M: When did you migrate to Canada?

Su: I came here December 2018.

M: Motivations? So you got married but were

Su: Yeah I definitely was looking out to move out of Pakistan because, where I was staying, in Pakistan what tends to happen is that you have a very limited skillset and people tend to have a very narrow notion about what you can do with your skills and what you can. And I feel I was always looking to move out of that sphere and get into a sphere where I could start over new and my past didn't really matter in terms of career and all that stuff. So I could study or I could go back and say go back to school, I could start working. I could start like becoming an entrepreneur. But my my, like what my motivation always was, was because I was so attached to Pakistan in terms of the not for profit and humanitarian work that I did in Pakistan. I always wanted to, even if I moved anywhere else, I always wanted to carry that goal in my head. So say you know whether I moved to like England or Canada or America I always wanted to sort of ignite this sort of, you know, passion and say maybe overseas Pakistanis or just other people about like arts and crafts in Pakistan and how much potential there is and how much like they're being exploited and how much so my connection was always like, I'll move out Yes, and I'll have like a primary day job or whatever, but I really want to sit down and like sort of promote our arts and like our crafts all over Pakistan… and our music and like everything because it's so rich culture. And in Pakistan, like stuff like Urdu’s wearing out. People don't talk Urdu as much. I and, you know, I mean, that's, that's the language to be proud of. Because honestly, like, I mean, unfortunately, even I can like sort of understand, like, very poetic Urdu because I haven't been brought up there, but I wish I could and I wish I could take pride in it because the kind of like linguistic like it's just everything. I think everything's from like authors like Manto to like poets like Faiz, like, Pakistani art like Sadeqain or so whatever you have, like they have so much more like struggle in their like in their Arts then. Well, it's wrong to make a comparison but I feel like there's so much struggle because it seemed very, very hard lives in that they’ve seen like partition they've seen like, the whole Bangladesh like, you know, \ they’ve seen just a lot of fractions of life that maybe haven't and then our youth are not sort of. They're not. They're not informed about that as they should be. And I feel like wherever I wanted to go in life, I always wanted to inform people of my culture, whether they were Pakistani or not. So yeah, that's something that I always wanted to bring into.

M: Right. So you like, I mean, tell me about your background. So you grew up outside of Pakistan?

Su: So I was born in Islamabad. So my dad was a diplomat. After every two foreign postings he would have to come back to Islamabad to work at the Foreign Office. I was in Islamabad. When I was 2 I moved to Baghdad for about five years in Iraq and then then I moved to Indonesia for about three years. Then back to Islamabad when I was about seven, eight, and I went to school in Islamabad so this is my first sort of thing with with Pakistan. But Islamabad is very different culturally from Pakistan, from Karachi because there's a lot of foreign population like theres diplomats and stuff. So you don't really feel the typical-ness. You know, it's not claustrophobic, it's, it's a little more broad. And then after Pakistan, we moved to the Netherlands for about six years. I think that was my dad's longest posting and that was kind of like, has in a way become home for all of us in some way or the other and then after the Netherlands, I moved to Russia. So I was living in Moscow for about three years. My dad retired some time in February 2008. I was still in the middle of high school, I was doing my International Baccalaureate, and then so I obviously could not it was like, couple of months ago, my final exams I was seeking move back to Pakistan with them. So I stayed on in Russia all alone. And that was a lot of fun. But apart from that, like I learned about, like, what the Russian culture and about so many things and about just just how like, you know, and I remember ever since I was like, you know, 10- 11 I would just go on and on about Pakistan to my friends and how amazing the culture is I was just one of those like, you know, it's very proud of all of these things and, and people just like my wedding happened in December, and all my friends were like you've been raving about Pakistan for like, as long as we've known you. Like, we're so excited to come. They all, well, some of them came and, like, you know, it was nice. So, then I moved to London to do my law at UCL and then I thought I didn't want to do my bar, whatever I came back to Pakistan. And yeah the story starts from there in terms of work and then finding like, what I'm good at what I what my passions are, like, you know, all that kind of stuff. And it was very difficult sort of moving a step forward, because they're like, but your lawyer, why wouldnt you want to practice law? Why would you want to do this? Why would you want to do that? So So we actually did, like a couple of friends. We actually close… but honestly when I practice law, my my impetus was not to become like a corporate lawyer or like whatever you see in suits or whatever and all of that stuff and makes shit loads of money. It was…it was more like, I wanna work. So criminal law I want to do Human Rights, that's where I was heading towards. And both things in Pakistan are a challenge because a woman being a criminal lawyer, anyone being a criminal lawyer and most of the criminals are very sort of notorious. And you know, I started I remember I started visiting kurachi Central Jail quite a few times to get an idea to get people's stories because I liked writing also, I like writing also, and I remember getting calls and getting tracked and all of that kind of stuff. So that was, you know, just a little uncomfortable. So basically that happened then and then we like couple of our friends were like very passionate and stuff. We, together with the guidance of Asma Jahangir, she's she's a very well known like activist add lawyer in Pakistan. So we started this legal aid clinic, whereby we would work with people who could not afford Legal Assistance which is 70% of the population. So you know if there was like land crimes and you know people taking over their property or people taking the land or people taking over whatever… like whatever is domestic violence or domestic divorce, the husband not giving the divorce, whatever it was, we were kind of solving it and than unfortunately I got a job into another good corporation which was linked law remotely and so I said okay, why not? But I kept in touch with the legal aid clinic and I believe it's doing really well right now. It's it's like when we started we were like, like working from like, what like, basically just like someone was kind enough to give a room from their house, like, somewhere in Lyari, right which is a very…was a criminal infested area. But then, now I believe it has its own office and all of that stuff so it is picking up. I would love to do that kind of thing in Pakistan but unfortunately like, you know, there's implications to that. Yeah as there is anything that's a little out of, you know, boundaries or whatever. And there are a lot of boundaries.

