Aditya Patel

APUSH

Period 4

29 August 2020

Family Interview Essay

Interviewee’s Full Name: Swati Pradeep Patel

Birthplace: Savner, Maharashtra, India

Date of Birth: June 23, 1979

Current Place of Residence: Fremont, California, 94539 USA

1. Why did your (interviewee's) parents select your name for you?

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She was born in a certain astronomical time, which gave her name. In Indian culture, the position of the stars at birth are very important and gave Swati her name.

3. What was the house (apartment, farm, etc.) like? How many rooms? Bathrooms? Did it have electricity? Indoor plumbing? Telephones?

She did not grow up in one house. As her father was a government servant, she and her family moved around lots. The house she was born in was very old. It had a few windows, large metal doors, and a large hall for the extended hall to gather and have food.

4. Were there any special items in the house that you remember?

Her parents were very fond of music, and she recalls having a gramophone, which her parents and she used throughout her elementary and high school years.

5. What is your earliest childhood memory?

Her earliest memory is of her Kindergarten school, when she was probably around 3 or 4 years old. She remembers her teacher scolding her for being shy, and recalls being embarrassed.

7. What kind of games did you play growing up?

As a child, she played a lot of pretend games. Often, she pretended to have her own kitchen, and pretended to have her own house.

8. What was your favorite toy and why?

Her favorite toy was a 1ft tall doll. Swati’s mother used to make sweaters and cloths for her doll. Eventually, she learned to knit to dress up her doll.

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9. What was your favorite thing to do for fun (movies, beach, etc.)?

Her favorite thing to do was, in the summer, to go to her grandmother’s village. In the nights, she, with her family, used to sleep under the moon.

10. Did you have family chores? What were they? Which was your least favorite

As the oldest child, all her extended family was eager to teach her tasks. By third grade, she was helping her parents in the kitchen and could make food for her family alone.

11. Did you receive an allowance? How much? Did you save your money or spend it?

She used to get one Rupee per day to help her grandfather with his tasks. She transported breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and helped him. She used to save this to buy utensil sets to play with.

12. What was school like for you as a child? What were your best and worst subjects? Where did you attend grade school? High school? College?

As she frequently changed houses, she also changed schools. The school she went to most was t school St. Joseph’s Convent. She was good at most of her subjects, other than history. Her history teacher forced her to remember dates and years, which she was unable to do.

14. Do you remember any fads from your youth? Popular hairstyles? Clothes?

One of the most popular fads was the umbrella skirt. She says her umbrella skirt would be able to make 10 regular skirts, and that they were full of material.

17.Did you have any pets? If so, what kind and what were their names?

For a year, Swati did have some rabbits. They were like fluffballs and were very fun to play with. They would get in comforters with her and were great pets. These rabbits were named “Chun mun” and “Mun mun”.

19. Were you ever mentioned in a newspaper?

She was mentioned in a newspaper twice. Once when she changed her name to make her middle name the same as my father’s. Another time was when she got a 5th rank in the 100 college Nagpur University System for a Dentistry test.

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21. What world events had the most impact on you while you were growing up? Did any of them personally affect your family?

The only big event that changed her life was the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, where a Union Carbide plant leaked toxic fumes across the city of Bhopal. Despite her future husband living in Bhopal being much more affected, this event, and seeing all the photos of the dead, changed her view on living in large cities.

24.How is the world today different from what it was like when you were a child?

She says that the most staggering difference is that the world is so much more connected. She used to have pen pals and sent letters to friends and family across the country. Despite this, everyone did become disconnected, and she says the she loves how easy it is to stay connected nowadays.

28. What stories have come down to you about your parents? Grandparents? More distant ancestors?

Swati’s grandfather was a Deputy Superintendent of Police in the major city of Jabalpur before he died. In his town, there were armed gangs. He caught the dakku (leader) of one gang many times, but he was always released due to corruption. Once, Swati’s grandfather told the dakku that if he caught him again, he would kill him in the town square. A few weeks later, the dakku’s body was found on the town square, and Swati’s grandfather had to go through a massive inquiry to prove his innocence.

30. Have any recipes been passed down to you from family members?

Almost every recipe that Swati knows has been passed down from her mother. Her favorite dish, khichdi, was made by her mother on special occasions, and she continues to make this weekly to this day.

31. Are there any physical characteristics that run in your family?

Almost everyone descendant from her grandparents have the same dimple on their chin. This has even been passed down to her own child. She wonders if her grandchildren will have them.

32. Are there any special heirlooms, photos, bibles or other memorabilia that have been passed down in your family?

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Swati has a pendant from her grandmother’s family, which has been passed down to each family’s oldest child. This pendant contains the nail of a Bengal tiger.

44. What was your profession and how did you choose it?

Swati is a software engineer. She chose this profession because she started an online dentist coaching program, and while working to create this online website and app, she began to enjoy coding, and eventually did her Masters in CS and changed professions.

45. If you could have had any other profession what would it have been? Why wasn't it your first choice?

In her youth, Swati wanted to be an architect. However, she chose in her youth to become a dentist, which eventually led her to software engineering. Now, given the chance, she would also become an architect.