



Simi Sara 02:39

Okay, my name is Simi Sara. I

And I guess I just wasn't ready to go the first time. But the second time, I just, I loved it. Like I loved it with a passion, I had a really good time, second time around. So I appreciated it much more.

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Eric Militaru 05:31

Nice. That's, that's great to hear. Hopefully, I'll feel that same way, maybe later on. But

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Simi Sara 05:37

I have a 22 year old son, who's graduating this year from Mount Allison University in New Brunswick. And like he it has been a slog for him. And I could appreciate that because he went straight out of school. And he's just gonna finish this thing. And it has been difficult for him. And I told him, I was like, I don't think you understand just how like lucky you are, you're going... but he is kind of like that, where he doesn't see the value of it just yet. Whereas I told him, I was like, Wait a second, I understood that the first time around second time around for me was I really appreciate the value of it.

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Eric Militaru 06:07

When Simi told me this, at first, I didn't think much of it. I mean, I'm pretty much in the same boat as her son school has just been feeling like a slog and I am so ready to be out of these woods and into the real world. But as we talked more, and I listened to her story more, the dots started to connect. And step by step I was shown how naive I was before this interview. But first, we got to take some of those steps together. So after Simi finished journalism school, she jumped right into the field. And as you can imagine, things got pretty busy. But her work quickly gained traction with the public.

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Simi Sara 06:38

What happened was this station that I first worked at used to do these 30 second news updates, like every hour on the hour kind of thing. And this was like on TV, right? But nobody paid attention. We didn't really pay attention to them at the new station, because just like something we had to do. But that was my first job there. Because it was like part time. They just took super young people to fill the hours because you had to do them 24 hours a day, seven days a week. So we worked a lot of overnight shifts and graveyards, whatever, I was just happy to do something. But it turns out a lot of the shifts I was doing, I was doing those updates like before really popular shows, and it had never occurred to me. So if you watch like Saturday Night Live in the nineteen, in the early 1990s. That was me at like one minute before Saturday Night Live started. If you watch Seinfeld, Thursday nights at nine o'clock, that was me for 30 seconds before. And it never occurred to me, but somehow, like people would see me right. And so it wasn't very long in the business before I would go out or people would recognize me and I was like 21, maybe 22 at that age. Yeah, I would say there was for many, many years, I didn't stop like it was nonstop I mean I had my daughter when... I had my first child when I was 25. My second when I was 28. And I was working full time all throughout that process. So and it was such a high pressure or kind of very competitive situation that I didn't



difference was to talk about it on the air to kind of share the journey with people.

Eric Militaru 13:04

But here's the thing, Simi's journey through SFU was completely different to what I'm doing right now, she already had years of experience in the field, and she enjoyed working in it before finishing her degree in communications. But for students now we are pressured to pick the right path from the beginning, you know, choose the right field to study or else you'll suffer the consequences of changing paths later on. For someone like myself, I have little to no experience in any field regarding communications, I wouldn't know if I like it or not, until maybe it's too late. So I understand the stress that comes from this fear of straying from the path. Luckily, in communications, there are a lot of opportunities and directions you can go in. So I asked Simi if she felt a similar feeling of trying something completely different.

Simi Sara 13:47

Yeah, in fact, there was a time when I thought that you know, academia is not so bad. Like maybe my backup would be I would get my masters and maybe I could be an instructor. Maybe that would be my next step. Because lots of externals and people like go into teaching afterwards. And that was definitely something that opened my eyes into well, maybe maybe I want to do this. It also helped me look at issues better and differently, like see a kind of a broader picture. Did some work in like sociology, it helps me to look at issues in kind of a different manner. I like I wrote a paper for my graduation for a special project to graduate towards the end there. And I was really, I was really proud of this topic and this paper, and it was kind of work that was done from within kind of media that doesn't often get done. And so I remember that my instructor, my professor was saying like, you know, you should continue on with this. You could do this as a basis for a master's degree. But at that point, I just thought, "I do not have the time to tackle that." I just needed a break from it. So I've always thought about going back. But so much of what I learned in communications did turn out to be so incredibly helpful in what I do, but I think I would tell you that there's a ton of different opportunities for you. In communications. You just don't realize it yet. You just don't because you haven't gotten out there to see how useful it is. I mean, there's a lot of commu- right now communications jobs are like they are hurting for people like they are hurting for people. Look organizations if you want like a steady paycheck, there's there's definitely like TransLink and Fortis and BC Hydro and like Fraser health, and like all those big organizations are so desperately looking for communications people. There are so many jobs out there right now.