M: So tell me about your your marriage so I mean your wedding. How did you meet your husband?

Su: So I have met my husband about three years ago at like, so we knew each other through a lot of mutual friends but we never really like met and spoke. But then like a friend of mine, and friend of his suggested that we…like we should probably like, get to know each other and it was a mutual friend of ours whose wedding it was. And so, he introduced us and then you know, one thing led to another we started sort of like, this is December 2015. And he was only there in Pakistan for a holiday and I don't know what happened to me but I just took… I'm very careful about these things but I just took a leap of faith and then we started having a long distance relationship. I told him that like, the only the only way I'm gonna have a long distance relationship with you is if we make an effort to meet after three, four months whether that's, you know, Im not asking you to come all the way to Pakistan or I'm not going to come all the way to Canada but lets meet half way. Otherwise not going to work on the phone and all that stuff. So we try to make an effort to that consistently as possible. Year and a half into it, he wanted me my family. I met his and then from then on. We kind of like, sort of… Oh, we met like in our first holiday was in Lisbon that we went to Miami. We went to Barcelona, so, and he came to … he comes to Karachi every December. So that, and then San Francisco. So like just random places, right? That was one of the things I put in my head was like, Im not gonna go into this blind sighted, you know.

M: What does he do?

Su: So he works for. He works for a company called Young Canada, and they are the parent company for restaurants like KFC, Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, etc, etc. And he looks after… like he's a franchisee and business coach. So he's kind of like an operations as well as, like growing the franchisees business. So he travels. In fact, right now also he’s in Vancouver. So he travels a lot for work.

M: All right. And had you been to Canada before you got married?

Su: No.

M: Okay. All right now, I mean, we have actually discussed your professional background as well and in terms of your migration to Canada, did you plan this… So I suppose the right question would be your migration to your move to London. Was that by yourself? Or was that with your family?

Su: No, I was by myself. That was myself.

M: And how did you sort of come up with that? Like, why did you choose London over Russia or Pakistan?

Su: To be honest, I didn't want I don't think Pakistan was even an option because I don't think they sort of sort of did the kind of law that I wanted to do. I think I was just kind of following the footsteps of my brother by going to school in London. But in hindsight, I probably had a better option going North America, or Canada do my law, but I believe it was I just wanted to get it done. I was not a very studious student in any case, so I was sort of like, okay, so we get it done three years done. With America, like or whatever you'd have to do like pre law then. You know, but like being in America would have definitely been a more wholesome experience. Yeah, but but London is fabulous. Great place. You know, at the time, it's funny because right now, couple weeks ago, I read that they changed the law… and the students who graduate from… foreigners who graduate from English universities have a 2 year to find work and whatever. At that time we didn't have that. And with Law, it was a very, like Oxford, Cambridge, very strict, aristocratic, sort of, selection process where the top law firms had people were graduates from there. And obviously people who are not of my racial ethnicity, if you could say that, so that was very competitive. And that's why I came home.

M: And So I mean, in terms of work now, like you're looking for work now, what kind of work are you looking for? Is it legal or anything really?

Su: I think, I would say say like, anything, really. But I kind of gave that thought up a couple of weeks ago. I don't want to do anything really, because it really does take away from who I am. I'd either go back into the Arts somewhere or the other, do something with writing, if that was… if I were to follow my passion. And if I were to stick to what my expertise are in, it's more like not for profit, fundraising, humanitarian sector, like international NGOs, and, UN, whatever.

M: And how are you finding the job market for those kinds of jobs?

