

Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History

Jay Raman Interview

1

00:00:00.960 --> 00:00:02.840

Interviewer (I): Good morning.

Jay Raman (JR): Good morning.

2

00:00:03.060 --> 00:00:07.900

I: I'm from San Jose State University's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. library,

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00:00:07.900 --> 00:00:14.840

I: and we are beginning to interview for 'Desis of Silicon Valley Speak: An Oral History'.

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00:00:15.120 --> 00:00:20.120

I: So thank you for your time and we would like to start with

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00:00:20.220 --> 00:00:26.820

I: with your introduction. So, tell us something about yourself and describe your journey up until now.

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00:00:27.700 --> 00:00:29.700

JR: My name is Jay Raman.

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00:00:30.760 --> 00:00:31.480

JR:

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00:00:31.840 --> 00:00:35.800

JR: Sorry for my American pronunciation. My name is Jay Raman.

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00:00:36.140 --> 00:00:36.640

I: Mhm.

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00:00:36.640 --> 00:00:39.160

JR: I have been in this country since 1997.

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00:00:40.000 --> 00:00:43.980

I: Mhm

JR: I went to a hotel school back in 1985.

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00:00:44.520 --> 00:00:46.740

JR: 1982 to 85, three years of

13

00:00:47.440 --> 00:00:49.120

JR: degree from

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00:00:49.120 --> 00:00:53.000

JR: Institute of Hotel Management in Chennai in India.

I: Mhm.

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00:00:53.000 --> 00:00:54.540

JR: I used to work with various

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00:00:55.560 --> 00:00:57.400

JR: hotel chains in India.

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00:00:57.740 --> 00:00:58.240

I: Mhm.

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00:00:58.480 --> 00:01:02.300

JR: I used to work for the welcome group. I used to work for the Taj.

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00:01:03.360 --> 00:01:10.060

JR: I used to work for the Indian government ITBC. Then I came here in 1997.

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00:01:10.360 --> 00:01:11.140

I: Mhm.

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00:01:11.140 --> 00:01:15.360

JR: When I came here in 1997, I did not

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00:01:16.140 --> 00:01:20.440

JR: work for the --- in the hospitality business.

I: Mhm.

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00:01:20.440 --> 00:01:22.480

JR: I came here as a software engineer.

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00:01:23.740 --> 00:01:24.240

I: Okay.

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00:01:24.700 --> 00:01:28.400

JR: So I worked for Farmers Insurance for four years-

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00:01:28.400 --> 00:01:30.820

I: Okay.

JR: then once I got my green card

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00:01:31.360 --> 00:01:32.440

JR: I

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00:01:33.780 --> 00:01:37.540

JR: decided I want to do something in which

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00:01:39.860 --> 00:01:40.860

JR: I have the expertise.

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00:01:41.660 --> 00:01:42.900

I: Mhm

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00:01:43.420 --> 00:01:47.820

JR: So I started my first restaurant in Sacramento

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00:01:47.940 --> 00:01:53.080

JR: back in 2008. We just completed 12 years.

I: Wow. That's great.

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00:01:53.800 --> 00:02:00.680

JR: Yeah, after being - after running this restaurant for 10 years I said, "Let me open a second one."

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00:02:00.680 --> 00:02:01.840

I: Mhm.

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00:02:02.340 --> 00:02:06.520

JR: Not a-not a - it was not a very exciting experience opening the second one

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00:02:06.520 --> 00:02:09.820

JR: for some reason it did not do well.

I: Okay.

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00:02:10.740 --> 00:02:13.400

JR: So we didn't know what to do with this restaurant.

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00:02:14.880 --> 00:02:17.000

I: Mhm.

JR: So closing down

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00:02:17.000 --> 00:02:19.640

JR: and laying off everyone was not the option.

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00:02:19.640 --> 00:02:20.500

I: Sure.

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00:02:21.300 --> 00:02:22.480

JR: So we decided...

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00:02:23.560 --> 00:02:27.040

JR: we just had to do some kind of an introspection.

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00:02:28.520 --> 00:02:34.480

JR: And we said, "Okay, if the restaurant is not doing well, what is the problem? Is it the food?
No.

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00:02:36.020 --> 00:02:42.500

JR: Is it the service? No. Then what is the problem? We just don't have customers. Maybe it's
the location."

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00:02:43.600 --> 00:02:44.100

I: Hmm.

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00:02:44.100 --> 00:02:46.440

JR: Then what we said, "Okay.

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00:02:46.440 --> 00:02:53.080

JR: if we can physically - if it is possible to uproot this restaurant completely and

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00:02:53.440 --> 00:02:56.780

JR: put it in the Bay Area, what are the chances of success?"

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00:02:57.360 --> 00:02:58.600

I: Mhm.

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00:02:58.600 --> 00:03:02.680

JR: It would do phenomenally well. I can tell - I can visualize that.

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00:03:03.420 --> 00:03:05.600

JR: But, unfortunately, we have

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00:03:06.420 --> 00:03:09.860

JR: a few more years of lease left.

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00:03:10.960 --> 00:03:14.100

JR: And uprooting ourselves was not the practical solution.

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00:03:14.500 --> 00:03:15.400

I: Mhm.

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00:03:15.400 --> 00:03:19.640

JR: So we said, "Okay. Let's be here, but take our food to the Bay Area.

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00:03:20.460 --> 00:03:21.220

I: Hmm

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00:03:21.580 --> 00:03:23.280

JR: That is how ---

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00:03:23.420 --> 00:03:26.060

JR: the concept of Mylapore Express was born.

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00:03:28.120 --> 00:03:30.120

JR: So-

I: Why did you call it Mylapore Express?

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00:03:30.640 --> 00:03:34.220

JR: I'm sorry.

I: Why did you call it Mylapore Express?

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00:03:34.220 --> 00:03:37.420

JR: Mylapore is the name of the restaurant. Express is our ---

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00:03:37.660 --> 00:03:44.120

JR: division which ships from here. Basically, we ship from here to all parts of the country now.

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00:03:44.520 --> 00:03:46.960

I: Mhm, Mhm. And why is it Mylapore?

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00:03:47.340 --> 00:03:49.900

JR: Mylapore is a place in Chennai

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00:03:49.900 --> 00:03:50.940

I: Mhm.

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00:03:50.940 --> 00:03:52.940

JR: where

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00:03:53.520 --> 00:03:57.520

JR: if you know the place Mylapore - you're from Calcutta, right? You're from

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00:03:57.520 --> 00:03:59.480

I: Yes

JR: Yeah, so...

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00:03:59.480 --> 00:04:02.200

JR:

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00:04:03.520 --> 00:04:06.620

JR: There's a place called Kali Ghat, right?

I: Yes

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00:04:06.620 --> 00:04:07.360

JR: Right.

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00:04:07.440 --> 00:04:08.880

JR: So...

73

00:04:08.880 --> 00:04:13.440

JR: Mylapore is a place in Chennai, and if you know about Mylapore,

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00:04:13.440 --> 00:04:16.320

JR: you can very well relate to the kind of food that we serve.

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00:04:16.860 --> 00:04:18.420

I: Okay.

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00:04:18.420 --> 00:04:22.410

JR: Mylapore is very very well known for its - for a lot of reasons.

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00:04:23.340 --> 00:04:26.580

I: Mhm.

JR: So if you ask my hundred-year-old grandmother,

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00:04:26.580 --> 00:04:27.400

I: Mhm.

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00:04:27.400 --> 00:04:34.020

JR: She will only remember Mylapore for the temple that is there, which has been there for like 1500 years.

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00:04:34.020 --> 00:04:34.820

I: Okay.

