all living in these little kind of

147

00:05:30.479 --> 00:05:34.479

U: invisible

148

00:05:32.000 --> 00:05:36.840

U: enclaves of Indian-American, Chinese-

149

00:05:34.479 --> 00:05:39.280

U: American, you know, hyphenated

150

00:05:36.840 --> 00:05:40.639

U: Americans and

151

00:05:39.280 --> 00:05:42.800

U: you know some of us feeling more



152

00:05:40.639 --> 00:05:44.240

U: American than others. And so at

153

00:05:42.800 --> 00:05:46.720

U: that moment

154

00:05:44.240 --> 00:05:49.759

U: I kind of then pivoted and launched

155

00:05:46.720 --> 00:05:52.080

U: with my my co-founder for Mosaic

156

00:05:49.759 --> 00:05:54.639

U: Priya Das, this initiative called Mosaic

157

00:05:52.080 --> 00:05:56.479

U: which is kind of rooted in this

158

00:05:54.639 --> 00:05:58.800

U: philosophy that

159

00:05:56.479 --> 00:06:01.759

U: America is no longer a melting pot, it is

160

00:05:58.800 --> 00:06:04.800

U: the mosaic, and we need to develop a kind

161

00:06:01.759 --> 00:06:07.840

U: of cultural competency that allows us

162

00:06:04.800 --> 00:06:11.280

U: all to come as we are and learn to

163

00:06:07.840 --> 00:06:13.680

U: recognize each other as Americans

164

00:06:11.280 --> 00:06:16.880

U: and realize that what binds us is our

165

00:06:13.680 --> 00:06:18.639

U: love for country and its, her values

166

00:06:16.880 --> 00:06:21.360

U: rather than how we look and what we eat

167

00:06:18.639 --> 00:06:23.600

U: and who we pray to and so on. So that's

168

00:06:21.360 --> 00:06:24.960

U: kind of now my life's work. I'm very much

169

00:06:23.600 --> 00:06:28.319

U: committed to

170

00:06:24.960 --> 00:06:30.240

U: furthering the sense of belonging in

171

00:06:28.319 --> 00:06:32.160

U: different communities in America and

172

00:06:30.240 --> 00:06:33.199

U: kind of figuring out ways in which to

173

00:06:32.160 --> 00:06:35.680

U: promote

174

00:06:33.199 --> 00:06:38.319

U: social cohesion, whether that's through

175

00:06:35.680 --> 00:06:39.840

U: kind of intercultural arts or to telling --

176

00:06:38.319 --> 00:06:40.960

U: telling stories

177

00:06:39.840 --> 00:06:42.960

U: or,

178

00:06:40.960 --> 00:06:44.720

U: for example, examining chapters of

179

00:06:42.960 --> 00:06:45.759

U: history because

180

00:06:45.759 --> 00:06:51.759

U: social cohesion requires us to have not

181

00:06:48.080 --> 00:06:54.319

U: just a vision for a future together but

182

00:06:51.759 --> 00:06:56.000

U: also a shared understanding of our past.

183

00:06:54.319 --> 00:06:58.160

U: And obviously with a lot of people who

184

00:06:56.000 --> 00:06:59.919

U: come here at different points in time from

185

00:06:58.160 --> 00:07:02.240

U: different places, we don't have that

186

00:06:59.919 --> 00:07:05.840

U: shared understanding. We also don't have

187

00:07:02.240 --> 00:07:05.840

U: very many collective memories. So

188

00:07:05.919 --> 00:07:09.840

U: Sangam and now

189

00:07:07.599 --> 00:07:12.080

U: Mosaic is about

190

00:07:09.840 --> 00:07:14.160

U: you know strengthening a sense of

191

00:07:12.080 --> 00:07:15.120

U: belonging. And I do believe that me being

192

00:07:14.160 --> 00:07:18.240

U: Desi

193

00:07:15.120 --> 00:07:20.160

U: and having that Desi experience of

194

00:07:18.240 --> 00:07:22.479

U: diversity growing up

195

00:07:20.160 --> 00:07:25.039

U: and being comfortable with diversity is

196

00:07:22.479 --> 00:07:26.800

U: really something that has helped me

197

00:07:25.039 --> 00:07:29.039

U: and my work.

198

00:07:26.800 --> 00:07:31.199

I: That's great, and I will ask you

199

00:07:29.039 --> 00:07:33.440

I: to build on that in my following

200

00:07:31.199 --> 00:07:35.759

I: question, subsequent questions. So before

201

00:07:33.440 --> 00:07:37.840

I: that, since you've been in Silicon

202

00:07:35.759 --> 00:07:41.280

I: Valley for a very long time, what does

203

00:07:37.840 --> 00:07:41.280

I: Silicon Valley mean to you?

204

00:07:43.120 --> 00:07:46.319

U: I'll tell you what it meant to me

205

00:07:44.879 --> 00:07:48.240

U: when I first came. Right when I first

206

00:07:46.319 --> 00:07:50.560

U: came it was simply

207

00:07:48.240 --> 00:07:52.080

U: an opportunity. I mean it was, you know, I

208

00:07:50.560 --> 00:07:53.520

U: came to Stanford.

209

00:07:53.520 --> 00:07:58.000

U: I chose Stanford for over other schools

210

00:07:56.080 --> 00:08:00.479

U: because of Silicon Valley and what it

211

00:07:58.000 --> 00:08:02.639

U: represented in terms of an opportunity:

212

00:08:00.479 --> 00:08:05.120

U: to build a career in --

213

00:08:02.639 --> 00:08:07.280

U: a lucrative career in high tech

214

00:08:05.120 --> 00:08:09.120

U: management. So you know, for me this was

215

00:08:07.280 --> 00:08:12.080

U: kind of like a

216

00:08:09.120 --> 00:08:15.120

U: a great host party for me to latch on to.

217

00:08:12.080 --> 00:08:18.720

U: It also was a place that by then had

218

00:08:15.120 --> 00:08:19.759

U: a fairly large influx of Desis so I felt

219

00:08:18.720 --> 00:08:21.199

U: like

220

00:08:19.759 --> 00:08:23.360

U: you know, I wouldn't feel out of

221

00:08:21.199 --> 00:08:25.680

U: place. You know, we had friends, we had

222

00:08:23.360 --> 00:08:28.560

U: people here that I could call on if I

223

00:08:25.680 --> 00:08:30.960

U: needed help, things like that. So it

224

00:08:28.560 --> 00:08:33.200

U: was really initially simply I had still

225

00:08:30.960 --> 00:08:34.640

U: not disconnected from my identity as an

226

00:08:33.200 --> 00:08:36.320

U: Indian and

227

00:08:34.640 --> 00:08:38.719

U: I still thought of India as home and



228

00:08:36.320 --> 00:08:40.399

U: maybe in some corners of my mind also

229

00:08:38.719 --> 00:08:41.760

U: entertained this notion that I would go

230

00:08:40.399 --> 00:08:43.919

U: back.

231

00:08:41.760 --> 00:08:45.600

U: And so it was strictly at that point

232

00:08:43.919 --> 00:08:47.120

U: opportunity, opportunity from an

233

00:08:45.600 --> 00:08:48.800

U: educational standpoint and from an

234

00:08:47.120 --> 00:08:50.080

U: economic standpoint.

235

00:08:50.080 --> 00:08:56.080

U: So now, you know, Silicon Valley is home.

236

00:08:53.600 --> 00:08:58.640

U: It's, um, it's a place that I have a

237

00:08:56.080 --> 00:09:01.360

U: lot of emotional attachment to but it's

238

00:08:58.640 --> 00:09:03.360

U: also an idea because

239

00:09:01.360 --> 00:09:06.320

U: you know there's --

240

00:09:03.360 --> 00:09:09.040

U: I believe that as probably

241

00:09:06.320 --> 00:09:10.560

U: one of the most diverse locations in the

242

00:09:09.040 --> 00:09:13.040

U: United States,

243

00:09:10.560 --> 00:09:16.000

U: as a geography. Silicon Valley is at

244

00:09:13.040 --> 00:09:19.040

U: the cutting edge of this trend towards

245

00:09:16.000 --> 00:09:21.360

U: increased diversity that is going to

246

00:09:19.040 --> 00:09:23.040

U: impact all parts of America eventually,

247

00:09:21.360 --> 00:09:23.839

U: right, the browning of America, if you

248

00:09:23.040 --> 00:09:27.839

U: will.

249

00:09:23.839 --> 00:09:30.080

U: And so I feel like we are pioneers

250

00:09:27.839 --> 00:09:33.360

U: in a way, you know, and

251

00:09:30.080 --> 00:09:36.000

U: I see -- so I see Silicon Valley as kind

252

00:09:33.360 --> 00:09:37.360

U: of and -- I see it as home but I also

253

00:09:36.000 --> 00:09:40.560

U: see it as

254

00:09:37.360 --> 00:09:43.279

U: an opportunity for us to kind of

255

00:09:40.560 --> 00:09:44.080

U: show that we can

256

00:09:44.080 --> 00:09:49.120

U: realize the full potential of America

257

00:09:46.640 --> 00:09:51.839

U: and all her glory if we can just figure

258

00:09:49.120 --> 00:09:53.200

U: out a way to be more cohesive so we are not

259

00:09:51.839 --> 00:09:56.000

U: just a bunch of people who still

260

00:09:53.200 --> 00:09:57.920

U: continue to see Silicon Valley as just a

261

00:09:56.000 --> 00:10:00.080

U: place of opportunity, but we actually see

262

00:09:57.920 --> 00:10:02.880

U: it as home.