Su: Umm not too bad, actually. Okay, not too bad, because they, they're very, they're a lot more good with handing out these jobs to people who have like, would have had like a diverse sort of background and cultural, whatever, you know, ethnicity, as opposed to giving them to people who are from here. I don't know why that is but that's probably a good a good thing I guess? I don't know, or maybe people over here just more into like finance and marketing. And that's what I tend to sort of hear every time. So when someone says I have a job, they're like, Oh, well I work for a bank for we work for, you know, whatever a company like Lowe's or you know, retail and that kind of stuff. So maybe that job market isnt built or maybe it'll be funny that way. But it hasn't been like hugely competitive to get a couple of interviews here and there. Like, yes, with the bigger places for sure. But the smaller ones, you get something or the other.

M: And in terms of visa status, like what sort of visa are you on currently and what kind of visa is your husband?..

Su: My husband's citizen so I am …I applied for temporary resident visa, which is basically a visit visa and because I had that I could get into the country and that be inbound, and apply for a spousal visa. So technically, my status is that I am a non-resident but I am allowed to work in Canada because I have a work permit. But my PR is probably due six, seven months from now. The good thing is I have a work permit so that you know allows me to work before my PR.

M: And in terms of your move now… so your move to be with your husband? Yeah, on a spouse visa How long did you plan have to plan and organize?

Su: Like a year before we got married or maybe at least nine months or 10 months before we got married. Like a lot of research out of like, what lawyers are we gonna get are going to apply ourselves? What are the forms gonna look like? And like I said, like we were always like antsy about the fact that you know, how am I…are we going to be married? How am I going to live like apart from you like 10,000 miles apart? That’s so weird. And then working that around, and talking with people talking to different lawyers, and then coming up and saying, well, no matter what you can be an inbound applicant. So that was a very stressful procedure, especially for my parents as well, because they just didn't think they just couldn't imagine like, and then it was also stressful for me because I was like, So where am I gonna live? Am I gonna live in your house, your parents? Or am I going to live with my own family? Coz it makes no sense to live in your house and blah, blah, blah, like that, obviously, raised a lot of conflict, and because of conflict and pressure was there I think we moved on. I think I really pushed it like…No, we have to find a way to do like the whole inbound or whatever alternative we have. And I'm glad that lawyers are lawyers were not good enough to sort of suggest that to us, because doing on your own is just not as…as efficient like I'd say yeah, yeah.

M: And how's how's married life, generally living and moving into a new place?

Su: What I'd say married life is Probably like..So I came in and obviously there's like a lot of expectations you have when you move in with someone that you're dating. And but it gets a lot of a lot different couple of months, well people say a couple of years down the line. In our case couple of months down the line. There were a lot of his travels, a lot of like challenges in terms of us getting along as people because we realized we're complete opposite in work like, you know, for fun, but then when it came to practicality, it was like, okay, clash, clash. So obviously one or the other person, or both the take step back in their personalities. But it's been, like it's been challenging.. ill tell you what, its been challenging and we don't share the same interests at all. Obviously, he's been in Canada for what 15 years. For me, I'm new so like every time, you know. So like every time I'm like I get excited about like, you know, going to Kensington Market or sitting on the patios like having lunch, and drinks and whatever during the summer or whatever. He's just like, yeah I've been there done that. And that's sort of like, you know, you’re kind of boring, like, but sometimes he'll he'll understand that like, okay, she just moved. But it really helps the fact that I've got like, some way or the other, a lot of my childhood friends ended up living here. So I do have like, a good like a good number of friends and close ones. I'd be like meeting someone or the other something, you know, you know, I'm not like.. And as far as him moving away, like my mother in law comes and visits in the summer. So she's here these days, and she's like, if you want to come and stay with… She lives with their daughter, her daughter’s not married, so she's like, if you want to come and stay or whatever. I'm like, you know, to be honest, like, I'm okay. Like, on my own. I actually like it, like, you know, and I don't get lonely or whatever, like that kind of thing. I mean, yeah, you know, I'm just I'm one of those like, I just do my own thing.

M: Your sister in law is in Toronto as well?

Su: Yeah, she works in Toronto. Yes. She’s been there. She's a year and a half older than my husband. She's not married. She's working for for Colgate Palolive.

M: So you do have family and friends Yeah. Which is which was gonna be my next questions. We'll discuss that when we do the mapping as well as. How long did your initial visa process take?