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00:04:35.570 --> 00:04:37.400

JR: Iconic.

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00:04:37.400 --> 00:04:40.260

JR: If you ask my mom

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00:04:41.380 --> 00:04:43.080

JR: she will talk about

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00:04:43.080 --> 00:04:48.060

JR: that there is a store there called Giri Trading Agency, which is very very famous among people.

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00:04:48.060 --> 00:04:53.480

JR: She'll only talk about that because they sell a lot of stuff relating to "pooja" [sanskrit: ceremonial worship] and

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00:04:53.620 --> 00:05:00.120

JR: devotional care. Videos and cassettes and - for self-improvement and self-realization and stuff like that.

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00:05:00.380 --> 00:05:01.080

I: Mhm.

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00:05:01.720 --> 00:05:03.320

JR: And if you talk to my wife,

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00:05:03.320 --> 00:05:06.080

JR: she will only think about - she will not think about anything else -

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00:05:06.080 --> 00:05:09.280

JR: she will only think about the amazing silk sari stores you have there.

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00:05:09.460 --> 00:05:10.340

I: Mhm.

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00:05:10.700 --> 00:05:12.200

JR: If you talk to my daughter,

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00:05:12.320 --> 00:05:13.640

JR: She will only think about

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00:05:13.640 --> 00:05:18.700

JR: the inexpensive stuff that you can get there for your ears and nose and whatnot. Like

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00:05:18.800 --> 00:05:19.980

JR: decking yourself up.

96

00:05:19.980 --> 00:05:20.680

I: Uh-huh.

97

00:05:20.720 --> 00:05:24.940

JR: If you ask somebody like me, who's like a hardcore into the food business,

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00:05:24.940 --> 00:05:27.920

JR: I'll only talk about the amazing restaurants out there in that area.

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00:05:27.920 --> 00:05:28.840

I: Okay.

100

00:05:29.160 --> 00:05:31.380

JR: So Mylapore, if you know...

101

00:05:33.340 --> 00:05:40.360

JR: If you ask anybody that knows food, Mylapore brings about memories of amazing vegetarian food.

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00:05:40.940 --> 00:05:41.960

I: Okay.

103

00:05:42.480 --> 00:05:47.500

JR: It's very famous for so many so many so many so many iconic restaurants which are like

104

00:05:48.940 --> 00:05:50.860

JR: hole-in-the-wall places.

105

00:05:50.860 --> 00:05:54.320

I: Okay. Mhm.

JR: There is like a 300 square foot

106

00:05:54.880 --> 00:05:57.660

JR: restaurant. We can barely see 10 people there, okay.

107

00:05:57.770 --> 00:06:01.420

I: Hmm,

JR: But there are people lining up from 10 o'clock in the morning

108

00:06:01.420 --> 00:06:03.789

JR: and they'll probably get to eat around 12 o'clock.

109

00:06:04.000 --> 00:06:06.040

I: Oh, wow.

JR: They don't mind waiting for 2 hours.

110

00:06:06.040 --> 00:06:08.700

I: Hmm

JR: The food is so amazing out there.

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00:06:09.040 --> 00:06:11.440

I: Okay. That's great.

JR: They don't even have computers.

112

00:06:11.440 --> 00:06:14.460

JR: They will just simply write using a chalk on a slate

113

00:06:14.460 --> 00:06:17.500

JR: and show you what the amount is. You just pay cash and walk out.

114

00:06:17.500 --> 00:06:18.760

I: I see.

115

00:06:18.770 --> 00:06:20.659

JR: There's no air conditioning.

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00:06:20.660 --> 00:06:21.600

I: Mokay.

117

00:06:21.860 --> 00:06:25.920

JR: So Mylapore - basically it reminds people of

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00:06:26.840 --> 00:06:28.560

JR: amazing vegetarian food.

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00:06:28.560 --> 00:06:29.440

I: Okay.

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00:06:29.940 --> 00:06:32.500

JR: We decided to go vegetarian because

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00:06:34.540 --> 00:06:36.960

JR: non-vegetarian restaurants are dime a dozen.

122

00:06:38.000 --> 00:06:42.200

I: Hmm

JR: You can count - today, I am

123

00:06:42.200 --> 00:06:45.920

JR: one among the two vegetarian restaurants in the entire Sacramento area.

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00:06:47.160 --> 00:06:51.140

I: Oh, really.

JR: If you-if you need vegetarian food you have to travel 150 miles.

125

00:06:51.560 --> 00:06:55.540

JR: But when I started, 10 years ago or 12 years ago,

126

00:06:55.540 --> 00:06:57.920

JR: I was the only vegetarian restaurant and even now

127

00:06:57.920 --> 00:07:00.420

JR: there are only like two vegetarian restaurants including myself.

128

00:07:01.140 --> 00:07:01.780

I: Hm.

129

00:07:02.080 --> 00:07:03.340

JR: So

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00:07:03.340 --> 00:07:05.560

JR: I always like to

131

00:07:05.960 --> 00:07:07.960

JR: go with the less

132

00:07:08.390 --> 00:07:09.800

JR: trodden path.

133

00:07:09.800 --> 00:07:13.360

I: Hmm.

JR: I'd rather be a trailblazer

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00:07:14.180 --> 00:07:16.010

JR: than a follower.

135

00:07:16.010 --> 00:07:17.020

I: Okay.

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00:07:17.020 --> 00:07:20.780

JR: The advantages of getting into something early is phenomenal.

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00:07:20.780 --> 00:07:21.580

I: Yes.

138

00:07:21.940 --> 00:07:25.720

I: That is a perfect segue to my next question.

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00:07:25.720 --> 00:07:30.180

I: So in that sense of being a trailblazer and being the first one -

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00:07:30.180 --> 00:07:32.940

I: in that context, what does Silicon Valley mean to you?

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00:07:36.080 --> 00:07:38.080

JR: Silicon Valley means

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00:07:38.080 --> 00:07:39.860

JR:

143

00:07:39.860 --> 00:07:41.180

JR: startups...

I: Mhm.

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00:07:41.180 --> 00:07:44.220

JR: and a humongous opportunity.

I: Hmm.

145

00:07:45.470 --> 00:07:48.730

JR: I say this because -- why are we successful today?

146

00:07:49.520 --> 00:07:53.580

JR: Mylapore Express is only like 18 months old, 19 months old

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00:07:53.580 --> 00:07:54.440

I: Hmm.

148

00:07:54.440 --> 00:07:59.480

JR: We - our revenues are at par or even higher than my

149

00:07:59.900 --> 00:08:02.560

JR: restaurant which has been in existence for 12 years.

150

00:08:02.560 --> 00:08:03.980

I: Oh wow. Hmm.

151

00:08:03.980 --> 00:08:09.680

JR: What took 12 years to achieve, we did that in 18 months.

152

00:08:10.440 --> 00:08:11.220

I: Hmm.

153

00:08:11.920 --> 00:08:15.540

JR: And our customer base is not even here in Sacramento. They're all in the Bay Area.

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00:08:16.360 --> 00:08:17.680

I: Hmm.

155

00:08:17.680 --> 00:08:21.300

JR: So, again, you have to be a little ---

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00:08:21.760 --> 00:08:24.060

JR: doing some kind of a thinking out-of-the-box.

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00:08:24.720 --> 00:08:25.460

I: Mhm.

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00:08:26.840 --> 00:08:27.480

I: And that's what you --

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00:08:27.480 --> 00:08:31.760

JR: Every problem, if you realize, every problem in this world

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00:08:32.560 --> 00:08:38.140

JR: gives you a huge opportunity to be successful. You can simply say it's a problem and say, "You know what?