Eric Militaru 15:37

So there are a lot of jobs and opportunities out there for us to take on. But maybe these jobs aren't the end goal you're dreaming of. Maybe it's not what you want to settle for. But here's the thing. Before this interview, I had a plan, I thought of how I wanted to make this episode before even doing this interview, because I thought only about my end goal with this project, and not so about how I'm going to get there. I tried to craft my questions in a way that it would end up forming a narrative that I had envisioned from the beginning. But obviousknin

a lot of students no matter their faculty can learn from it. When I asked about her current position at CKNW, I still had that mindset of, you know, the end goal or the dream job being the most important thing, you got to get there as fast as possible. But Simi quickly reminded me that that is not the case. Was where you are right now is Was this the end goal or like the dream from the beginning?

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Simi Sara 16:46

I always tell my kids is that like, don't think about your end goal. Think about the next thing that you want to do. You know, because it's like this business, there is no end goal all too often, you know, the corporate bosses will decide that end goal for you. And I've had that happen, I've been laid off twice. So it's a matter of like, what do you love? What are you willing to do? What is the next thing that you want to do, and I was originally hired at CKNW in 2011. Full time, my, I think I worked that it was the 12:30 to 3:00. That's That's what I was hosting 12:30 to 3:00, and then it became 12:00 to 3:00, which was a great shift. And then in 2014, they did some rearranging and they asked me to do 10:00 to 2:00. So I was like, Alright, I can do 10:00 to 2:00, it's a long day, but 10:00 to 2:00 is fine. And I that to me, after about five years, I was really, 10:00 to 2:00 was like I was not happy doing 10:00 to 2:00. And I had said that, you know, if ever I could do the mornings, I would love to do a mornings. That's. So I've always thought about just the next thing that I could do, and then try to make that happen. Because everything is always changing in this. If you told me 10 years ago, or even 15 years ago, 20 years ago that your goal is going to be hosting like the morning show on CKNW, I would have said, No, I don't think so. So you just don't know how things are gonna work out that's all.

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Eric Militaru 18:09

You know, to get where you are right now you had to jump quite a few hurdles and jump into different opportunities. And you didn't even know if it will, you know, work out in the end. But what kept you pushing forward? And you know, taking these leaps? And what could you say to current undergrad students who are trying to figure things out?

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Simi Sara 18:26

That is such a good question. I don't think anybody's ever asked me that question before. Because you're right, there were obstacles, like in 2008, when I was laid off, and the recession was on that was super hard. And then I managed after 10 months to get a full time job at a talk radio station not CKNW but another one that used to be around at that time. And I and I lasted four months before they shut down that station and laid off everybody at that station too. And so then I was starting from scratch all over again. And I was ready at that point to be like I am done. I am gonna go to law school. And I'm going to forget about this, like I was ready to just like go start do something completely different. And I made one phone call and I remember calling well CKNW and the program director at the time. And I said, you know, you probably don't know me, but this is who I am. And he goes, No, no, of course I know. He said, I've been listening. I said what? And he goes, Yeah. And I said so you know, like we've all been laid off. And I'm just wondering, do you have anything part time like, I'm happy to be on call? And he said you know what, come on and let's talk. And I was so impressed by the fact that there's somebody who doing their job well was always listening to the competition, right? Because