Su: I'm actually good. Oh, yeah. So for the visitor visa, the first time I applied for it I got rejected because to be honest, it was a very rushed and most people do apparently from Pakistan. This is the hardest visa, the Canadian visa is the hardest to get. So and to be honest, to be fair, I didn't really put in a lot of documents. I didn't really apply from my heart. So I just sort of gave it in and I got rejected. This time around, like there was a lot of documents and stuff and like a lot of because this meant a lot more or more stakes involved. At that point. I was just going to meet my boyfriend. And then I was this time I was like, you know, I need a visa visa in order for me to get into the country after we get married, right. So the process itself didn't take very long I believed like I got an email maybe like 15 days down the line saying come pick up your passport, but the whole collection of documents and justifying things took a bit longer than that. Yeah, any other visa would say you would see how long isn't like a few months? maybe, you know, I'd say like was, I'd say a month and a half. Yeah, okay. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, A lot of people like, like my husband's cousin, he applied, he has a Pakistani passport as well. So he applied from Dubai, like within five days he got it. From Pakistan, I don't know why they're just a little more stricter.

M: Okay, so, um, and final question before we begin mapping, how do you consider yourself? I mean, what are the skills that you bring with you to this country? How do you consider yourself to be a skilled migrant?

Su: Um, to be honest, like, well, if I were to go for the typical like words like project management, not for profit management, you know, in terms of marketing, content writing, I’ve done a lot of that, communications, interactions and digital marketing and all of that. But if I were to really look at like, my passions and my skills into my passions, it'd be that you know, I could contribute a lot of cross cultural. Like I said, like I'd love curating like Pakistani exhibition artists exhibitions here. I'd love curating, like pop ups or stuff with like, you know, crafts and things made by underprivileged like woman in Pakistan. So I think the whole cross cultural thing really like link to art and crafts really does help me out. And then, you know, I don't know if that's a skill set, but I think I have a very creative mindset. It's like you give me something as long as you give it to me from the start of it, I will make something of it. And I think that's, that's one of the things that…I don't know if I have that cliche skill set. I've always kind of said, Well, I don't fall into that category anyway. And that's probably why a lot of people are like, Well, what does she bring to the table? Right? But, but there's something I can't explain what I do bring to the table, but it's just..

M: I think you explained it perfectly. Yeah. Yes, you will. Again, it's I don't think that all skill systems are about about actual physical like tangible. Yeah, they're about life skills as well. So I think that that's very important. Did your husband migrate here on the skills visa category?

Su: Oh, he he moved here as a student, he went to UofT. So he moved here as a student..he was. He finished high school in karachi and he moved here when he was done. 2005-2006 – something like that. Like he is his family had also come a couple of years before that to settle in the kids and whatever. And then it was like they had applied as a family and by the end of I think, I think 2011-2012 they all got their passports or whatever. So the parents moved back coz there they have… my my father in law has a business back home and then and then. Well, yeah, yeah, they decided to stay. My husband's younger brother stayed for a bit, didn’t really like itwe, nt back to Karachi to join the family business, and then my sister in law is still here.

M: And in terms of cultural sort of change, I mean, I suppose we did briefly talk talk about how you grew up in a culture that was quite similar to Western culture.

Su: Yeah. At least from me, not from my parents. My parents don't think that.. theyre like you’re Pakistani at the end of the day, I'm like, well, no Im not, like, yeah, I mean, I am but that not like a… that's not like a that's a nationality. That's not a way of thinking, you know, right. Yeah. That's, that's interesting.

M: Yeah. So yeah, I mean, that's an that's a discussion that I have with my parents all the time. Yeah. But um, what about your husband like, is he very culturally Pakistani, or is his family very culturally Pakistani?

Su: His family, I would say are very traditional but Modern Family. So he is not he's traditional in the sense like, now, that I'm living with him I get to know how traditional he is. But he's not like every time like say for example if you go out for dinner with a couple of people and they're not they're from Canada or whatever and someone asks how’s Pakistan and I'd be like Pakistan’s great like there's so much…you go up north, there mountains… you go south theres the sea. And he… hes just like Pakistan’s shit, like, wow that's one thing we clash on. Im like Amir, look like we have so many like there's so much culture like you know whether it comes to food or comes to traditions or folklore or whatever. He's not very proud Paksitani. In the sense of gender roles and stuff, he's very typical but when it comes down to,

say like, he's not worried about what I wear, what I do. He's not like in traditional the sense that like, he has set of values and like systems that are… that go beyond superficial things like clothing and all of that it's all about you know, well did you… you know, take care of somebody? Are you hospitable? These are the things that I think comes from our culture because we as people are very hospitable. And we take care of our guests and he's always told me like I'm a hospitable as well, but he's always told me like, you know, guests whoever comes to our house…like that way you can tell the traditionalism coming in but and also the fact that when we started dating, he wasn't like he told me from the first day I'm not fooling around with you like if this works out. I want to get married to you. And I was like, okay, because guys, even in Pakistan dont say that. So that in that sense yes, I'd say he’s well valued but but but not like, you know, very pro Pakistan. Or maybe he just doesn't know it.