263

00:10:00.080 --> 00:10:05.839

I: Okay great. Now you've mentioned that,

264

00:10:02.880 --> 00:10:07.760

U: you know, being Desi and the exposure

265

00:10:05.839 --> 00:10:09.519

U: to the diversity that, you know, that we

266

00:10:07.760 --> 00:10:11.600

U: naturally I guess experience in India

267

00:10:09.519 --> 00:10:14.880

U: and we don't consciously think about it,

268

00:10:11.600 --> 00:10:17.040

U: you know, by living there but -- So that

269

00:10:14.880 --> 00:10:19.120

U: that informs your

270

00:10:17.040 --> 00:10:22.000

U: your

271

00:10:19.120 --> 00:10:24.959

U: lifestyle, your work, your engagement with

272

00:10:22.000 --> 00:10:26.800

U: Silicon Valley, right?

I: So, in that sense,

273

00:10:24.959 --> 00:10:29.279

I: is it fair to say that you identify

274

00:10:26.800 --> 00:10:31.279

I: yourself as a Desi of Silicon Valley?

275

00:10:29.279 --> 00:10:33.440

U: Yes, absolutely. I would say -- I mean that's

276

00:10:31.279 --> 00:10:36.240

U: a big part of my identity, right. I was

277

00:10:33.440 --> 00:10:38.240

U: born and raised. my formative years were in

278

00:10:36.240 --> 00:10:40.800

U: India and also my life,

279

00:10:38.240 --> 00:10:43.200

U: my personal life over here is still very

280

00:10:40.800 --> 00:10:46.240

U: Indian, you know. In fact, I would say

281

00:10:43.200 --> 00:10:48.160

U: in many ways I'm more traditional than a

282

00:10:46.240 --> 00:10:50.480

U: lot of my cousins even that were born

283

00:10:48.160 --> 00:10:53.279

U: and raised in India, in the generation after

284

00:10:50.480 --> 00:10:55.120

U: me and then moved over here. right.

285

00:10:53.279 --> 00:10:57.200

I: How do you say that, what do you mean?

286

00:10:55.120 --> 00:10:59.360

U: Because I was frozen in time, right. My

287

00:10:57.200 --> 00:11:02.079

U: Indian identity and practices, my

288

00:10:59.360 --> 00:11:04.079

U: language, my cuisine, my

289

00:11:02.079 --> 00:11:08.480

U: religious practices, they're all kind of

290

00:11:04.079 --> 00:11:10.560

U: still frozen from 1991 when I left India.

291

00:11:08.480 --> 00:11:12.720

U: The night before I left I still

292

00:11:10.560 --> 00:11:14.000

U: slept right next to my grandmother. I had

293

00:11:12.720 --> 00:11:17.120

U: gone to the same temple, I had gone

294

00:11:14.000 --> 00:11:19.360

U: through all along. So that portion of

295

00:11:17.120 --> 00:11:20.480

U: my life, that aspect of my life is frozen

296

00:11:19.360 --> 00:11:22.880

U: in time.

297

00:11:20.480 --> 00:11:24.160

U: There's additional layers

298

00:11:22.880 --> 00:11:26.399

U: added on.

299

00:11:24.160 --> 00:11:28.240

U: But I think

300

00:11:26.399 --> 00:11:30.720

U: you know that's who I am, right. That's

301

00:11:28.240 --> 00:11:32.640

U: it's a very very strong part of who I am.

302

00:11:30.720 --> 00:11:34.959

U: And I do believe that there's things

303

00:11:32.640 --> 00:11:36.640

U: that about my identity and my thinking



304

00:11:34.959 --> 00:11:37.760

U: that I have shunned over a period

305

00:11:36.640 --> 00:11:41.040

U: because

306

00:11:37.760 --> 00:11:43.839

U: coming here and experiencing life

307

00:11:41.040 --> 00:11:48.160

U: here and all of my the wisdom that comes

308

00:11:43.839 --> 00:11:48.880

U: with it, has really helped me grow.

309

00:11:48.160 --> 00:11:51.440

U: And

310

00:11:48.880 --> 00:11:53.440

U: you know has -- so there's things about

311

00:11:51.440 --> 00:11:55.760

U: me that are less Desi, you know. In my

312

00:11:53.440 --> 00:11:58.639

U: attitudes towards, for example,

313

00:11:55.760 --> 00:12:00.800

U: you know past and color and

314

00:11:58.639 --> 00:12:03.760

U: race are all different. I don't even know

315

00:12:00.800 --> 00:12:04.880

U: what my attitude growing up but I know

316

00:12:03.760 --> 00:12:05.680

U: that it's a lot

317

00:12:04.880 --> 00:12:08.399

U: more

318

00:12:05.680 --> 00:12:10.079

U: secular right now. But I do think I

319

00:12:08.399 --> 00:12:13.360

U: see -- I mean, it's a big part of who I am.

320

00:12:10.079 --> 00:12:15.760

U: You know it's -- I still I speak four Indian

321

00:12:13.360 --> 00:12:18.240

U: languages. I'm, you know,

322

00:12:15.760 --> 00:12:22.320

U: a lot of my day-to-day life includes

323

00:12:18.240 --> 00:12:22.320

U: practices that are very uniquely Indian.

324

00:12:23.440 --> 00:12:27.120

I: Go ahead -- go ahead I don't

325

00:12:25.040 --> 00:12:28.399

I: want to interrupt.

U: So I think that

326

00:12:28.399 --> 00:12:33.120

U: I also do think that I have the best of

327

00:12:30.959 --> 00:12:35.120

U: both worlds, you know. I think

328

00:12:33.120 --> 00:12:38.000

U: what has helped

329

00:12:35.120 --> 00:12:40.480

U: me succeed and probably a lot of our

330

00:12:38.000 --> 00:12:43.120

U: other Desi sisters over here

331

00:12:40.480 --> 00:12:46.639

U: succeed is we came here kind of

332

00:12:43.120 --> 00:12:49.279

U: debt-free to go -- to have you know --

333

00:12:46.639 --> 00:12:53.440

U: to get an advanced degree here

334

00:12:49.279 --> 00:12:55.519

U: in college through scholarships. And

335

00:12:53.440 --> 00:12:58.160

U: then we came here kind of

336

00:12:55.519 --> 00:13:00.560

U: having been raised not only in intact

337

00:12:58.160 --> 00:13:02.320

U: families but in

338

00:13:00.560 --> 00:13:04.720

U: in extended families,

339

00:13:02.320 --> 00:13:06.720

U: right? We had aunts and uncles so we were

340

00:13:04.720 --> 00:13:08.399

U: kind of cradled in love. We didn't have

341

00:13:06.720 --> 00:13:10.560

U: money but yet we had a lot.

342

00:13:08.399 --> 00:13:13.440

U: We came here, we got our degrees

343

00:13:10.560 --> 00:13:15.360

U: and we were kind of upwardly mobile.

344

00:13:13.440 --> 00:13:17.040

U: You know, we have English language skills,

345

00:13:15.360 --> 00:13:19.200

U: we have technical skills ,we have skills

346

00:13:17.040 --> 00:13:21.440

U: that this system requires.

347

00:13:19.200 --> 00:13:24.320

U: And at the same time when it came to

348

00:13:21.440 --> 00:13:26.480

U: me being of child-bearing age I had

349

00:13:24.320 --> 00:13:28.880

U: my parents and my in-laws here to help

350

00:13:26.480 --> 00:13:32.480

U: me raise my kids so I didn't need to take

351

00:13:28.880 --> 00:13:35.680

U: a step away from my career. So I believe

352

00:13:32.480 --> 00:13:37.120

U: that we do have the system as it was

353

00:13:35.680 --> 00:13:39.440

U: engineered even though it wasn't

354

00:13:37.120 --> 00:13:41.120

U: engineered for us, with us in mind -- has

355

00:13:39.440 --> 00:13:44.399

U: benefited us

356

00:13:41.120 --> 00:13:47.120

U: as a Desi community. And with that I think

357

00:13:44.399 --> 00:13:49.160

U: comes -- with that kind of

358

00:13:47.120 --> 00:13:51.279

U: privilege comes

359

00:13:49.160 --> 00:13:54.000

U: responsibility and a moral

360

00:13:51.279 --> 00:13:56.320

U: responsibility to do more with it for

361

00:13:54.000 --> 00:13:58.160

U: other people that have not been blessed

362

00:13:56.320 --> 00:14:00.480

U: with the same privilege,

363

00:13:58.160 --> 00:14:02.079

U: whether it's people of color or people,

364

00:14:00.480 --> 00:14:04.079

U: you know, that have been disadvantaged or

365

00:14:02.079 --> 00:14:06.560

U: marginalized other ways.