161

00:08:38.140 --> 00:08:42.660

JR: I'm not doing this." Or you can say, "It's a problem, and let me find a solution for that."

162

00:08:43.780 --> 00:08:44.760

I: Mhm.

163

00:08:44.760 --> 00:08:49.560

JR: All the businesses that thought of problems as an opportunity like Uber

164

00:08:49.560 --> 00:08:50.380

I: Hmm.

165

00:08:50.380 --> 00:08:52.960

JR: Amazon right? Netflix.

166

00:08:53.440 --> 00:08:56.140

JR: They're all humongously successful. Hugely successful.

167

00:08:57.380 --> 00:09:02.460

JR: So look at the life of a typical Desi couple in the Bay Area, all right.

168

00:09:03.720 --> 00:09:07.580

JR: To own a home, you need to shell out one million or above.

169

00:09:07.920 --> 00:09:09.720

JR: Is that true?

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00:09:09.730 --> 00:09:12.880

I: Yeah. Mhm.

JR: A million dollar home means

171

00:09:12.880 --> 00:09:17.040

JR: about 8 to 10 thousand dollars in mortgage, assuming a 15% down payment.

172

00:09:17.860 --> 00:09:18.580

I: Hmm.

173

00:09:19.300 --> 00:09:23.120

JR: So, if you want to pay a mortgage of 8 to 10 thousand dollars a month,

174

00:09:24.880 --> 00:09:30.580

JR: almost the entire wife's salary and the husband's - half of the husband's salary goes towards that.

175

00:09:32.840 --> 00:09:35.080

JR: What are you left to eat with, right?

176

00:09:35.080 --> 00:09:37.480

JR: Now, you have children.

177

00:09:39.540 --> 00:09:43.540

JR: Indian kids are smart. The parents like to challenge them a lot.

178

00:09:44.740 --> 00:09:50.180

JR: They want them to be in basketball, piano, karate, tennis, soccer, whatnot,

179

00:09:50.640 --> 00:09:54.320

JR: and when you do all these extracurricular activities and

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00:09:54.820 --> 00:09:58.420

JR: also take care of your work and come back home, you are dead tired.

181

00:09:59.520 --> 00:10:00.540

JR: You

182

00:10:00.540 --> 00:10:02.680

JR: want to eat something healthy,

183

00:10:02.880 --> 00:10:08.460

JR: and going to a restaurant and buying that restaurant food every day is not working out well

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00:10:08.460 --> 00:10:09.840

JR: because the quality is terrible.

185

00:10:11.280 --> 00:10:15.460

JR: So, you end up hiring nannies who are highly

186

00:10:16.360 --> 00:10:18.020

JR: undependable.

187

00:10:19.480 --> 00:10:23.140

JR: Sometimes they show up. Sometimes they don't. You don't know how good they are.

188

00:10:23.140 --> 00:10:26.040

JR: You don't fingerprint them. You don't do a background check.

189

00:10:26.960 --> 00:10:28.940

JR: They come in. They charge you by the hour.

190

00:10:28.940 --> 00:10:32.000

JR: They ask you all kinds of questions. "Hey where is - "Namak kahan hai?" [Hindi: where is the salt]

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00:10:32.000 --> 00:10:33.620

JR: Where is "haldi"? [Hindi: turmeric] Where is chilli powder?"

192

00:10:33.620 --> 00:10:37.880

JR: You feel that you-you can do it yourself if they don't ask all these questions, right?

193

00:10:38.860 --> 00:10:39.640

I: Hmm.

194

00:10:40.160 --> 00:10:44.220

JR: And you - at the end of the day, you still buy your own vegetables. It's costing you money.

195

00:10:44.220 --> 00:10:46.000

JR: You're paying somebody to cook it for you.

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00:10:46.449 --> 00:10:47.740

JR: What happens is

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00:10:47.740 --> 00:10:49.260

JR: typically a husband and wife

198

00:10:49.260 --> 00:10:53.120

JR: they get inside the kitchen, and they start cooking on a Saturday and Sunday

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00:10:53.500 --> 00:10:55.740

JR: and portion them out and put it in the fridge.

200

00:10:57.140 --> 00:11:01.060

JR: So Monday to Friday, the corporate world sucks the blood out of you.

201

00:11:01.500 --> 00:11:04.300

JR: On Saturday and Sunday, you don't have a life. You still end up cooking.

202

00:11:04.880 --> 00:11:07.740

JR: So there - that's where Mylapore Express comes in.

203

00:11:09.220 --> 00:11:12.980

JR: We make people productive. Period.

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00:11:14.900 --> 00:11:18.100

JR: You can use that word productive in any sense you feel like.

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00:11:18.640 --> 00:11:21.600

JR: You can say - you can be more productive at work.

206

00:11:22.540 --> 00:11:26.020

JR: You can be productive as far as taking care of your health.

207

00:11:26.700 --> 00:11:30.180

JR: You can be productive as far as pursuing a passion of yours.

208

00:11:30.680 --> 00:11:34.060

JR: We free up - free you up from kitchen time.

209

00:11:34.720 --> 00:11:35.340

I: Hmm.

210

00:11:35.620 --> 00:11:40.640

JR: We cook food that comes really really close to what your mom makes.

211

00:11:42.520 --> 00:11:44.200

JR: The only missing ingredient is

212

00:11:44.720 --> 00:11:46.100

JR: love and affection.

213

00:11:47.000 --> 00:11:50.880

JR: But we do put in lot of love and affection too.

I: Sure. Yeah.

214

00:11:50.880 --> 00:11:51.500

JR: Okay.

215

00:11:51.920 --> 00:11:54.880

JR: Less in salt. Less in oil. Less in masala [Hindi: spices].

216

00:11:56.480 --> 00:11:59.080

JR: Less in cream. Healthy.

217

00:12:00.140 --> 00:12:01.080

JR: And...

218

00:12:01.140 --> 00:12:03.460

JR: top-notch quality with the best ingredients.

219

00:12:03.780 --> 00:12:07.880

JR: We use only organic virgin coconut oil from-from Costco for all our South Indian food

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00:12:08.340 --> 00:12:08.860

I: Hmm.

221

00:12:08.860 --> 00:12:10.940

JR: North Indian food is all rice bran oil.

222

00:12:11.280 --> 00:12:12.460

JR: It's all expensive.

223

00:12:12.920 --> 00:12:14.280

JR: But, my customers deserve it.

224

00:12:14.820 --> 00:12:15.420

I: Hmm.

225

00:12:15.420 --> 00:12:18.620

I: So I will just bring you - I mean, I think you're

226

00:12:18.660 --> 00:12:22.280

I: saying what I would talk about in my next questions.

227

00:12:22.760 --> 00:12:29.480

I: So, for example, like, do you identify yourself as a Desi of Silicon Valley, broadly speaking?

228

00:12:29.840 --> 00:12:33.040

I: And what does that mean to you in terms of what you have been telling me?

229

00:12:33.560 --> 00:12:37.700

JR: 99.9 percent of my customers are Desi. I serve the Desi market. Yes.

230

00:12:37.700 --> 00:12:38.440

I: Mhm.

231

00:12:41.000 --> 00:12:44.740

JR: So I'm a Desi trying to fill in a Desi need.

232

00:12:45.220 --> 00:12:45.960

I: Mhm.

233

00:12:49.980 --> 00:12:53.860

I: And what does being Desi mean in Silicon Valley?

234

00:12:57.040 --> 00:13:00.920

I: From [unclear]-

JR: Being Desi means to me...

235

00:13:03.160 --> 00:13:05.160

JR: There is a Desi culture.

236

00:13:05.500 --> 00:13:09.920

I: Mhm

JR: Desi way of doing things which are being forgotten.