M: Okay, so we'll, we'll get drawing. So, the first question is, tell me about all of the visa categories you went through from the point of your initial arrival to current status. Now, in terms of your journey, I would also be interested in your…Was it a student visa to do the UK? So probably that as well. Went to the UK, you went back to Pakistan. Maybe you want to demonstrate that you were growing up in other parts of the world. It's totally up to you, but like basically all kinds of visa categories that you went through a journey or..journey around the world.

Su: Im very artsy, so I'm gonna try and do something artsy. I think I'm more in the moment kind of person. So that’s a Pakistani flag. So it says 20th December 1989 the day this is the day I was born. I was born and this is the day that my dad was he was going through a lot of politics in terms of people and his colleagues. So he was fighting for a promotion that he was very much due for. But this day, the day of my birth, I was born as finally when he got that promotion, making him like the ambassador, like in foreign countries. So he always sees my birth as good luck. I've always been like a little spoiled dads child. So moving on from that, like if I were to go on…I wish I knew what the Arab flag looked like. This is Iraq. This is Indonesia. So my first best friend was I met… was in Indonesia. So then, leaving was sad obviously. Then we went to Islamabad which was interesting. So, we stayed like random places. Well, when my dad was doing a course and we stayed in one of those houses too long…Like, our like, container came by a container came from from Jakarta. And then we bought a house and my dad was busy like doing these courses and my mom us were like, just. like first experience in Pakistan like, our maid, like goes missing and my mom was like, but I dropped her home, like last night and she told me this is the house and like the next day the family comes to the house and they're like, like what did you do to like my daughter? She's not back home, whatever and they threatened to put it up in the newspaper or whatever. Turns out the girl herself had ran away with another guy. So that was like, obviously all this visa stuff was supported by my dad. So I don’t really know much about it. So there was this holiday without mom. It was amazing. No with dad was amazing. Yeah, mom was …all these rules back then obviously right. I remember the flag. So That's Holland, that's like legal.. like that’s weed, so Canada. Yeah its way more legal here than in Holland. There you can't smoke on the streets. Over here, like there's no, like you can order it online on the Government of Ontario Canada website…like they even have like CBD oils and stuff like that which you can tell me which which ones are good so. To be honest I'm not like so much as so much a weed person I realized so yeah i think i think i think… or maybe the strains that I've like ordered haven't been like very suitable for me but like in Pakistan whatever I used to get like cuz I love writing so get me very creative. Over here, it just gets me very like paranoid and jittery and I don't like that. So, well I was a little upset and I think I spoke for all my family when I say this that like this is you know, home. We did there for so many years and moving from Holland to like, say like, you think about like Russia, you're like, what the hell… Where am I going? But then you know, we get there and like, you know, It's amazing. Like it's just the best. I speak Dutch but now that's going down the drain obviously because I have less people to practice with but. Im trying to draw this but its not working…St. Basil's Cathedral basically. Yeah. And the Kremlin, but I'm not I can't draw them. And then funnily enough their flag is the opposite of…So all of this was like diplomatic visa. My father retired in 2008. I'm not gonna go into the English flag cuz, yeah, England..whatever. I was living in London. It was nice. I had a lot of friends at that point who had also moved to London. So it's kind of like interesting because you know, I had a community. Its like those weighs – like justice or whatever. So this is the artist that I work with. Obviously, she doesn't look like that. But just to signify that I was curating in some point in my life. So I got a very serious or, I thought was a serious relationship in my second year like while I was in Pakistan, got my heart broken. I thought it was the end of the world but it clearly wasn't. There are many more heartbreaks after that and many more like fun times. And then we have in the middle, I think, the most important one. Like I know that’s not a maple leaf but like, Ironic, right, because I was born on 28th December. I got married on the 23rd of December. So [moving to Canada], It was a struggle. The weather was a struggle, there was loss of relationship excitement, like I said, husband traveling a lot, not ready to let go of his bachelor lifestyle habits. Now it's gone better because lot of people told him to but initially No. And then I used to be stuck in upset because I but now I found my own thing and I found my way to go through with him and how to deal with him. I know what he's tired when he wants to watch a match, when he does these things I know like the whole rhythm. So I'm not very like pushed about it. But yeah, that's, that's well, that's my very basic map, I guess.