366

00:14:04.079 --> 00:14:08.320

U: I believe very strongly that Desis --

367

00:14:06.560 --> 00:14:09.760

U: you know, if you look at the stats

368

00:14:08.320 --> 00:14:12.000

U: out there,

369

00:14:09.760 --> 00:14:14.720

U: a lot of people will kind of show with

370

00:14:12.000 --> 00:14:17.600

U: great pride the highest median income

371

00:14:14.720 --> 00:14:19.519

U: group in America is Indian-

372

00:14:17.600 --> 00:14:22.079

U: American, right.

373

00:14:19.519 --> 00:14:23.839

U: As if -- but the idea what we need to take

374

00:14:22.079 --> 00:14:26.079

U: from that is not just this kind of

375

00:14:23.839 --> 00:14:28.000

U: misplaced sense of pride and

376

00:14:26.079 --> 00:14:30.639

U: exceptionalism

377

00:14:28.000 --> 00:14:32.800

U: because it's not -- it's not that we, it

378

00:14:30.639 --> 00:14:35.680

U: is it's not because our culture is

379

00:14:32.800 --> 00:14:37.680



U: superior or our culture values education

380

00:14:35.680 --> 00:14:41.440

U: more because if that were true you would

381

00:14:37.680 --> 00:14:42.839

U: not have as much illiteracy in India.

382

00:14:41.440 --> 00:14:44.720

U: It is that we were

383

00:14:42.839 --> 00:14:47.120

U: hand-picked to,

384

00:14:44.720 --> 00:14:48.800

U: from India to fulfill a certain role and

385

00:14:47.120 --> 00:14:51.440

U: we've done it well.

386

00:14:48.800 --> 00:14:54.639

U: But we have benefited from a system that

387

00:14:51.440 --> 00:14:56.079

U: was engineered to exclude some other

388

00:14:54.639 --> 00:14:58.959

U: people from it.

389

00:14:56.079 --> 00:15:00.639

U: And it took me a long time as a Desi

390

00:14:58.959 --> 00:15:02.240

U: to kind of come to that understanding,

391

00:15:00.639 --> 00:15:03.680

U: you know, because it's all a process of

392

00:15:02.240 --> 00:15:05.760

U: first understanding that you're now

393

00:15:03.680 --> 00:15:07.600

U: American and then looking back at the

394

00:15:05.760 --> 00:15:11.279

U: history of America and understanding

395

00:15:07.600 --> 00:15:14.160

U: what 400 years of American history has

396

00:15:11.279 --> 00:15:16.000

U: meant, looking at our own place over here,

397

00:15:14.160 --> 00:15:18.720

U: and then kind of making the right choice,

398

00:15:16.000 --> 00:15:20.959

U: right? So in that sense I think it is

399

00:15:18.720 --> 00:15:23.360

U: our 'dharma' [Sanskrit: understood variously as universal law, duty], right? to do

400

00:15:20.959 --> 00:15:25.040

U: and to see our

401

00:15:23.360 --> 00:15:26.639

U: brothers and sisters over here

402

00:15:25.040 --> 00:15:29.519

U: regardless of their countries of origin

403

00:15:26.639 --> 00:15:32.240

U: as our 'kula' [Sanskrit: clan, lineage, family] friend which is --

404

00:15:29.519 --> 00:15:33.839

U: and figure out how do we

405

00:15:32.240 --> 00:15:37.199

U: do right by them

406

00:15:33.839 --> 00:15:38.880

U: and not just identify as, you know,

407

00:15:37.199 --> 00:15:40.959

U: Desis, and looking after our own

408

00:15:38.880 --> 00:15:43.440

U: interests or

409

00:15:40.959 --> 00:15:45.360

U: viewing the lens of everything including

410

00:15:43.440 --> 00:15:48.320

U: for example American elections through --

411

00:15:45.360 --> 00:15:49.120

U: for how does it benefit people.

412

00:15:48.320 --> 00:15:50.000

I: Yes.

413

00:15:49.120 --> 00:15:52.240

I. Yes.

414

00:15:50.000 --> 00:15:55.440

I: Yes, I agree.

415

00:15:52.240 --> 00:15:57.759

I: So in that context I would say,

416

00:15:55.440 --> 00:15:59.279

I: since you have lived in in a different

417

00:15:57.759 --> 00:16:00.399

I: city and state before you moved to

418

00:15:59.279 --> 00:16:02.079

I: Silicon Valley and I'm sure you've

419

00:16:00.399 --> 00:16:04.399

I: traveled to other states and in other

420

00:16:02.079 --> 00:16:05.680

I: countries too possibly --

421

00:16:05.680 --> 00:16:10.000

I: What is it about Desis of Silicon Valley

422

00:16:08.000 --> 00:16:13.600

I: that is so distinctive

423

00:16:10.000 --> 00:16:15.759

I: than Desi in, say, Utah, Desi in

424

00:00:00.000 --> 00:16:17.519

I: Rochester, New York, Desi in

425

00:16:15.759 --> 00:16:19.519

I: Florida. I mean, they're very distinct

426

00:16:17.519 --> 00:16:22.320

I: groups. What is it about Desis in

427

00:16:19.519 --> 00:16:23.440

I: Silicon Valley that makes them so

428

00:16:22.320 --> 00:16:25.279

I: vibrant?

429

00:16:23.440 --> 00:16:29.519

U: You know, first thing I think we have a

430

00:16:25.279 --> 00:16:31.519

U: larger population and --

431

00:16:29.519 --> 00:16:33.600

U: but at the same time we're not uni--

432

00:16:31.519 --> 00:16:36.399

U: you know we're not homogenous. So

433

00:16:33.600 --> 00:16:39.600

U: we have a lot more diversity among the

434

00:16:36.399 --> 00:16:42.399

U: Desi population over here on one hand. But

435

00:16:39.600 --> 00:16:44.639

U: we also have something that we share

436

00:16:42.399 --> 00:16:46.160

U: which is kind of a large portion of the

437

00:16:44.639 --> 00:16:48.959

U: Desis in Silicon Valley

438

00:16:46.160 --> 00:16:51.120

U: kind of are rooted in the high-tech

439

00:16:48.959 --> 00:16:52.240

U: environment, right? So we share some

440

00:16:51.120 --> 00:16:54.880

U: things that are the same whether you're

441

00:16:52.240 --> 00:16:57.519

U: software engineer or a product manager. I

442

00:16:54.880 --> 00:17:00.800

U: would say a majority of us here in South

443

00:16:57.519 --> 00:17:03.920

U: Bay probably have some homogeneity in

444

00:17:00.800 --> 00:17:06.000

U: terms of our professional background. But

445

00:17:03.920 --> 00:17:08.079

U: we also have this culture, this diversity

446

00:17:06.000 --> 00:17:09.919

U: like whether it's by language or

447

00:17:08.079 --> 00:17:11.120

U: religion or what have you.

448

00:17:11.120 --> 00:17:16.079

U: In my experience and I lived in

449

00:17:14.160 --> 00:17:17.679

U: Dallas, of course, being in grad school

450

00:17:16.079 --> 00:17:19.520

U: was very different, you know. I was only

451

00:17:17.679 --> 00:17:21.520

U: there for like nine months in

452

00:17:19.520 --> 00:17:22.559

U: RPI and then I came to business school

453

00:17:21.520 --> 00:17:23.919

U: much later.

454

00:17:22.559 --> 00:17:26.319

U: But

455

00:17:23.919 --> 00:17:28.559



U: in other places I think there's two

456

00:17:26.319 --> 00:17:29.840

U: different things. One is the numbers are

457

00:17:28.559 --> 00:17:31.919

U: smaller

458

00:17:29.840 --> 00:17:34.160

U: and also probably there is more

459

00:17:31.919 --> 00:17:35.520

U: diversity in the professional realm,

460

00:17:34.160 --> 00:17:36.880

U: probably people working in more

461

00:17:35.520 --> 00:17:40.240

U: industries.

462

00:17:36.880 --> 00:17:42.480

U: You know, I just

463

00:17:40.240 --> 00:17:44.799

U: can't say how things are right now but

464

00:17:42.480 --> 00:17:46.960

U: a lot of people tell us that we make a

465

00:17:44.799 --> 00:17:49.280

U: mistake when we just kind of assume that

466

00:17:46.960 --> 00:17:52.240

U: all Desis in America kind of have

467

00:17:49.280 --> 00:17:54.480

U: this, you know, software engineer and

468

00:17:52.240 --> 00:17:56.640

U: making good money and, you know, having --

469

00:17:54.480 --> 00:18:00.080

U: living in good homes. There is just a

470

00:17:56.640 --> 00:18:02.640

U: large diversity in and among Desis as

471

00:18:00.080 --> 00:18:04.799

U: well, like Desis in Central Valley, right?

472

00:18:02.640 --> 00:18:07.120

U: I think a lot of it has to do with

473

00:18:04.799 --> 00:18:10.320

U: the point at which they entered

474

00:18:07.120 --> 00:18:13.200

U: America, right? Their journey. There's

475

00:18:10.320 --> 00:18:14.559

U: diversity in points of entry, modes of

476

00:18:13.200 --> 00:18:16.400

U: entry in the sense that you come here on

477

00:18:14.559 --> 00:18:18.480

U: a visa to go to grad school or did you

478

00:18:16.400 --> 00:18:21.039

U: come here as a dependent, you're

479

00:18:18.480 --> 00:18:23.360

U: sponsored by relatives. There are

480

00:18:21.039 --> 00:18:25.760

U: people who came here maybe as refugees

481

00:18:23.360 --> 00:18:28.799

U: or you know people from -- based on some

482

00:18:25.760 --> 00:18:32.160

U: kind of financial hardship.