237

00:13:09.920 --> 00:13:13.740

JR: Bringing back our own cultural roots. For example, this Diwali.

238

00:13:14.520 --> 00:13:15.640

I: Mhm.

239

00:13:16.440 --> 00:13:19.520

JR: I want to send you the comments that was sent by somebody the other day.

240

00:13:19.520 --> 00:13:21.140

JR: It is actually on my Facebook page.

241

00:13:21.600 --> 00:13:22.220

I: Mhm.

242

00:13:22.220 --> 00:13:26.960

JR: You should - you should try to look at my facebook page: Mylapore Express Bay Area.

243

00:13:27.480 --> 00:13:28.200

I : Mhm.

244

00:13:28.200 --> 00:13:33.840

JR: So we literally put everything in that. Every single comment of my customers features there.

245

00:13:34.380 --> 00:13:35.019

I: Mhm.

246

00:13:35.020 --> 00:13:38.660

JR: So, I remember Diwali back

247

00:13:39.600 --> 00:13:45.100

JR: 40 years ago, totally different . We - I wouldn't be able to sleep the previous night.

248

00:13:45.480 --> 00:13:49.160

JR: I'm only thinking about getting up in the morning and doing all those wonderful things, right?

249

00:13:49.520 --> 00:13:50.040

I: Hmm.

250

00:13:50.340 --> 00:13:51.420

JR: So

251

00:13:51.429 --> 00:13:54.329

JR: there are certain things in South India we do which

252

00:13:55.200 --> 00:13:57.700

JR: people don't do when they come to America.

253

00:13:58.260 --> 00:14:00.260

JR: So I brought all those things.

254

00:14:02.640 --> 00:14:04.320

I: Can you give an example?

255

00:14:04.740 --> 00:14:08.140

JR: For example, on Diwali day,

256

00:14:08.460 --> 00:14:13.120

JR: your tummy gets totally messed up because everywhere you go you are eating sweets and snacks.

257

00:14:13.120 --> 00:14:13.620

I: [laughs]

258

00:14:13.620 --> 00:14:17.200

JR: Every house you go, they offer you something what they make, right?

259

00:14:17.200 --> 00:14:18.040

I: Yeah.

260

00:14:18.040 --> 00:14:21.380

JR: Typically on Diwali day the first thing my parents would give me is

261

00:14:21.940 --> 00:14:24.540

JR: a homemade blend of medicine, okay,

262

00:14:25.020 --> 00:14:28.640

JR: which is your shield against eating all that stuff.

263

00:14:29.480 --> 00:14:30.480

I: Hm.

264

00:14:30.480 --> 00:14:33.800

JR: We don't get that here. I got it from India for these people.

265

00:14:34.340 --> 00:14:35.440

I: Hmm.

266

00:14:36.560 --> 00:14:38.880

JR: So, back home

267

00:14:38.880 --> 00:14:40.650

JR: ---

268

00:14:40.650 --> 00:14:44.090

JR: there are magazines which we grew up with.

269

00:14:45.620 --> 00:14:47.840

JR: Regional magazines which

270

00:14:48.620 --> 00:14:49.120

JR: ---

271

00:14:49.120 --> 00:14:55.120

JR: The Diwali publication of that magazine is like a big volume, you know? Not that regular thin ones.

272

00:14:55.290 --> 00:14:57.290

JR: It's this - pretty big.

273

00:14:57.810 --> 00:15:01.070

JR: Normally like 400, 500 pages, right?

I: Mhm.

274

00:15:01.320 --> 00:15:07.080

JR: So we used to fight at home, who gets to read what first. I brought all those magazines for these people.

275

00:15:08.120 --> 00:15:09.060

I: Hmm. Ok.

276

00:15:09.060 --> 00:15:15.480

JR: You know what people said? My mom was so happy that she's celebrating Diwali

277

00:15:17.220 --> 00:15:22.180

JR: in America the Indian way, the traditional way, "Thank you for doing this."

278

00:15:22.340 --> 00:15:23.240

I: Hmm.

279

00:15:24.420 --> 00:15:30.100

JR: Even the sweets that I got from here are made by a very famous caterer in India.

280

00:15:31.820 --> 00:15:33.560

JR: Okay. He

281

00:15:33.570 --> 00:15:34.950

JR: has a

282

00:15:34.950 --> 00:15:40.580

JR: 20,000 square foot place where he employs like 100 different cooks and makes those sweets.

283

00:15:40.580 --> 00:15:42.660

JR: And the first batch came to us.

284

00:15:42.960 --> 00:15:43.900

I: Okay.

285

00:15:44.300 --> 00:15:45.180

I: Mhm.

286

00:15:45.180 --> 00:15:50.810

JR: So, the people here felt like they were actually celebrating Diwali in India.

287

00:15:50.810 --> 00:15:55.039

JR: The only thing missing was the fireworks and stuff like that, right?

288

00:15:55.040 --> 00:15:58.580

JR: I was able to take care of the food and the whole experience.

289

00:15:59.100 --> 00:16:01.100

JR: For them we took care of it.

290

00:16:01.380 --> 00:16:03.380

I: That's great. Wonderful.

291

00:16:03.510 --> 00:16:08.330

I: So that again ties into my next question. So why do you think

292

00:16:09.060 --> 00:16:12.440

I: Desi culture is so vibrant in Silicon Valley?

293

00:16:14.860 --> 00:16:21.220

JR: See, we are a very confused set of people. We want to work in America

294

00:16:21.220 --> 00:16:22.940

JR: and we want to be

295

00:16:22.980 --> 00:16:26.660

JR: American in every way, but we don't want to lose our Indian identity.

296

00:16:27.960 --> 00:16:28.660

I: Mhm.

297

00:16:29.100 --> 00:16:30.720

JR. So...

298

00:16:30.729 --> 00:16:31.989

JR: to me

299

00:16:31.989 --> 00:16:33.989

JR: the Indian culture dates

300

00:16:34.080 --> 00:16:41.440

JR: several thousands of years back, tens of thousands of years back, and we had - we were so so so advanced

301

00:16:41.440 --> 00:16:43.179

JR: in everything.

302

00:16:43.500 --> 00:16:49.540

JR: At some point, we all forgot about our roots, and we started doing things the Western way.

303

00:16:49.720 --> 00:16:52.040

JR: Now the world is realizing that

304

00:16:52.240 --> 00:16:54.800

JR: our ancestors did everything right.

305

00:16:55.300 --> 00:17:00.740

JR: And we want to go back to doing the same way we were doing things several hundreds of years ago.

306

00:17:02.480 --> 00:17:05.640

JR: So we want to go back, and we want to tell our children "You know what?

307

00:17:05.920 --> 00:17:13.040

JR: We are from a culture that-that did all these things, and that's the way the entire world is going today."

308

00:17:14.240 --> 00:17:18.340

JR: But a few years ago, a few decades ago, we were all completely

309

00:17:18.940 --> 00:17:21.980

JR: blindsided by how good our culture was.

310

00:17:23.060 --> 00:17:27.320

JR: I remember taking cloth bags with my mom to the grocery store.

311

00:17:27.840 --> 00:17:33.440

JR: We walking three, four miles to the grocery store. Then came plastic. Now everybody's saying, "OK.

312

00:17:33.440 --> 00:17:37.400

JR: Let's go back to bringing your own bags." And they're selling the - they made an industry out of it.

313

00:17:37.400 --> 00:17:39.860

JR: They-they're selling these bags for like \$1.

314

00:17:40.420 --> 00:17:41.880

JR: Right?

I: Hmm.