M: So I suppose I'm what I'm now interested in is you're, you're like the kinds of services that you uses. I mean, this is research is also about what people do in turn. of trying to get visas. Yeah, so I suppose the two destinations that I'm interested in knowing about is London is the UK and Canada. And you said that you used a lawyer for Canada. so I mean what I'm wanting to know as any commercial services that you used okay things that you paid for all you guys had to pay for

Su: lawyer for Spousal Visa …a lot of money and then obviously there was the visa for the visa which obviously is like a visa fee. right. So that for the UK that was also student visa. Had a fee but I didn’t use a lawyer coz obviously university on my behalf had actually, and honestly, the at that point, there was a big clunk of students, in the sense that there was like you know that year… there was a big backlog and whatever people got their UK visas really late so I did miss like freshers week and stuff.

M: And there was University fees and like how what what sort of support systems that were available to you mean where your foot where your family paying the fees? Yeah, yeah, I was. I used to come back to Karachi, like the summer and work, like, just like gaining experience, but it was mostly like my family paying for it.

Su: So for immigration here I had to do criminal record check. I had to do medical. I think I still have to do a few more things like to prove you know, we're married. The other day, we got a letter from a lawyer from who had gotten a letter from, from the Canadian government saying that we need to prove that we're cohabiting. Im like how do we prove that they're like. Well, basically, you know, joint bank accounts or letters that have come to your house, like addressed to you, but come to his address and that kind of stuff. I was like, Okay, fine. We'll send that over. But like, obviously, I mean, I get it, I get it from their point of view, because there's a lot of people that just get married, like, sort of have an agreement whereby they're just like, okay, I'll get married to but you know, I'm just helping you with your residency or whatever. But yes, but we gave them a lot of proof of the fact that like, I remember my husband writing like four pages of like, how we met, how this happened. Even then they had like questions like, Okay, what was the restaurant where the first date was? What was this? What was that? So they were very thorough and so despite that, like im quite surprised they still think someone would’ve made that up, but maybe it's maybe it's just protocol? I don't know.

M: And I mean, how do you also look? I mean, I suppose now I'm just gonna ask you a moral sort of an emotional question or Yeah, mental kind of a question where How do you feel about being on this dependent visa? I mean, considering that your visa depends upon your husband and marriage?

Su: It's stressful? Yeah, very stressful. Like, I can't wait to reach to the mark where, like, you know, I'm on my own kind of thing and like, it's not dependent, like, in any way, like, you know, it's a very insecure time, you know, like your dependence is completely on somebody else. Financially also, and as well as, you know, country wise or living wise. That's never ever happened with me. So, I think that that is a that's a tough like. These are tough emotions to juggle sometimes. I've always been this kind of like independent person and then you turn around you suddenly become utterly dependent on someone else. Its like ha ha, joke's on you, kind of thing. Well, I think the first few months like you were kind of like, okay, let's just go with however it is. Yeah, he was a bachelor. So he was like, Okay, we'll buy groceries whenever and neither was really cared. But because I was like, I was so used to a house that was systematic and he was so used to living as a bachelor, that I wanted systems like groceries every two weeks, I wanted to cook coz I like cooking like, I wanna have meals ready, and like stuff like that. So, those are the things I had to like systemize and then obviously, like, anything I needed to get or whatever, like, although, like I try very hard to like pull out my savings or whatever and do part time jobs here and there. Obviously he still supports like, like, anything that I need, right? Like, you know, like give me a certain amount of whatever it is so that I can buy this or that.. So even though like I would not be on this way, I wouldn't be on the street anyway. But like, it's just one of those things where you're like, I'd rather know when this is happening and when it's going to be fine, like, as opposed to be like in the dark because I don't like uncertainty. That’s it. And it's also, I’ll tell you what, I've never lived in a country as an immigrant. I've always lived and my dad used to always say this, and Im like dad “That's such a wrong thing to say”… like don't use the word “immigrant” in the negative connotation, but he's like, I'm right. You realize that when you move there, that in your life you did have like a privileged status, whether you liked it or not, and then in Pakistan you lived at home. Now suddenly, you're basically like, gonna be a barista at Starbucks, you're gonna have problems getting your mind down, right? Rather than thinking I'm still living in that sphere of mind. For me. That's, that was the biggest challenge to overcome. And I think I've overcome that really, but like it's still every day, it's like, okay, you're not starting from if you were at level 10 in Pakistan, you're not starting from level 10, you probably started with level two. Yeah. And that is sort of, it hits your self esteem, it hits your dynamics with your husband or whatever, because, you know, like, it just does, like, even indirectly, its got nothing to do with anyone else. But it's just like that. And I have been financially like, I lived with my parents, whatever. So as far as like bills and stuff goes, I had like no idea… but in terms of like my own financial stuff, like things I wanted to buy or the things I wanted to do, I never asked my parents. So it's it's challenging because I've been like, not that I have to ask my husband for money. He will just like transfer it every month or whatever but, but you know getting there it takes time to get there because it's awkward. You're like, he's my boyfriend you're dating, everything's fun suddenly it comes down to money. And then when I researched it was like, a big like a big issue between couples and I was like, okay, there's the other issue I remember we were joking about this when we were dating was like two two big issues in a marriage. And then one is cleanliness and I remember dating sitting there laughing and saying what do you mean cleanliness? How is that even an issue that leads to divorce or whatever. And and he was like, I don't know, I'm just reading this off a website and the second one is budgeting. And I was like oh Don't worry, we won't have issue with either but like I here now and I have issues with both [laughs]. My husbands not the most cleanest person… he's clean but he's messy. Yeah, he's hygienic. You know, he's he's like, Okay throw the shoes here, the socks here. And the the thing is it's so funny because I was living at home I didn't really care like I kept my room like clean or whatever but like I wouldn't have cared if someone came to my house and put their boots here or there but now I'm just like “tomorrow I'm gonna wake up I know I have to do it”. So like it just gets me antsy and irritated. And obviously factors like that wouldn't be there if I was like working safe say, if I work from like nine to like six seven, I wouldn’t give a shit about like what's happening like…That's also one of the things I that's why I want to get to work so fast although could take a longer sabbatical, and do part time gigs, but I think one of the reasons for mental stability will also be getting back to work. An idle mind is the devil's workshop this basically it.