483

00:18:28.799 --> 00:18:34.480

U: Entry point matters, right? And

484

00:18:32.160 --> 00:18:36.880

U: I think that in Silicon Valley

485

00:18:34.480 --> 00:18:39.120

U: we have this big chunk of people that

486

00:18:36.880 --> 00:18:42.000

U: over the past 30 years have been

487

00:18:39.120 --> 00:18:44.400

U: associated with the high-tech industry.

488

00:18:42.000 --> 00:18:46.320

U: So I think there's probably, at least in

489

00:18:44.400 --> 00:18:49.039

U: my interactions -- I don't see enough

490

00:18:46.320 --> 00:18:50.880

U: diversity on that vector of

491

00:18:49.039 --> 00:18:52.960

U: profession. I do see a lot of

492

00:18:50.880 --> 00:18:55.360

U: diversity in terms of, you know, your

493

00:18:52.960 --> 00:18:56.720

U: place of origin in India, the language

494

00:18:55.360 --> 00:18:58.160

U: you speak, or the culture that you

495

00:18:56.720 --> 00:19:00.240

U: identify with.

496

00:18:58.160 --> 00:19:01.280

I: Right, right.

497

00:19:00.240 --> 00:19:03.039

I: It's true.

498

00:19:01.280 --> 00:19:04.640

I: So in

499

00:19:03.039 --> 00:19:07.280

I: Silicon Valley, for example, and you may

500

00:19:04.640 --> 00:19:10.640

I: have heard this statistic, too: that for

501

00:19:07.280 --> 00:19:12.400

I: example Carnatic music is practiced more

502

00:19:10.640 --> 00:19:15.919

I: in Silicon Valley

503

00:19:12.400 --> 00:19:18.320

I: than maybe even Tamil Nadu and

504

00:19:15.919 --> 00:19:20.720

I: the rest of southern India because of

505

00:19:18.320 --> 00:19:22.400

I: the number of people. So why, what makes

506

00:19:20.720 --> 00:19:25.440

I: these cultures,

507

00:19:22.400 --> 00:19:26.720

I: like these cultural artifacts flourish so

508

00:19:25.440 --> 00:19:28.320

I: much here?

509

00:19:26.720 --> 00:19:30.000

U: That's a very good point. In being in

510

00:19:28.320 --> 00:19:32.000

U: the arts I can kind of talk to that. I

511

00:19:30.000 --> 00:19:34.559

U: think part of it is what I had mentioned:

512

00:19:32.000 --> 00:19:36.559

U: you know, we left home

513

00:19:34.559 --> 00:19:38.480

U: at a point when we didn't really -- we were

514

00:19:36.559 --> 00:19:40.080

U: only focused on kind of making a future

515

00:19:38.480 --> 00:19:41.600

U: for ourselves from a professional

516

00:19:40.080 --> 00:19:45.120

U: standpoint, lifting ourselves out of

517

00:19:41.600 --> 00:19:47.280

U: poverty. I did not spend any time growing

518

00:19:45.120 --> 00:19:49.120

U: up, even though I was surrounded by

519

00:19:47.280 --> 00:19:50.960

U: Carnatic music and Bharatanatyam, it was

520

00:19:49.120 --> 00:19:51.760

U: not something I had any time to spare

521

00:19:50.960 --> 00:19:53.840

U: for

522

00:19:51.760 --> 00:19:56.000

U: because we had one goal only, you know:

523

00:19:53.840 --> 00:19:57.919

U: get into that engineering college, crack

524

00:19:56.000 --> 00:20:00.640

U: your entrance exams, then you take your

525

00:19:57.919 --> 00:20:03.039

U: GRE, and then get out of there. It was

526

00:20:00.640 --> 00:20:05.360

U: only when I came here in my thirties

527

00:20:03.039 --> 00:20:08.720

U: that I took up Bharatnatyam. In fact I

528

00:20:05.360 --> 00:20:10.080

U: debuted with my daughter in 2012.

529

00:20:08.720 --> 00:20:12.000

I: That's great.

530

00:20:10.080 --> 00:20:14.640

U: You know, it becomes more precious to you

531

00:20:12.000 --> 00:20:15.440



U: and you talk a lot with people.

532

00:20:15.440 --> 00:20:21.280

U: I think the the arts,

533

00:20:18.080 --> 00:20:23.440

U: especially performing arts, is a way for

534

00:20:21.280 --> 00:20:24.640

U: the diaspora to stay connected with

535

00:20:23.440 --> 00:20:27.039

U: their roots

536

00:20:24.640 --> 00:20:30.880

U: and to pass the connection on to their

537

00:20:27.039 --> 00:20:32.960

U: kids, right. So I had my daughter start

538

00:20:30.880 --> 00:20:34.880

U: her Bharatnatyam lessons at age five

539

00:20:32.960 --> 00:20:37.200

U: and she is a very accomplished dancer

540

00:20:34.880 --> 00:20:39.600

U: now and it's a big part of who she is,

541

00:20:37.200 --> 00:20:41.840

U: and she has learned so much about

542

00:20:39.600 --> 00:20:43.440

U: not just mythology but the practice of

543

00:20:41.840 --> 00:20:45.679

U: dance, how it's evolved. She's got an

544

00:20:43.440 --> 00:20:47.760

U: interest in temples as a result.

545

00:20:45.679 --> 00:20:50.480

U: So I think people find that in the

546

00:20:47.760 --> 00:20:52.000

U: absence of --

547

00:20:50.480 --> 00:20:53.760

U: you know, we don't have the same kind of

548

00:20:52.000 --> 00:20:55.760

U: organized religion where you go to

549

00:20:53.760 --> 00:20:57.840

U: church and you have Sunday school.

550

00:20:55.760 --> 00:20:59.760

U: But we have organized practice of

551

00:20:57.840 --> 00:21:01.600

U: culture

552

00:20:59.760 --> 00:21:03.440

U: and that becomes important, especially

553

00:21:01.600 --> 00:21:06.320

U: for those who are non-religious like I

554

00:21:03.440 --> 00:21:08.640

U: am. I would say I'm more

555

00:21:06.320 --> 00:21:11.360

U: culturally connected than religious

556

00:21:08.640 --> 00:21:14.320

U: and so for me the the ritual of going to

557

00:21:11.360 --> 00:21:16.320

U: Sunday dance class with my daughter

558

00:21:14.320 --> 00:21:18.000

U: was was such an important thing. It was a

559

00:21:16.320 --> 00:21:19.280

U: way of kind of discovering myself. I

560

00:21:18.000 --> 00:21:21.919

U: learned so much about my own culture

561

00:21:19.280 --> 00:21:23.440

U: after coming here. So I

562

00:21:21.919 --> 00:21:25.840

U: think that's that and of course there's

563

00:21:23.440 --> 00:21:29.840

U: also the more mundane aspect of

564

00:21:25.840 --> 00:21:31.760

U: the commerce of of art: the only

565

00:21:29.840 --> 00:21:33.360

U: people that are able to make money in

566

00:21:31.760 --> 00:21:35.440

U: arts, whether it's in Indian arts or

567

00:21:33.360 --> 00:21:36.159

U: otherwise, are teachers,

568

00:21:35.440 --> 00:21:37.120

U: right?

569

00:21:37.120 --> 00:21:41.280

U: Performing artists do not make nearly

570

00:21:39.120 --> 00:21:43.840

U: enough money, right. They are not -- it's the

571

00:21:41.280 --> 00:21:46.880

U: teachers that make money. And it's

572

00:21:43.840 --> 00:21:48.640

U: because of this kind of need for

573

00:21:46.880 --> 00:21:50.000

U: people to learn arts and feel like

574

00:21:48.640 --> 00:21:52.159

U: they're part of it. Not all of them are

575

00:21:50.000 --> 00:21:53.360

U: going to succeed and have KACHERIS and

576

00:21:52.159 --> 00:21:55.280

U: and you know.

577

00:21:53.360 --> 00:21:57.600

U: But I think

578

00:21:55.280 --> 00:21:59.840

U: the process is valuable and teachers

579

00:21:57.600 --> 00:22:01.600

U: play a very key role

580

00:21:59.840 --> 00:22:04.000

U: and that's why you see that it

581

00:22:01.600 --> 00:22:04.960

U: thrives. And also the other thing is

582

00:22:04.960 --> 00:22:09.120

U: especially here organizations like South

583

00:22:07.360 --> 00:22:11.039

U: India Fine Arts, you know ,the dollar goes

584

00:22:09.120 --> 00:22:12.880

U: a long way in attracting very high

585

00:22:11.039 --> 00:22:14.480

U: caliber artists.

