

Kahaani 2: Jayanti's Story – transcript of all extracts included on slides

Slide 8:

(23:22 - 24:05)

(23:22) The lesson about the younger generation is – you can be subversive in accepting an MBE on **your** terms, not their terms. You can be revolutionary, but what you have to do is be brave and stick with your ideas and stick with what you want to do. (23.44)

Yeah. Don't let other people decide – don't assume things about people – listen to find out about people before you even speculate, before you stereotype somebody.

One of the biggest problems is people make assumptions – and, based on those assumptions, stereotype people – you know – as to what they're going to be like. **(24:05)**

Slide 11:

05.52 – 06.52

(05.52) Assimilation was fairly easy because of the language – because eo of the ability to articulate what you want to say – yet also, cracking jokes and making serious points with humour – er – for example, if you see somebody who has got some curiosity, or who has vague notions about racism, say, and they're curious about your background, and they make assumptions – so you crack a joke and saying, 'I can be humble if you want me to be humble ; I can be humiliated if that's what you expect from people like me, you know. However, listen to what I have to say – and don't look at me!' And that power of language did definitely help. I could debate with most of the people, but it took some time – a couple of years – before I got quite fluent at the ability to speak English. **(06.52)**

Slide 11:

08:45 – 09:38

(08:45) There were the usual racist comments, like the Managing Director where I was first employed said to me, 'Oh, Jayanti – that's a mouthful of a name, shall we call you Jack?'

And I said, 'No you will not!' And that's really being firm about (...) because my name is important to me – so – um – I came back and started research at university after that, in 1974. I use the name – name is important to all people, it's a name that somebody has given, it's a name they've known themselves by. I do not want to make life easy for anybody else; it's their problem, not mine. If they think it's difficult, better learn how to deal with it and not get someone else to accommodate you. I have stuck by my guns in that respect – for the last 50 years. **(09:38)**

Slide 14:

Watch 21:44 – 24:04

(21:42) So, I stayed with my single agenda item, and answer to my single agenda item is?

Anti-racism.

In 2022 I was given an MBE – and when that was offered, I got a letter from the – um – Cabinet Office, saying something like – um – ‘We are minded to give you an MBE for services to Southampton, Hampshire.’

So, I said, ‘Um, services to Southampton, Hampshire what does that mean? Does it mean I’ve got a nice clean garden in front of the house? That would be a service to Southampton and Hampshire, won’t it? What would it mean?’

So, they said, ‘Well...’ - because I was going to reject it – and they said, ‘Well, suggest something – you know – suggest something. You know, we got this from your nomination.’

So, I said, ‘For promoting anti-racism in Southampton and Hampshire,’ thinking they won’t have it. Er – they accepted it! So, I had no choice but to accept it (*laughs*) – accept that MBE.

But that was in 2022, I didn’t go to Palace to get it, I went to the local Lord Lieutenant to get it, in Winchester. And the Lord Lieutenant says, ‘Mmm, ten years ago you gave me a badge, Nefertiti badge for Black History Month,’ – now in 2005, I’d started with (name) , Black History Month in Southampton – I said, ‘Oh right – and now you are returning the honour are you?’ Because he was giving me an MBE, so I equated the two.

To me – so the lesson about younger generation is, you can be subversive in accepting an MBE on your terms, not their terms. You can be revolutionary, but what you have to do is be brave and stick with your ideas and stick with what you want to do. (23.44)

Yeah. Don’t let other people decide – don’t assume things about people – listen to find out about people before you even speculate, before you stereotype somebody.

One of the biggest problems is people make assumptions – and, based on those assumptions, stereotype people – you know – as to what they’re going to be like. **(24:05)**

(End)