M: And in terms of like these part time gigs that you're doing, what are you doing?

Su: Mostly like brand ambassadors stuff. So right now working for this thing called, there's a magazine called refinery 29. But we know it like they're they're doing these pop ups all over this a fourth year doing these art installations. What it is, is like an experience-based thing. So like they're curating 29 rooms with different experiences for people go there. So, there's like artists, they've been doing this in Florida, Atlanta, and like, a couple of places, and this is the first time they doing in Toronto at the exhibition place. So they’ve picked all Canadian local artists, and they're doing like very like performance art. And it's very interactive. So if you're like a visitor and you bought a ticket, you're not just standing here looking at the museum, but you're interacting with the Art. And so I'm just like, working.. I don't know exactly what my role is till the training is tomorrow, but I'm gonna be like one of their brand ambassadors. Probably make contacts and stuff during that time. But, yeah, it's like 12 hours a day work, but I think I need that. Like, honestly networking, you know, it's like, it's weird because it's not difficult. It's actually one of the easier countries to network. But I just feel like because of the closeted environment that we actually experienced in Paksitan where a girl goes up to a guy like gives out like a visitor cards, like “oh, okay, you know”, so that I think that's kind of been drilled into our like, my system. So like, the whole networking thing is like, like my parents. They’re like “what's networking?...just like send CV’s” Im like dad these guys like networking… it is 80% of the job. The other day I went to this NGOs random like annual general meeting and my husband was like why are you going to the annual general meeting? so random…I was like I'm going to go and try making contacts. After the meeting was done I walked up the CEO and I'm like, Look, I like to introduce myself very briefly coz she obviously didn’t have time. She's like, Look, let me just give you my card and email me and we'll see what positions we have and where we can put you for that was like, you know, like a step to get out. But I think most of the time I'm so stuck in my comfort zone. It's a lot of laziness and like it's, kind of like futility and actions like… Okay, so what if I get this I'm never gonna be as senior as big as I was in Pakistan. So like, I'm gonna have to work what 10 years more to get the level that I was in Pakistan. Its ridiculous. Even though that may not be the truth. But I don't you know, that's what I mean. That self defeating thought kind of puts me back on doing stuff.

M: And in terms of your migration itself was tell me the role of your parents and your social connections. So friends, family community that they played in your migration, or was there? Was there any role in there?

Su: Yeah In terms of authenticating that, Oh, yeah. You know, our daughter, was in a relationship with him and they were dating and then she got married and that kind of thing, but otherwise not really. My mom kind of knew, like I told her first because we had… my cousin was getting married in San Francisco, and he was just insisting on meeting my family, and he was my mom's brother's daughters wedding, so my first cousin. And so I said, Okay, fine. You want to move my family from San Francisco and he'd come and then from then on, it was like, no going back kind of thing. But he met my dad like later that year. So Ive never like introduced any guys to my dad, unless the guy has been serious about his intentions and he was very serious about it. So, I guess that was that was that. In terms of dating and stuff, so like my mom would know… But like, I never liked sort of introduced them to my dad, so then he was like okay that's the real deal, you know.

M: And in terms of the…are you are you sort of interested in immigration policies and migration policies generally?