586

00:22:12.880 --> 00:22:15.520

U: They come here and perform and

587

00:22:14.480 --> 00:22:16.320

U: tour

588

00:22:16.320 --> 00:22:19.200

U: And,

589

00:22:17.200 --> 00:22:22.240

U: you know, when you are exposed to very

590

00:22:19.200 --> 00:22:24.000

U: high quality art and you -- it's a

591

00:22:22.240 --> 00:22:26.799

U: privilege. It's something that kids in

592

00:22:24.000 --> 00:22:28.159

U: India don't get access to that.

593

00:22:26.799 --> 00:22:30.320

U: They don't get -- I mean you have Spic

594

00:22:28.159 --> 00:22:32.640

U: Macay and stuff but if you're an

595

00:22:30.320 --> 00:22:34.640

U: average child growing up in Bihar or

596

00:22:32.640 --> 00:22:36.320

U: some other place, you don't get that.

597

00:22:34.640 --> 00:22:38.240

U: You know, we are exposed to that and it's

598

00:22:36.320 --> 00:22:40.640

U: this -- it's kind of the

599

00:22:38.240 --> 00:22:42.799

U: again a privilege.

600

00:22:40.640 --> 00:22:45.600

I: And sure, and Silicon Valley has the dollar

601

00:22:42.799 --> 00:22:48.320

I: power to be able to do that.

U: Absolutely

602

00:22:45.600 --> 00:22:50.480

U: and you know I'm happy to say that also

603

00:22:48.320 --> 00:22:51.919

U: we do have in Silicon Valley people

604

00:22:50.480 --> 00:22:52.799

U: living here

605

00:22:52.799 --> 00:22:56.640

U: very very high caliber. Then they could

606

00:22:54.799 --> 00:22:58.240

U: be touring on their own you know and

607



00:22:56.640 --> 00:22:59.200

U: some of these people are

608

00:22:59.200 --> 00:23:04.400

U: are working full-time in other

609

00:23:01.760 --> 00:23:06.880

U: jobs regular jobs, but they're also able

610

00:23:04.400 --> 00:23:09.919

U: to practice their art in, at a very high

611

00:23:06.880 --> 00:23:13.280

U: level, be able to do both, you know. And

612

00:23:09.919 --> 00:23:15.520

U: that to me is really fascinating.

I: Yes, yes,

613

00:23:13.280 --> 00:23:16.320

U: That's -- I think that is also

614

00:23:15.520 --> 00:23:17.919

U: one

615

00:23:16.320 --> 00:23:20.320

U: reason why this

616

00:23:17.919 --> 00:23:21.760

U: why Silicon Valley becomes so unique

617

00:23:20.320 --> 00:23:23.200

I: Yeah, this is true.

618

00:23:21.760 --> 00:23:24.559

U: This is very true from the arts

619

00:23:23.200 --> 00:23:25.520

U: perspective.

620

00:23:25.520 --> 00:23:29.520

U: We've -- there is obviously a lot over

621

00:23:27.919 --> 00:23:31.280

U: here. There's probably very few other

622

00:23:29.520 --> 00:23:33.840

U: places that can claim

623

00:23:31.280 --> 00:23:37.919

U: you know this kind of

624

00:23:33.840 --> 00:23:39.360

U: rich culture and artistic practice.

625

00:23:37.919 --> 00:23:40.640

U: The other thing that about Silicon

626

00:23:39.360 --> 00:23:42.159

U: Valley that's different about Desis

627

00:23:40.640 --> 00:23:43.440

U: and I'll tell you from my own experience

628

00:23:42.159 --> 00:23:44.880

U: with my kids

629

00:23:43.440 --> 00:23:48.240

U: is I think there comes a point when

630

00:23:44.880 --> 00:23:50.720

U: there is enough of a population density

631

00:23:48.240 --> 00:23:52.640

U: or a mass of us,

632

00:23:50.720 --> 00:23:53.440

U: the people

633

00:23:53.440 --> 00:23:56.880

U: start feeling very comfortable about

634

00:23:55.360 --> 00:23:59.520

U: their identity.

635

00:23:56.880 --> 00:24:01.200

U: You know, my daughter, I heard from

636

00:23:59.520 --> 00:24:04.080

U: friends of mine that were growing up for

637

00:24:01.200 --> 00:24:06.080

U: example in Mississippi or Kansas, you know,

638

00:24:04.080 --> 00:24:07.600

U: in the '60s and '70s,

639

00:24:06.080 --> 00:24:10.640

U: they did everything they could to

640

00:24:07.600 --> 00:24:13.200

U: downplay their Indian-ness, right. And

641

00:24:10.640 --> 00:24:16.000

U: because the only model available for

642

00:24:13.200 --> 00:24:17.679

U: people was assimilation,

643

00:24:16.000 --> 00:24:19.520

U: assimilation was the only way to

644

00:24:17.679 --> 00:24:22.559

U: integrate. So they tried their best to

645

00:24:19.520 --> 00:24:24.320

U: assimilate only to realize that, you know,

646

00:24:22.559 --> 00:24:26.320

U: no matter how much you give up eating

647

00:24:24.320 --> 00:24:29.039

U: curry and you anglicize your name, people

648

00:24:26.320 --> 00:24:29.760

U: will still ask you where are you from,

649

00:24:29.039 --> 00:24:31.600

U: right.

650

00:24:29.760 --> 00:24:33.520

U: and that's the breakdown of that model

651

00:24:31.600 --> 00:24:34.559

U: of melting pot. But you know what you --

652

00:24:33.520 --> 00:24:38.159

U: when you are

653

00:24:34.559 --> 00:24:40.080

U: a minority in your minuscule minority,

654

00:24:38.159 --> 00:24:41.440

U: you -- that's what you do, you know. You just

655

00:24:40.080 --> 00:24:43.919

U: kind of like try to melt in the

656

00:24:41.440 --> 00:24:47.360

U: background and not stand out, yeah.

657

00:24:43.919 --> 00:24:49.440

U: Here what I find among kid my kids and

658

00:24:47.360 --> 00:24:51.440

U: others is they have pride

659

00:24:49.440 --> 00:24:53.039

U: in in their identity. They are not afraid

660

00:24:51.440 --> 00:24:54.480

U: like [to] wear the Indian clothes and bindi [dot on the forehead].

661

00:24:53.039 --> 00:24:56.559

U: My daughter, when she gets ready to go

662

00:24:54.480 --> 00:24:58.720

U: and perform her dance, she's strutting

663

00:24:56.559 --> 00:25:00.960

U: around in public places with her costume.

664

00:24:58.720 --> 00:25:01.679

U: She doesn't care, you know. She's proud of

665

00:25:00.960 --> 00:25:04.080

U: it.

666

00:25:01.679 --> 00:25:05.679

U: And when she starts speaking, people

667

00:25:04.080 --> 00:25:07.360

U: are like amazed that this is like an

668

00:25:05.679 --> 00:25:08.720

U: all-American kid,

669

00:25:07.360 --> 00:25:10.720

U: you know. And

670

00:25:08.720 --> 00:25:12.840

U: I think that pride comes

671

00:25:10.720 --> 00:25:15.120

U: from two things: one is

672

00:25:12.840 --> 00:25:18.320

U: success, when your community is

673

00:25:15.120 --> 00:25:20.640

U: associated with success.

I: Yes.

U: And two is

674

00:25:18.320 --> 00:25:21.840

U: when you're here in large enough numbers.

675

00:25:20.640 --> 00:25:23.279

I: Yes

676

00:25:21.840 --> 00:25:24.480

I: Yes, if you're, like you said, if you're

677

00:25:23.279 --> 00:25:26.400

I: one --

678

00:25:24.480 --> 00:25:28.960

I: you're the only Indian family in the

679

00:25:26.400 --> 00:25:31.760

I: neighborhood, then you don't have --

680

00:25:28.960 --> 00:25:33.840

U: Yeah, it's very hard, it's very hard, yeah.

681

00:25:31.760 --> 00:25:35.520

I: It's almost parallel to say when

682

00:25:33.840 --> 00:25:37.279



I: like you know growing up in Calcutta if

683

00:25:35.520 --> 00:25:39.520

I: there was one South Indian family in an

684

00:25:37.279 --> 00:25:41.039

I: entire Bengali neighborhood you

685

00:25:39.520 --> 00:25:44.000

know it's almost [laugh]

U: yeah yeah yeah.

I: that's the

686

00:25:41.039 --> 00:25:46.559

I: parallel. I: So now

687

00:25:44.000 --> 00:25:49.520

I: my next question would be about how does

688

00:25:46.559 --> 00:25:51.120

I: being Desi help you succeed in your work

689

00:25:49.520 --> 00:25:52.960

I: in Silicon Valley?

690

00:25:51.120 --> 00:25:53.840

U: So I, you know, I think I touched upon it.

691

00:25:53.840 --> 00:25:58.000

U: Really, I think, for one thing

692

00:25:56.080 --> 00:25:59.919

U: and again just to be clear I'm only

693

00:25:58.000 --> 00:26:02.480

U: talking about people

694

00:25:59.919 --> 00:26:04.559

U: who like myself, you know, with a

695

00:26:02.480 --> 00:26:06.080

U: high-tech background and, you know, in

696

00:26:04.559 --> 00:26:08.559

U: business school, so I'm not -- I cannot

697

00:26:06.080 --> 00:26:10.559

U: speak, for example, for those who are maybe

698

00:26:08.559 --> 00:26:12.720

U: you know cooks or

699

00:26:10.559 --> 00:26:15.520

U: taxi drivers or others. Their experiences

700

00:26:12.720 --> 00:26:16.880

U: are obviously very very different from mine.