315

00:17:41.880 --> 00:17:42.540

JR: [laughs]

316

00:17:42.540 --> 00:17:45.640

JR: And branding them with Safeway and Whole Foods and whatnot and say,

317

00:17:45.640 --> 00:17:47.594

JR: "You know what bring these bags next time you come,

318

00:17:47.594 --> 00:17:49.620

JR: otherwise we are- we're going to charge you for the bag."

319

00:17:50.440 --> 00:17:52.160

JR: But this is how we were.

320

00:17:52.540 --> 00:17:54.540

JR: Right?

I: Yeah.

321

00:17:54.980 --> 00:17:57.200

JR: Recycling. We invented recycling!

322

00:17:57.660 --> 00:17:59.940

JR: Recycling was invented by Indians.

323

00:18:01.060 --> 00:18:04.000

JR: Every grocery store you go, they use the old

324

00:18:04.060 --> 00:18:06.980

JR: newspapers, you know? You've seen that right?

325

00:18:07.160 --> 00:18:07.960

I: Yes.

326

00:18:07.980 --> 00:18:13.320

JR: To wrap your --- to package your "daals" [Hindi: lentils], and rice and salt and sugar and everything

327

00:18:13.320 --> 00:18:15.140

JR: with those jute

328

00:18:15.160 --> 00:18:16.740

JR: threads, right?

329

00:18:16.740 --> 00:18:17.840

I: Mhm.

330

00:18:18.140 --> 00:18:23.940

JR: Corporate Western world came in. They said, "Ok. We are pre-packaging in plastic things and giving it to you."

331

00:18:25.380 --> 00:18:30.020

JR: So are we not going back to what we were doing several decades ago now?

332

00:18:30.320 --> 00:18:30.920

I: Hmm.

333

00:18:32.120 --> 00:18:34.200

JR: So ginger, garlic, turmeric...

334

00:18:35.160 --> 00:18:40.120

JR: We had everything! We had in my house, one day of fasting for everybody.

335

00:18:41.080 --> 00:18:42.940

JR: Now we're talking about fasting today.

336

00:18:42.940 --> 00:18:47.280

JR: Indian culture - we knew about the importance of fasting so many hundreds of years ago.

337

00:18:49.240 --> 00:18:51.600

JR: My grandma only eats once a day,

338

00:18:51.600 --> 00:18:55.280

JR: and she doesn't eat for an entire day on "Ekadasi day" [11th lunar day by Hindu calendar].

339

00:18:58.780 --> 00:19:05.100

JR: So I'm happy to bring back Indian culture to Indian people, the Indian way of doing things, Indian food

340

00:19:05.120 --> 00:19:09.480

JR: to most of my dishes that you see in in Mylapore Express

341

00:19:10.420 --> 00:19:12.880

JR: are not available in any restaurants.

342

00:19:14.800 --> 00:19:16.800

JR: That is why they like it.

343

00:19:17.460 --> 00:19:19.689

I: Hm.

JR: This morning somebody put a post. You should-

344

00:19:19.689 --> 00:19:21.800

JR: you should definitely go and look at the Facebook page.

345

00:19:21.800 --> 00:19:23.660

I: Sure.

JR: I highly recommend that you do it.

346

00:19:23.660 --> 00:19:27.280

I: Mhm.

JR: It's called Mylapore Express Bay Area. Okay.

347

00:19:27.280 --> 00:19:28.240

I: Mhm.

348

00:19:28.240 --> 00:19:30.600

JR: This morning somebody said that

349

00:19:30.600 --> 00:19:32.400

JR: "Poricha Kootu [Tamil: mixed vegetables cooked in coconut and lentil curry] was so amazing, Jay.

350

00:19:32.400 --> 00:19:34.780

JR: I wish you can put this in the menu every week."

351

00:19:35.600 --> 00:19:36.780

I: [laughs]

352

00:19:36.780 --> 00:19:41.840

JR: So how many restaurants serve Poricha Kootu? No they don't! They don't even know how to make it.

353

00:19:42.340 --> 00:19:43.320

I: Hmm.

354

00:19:43.320 --> 00:19:48.260

JR: I dig in recipes of yesteryears, handwritten recipes from my mom.

355

00:19:49.080 --> 00:19:50.740

JR: I even post those recipes

356

00:19:50.740 --> 00:19:55.960

JR: with the entire handwritten pictures of how my mom wrote it 45 years ago for me when I went to work.

357

00:19:56.380 --> 00:19:57.480

I: [laughs]

358

00:19:59.380 --> 00:19:59.980

I: Hmm.

359

00:19:59.980 --> 00:20:03.140

JR: I have saved all those recipes. So basically

360

00:20:03.360 --> 00:20:09.040

JR: I'm bringing in those recipes that you cannot see anywhere here. I'm visualizing

361

00:20:09.860 --> 00:20:13.060

JR: an eatery where you can go eat with your hands

362

00:20:13.060 --> 00:20:16.360

JR: and nobody's gonna look at you and say, "What the hell are you doing?" right?

363

00:20:16.560 --> 00:20:17.280

I: [laughs]

364

00:20:17.600 --> 00:20:19.640

JR: Eating with hands, amazing!

365

00:20:20.249 --> 00:20:24.496

JR: Licking your fingers, awesome! We get tricked by all these Western people

366

00:20:24.500 --> 00:20:27.380

JR: eating with forks and spoons and or whatnot.

367

00:20:28.160 --> 00:20:32.980

JR: We eat with all our five senses. You know that right? We look at the food: visual appeal.

368

00:20:33.600 --> 00:20:40.200

JR: We smell the food: sensory appeal, right? We touch the food. How many Americans touch their food?

369

00:20:41.700 --> 00:20:42.960

I: Mhm.

370

00:20:43.780 --> 00:20:47.000

JR: We feel it with all our senses before we even put that in our mouth.

371

00:20:50.380 --> 00:20:52.020

I: Mhm, mhm. You're right.

372

00:20:52.020 --> 00:20:55.560

JR: Indian culture is amazing. I'm so happy to be part of this

373

00:20:55.780 --> 00:20:59.420

JR: journey and bringing this to American people here.

I: Yeah.

374

00:20:59.420 --> 00:21:03.760

JR: Indian - the way we are growing - we're growing at 3 to 4 percent a week.

375

00:21:04.300 --> 00:21:06.300

I: Hmm.

JR: I'm not saying a year.

376

00:21:06.900 --> 00:21:10.500

I: Right.

JR: I'm saying 3 percent a week. That's a lot.

377

00:21:10.500 --> 00:21:13.880

I: You mean the population size?

JR: No, my order size.

378

00:21:13.880 --> 00:21:15.340

I: Your order size, yes. [laughs]

379

00:21:15.340 --> 00:21:19.560

JR: If I do 200 orders this week, I'm doing 206 next week.

I: Wow.

380

00:21:19.560 --> 00:21:24.900

JR: I'm doing 213 the week after. I'm doing 220 the week after. You know what I'm saying?

381

00:21:24.900 --> 00:21:26.560

I: Yeah. Yeah. Mhm.

382

00:21:27.180 --> 00:21:28.120

I: Hm. Great.

383

00:21:28.140 --> 00:21:32.980

I: So you have kind of also addressed what I was going to ask. So how does being Desi

384

00:21:33.000 --> 00:21:36.000

I: help you succeed in your work in Silicon Valley?

385

00:21:37.680 --> 00:21:40.520

JR: You got to differentiate yourself.

I: Hmm, hm.

386

00:21:41.020 --> 00:21:44.680

JR: You are Desi with a difference.

I: Hmm.

387

00:21:45.360 --> 00:21:51.200

JR: If you are a Desi establishment with a difference, yeah --- there's nothing else but success.

