

05/05/2021 14:30pm THE KITCHEN, 10 Heuwel Ln, Hutten Heights, Newcastle, SA.

Mrs. Ashnee Prithiraj. Mother. Aged 43.

1. What is one of your earliest memories?

I have many. I used to play a lot of pretend and dress up. I had a box, and I would put my blanket inside it and make it warm and really comfortable, with padding stuff. I would take snacks and sit. I would take mas long black stockings on my head as hair. I would take my dolly and sit in my box. I would watch Santa Barbra and flick my hair like Kelly. I would just pretend and sing Amitabh Bachchan songs too.

I can also remember the day my grandfather died. I remember holding his hand. It was a dark corridor, and he was not feeling well. I remember the toilet being right at the back of the house. It was a big house. His room was a corner room. He went to bed.

2. What is the most trouble you have ever gotten in?

The day I ran away with dad. That was like a movie scene.

3. What was your relationship with your own parents like?

Great. Nana was an extreme disciplinarian. One day when I was a teenager, I wore torn jeans (I was so excited to wear the trendy stuff), and nana made it a big deal and made me change. I had to wear normal clothing.

Ma and Nana didn't allow me to put up posters in my room, so I had to stick posters inside my wardrobe. I used to stick stickers everywhere.

4. What is something you always wanted to do but didn't — and why didn't you?

I've wanted to study further, but I didn't because I became a mommy and a wife, so those things became a priority.

5. Was there something your parents did when you were a kid that you swore you'd never do yourself?

Yeah, make my children feel like they had to fear telling me things, like they had to hide things from me and keep secrets.

6. How many serious relationships were you in before you settled down (if you did)? What were they like?

Serious relationships? I only had one – dad. It was amazing and still is amazing.

7. What was your hardest breakup like?

My hardest breakup was when dad decided he was going to marry someone else. I was so sad. I was cool, like I didn't throw a tantrum. I just dealt with it, but I was really sad because I liked him.

8. Growing up, what did you think you wanted to do for a living?

Be a lawyer, or an educational psychologist.

9. How have your notions of what it means to be a woman changed over your lifetime?

Actually, they are pretty much the same. I think that I learnt about being assertive a little bit better and that's all.

10. (If she worked): What was it like being a working mom at that time? Would you do it all over again? What would you change?

Ah, it was very tough. Dad was working in the bottle store, and he didn't have a stable income. We opened a new business. So uh, we were really strapped for cash. It was always because dad and I eloped, that people thought we would fail – so everything we did we had to prove. We wanted things to be a success. The only way to achieve that was to work, travel, leaving Dannhauser, doing my best and supporting our dream. I wouldn't change anything, because it all worked out well.

11. (If she didn't work): What was it like being a stay-at-home mom at that time? Would you do it all over again? What would you change?

Being a stay-at-home mom is wonderful because you see your kids grow and be there on the good days and bad days. It has a negative connotation because people think you're on a holiday, but its really hard sometimes.

12. When did you lose your virginity and to whom?

To Mr. Renash Ramdas, and I lost it the day we got married in his house, with all his family members and it was great yah.

13. Who were/are your role models? Who did you look up to when you were younger? Who do you look up to now?

Now, I think, dad. He is extremely focused, and he's got all the qualities that I think is great. He is honest which I love. I think that Ajie is also brilliant, with great motherly skills and she's learnt a lot. Actually, all the older ladies thought me about being a mom, so yeah.

When I was younger, I didn't have many siblings, so I guess when I met dad he was pretty cool. I also had teachers and good friends. I used to watch a lot of TV. Ma was also a good role model.

14. What is the best trip you've ever taken?

I have to say, it was India, and I enjoyed it. That we went to all together. That was really nice.

15. Who was your best friend growing up? Who is your best friend now?

Dad. I used to hang out with dad. Dad didn't allow anyone to come. We just hung out together. The moments we weren't hanging out together, we would send secret messages.

Dad is still my best friend.

16. Have you ever had an abortion?

I haven't had an abortion, but when I was younger and I had more preconceived ideas about the world – I realized not to be so judgemental. Now if I had to think about it, especially because I have daughters. I would support their decisions because it's their body. If they want the baby, I would support them, and if they don't I would support them. I would just give them the best advice.

17. Is there a moment or event that radically changed the way you saw the world?

Yah. Corona virus. I learnt that, right now, right here is a very powerful moment because it can be taken away in one second. So you have to enjoy each and every moment in that moment.

18. Have you ever done something really impulsive? How did it go?

Ya ya. It was great. The day that your dad said I really love you and ignored everyone, because we like each other a lot and trust each other. I did it. Jumped in his red ford laser and left.

19. What was the moment I hurt you the most when I was growing up?

Uh. It used to be when you belittle me. That was like not so nice.

20. What was the moment I frustrated you most when I was growing up?

Oh actually, there were a lot. The lessons were there and I had to teach you, but you didn't want to learn. I had to leave you to figure it out, but when you fail it was such a catastrophe. When you were a baby it was like personal hygiene, when you were older it was the boyfriends and not speaking to me, and now it's like I want you to study and you are like I don't really care.

21. (If she got married): When did you know that you were ready to get married?

Actually, I wasn't ready. I was quite happy to date the dude and enjoy his company and just live the life. one day we were making out, and we got caught making out. Nana was like this isn't working out and you've got to get married, so we agreed.