701

00:26:15.520 --> 00:26:19.120

U: I think

702

00:26:16.880 --> 00:26:22.480

U: being -- Desi.

703

00:26:19.120 --> 00:26:24.320

U: First of all, the language, right?

704

00:26:22.480 --> 00:26:27.279

U: Second of all, you know, we come here

705

00:26:24.320 --> 00:26:29.200

U: already with a lot going for us.

706

00:26:27.279 --> 00:26:31.279

U: You know, people who come, people

707

00:26:29.200 --> 00:26:33.039

U: always say, Oh, wow all the Indians I know

708

00:26:31.279 --> 00:26:35.279

U: are so successful. But you're selecting

709

00:26:33.039 --> 00:26:37.200

U: on the dependent variable. You came here

710

00:26:35.279 --> 00:26:38.559

U: because you already had everything it

711

00:26:37.200 --> 00:26:40.640

U: takes to succeed.

712

00:26:38.559 --> 00:26:43.360

U: That is the hard truth that

713

00:26:40.640 --> 00:26:46.720

U: people need to internalize, that

714

00:26:43.360 --> 00:26:49.200

U: in 1965 when the Hart-Celler Act was

715

00:26:46.720 --> 00:26:51.679

U: passed -- this is after, you know, basically

716

00:26:49.200 --> 00:26:54.799

U: decades and decades of having laws on

717

00:26:51.679 --> 00:26:57.039

U: the book that prevented immigration from,

718

00:26:54.799 --> 00:26:58.640

U: you know, countries in Asia and Africa

719

00:26:57.039 --> 00:27:01.760

U: and others, basically communities of

720

00:26:58.640 --> 00:27:03.919

U: color -- the reason they passed that act

721

00:27:01.760 --> 00:27:06.799

U: and then said you know we are going to

722

00:27:03.919 --> 00:27:09.679

U: actively recruit people from places like

723

00:27:06.799 --> 00:27:12.000

U: India that had this profile was because

724

00:27:09.679 --> 00:27:14.640

U: we were in the middle of the Cold War

725

00:27:12.000 --> 00:27:17.520

U: with the Soviet Union and losing on many

726

00:27:14.640 --> 00:27:19.760

U: fronts. So there was a reason why we were

727

00:27:17.520 --> 00:27:22.000

U: picked for that to come here and so of

728

00:27:19.760 --> 00:27:23.440

U: course you know a lot of us we already

729

00:27:22.000 --> 00:27:26.480

U: came here,

730

00:27:23.440 --> 00:27:28.559

U: you know, with every ingredient

731

00:27:26.480 --> 00:27:30.480

U: required for success.

732

00:27:28.559 --> 00:27:33.279

U: And then

733

00:27:30.480 --> 00:27:35.919

U: I think my success, a lot of it has to do

734

00:27:33.279 --> 00:27:38.559

U: with the family support, the fact that I

735

00:27:35.919 --> 00:27:40.159

U: have a husband who sees me as equal. We

736

00:27:38.559 --> 00:27:41.679

U: met in college,

737

00:27:40.159 --> 00:27:42.720

U: right, so

738

00:27:41.679 --> 00:27:45.279

U: we

739

00:27:42.720 --> 00:27:47.760

U: were completely on equal footing and

740

00:27:45.279 --> 00:27:50.960

U: so I had that support. It also helped

741

00:27:47.760 --> 00:27:54.159

U: that we very quickly after schooling

742

00:27:50.960 --> 00:27:54.960

U: became financially fairly stable.

743

00:27:54.960 --> 00:28:00.559

U: And then the important part is the

744

00:27:57.679 --> 00:28:03.120

U: family, the culture, the cultural

745

00:28:00.559 --> 00:28:04.480

U: practices that sets us apart, you know. I

746

00:28:03.120 --> 00:28:07.440

U: went to business school at Stanford and

747

00:28:04.480 --> 00:28:09.679

U: we graduated, there were 50 percent of our

748

00:28:07.440 --> 00:28:11.760

U: graduating class was women.

749

00:28:09.679 --> 00:28:13.360

U: And, you know, I don't have the stats to

750

00:28:11.760 --> 00:28:15.600

U: to back this up but I can tell you

751

00:28:13.360 --> 00:28:17.840

U: anecdotally when I went back to my

752

00:28:15.600 --> 00:28:19.840

U: 10-year reunion and 20-year reunion, I

753

00:28:17.840 --> 00:28:21.760

U: found that the people that have stepped

754

00:28:19.840 --> 00:28:24.320

U: away from their career as far as women

755

00:28:21.760 --> 00:28:27.279

U: were, were largely white

756

00:28:24.320 --> 00:28:29.679

U: because they had to make the choice

757

00:28:27.279 --> 00:28:31.120

U: of, you know, either being there for their



758

00:28:29.679 --> 00:28:32.880

U: kids in their formative years -- they

759

00:28:31.120 --> 00:28:34.480

U: didn't want to outsource that --

760

00:28:32.880 --> 00:28:36.480

U: and they had -- even though they had the

761

00:28:34.480 --> 00:28:38.399

U: money they just, you know, they realized

762

00:28:36.480 --> 00:28:39.279

U: that, you know, this but they didn't have

763

00:28:38.399 --> 00:28:40.480

U: it,

764

00:28:39.279 --> 00:28:42.880

U: have that,

765

00:28:40.480 --> 00:28:44.480

U: the parents, the culture of the parents

766

00:28:42.880 --> 00:28:47.360

U: and the in-laws taking care of their

767

00:28:44.480 --> 00:28:49.679

U: kids, right. Guess what? The first 10

768

00:28:47.360 --> 00:28:52.080

U: years after my childbearing.

769

00:28:49.679 --> 00:28:54.559

U: six months my parents were here, and six

770

00:28:52.080 --> 00:28:57.520

U: months, my in-laws were there. And, yes, I had a nanny

771

00:28:54.559 --> 00:28:58.559

U: because they were elderly, but it was, you

772

00:28:57.520 --> 00:29:00.480

U: know, it just

773

00:28:58.559 --> 00:29:02.000

U: freed me up,

774

00:29:00.480 --> 00:29:03.919

U: right. So

775

00:29:02.000 --> 00:29:06.399

U: you just talk about kind of every

776

00:29:03.919 --> 00:29:08.559

U: advantage. So it's no surprise

777

00:29:06.399 --> 00:29:09.600

U: that we are doing better than even the

778

00:29:08.559 --> 00:29:11.200

U: whites

779

00:29:09.600 --> 00:29:13.919

U: over here, right?

780

00:29:11.200 --> 00:29:16.000

U: So I think it's a system and

781

00:29:13.919 --> 00:29:17.360

U: I personally -- that's kind of my take. I

782

00:29:16.000 --> 00:29:19.679

U: don't know, I don't have any data or

783

00:29:17.360 --> 00:29:20.640

U: studies to back it up but you know.

I: Sure,

784

00:29:19.679 --> 00:29:21.840

I: yeah,

785

00:29:20.640 --> 00:29:23.279

I: yeah,

786

00:29:21.840 --> 00:29:26.559

I: right.

787

00:29:23.279 --> 00:29:29.600

I: And so now, when you look back at your

788

00:29:26.559 --> 00:29:33.760

I: journey, how do you think Silicon Valley

789

00:29:29.600 --> 00:29:33.760

I: influences your identity as a Desi?

790

00:29:36.799 --> 00:29:41.360

U:

791

00:29:38.640 --> 00:29:44.240

U: I think, you know, for me

792

00:29:41.360 --> 00:29:46.159

U: having been here,

793

00:29:44.240 --> 00:29:48.240

U: I do recognize that I, we live in a

794

00:29:46.159 --> 00:29:51.120

U: bubble, you know. So

795

00:29:48.240 --> 00:29:52.720

U: I'm constantly reminded that this is not

796

00:29:51.120 --> 00:29:55.520

U: the real world. Even you, you know, you

797

00:29:52.720 --> 00:29:56.799

U: drive 15 miles to Gilroy and all of a

798

00:29:55.520 --> 00:29:58.880

U: sudden you realize it's a very different

799

00:29:56.799 --> 00:30:00.159

U: world.

I: Yes.