388

00:21:52.420 --> 00:21:53.340

I: Mhm.

389

00:21:54.260 --> 00:21:55.200

I: Right.

390

00:21:55.880 --> 00:21:57.140

I: So

391

00:21:57.140 --> 00:22:02.400

I: one more question is - so when you look back at your journey, right, from where you started

392

00:22:02.400 --> 00:22:07.500

I: like with the restaurant business and now the delivery, so when you look back at your journey

393

00:22:07.509 --> 00:22:08.960

I: how do you think

394

00:22:08.960 --> 00:22:10.960

I: Silicon Valley itself

395

00:22:11.540 --> 00:22:14.020

I: influences your identity as a Desi?

396

00:22:14.840 --> 00:22:18.820

JR: See, when you look at all these startups who have started from scratch from out of their garage

397

00:22:18.820 --> 00:22:20.120

JR: and what they are right now,

398

00:22:20.600 --> 00:22:23.900

JR: I feel anything in life is possible. It's a huge

399

00:22:24.740 --> 00:22:29.520

JR: thing to look upon those successful startups based in the Bay Area.

400

00:22:30.120 --> 00:22:30.740

I: Mhm.

401

00:22:30.740 --> 00:22:35.560

JR: When somebody can start something like Amazon, can be hugely popular.

402

00:22:35.560 --> 00:22:39.000

JR: I'm visualizing myself as the Amazon of Desi food.

403

00:22:39.320 --> 00:22:40.620

I: Hmm. Okay.

404

00:22:40.640 --> 00:22:42.640

JR: It is

405

00:22:42.800 --> 00:22:44.320

JR: a no-brainer.

406

00:22:44.320 --> 00:22:49.380

JR: There's no need for people to cook. Let me put it this way. It's stupid to cook at home.

407

00:22:49.900 --> 00:22:52.160

JR: Unless you have something like

408

00:22:52.160 --> 00:22:56.500

JR: You really love enjoy cooking and that's your passion and blah blah blah.

409

00:22:56.780 --> 00:23:00.700

JR: Otherwise, it doesn't make any sense for people to cook at home.

410

00:23:01.120 --> 00:23:04.040

JR: If I am able to take care - address all your problems:

411

00:23:04.700 --> 00:23:06.820

JR: quality wise, spice wise,

412

00:23:07.460 --> 00:23:13.540

JR: freshness wise, variety wise, the best ingredients wise and I'm freeing you up -

413

00:23:14.000 --> 00:23:15.540

JR: Okay.

414

00:23:17.500 --> 00:23:22.300

JR: There's no reason why you would be going to the grocery store, buying vegetables, bringing them,

415

00:23:22.620 --> 00:23:27.620

JR: putting it in the fridge, then prepping them, cooking, cleaning, dish washing,

416

00:23:27.620 --> 00:23:30.220

JR: and stocking all the leftovers back in the fridge.

417

00:23:30.640 --> 00:23:31.920

JR: And after ten days,

418

00:23:31.920 --> 00:23:36.060

JR: if you open the fridge, you will see that you still have two tomatoes that are rotten and you have to throw out.

419

00:23:38.020 --> 00:23:40.300

JR: I take care of all that stuff for you

420

00:23:40.300 --> 00:23:41.360

JR: at a reasonable price.

421

00:23:41.360 --> 00:23:45.800

JR: If you really looked at cost in each of these step by step by step,

422

00:23:45.800 --> 00:23:48.980

JR: you'll feel that you're actually paying significantly less

423

00:23:49.780 --> 00:23:51.780

JR: for what I'm providing.

424

00:23:53.280 --> 00:23:56.200

JR: And your - there is a woman who orders from Palo Alto.

425

00:23:56.200 --> 00:23:58.940

JR: She's training for her next Ironman.

426

00:23:59.360 --> 00:24:00.300

I: Hmm.

427

00:24:01.060 --> 00:24:07.860

JR: I'm freeing up her time, okay? There is a CEO of a big networking company who orders food from me.

428

00:24:07.860 --> 00:24:10.980

JR: She says, "Jay, my mom is 85 years old and

429

00:24:10.980 --> 00:24:16.800

JR: I can't cook this food, what you're providing. And she absolutely loves it. So I'm ordering from you every week."

430

00:24:17.420 --> 00:24:24.040

JR: Okay. There is this woman who's a double masters. Okay. Abused by her husband.

431

00:24:25.100 --> 00:24:29.820

JR: The husband thinks the wife's place is in the kitchen to provide him food,

432

00:24:29.820 --> 00:24:35.580

JR: and she is pursuing a dream on her own and she tells her husband, "You want food, right? Let me pursue my dream.

433

00:24:35.580 --> 00:24:38.420

JR: I'll order Mylapore Express for you. I'll take care of you."

434

00:24:38.900 --> 00:24:40.900

JR: Now, let me do my thing."

435

00:24:41.540 --> 00:24:44.240

JR: There's another woman who says, "Jay, my

436

00:24:44.240 --> 00:24:48.900

JR: kitchen is undergoing a renovation for the next three weeks and you're my backup guy."

437

00:24:50.200 --> 00:24:53.420

I: Mhm.

JR: Right? Moms from India are telling their

438

00:24:53.420 --> 00:24:55.780

JR: pregnant daughters here saying that, "You not what?

439

00:24:56.140 --> 00:25:00.440

JR: I'm going to be arriving there only on your seventh month or 8th month.

440

00:25:00.440 --> 00:25:04.240

JR: But till such time, all your cravings you satisfy by ordering Mylapore Express.

441

00:25:06.200 --> 00:25:07.760

I: Hm.

JR: People

442

00:25:07.760 --> 00:25:10.119

JR: go on vacation to Disneyland from

443

00:25:10.119 --> 00:25:11.120

JR: ---

444

00:25:11.120 --> 00:25:16.880

JR: San Francisco, and they order food to be delivered in the Airbnb in Disneyland.

445

00:25:17.480 --> 00:25:19.480

I: Oh, Wow. That's great!

446

00:25:19.700 --> 00:25:20.960

JR: Right?

447

00:25:21.320 --> 00:25:22.520

JR: So...

448

00:25:22.520 --> 00:25:26.860

JR: people who go on cruise ships - you know, you've taken a cruise, right?

449

00:25:26.860 --> 00:25:28.860

I: Mmmm, not yet. [laughs]

450

00:25:29.180 --> 00:25:30.600

JR: Not yet. If you take a cruise,

451

00:25:30.600 --> 00:25:36.780

JR: you will understand that they feed you so much of food in the cruise, when you come back,

452

00:25:36.780 --> 00:25:41.160

JR: All your longing is simple simple simple "ghar ka khanna" [Hindi: home-cooked food].

453

00:25:41.160 --> 00:25:42.480

I: Hmm.

JR: You know how many people order

454

00:25:42.480 --> 00:25:45.520

JR: when they come back from a cruise line saying, "Jay, you know what, I'm dying for this food."

455

00:25:46.000 --> 00:25:47.020

I: Hmm.

456

00:25:47.500 --> 00:25:49.740

JR: Wife goes on a trip to India.

457

00:25:50.060 --> 00:25:54.180

JR: She calls me and says, "Jay, can I put in an order for the next four weeks

458

00:25:54.180 --> 00:25:57.380

JR: because I'm not here, and my husband doesn't know how to cook."

459

00:25:57.960 --> 00:25:58.800

I: Hmm.

460

00:25:59.540 --> 00:26:02.500

JR: I've given you so many examples of why people order.

461

00:26:02.500 --> 00:26:04.500

I: Hm. Hm.