22. When did you know you were ready to have kids?

I was not ready to have kids at all. I had no idea what it entailed. I was extremely spoiled, being an only child I had no interaction with family and stuff. Having your own kid is like turning a new page. When Sri came along, she was not an easy kid – she had a headstrong attitude, so I had to really learn and understand and seek her. once I did that I understood that, and that was important. I needed to for her to be Sri and not project me on her. That's when she started to shine.

23. What do I need to know about our family's medical history that could affect my health or life?

Highly allergic to everything. But generally speaking, we have good health apart from diabetes, hypertensions and heart attacks are very common – because we lead a good life. it's a rich mans disease because you're all the time enjoying good stuff.

24. What was the day I was born (or adopted) like?

Uh, the day you were born was very funny because you're dad – in all his excitement, came from work and told him I was unwell (it was Arishmas wedding) and couldn't go to the wedding. We went shopping and I physically exerted myself. I didn't tell anyone but I could feel the pain starting, dad came home around six. I told him its time to go. Dad went into superman mode, and phoned so many people. He was organising everything and packing everyone. In all the excitement, he forgot me at home. sometimes I would prank him about going into labour, just to go to spur or Newcastle.

25. (If she got married): What was your wedding day like?

My wedding day. I have the most thoughtful and caring and genuine husband I could've ever asked for, because our family was really small and dad's was really big. When a girl gets married it's like you're losing someone, and my parents really felt like they were alone. I told dad about this and dad understood. Everything we did made sense to us, like instead of two separate weddings, we just had one. It just made sense. It was OUR wedding. Like the bidai and everything, it was what made us happy. And that was perfect. The pressure was on dad also, because he didn't have a lot of money – but he didn't let us feel that, he just made a plan for everything to be there. It was a really great wedding. There were hurdles along the way, like the venue being cancelled and last minute us being stranded, but we moved forward and sorted it out.

26. What's the worst fight you ever had with my dad?

The worst fight. Yoh. It was always with drinking and alcohol. The moment when I felt he was belittling me or not understanding me. I wanted him to have a different vision and he was doing something else.

We fight often, but healthy disagreements. Respectful disagreements. It's a lot more tamed now.

Dad has this thing where he does what he wants and then we deal with that, but it's okay now, I've grown to understand him.

27. What's your favourite photo of yourself? Of our family?

I think, the one where we have the Starbucks shirts in the entertainment room where we are just chilled and relaxed. It was just us as a family. Everyone was just happy and smiley and yah.

28. What was the first year of motherhood like for you?

Awful. I had this little person that stole all the attention that I had. She suddenly became dad's favourite and she just cried and demanded and wouldn't let me sleep. I didn't know that when you had a baby you don't sleep, I thought they sleep. It wasn't like that. The little person just loved her father, no matter how I tried. The moment her father walked passed her arms went out.

29. What do you want or wish most for your kids?

I want them to be happy, balanced, successful, loving, and kind people.

30. What do you want your funeral to be like?

I have it on a PDF. I just want it to be extremely low key and sensitive for my children so they don't have to worry much. They mustn't listen to everyone telling them what to do. They must just find closure.

31. What was life like for you at my age?

It was the time of my life. I was in university and dad had broken up with me so I was dating a lot of people. I was going to nightclubs. It was just studying and being a student. I was living it up. Enjoying my life.

32. What were some of your biggest struggles or insecurities in high school?

Because I was an only kid, I didn't have a big family support. I battled with that. I was an introvert. I was good-looking so my friends weren't my friends. Because I had so many boy crushes, people thought I was that kinda girl.

33. Were you ever sexually harassed or sexually assaulted?

Yah. Yah. Not sexually as that, but like taken advantage of. Lets just say, just weird stuff. I wasn't raped. It was like not nice feelings.

34. Do you have any health issues you've never told me about?

Health. No I tell you everything. I don't have anything to hold back. I let you know everything.

35. What would your perfect day be like? Describe it.

My perfect day. I think I live a perfect day everyday. Uh I have got no issues in my life, I'm quite happy.

36. What's the one song or album that means the most to you?

I think I have a lot. Its like a collection for different moments that bring back special feelings. I can't specifically tell you one.

37. Is the present year anything like you imagined it would be when you were growing up?

Never in a million years.

38. What advice would you give to your younger self at age 20? 30? 40?

20, believe in yourself its gonna be okay.

30, you're doing great.

40, keep going.

39. What are some values you hold?

Integrity, very important where you do the right thing even if no one is looking. I'm talking about the big things you know. and honesty is very important to me. if you want to have a relationship with me those are the most important things to me, I wont judge you as long as you have integrity.

40. Which 3 events most shaped your life?

The day I got married, the day Sri was born and the day Ria was born.

41. What is something you used to do a lot but now rarely do?

Dance. I used to love dancing, when I was younger I loved going to the nightclubs with dad, when we got married we danced at NOFTA. Now I don't really dance.

42. Which 3 words best describe who you tried to be in life and how you want to be remembered?

Loving. Supportive. Honest.

43. What have you learned about other people in life?

They use you, for their own means. Once they're done, they move on to use someone new.

44. What do you think drives people?

Ambition. Love. Desire. Vision. Arrogance. Someone telling you that you can't and proving them wrong. Desperation. Uh. Good values. Aspiration – trying to be better for yourself.

45. What do you think the world needs more of right now?

Hope.

46. What do you think is the meaning of life?

A happy home.

47. What did you find most beautiful about life?

My children. Actually, its more than that. Its seeing the smiles of my children, husband and parents.

48. Is there anything you regret?

Hmm. Yah. Not being rich younger.

49. Is there anything you'd still like to do in your life?

Lots. Because when the ambition dies, your spirit does too.