800

00:29:58.880 --> 00:30:02.399

U: But

801

00:30:00.159 --> 00:30:02.399

U: um

802

00:30:02.799 --> 00:30:07.360

U: How does it influence my thinking? I

803

00:30:05.760 --> 00:30:10.559

U: just feel like I have the best of both

804

00:30:07.360 --> 00:30:13.200

U: worlds, you know. That I'm a very blessed

805

00:30:10.559 --> 00:30:15.120

U: person, you know, I'm thankful to my roots,

806

00:30:13.200 --> 00:30:18.159

U: my Desi roots, which I think are very

807

00:30:15.120 --> 00:30:20.840

U: important. The other -- and Silicon

808

00:30:18.159 --> 00:30:24.399

U: Valley I think kind of has helped me see

809

00:30:20.840 --> 00:30:25.760

U: myself, expand my view of who my

810

00:30:24.399 --> 00:30:28.159

U: people are,

811

00:30:25.760 --> 00:30:30.320

U: right? I don't just see them as Desis. I

812

00:30:28.159 --> 00:30:32.960

U: see everybody around us, you know, Mexican,

813

00:30:30.320 --> 00:30:34.799

U: Chinese, whatever their origin is, I see

814

00:30:32.960 --> 00:30:35.679

U: myself as being

815

00:30:35.679 --> 00:30:39.120

U: kind of --

816

00:30:36.799 --> 00:30:41.200

U: they're all my country people. So I mean

817

00:30:39.120 --> 00:30:43.039

U: that part I think came from me being in

818

00:30:41.200 --> 00:30:45.360

U: Silicon Valley but I don't have a very

819

00:30:43.039 --> 00:30:47.600

U: good answer, I'm afraid.

I: No, no, that's

820

00:30:45.360 --> 00:30:49.840

I: great. And my, I guess my

821

00:30:47.600 --> 00:30:52.000

I: last question to you, is how do you

822

00:30:49.840 --> 00:30:55.120

I: foresee your future or your family's

823

00:30:52.000 --> 00:30:57.120

I: future in Silicon Valley?

824

00:30:55.120 --> 00:30:59.279

U: You know,

825

00:30:57.120 --> 00:31:01.840

U: I do worry about it. I mean, it's the

826

00:30:59.279 --> 00:31:05.120

U: only home my kids have known. But I'm

827

00:31:01.840 --> 00:31:06.640

U: worried because I worry about how

828

00:31:05.120 --> 00:31:08.960

U: sustainable --

829

00:31:06.640 --> 00:31:10.880

U: First of all -- I'll take that back. One

830

00:31:08.960 --> 00:31:13.200

U: thing that is lacking in Silicon Valley

831

00:31:10.880 --> 00:31:15.600

U: right now is social cohesion.

832

00:31:13.200 --> 00:31:17.919

U: And even though we are more diverse

833



00:31:15.600 --> 00:31:19.919

U: now, we are less socially integrated and

834

00:31:17.919 --> 00:31:21.120

U: that has to do with the same phenomenon

835

00:31:19.919 --> 00:31:23.440

U: you're talking about: we have a large

836

00:31:21.120 --> 00:31:25.519

U: enough Desi population so when they see

837

00:31:23.440 --> 00:31:27.840

U: these new Desis come here,

838

00:31:25.519 --> 00:31:29.519

U: they fit right into those silos, right?

839

00:31:27.840 --> 00:31:32.480

U: There's very little need for them to

840

00:31:29.519 --> 00:31:34.320

U: kind of move beyond it and be curious

841

00:31:32.480 --> 00:31:36.720

U: and learn more about other cultures. They

842

00:31:34.320 --> 00:31:38.559

U: transact for business and they may go

843

00:31:36.720 --> 00:31:40.399

U: into their workplaces

844

00:31:38.559 --> 00:31:42.480

U: and interact with other people, but

845

00:31:40.399 --> 00:31:44.159

U: they're not going there and kind of

846

00:31:42.480 --> 00:31:45.919

U: sharing their Indian-ness, right? They're

847

00:31:44.159 --> 00:31:47.679

U: just going there, doing their business,

848

00:31:45.919 --> 00:31:50.640

U: and then they come back and go into

849

00:31:47.679 --> 00:31:52.399

U: their own kind of weekend events. And you

850

00:31:50.640 --> 00:31:54.640

U: know whether it's temple or, you know,

851

00:31:52.399 --> 00:31:56.720

U: whatever it is, and I worry that

852

00:31:54.640 --> 00:31:58.880

U: that's happening in all the other

853

00:31:56.720 --> 00:32:01.200

U: communities that are here in any

854

00:31:58.880 --> 00:32:04.720

U: significant number. So it kind of has

855

00:32:01.200 --> 00:32:06.880

U: caused this erosion in national identity

856

00:32:04.720 --> 00:32:08.799

U: and that can result in all kinds of

857

00:32:06.880 --> 00:32:11.440

U: other issues like, you know, you can you

858

00:32:08.799 --> 00:32:12.320

U: can become very tribal in your views

859

00:32:11.440 --> 00:32:14.320

U: about

860

00:32:12.320 --> 00:32:17.279

U: politics or social issues. You already

861

00:32:14.320 --> 00:32:19.200

U: see this, right? People are

862

00:32:17.279 --> 00:32:20.480

U: putting their

863

00:32:19.200 --> 00:32:22.799

U: the Indian-ness ahead of the

864

00:32:20.480 --> 00:32:25.360

U: American-ness, so that's -- I worry about

865

00:32:22.799 --> 00:32:26.559

U: that. So I feel like -- and that issue I

866

00:32:25.360 --> 00:32:30.240

U: think is

867

00:32:26.559 --> 00:32:32.399

U: further amplified, magnified because

868

00:32:30.240 --> 00:32:34.960

U: forty percent of Santa Clara Valley is

869

00:32:32.399 --> 00:32:37.120

U: identified -- is basically made up of

870

00:32:34.960 --> 00:32:39.120

U: people that were born elsewhere.

871

00:32:37.120 --> 00:32:40.960

U: A big chunk of them moved here as

872

00:32:39.120 --> 00:32:42.960

U: adults so they don't have the history of

873

00:32:40.960 --> 00:32:44.399

U: the land. They don't know what -- they don't

874

00:32:42.960 --> 00:32:47.120

U: realize that,

875

00:32:44.399 --> 00:32:49.440

U: you know, as recently as 50 years ago

876

00:32:47.120 --> 00:32:52.000

U: this place was largely agricultural, had

877

00:32:49.440 --> 00:32:54.240

U: orchards and canneries. And they don't

878

00:32:52.000 --> 00:32:55.440

U: understand how the Vietnamese refugees

879

00:32:54.240 --> 00:32:57.279

U: came here as boat people or the

880

00:32:55.440 --> 00:33:00.080

U: Cambodians or others.

881

00:32:57.279 --> 00:33:02.000

U: And all of that kind of lack of

882

00:33:00.080 --> 00:33:04.399

U: shared history,

883

00:33:02.000 --> 00:33:06.080

U: shared understanding of history and

884

00:33:04.399 --> 00:33:07.679

U: combined with the lack of shared

885

00:33:06.080 --> 00:33:09.039

U: experiences,

886

00:33:07.679 --> 00:33:10.399

U: you know, when you think of what creates

887

00:33:09.039 --> 00:33:11.919

U: social cohesion

888

00:33:10.399 --> 00:33:14.880

U: is having

889

00:33:11.919 --> 00:33:16.480

U: the lore of history told to you, right?

890

00:33:14.880 --> 00:33:17.840

U: All of you kind of understanding the

891

00:33:16.480 --> 00:33:20.080

U: same history

892

00:33:17.840 --> 00:33:22.159

U: and then having kind of shared

893

00:33:20.080 --> 00:33:24.240

U: experiences where we all get together

894

00:33:22.159 --> 00:33:26.799

U: and experience things together. And then

895

00:33:24.240 --> 00:33:28.720

U: the third part of it is having a shared

896

00:33:26.799 --> 00:33:30.799

U: vision for the future and this is the

897

00:33:28.720 --> 00:33:31.679

U: part that is really kind of

898

00:33:31.679 --> 00:33:35.360

U: troublesome to me. Because I think

899

00:33:33.279 --> 00:33:38.399

U: there's been surveys that find the big

900

00:33:35.360 --> 00:33:40.559

U: chunk of the original kind of

901

00:33:38.399 --> 00:33:41.679

U: inhabit -- not original I mean that would

902

00:33:40.559 --> 00:33:43.519

U: be the

903

00:33:41.679 --> 00:33:45.440

U: Ohlone -- but I think people who are

904

00:33:43.519 --> 00:33:47.679

U: here for generations don't see

905

00:33:45.440 --> 00:33:49.760

U: themselves staying here anymore because

906

00:33:47.679 --> 00:33:50.799

U: their kids cannot afford the properties

907

00:33:49.760 --> 00:33:53.120

U: here,

908

00:33:50.799 --> 00:33:55.039

U: right. They're not benefiting from the

909



00:33:53.120 --> 00:33:57.039

U: tech boom so they have, you know, parents

910

00:33:55.039 --> 00:33:58.320

U: are retiring, moving to Florida, selling

911

00:33:57.039 --> 00:33:59.279

U: their homes.