462

00:26:06.960 --> 00:26:14.100

I: So and -- this is Silicon Valley, you know, reaching out to you for their

463

00:26:14.440 --> 00:26:21.380

I: Desi food. So how does all of this help you - your identity as a Desi?

464

00:26:25.020 --> 00:26:30.980

JR: Well, this business is pitching itself as a Desi. I very proudly even write on the vans

465

00:26:30.980 --> 00:26:32.980
JR: in my only regional language.

466
00:26:33.540 --> 00:26:34.880
I: Oh, okay. Mhm.

467
00:26:34.880 --> 00:26:38.120
JR: All my vans have everything written in English as well as Tamil.

468
00:26:38.120 --> 00:26:39.480
I: Hmm.

469
00:26:39.480 --> 00:26:41.920
JR: And in a typical lingo that we use at home

470
00:26:41.920 --> 00:26:42.940
JR: It's a

471
00:26:42.940 --> 00:26:44.080
JR: See..

472
00:26:44.080 --> 00:26:49.520
JR: Don't brand me as like a caste- caste based guy. I am not. Okay.

473
00:26:50.100 --> 00:26:53.740
JR: When you talk about Chettinad food. It is food

474
00:26:54.360 --> 00:26:59.600

JR: belonging to a certain region and not to the Chettiar community alone. It belongs to a certain region

475

00:26:59.600 --> 00:27:03.680

JR: I cook a Tam-Brahm food: Tamil Brahman food.

476

00:27:03.680 --> 00:27:06.820

JR: See that doesn't mean I'm only serving the Brahman community.

477

00:27:07.120 --> 00:27:08.590

JR: Right?

I: Hmm.

478

00:27:08.590 --> 00:27:12.500

JR: A Tam-Brahm cooking is a certain way of cooking, very healthy way of cooking.

479

00:27:13.280 --> 00:27:13.980

I: Hmm.

480

00:27:13.980 --> 00:27:15.980

JR: Tam-Brahms don't use garlic.

481

00:27:16.240 --> 00:27:16.840

I: Hmm.

482

00:27:17.020 --> 00:27:18.620

JR: Tam-Brahms don't use onions.

483

00:27:18.620 --> 00:27:19.680

I: Hmm.

484

00:27:19.680 --> 00:27:23.040

JR: Tam-Brahms use lot more of black pepper.

485

00:27:23.320 --> 00:27:24.730

JR: Very healthy.

486

00:27:24.730 --> 00:27:26.880

I: Hmm.

JR: Lot of turmeric, extremely healthy.

487

00:27:26.880 --> 00:27:28.280

JR: You can go to Costco and they sell you

488

00:27:28.280 --> 00:27:29.140

JR: ---

489

00:27:29.140 --> 00:27:33.680

JR: turmeric capsules for \$35, right? We incorporate it in our food a lot.

490

00:27:35.760 --> 00:27:36.700

JR: Ginger.

491

00:27:37.240 --> 00:27:38.060

JR: Curry leaves.

492

00:27:38.820 --> 00:27:41.000

JR: Cumin seeds, coriander seeds.

493

00:27:42.240 --> 00:27:44.320

JR: This features in our cooking a lot

494

00:27:45.540 --> 00:27:48.940

I: Hmm.

JR: So basically it's harmless for you.

495

00:27:48.940 --> 00:27:54.220

JR: It's actually helping you with your digestive system as well.

496

00:27:57.620 --> 00:28:01.040

JR: So, I'm happy to showcase

497

00:28:02.380 --> 00:28:08.560

JR: a regional specialties of the place from where I belong in southern India.

498

00:28:08.560 --> 00:28:10.560

I: Hmm. Hm.

499

00:28:11.320 --> 00:28:12.580

JR: Bringing

500

00:28:12.980 --> 00:28:16.120

JR: simple, regional Desi food

501

00:28:17.840 --> 00:28:19.840

JR: from villages of

502

00:28:20.340 --> 00:28:21.870

JR: Tamil Nadu

503

00:28:21.870 --> 00:28:25.180

JR: to all the corporate guys here in the Bay Area

504

00:28:25.820 --> 00:28:26.640

I: Mhm.

505

00:28:26.640 --> 00:28:31.700

JR: who are so busy providing the solution for the next big problem to the rest of the world.

506

00:28:31.700 --> 00:28:33.080

JR: I am solving their food problem.

507

00:28:34.720 --> 00:28:36.000

I: Great. Yeah.

508

00:28:36.660 --> 00:28:37.380

I: Right.

509

00:28:37.380 --> 00:28:43.880

I: So I guess my kind of last question on the list though is how do you foresee your

510

00:28:44.360 --> 00:28:47.720

I: future or your family's future in Silicon Valley?

511

00:28:51.980 --> 00:28:57.580

JR: I see us opening multiple outlets in the Bay Area very soon.

512

00:28:57.900 --> 00:28:58.760

I: Okay.

513

00:29:00.840 --> 00:29:07.099

JR: We are going to be opening at least two units: one in San Jose and one in Fremont very soon

514

00:29:07.520 --> 00:29:09.260

JR: with a slight difference.

515

00:29:09.420 --> 00:29:10.360

I: Mhm.

516

00:29:10.740 --> 00:29:13.120

JR: Right now my food is

517

00:29:14.340 --> 00:29:16.980

JR: cooked, chilled, packed, and sent.

518

00:29:18.540 --> 00:29:19.400

I: Mhm.

519

00:29:19.400 --> 00:29:23.800

JR: Now there is always a certain segment of the population who say, "Jay, you know what,

520

00:29:23.800 --> 00:29:25.260

JR: we don't really eat

521

00:29:25.740 --> 00:29:29.900

JR: food that was made yesterday. We like to eat food made today

522

00:29:30.840 --> 00:29:34.340

JR: as fresh as possible like hot, 'garam, garam khanna' [Hindi: hot food], " right?

523

00:29:34.500 --> 00:29:37.060

I: Mhm.

JR: If I can open a

524

00:29:37.580 --> 00:29:42.380

JR: Mylapore Express in the Bay Area only serving hot

525

00:29:42.680 --> 00:29:45.820

JR: offerings like what I'm making right now where people can walk in and

526

00:29:46.420 --> 00:29:50.300

JR: take them in environment-friendly stainless steel tiffin carriers.

527

00:29:51.120 --> 00:29:51.880

I: Hmm.

528

00:29:52.420 --> 00:29:55.400

JR: So I'm looking at myself as

529

00:29:55.580 --> 00:29:57.180

JR: an environment-friendly

530

00:29:57.500 --> 00:30:03.100

JR: takeaway place where you can get all the Mylapore Express

531

00:30:03.500 --> 00:30:05.220

JR: food

532

00:30:05.220 --> 00:30:06.390

JR: made

533

00:30:06.390 --> 00:30:09.800

JR: everyday, and you can just walk in and say, "Jay, what do you have today?"

534

00:30:09.920 --> 00:30:12.499

JR: "Okay, I'll take all this. Here's my tiffin carrier."

535

00:30:13.650 --> 00:30:19.340

JR: I fill up the carrier, you go home, and you enjoy. So, people will just do - repeat this again, daily every day.

536

00:30:19.340 --> 00:30:21.340

JR: You know what I'm saying?

I: Hmm.

537

00:30:22.080 --> 00:30:26.260

JR: So you don't have - there are several customers of mine

538

00:30:26.260 --> 00:30:28.920

JR: who don't do grocery - Indian groceries - anymore.

539

00:30:28.920 --> 00:30:30.920

I: Oh. That's fabulous.

JR: My average-

540

00:30:31.160 --> 00:30:38.360

JR: average top 20 customers spend about \$7,000 per family every year

541

00:30:39.540 --> 00:30:40.380

I: Hmm.

542

00:30:41.100 --> 00:30:44.240

JR: \$7,000 in 52 weeks.

543

00:30:44.420 --> 00:30:48.660

JR: That means they are spending close to 140 dollars a week.

544

00:30:49.300 --> 00:30:50.140

I: Hmm.

545

00:30:51.580 --> 00:30:52.620

I: Wow.

546

00:30:54.820 --> 00:30:55.560

I: Hm.

547

00:30:59.100 --> 00:31:03.120

JR: So that tells you like how

548

00:31:03.120 --> 00:31:06.640

JR: how revolutionizing this whole concept is.

I: Mhm.

549

00:31:08.940 --> 00:31:14.660

I: Yeah, that's great. So Jay, I'm done with my questions, but it was like so

550

00:31:14.660 --> 00:31:16.523

I: amazing to listen to this entire journey,

551

00:31:16.523 --> 00:31:21.310

I: the way you started and then you thought about it, and then how Silicon Valley is actually kind of

552

00:31:21.310 --> 00:31:24.600

I: literally like it's reaching out to you for their

553

00:31:24.600 --> 00:31:26.080

I: dietary needs.

554

00:31:26.360 --> 00:31:30.280

I: So is there anything else you would like to talk of or mention to us about

555

00:31:30.280 --> 00:31:32.400

I: about being Desi in general in Silicon Valley?

556

00:31:32.400 --> 00:31:37.600

I: I'm sure you have lived in or traveled in other places of the country where Indian communities thrive,

557

00:31:37.600 --> 00:31:41.520

I: but they don't - but they're very different from the way the Desi community thrives in Silicon Valley.

558

00:31:41.760 --> 00:31:45.580

I: What is so special about Silicon Valley and Desis? What is the connection?

559

00:31:45.580 --> 00:31:48.800

JR: See, Desis everywhere else are --

560

00:31:49.860 --> 00:31:53.220

JR: Okay, let me put it this way. The Desis in the Bay Area

561

00:31:54.320 --> 00:31:57.320

JR: are the busiest of all Desis in America.

562

00:31:57.940 --> 00:31:58.900

I: Hmm.

563

00:31:59.880 --> 00:32:04.060

JR: The concept of Mylapore Express may not work in all the cities

564

00:32:04.480 --> 00:32:05.400

I: Hmm.

565

00:32:06.940 --> 00:32:11.040

JR: The number one area where it will definitely work is the Bay Area.

566

00:32:11.800 --> 00:32:14.740

JR: Number two, possibly Seattle.

567

00:32:15.840 --> 00:32:16.600

I: Hmm.

568

00:32:16.600 --> 00:32:19.360

JR: Number three, maybe New Jersey, Bos-

569

00:32:20.180 --> 00:32:23.600

JR: --

570

00:32:24.420 --> 00:32:26.420

JR: New Jersey or Boston area.

571

00:32:26.420 --> 00:32:27.520

I: Mhm.

572

00:32:28.760 --> 00:32:30.680

JR: Maybe Texas to a certain extent.

573

00:32:31.280 --> 00:32:35.120

JR: It'll not work in LA. It may not work in Chicago.

574

00:32:35.940 --> 00:32:37.680

JR: It may not work in Atlanta.

575

00:32:40.200 --> 00:32:42.080

JR: Because

576

00:32:42.520 --> 00:32:47.480

JR: there are some key key key things that are required- that are required for this to be successful.

577

00:32:49.180 --> 00:32:52.140

JR: Your real-estate prices must be crazy, number one.

578

00:32:52.660 --> 00:32:54.260

JR: Number two,

579

00:32:54.260 --> 00:32:58.920

JR: You should be really really really busy that you cannot cook at home.

580

00:33:00.400 --> 00:33:03.720

JR: You should be on the road at least two hours in a day.

581

00:33:04.340 --> 00:33:05.140

I: Yeah.

582

00:33:05.540 --> 00:33:06.300

I: Mhm.

583

00:33:06.800 --> 00:33:08.480

JR: Right?

I: Mhm.

584

00:33:08.480 --> 00:33:12.020

JR: Sixty to 90 minutes at least on the- on the road in middle of traffic.

585

00:33:12.660 --> 00:33:15.500

JR: When you come back home, you're dead meat basically.

586

00:33:15.880 --> 00:33:16.460

I: Hmm.

587

00:33:16.460 --> 00:33:18.880

JR: This happens in the Bay Area.

I: Yes.

588

00:33:20.720 --> 00:33:22.720

JR: Does it happen in LA? Maybe not.

589

00:33:23.200 --> 00:33:24.120

I: Hmm.

590

00:33:28.540 --> 00:33:32.400

JR: So another thing is - why people order from us - yesterday a mom called me.

591

00:33:32.400 --> 00:33:35.100

JR: She said, "Jay, my daughter's in

592

00:33:35.720 --> 00:33:37.020

JR: Carnegie Mellon.

593

00:33:37.180 --> 00:33:38.460

JR: It's

594

00:33:38.720 --> 00:33:41.860

JR: exam time for her, and she's really stressed out.

595

00:33:42.180 --> 00:33:45.640

JR: And I don't want her to be cooking and trying to figure out what the

596

00:33:45.700 --> 00:33:46.720

JR: food

597

00:33:46.720 --> 00:33:49.900

JR: scene is. So can you send her food?"

598

00:33:50.920 --> 00:33:52.100

JR: I said, "Yeah.

599

00:33:52.680 --> 00:33:53.920

JR: I ship

600

00:33:53.920 --> 00:33:55.360

JR: on a Monday.

601

00:33:55.540 --> 00:33:58.500

JR: It'll reach her on Thursday by ground, FedEx Ground.

602

00:33:58.500 --> 00:34:02.360

JR: And I'll take care of the packaging and everything so well, it'll be no problem for her."

603

00:34:03.920 --> 00:34:07.840

JR: She said, "No Jay. I want you to ship on Monday. And I want it on Tuesday

604

00:34:07.840 --> 00:34:11.160

JR: or rather, ship on Thursday. She gets it on Friday."

605

00:34:12.480 --> 00:34:15.460

JR: So I said that overnight shipping cost is 90 bucks.

606

00:34:16.200 --> 00:34:17.240

JR: She said, "No problem."

607

00:34:17.800 --> 00:34:18.440

I: Hmm.

608

00:34:18.680 --> 00:34:19.740

JR: "I'll take care of it."

609

00:34:22.700 --> 00:34:24.700

JR: The kids

610

00:34:25.340 --> 00:34:27.200

JR: doing well in their exams

611

00:34:27.360 --> 00:34:33.420

JR: and not getting sidetracked with food issues is pretty high on the list for parents.

612

00:34:33.580 --> 00:34:34.520

I: Mhm.

613

00:34:37.860 --> 00:34:38.940

I: Yeah.

614

00:34:39.820 --> 00:34:41.860

JR: All right. Anything else for me?

615

00:34:41.860 --> 00:34:46.960

I: No, that's great unless you want to add something else about the Desi community and this is

616

00:34:46.960 --> 00:34:50.440

JR: No, I think I've given you all the information that I had in the mind.

617

00:34:50.440 --> 00:34:50.940

I: Okay.

618

00:34:50.940 --> 00:34:54.140

JR: All right. If you have any more questions reach out to me, I'll be more than happy to share.

619

00:34:54.140 --> 00:34:54.640

I: Sure.

JR: Okay.

620

00:34:54.640 --> 00:34:56.980

I: Thank you very much. This has been amazing.

JR: Alright, thank you.

621

00:34:56.980 --> 00:34:58.780

I: Thank you. Buh-bye.

JR: Yeah. Thank you. Yeah By-bye.