912

00:33:58.320 --> 00:34:01.679

U: And so

913

00:33:59.279 --> 00:34:03.840

U: we are losing a portion of the

914

00:34:01.679 --> 00:34:06.720

U: population. And so when you have a flux

915

00:34:03.840 --> 00:34:09.359

U: in population that is that significant,

916

00:34:06.720 --> 00:34:10.960

U: you know, a 40 percent from elsewhere, another 40

917

00:34:09.359 --> 00:34:11.919

U: percent don't see themselves here in

918

00:34:10.960 --> 00:34:13.359

U: future,

919

00:34:11.919 --> 00:34:15.760

U: then you and you don't have shared

920

00:34:13.359 --> 00:34:17.919

U: history, you don't see a shared future,

921

00:34:15.760 --> 00:34:20.320

U: you don't have shared experiences, then

922

00:34:17.919 --> 00:34:22.399

U: you become a bunch of people, kind of

923

00:34:20.320 --> 00:34:23.679

U: very dystopian, like we are hanging out

924

00:34:22.399 --> 00:34:26.960

U: in this

925

00:34:23.679 --> 00:34:29.440

U: pod, that we are enriching ourselves in --

926

00:34:26.960 --> 00:34:30.879

U: You know, it's just a part of opportunity,

927

00:34:29.440 --> 00:34:32.720

U: of making money

928

00:34:30.879 --> 00:34:34.879

U: and nothing else.

929

00:34:32.720 --> 00:34:36.879

U: And that has to change, you know, and I

930

00:34:34.879 --> 00:34:38.800

U: kind of worry about that. And so it's

931

00:34:36.879 --> 00:34:39.839

U: quite possible that, you know, my girls

932

00:34:38.800 --> 00:34:42.159

U: are young,

933

00:34:39.839 --> 00:34:43.359

U: and as they set out into this world

934

00:34:42.159 --> 00:34:45.200

U: and they find,

935

00:34:43.359 --> 00:34:47.440

U: depending on where they go,

936

00:34:45.200 --> 00:34:48.879

U: you may choose at that point to kind of

937

00:34:47.440 --> 00:34:50.560

U: move with them.

938

00:34:48.879 --> 00:34:52.480

U: If we are not able to, in the

939

00:34:50.560 --> 00:34:55.760

U: meanwhile develop

940

00:34:52.480 --> 00:34:59.760

U: kind of a meaningful community

941

00:34:55.760 --> 00:35:01.359

U: that feels right to us.

942

00:34:59.760 --> 00:35:04.160

I: Right, well,

943

00:35:01.359 --> 00:35:06.400

U: I haven't heard this perspective from

944

00:35:04.160 --> 00:35:08.079

I: you know, from many people but

945

00:35:06.400 --> 00:35:10.800

I: it's a very --

946

00:35:08.079 --> 00:35:12.720

I: I think a very realistic.

U: It is.

947

00:35:10.800 --> 00:35:15.119

U: I mean, yeah, and I think like with most

948

00:35:12.720 --> 00:35:18.160

U: of the arts and culture work that we do,

949

00:35:15.119 --> 00:35:19.760

U: yes, people don't sense, have a sense

950

00:35:18.160 --> 00:35:21.680

U: of urgency. And this is the other thing

951

00:35:19.760 --> 00:35:22.640

U: I'm trying to articulate,

952

00:35:21.680 --> 00:35:25.119

U: is

953

00:35:22.640 --> 00:35:27.760

U: you know, belonging may be viewed on

954

00:35:25.119 --> 00:35:29.920

U: Maslow's hierarchy as a third order,

955

00:35:27.760 --> 00:35:32.079

U: right: food, clothing, shelter, you know,

956

00:35:29.920 --> 00:35:33.760

U: belonging is not first order.

957

00:35:32.079 --> 00:35:35.760

U: But I think there's a fallacy there. I

958

00:35:33.760 --> 00:35:38.640

U: think in the short term on an individual

959

00:35:35.760 --> 00:35:40.240

U: level belonging may not be a first order

960

00:35:38.640 --> 00:35:41.839

U: need but as

961

00:35:40.240 --> 00:35:44.560

U: a people

962

00:35:41.839 --> 00:35:46.560

U: if you don't belong, you know, to a place

963

00:35:44.560 --> 00:35:47.599

U: and it can't just be a virtual place, it

964

00:35:46.560 --> 00:35:50.000

U: can't be

965

00:35:47.599 --> 00:35:52.240

U: you know some abstract belonging to an

966

00:35:50.000 --> 00:35:54.960

U: online kind of gamers group, right.

967

00:35:52.240 --> 00:35:56.560

U: Belonging to a place, a physical place, is

968

00:35:54.960 --> 00:35:59.520

U: very important.

969

00:35:56.560 --> 00:36:02.079

U: And all kinds of

970

00:35:59.520 --> 00:36:04.640

U: social diseases can take root if you

971

00:36:02.079 --> 00:36:05.760

U: don't have that sense of belonging.

972

00:36:04.640 --> 00:36:07.599

U: But

973

00:36:05.760 --> 00:36:09.200

U: we have not yet found a way -- people

974

00:36:07.599 --> 00:36:11.760

U: always talk about the ills in Silicon

975

00:36:09.200 --> 00:36:13.680

U: Valley being housing, transportation,

976

00:36:11.760 --> 00:36:15.520

U: gentrification,

977

00:36:13.680 --> 00:36:17.920

U: you know, traffic -- all of these things.

978

00:36:15.520 --> 00:36:20.240

U: Nobody ever talks about the fact that we

979

00:36:17.920 --> 00:36:21.920

U: don't act like a community,

980

00:36:20.240 --> 00:36:23.680

U: right? We're just here attached to this

981

00:36:21.920 --> 00:36:24.640

U: host body, right?

982

00:36:23.680 --> 00:36:27.119

U: And

983

00:36:24.640 --> 00:36:28.720

U: that is a serious problem. That is a

984

00:36:27.119 --> 00:36:30.800

U: problem because you know what's going to



985

00:36:28.720 --> 00:36:32.400

U: happen in a very practical way is people

986

00:36:30.800 --> 00:36:34.960

U: are not going to want to come here.

987

00:36:32.400 --> 00:36:36.400

U: And now with Covid people have proven

988

00:36:34.960 --> 00:36:37.280

U: that you don't need to physically be

989

00:36:36.400 --> 00:36:38.400

U: here to get

990

00:36:37.280 --> 00:36:41.599

U: jobs done,

991

00:36:38.400 --> 00:36:43.440

U: right? So what is it that --

992

00:36:41.599 --> 00:36:44.960

U: The sense of community comes from all

993

00:36:43.440 --> 00:36:47.760

U: those things. And so

994

00:36:44.960 --> 00:36:49.760

U: in my work, trying to kind of further the

995

00:36:47.760 --> 00:36:52.480

U: sense of belonging through

996

00:36:49.760 --> 00:36:54.560

U: you know dialogue and arts. It's very

997

00:36:52.480 --> 00:36:57.520

U: challenging because we don't get the

998

00:36:54.560 --> 00:36:59.760

U: funding we need, because it's not seen as

999

00:36:57.520 --> 00:37:02.320

U: a first order need. But my point is if

1000

00:36:59.760 --> 00:37:03.119

U: you -- let's say you had a magic wand and

1001

00:37:02.320 --> 00:37:05.520

U: you

1002

00:37:03.119 --> 00:37:07.760

U: were able to wave that wand and you took

1003

00:37:05.520 --> 00:37:08.960

U: care of housing, you took care of traffic,

1004

00:37:07.760 --> 00:37:11.280

U: and you took care of all the other

1005

00:37:08.960 --> 00:37:13.839

U: things that you identified as pressing

1006

00:37:11.280 --> 00:37:16.079

U: needs, you would still not find this

1007

00:37:13.839 --> 00:37:18.720

U: place livable because you'd be missing

1008

00:37:16.079 --> 00:37:20.160

U: the key thing that makes it a community,

1009

00:37:18.720 --> 00:37:22.320

U: right? Because you've already priced out,

1010

00:37:20.160 --> 00:37:24.000

U: you know, your arts and you don't

1011

00:37:22.320 --> 00:37:25.760

U: value it. You just don't learn how to

1012

00:37:24.000 --> 00:37:27.920

U: live together. And

1013

00:37:25.760 --> 00:37:29.520

U: so I see that as a big fear which is why

1014

00:37:27.920 --> 00:37:31.359

U: I'm kind of, you know, redoubling my

1015

00:37:29.520 --> 00:37:33.599

U: efforts to strengthen,

1016

00:37:31.359 --> 00:37:36.079

U: to actually get people to recognize

1017

00:37:33.599 --> 00:37:37.680

U: that this is a problem,

1018

00:37:36.079 --> 00:37:39.920

U: right? When arts and culture is not just

1019

00:37:37.680 --> 00:37:42.320

U: a cherry on top of a cake, it needs to be

1020

00:37:39.920 --> 00:37:43.280

U: baked into the cake.

I: Yes.

1021

00:37:42.320 --> 00:37:45.359

I: Yes.

1022

00:37:43.280 --> 00:37:47.200

I: Correct, yes. Thank you, thanks a lot, Usha,

1023

00:37:45.359 --> 00:37:49.200

I: for this wonderful

1024

00:37:47.200 --> 00:37:51.280

I: interview, and the perspectives that

1025

00:37:49.200 --> 00:37:52.880

I: you have shared about being Desi

1026

00:37:51.280 --> 00:37:54.800

I: here. So I'm going to stop --

1027

00:37:52.880 --> 00:37:59.040

U: Yes, yes.

1028

00:37:54.800 --> 00:37:59.040

I: I want to stop the recording.