Su: For sure. I really want to work with immigrants and refugees. My dream was actually to like move to…. before I met Amir, My dream was to like move to Europe and work with refugees and sort of work in in terms of policy making for assimilation for refugees or refugees or immigrants because I think that is….and honestly in Toronto as well people say oh community centres, YMCA, employment Canada blah, blah, blah. But honestly, that doesn't help very much. It's not about Okay, I want to come and get a job immediately. It's just about like, if, if I've just flown in or whatever, from Tunisia or wherever, I didn't speak a word of English and whatever, like, how can you help me in the immediate level to get me assimilated to my culture, to make sure that I live in a place which has people from my culture, like I've always been interested in, like, migration and like, settlement and, and immigration and just general sort of like, you know, cultural assimilation, and I feel there's a big lacking of that, no matter how many centers they have.

M: Right. So you're more interested in the sort of NGO space work in migration? Have you sort of do you look into migration policies and stuff as well?

Su: Not really, not really.

M: Have people come to you for immigration advice, by any chance have any sort of similar like, considering that you went through this?

Su: Actually no. Like, I as a lot of people for my like, for advice for me, but no, like, I think it's only been nine months. So, I guess nobody has come up to me.

M: And I suppose what I want to now know is the role of technology and you're in You're such a new sort of moving to Canada and even moving to London, I was I would ask maybe, how did you do conduct online research? Did you look at online resources? And again, broadly, as well, how did you use technology, I suppose even maintaining that long distance relationship.

Su: To be honest, I've been very bad at that. I didn't maintain technology or say, you know, you'd imagine like, you know, somebody who's moving to Canada to be like, okay, let's read up about politics. And let's read up about what's happening day to day and I'd say only the last month I've started getting more involved, the elections coming in and everyone's talking about it. And I'm like, okay I need to know what's going on or like sports for that matter, and that kind of stuff. So I was never very like… London's different because I was more politically aware because it's more globalised. But in terms of use of technology to help me out Absolutely not. I just didnt. I think every big change in my life has been blindness and aloofness. If I were to put it that way, every single decision that I have made has been just on, you know, just just a leap of faith like really… Ive never really been like, Okay, I'm gonna research this or whatever it's been like someone's given me advice. I like the advice, Ill go for it or whatever. But now like, as I've grown up and realized several mistakes I might have made doing that, I try to remain more informed and I try to research more.

M: But yeah, maintaining your relationship with your boyfriend or your husband now. How did you do that on my long distance? Like what were you sort of what are the tools that

Su: like WhatsApp, Facetime – that kinda stuff.

M: All right now I think I suppose maybe I want to ask you about your future plans now from here on what's the next step or next steps?

Su: Well, well I there's so many steps to be honest… like I want to be. I want to work in the art sphere I also want to work. I also want to like this new thing that I have in mind. I want to become a naturopath… I want to work with organic medicine, with aroma therapy with oils because I that's benefited me so I suffer from anxiety and depression seasonally. So, both of these things have helped me a lot …eating clean, organic and also like a lot of lateral movement therapy essential oils and just tinctures and whatever it is like I've benefited from them a lot. So I really want to do something that would help other people also do that. I want to link that to mental health somehow. So I've been reading up a lot about mental health and about, you know, different therapy procedures and how to do that. I'm not a certified therapist so obviously no one can take me seriously in that way. So basically that’s also something I want to do, but I also like I think my main goal in life in whatever factor would be to help people, whether that's mental health or that's, you know physical disabilities or volunteering at you know, an old people's home because I know I just had this certain like, obviously, I've never been old before and I've never felt the feeling of loneliness of not having my children because I don't have children but there's something that pulls me to connect to people. Whether they're orphans or old people, so there's anything I can do for them in any way id be grateful. But anyway, as it comes to be a very practical stance, I need to have more investment capital to stand and say, this is what I do for a living and maybe one day that’ll translate to something of my own.

M: And what about like other sort of goals? And I mean, do you want to buy a house? For example? Do you want to have children?

Su: Well, to be honest, like, I'm not very profit driven in the sense that I'm not like, I'm a little hippie at heart. So, I would say, my husband the complete opposite He's like, now we've got an apartment. We have a house. Now we have to buy this know we have to buy that, and it's always about that. I'm just like, just relax and enjoy the moment. Like, I'm not I'm not worried if I don't have a house. Kids are not my agenda anytime soon. But I'd like to have then for sure. Yeah, I think I think right now what I'm working on a lot is personal growth. Yeah, like emotional regulation, and you know, stuff that there's a very interesting therapy procedure called dialectical behavioural therapy. And there's a lot of workbooks available for that. And I think I'm working on that I'm working on just, I am inherently a very sensitive person. So I'm working on just sort of growing a thicker skin and just kind of like accepting situations as they are. And I think the self loathe, unless I know do that, I cant be good enough for anything or anyone. Whether that's a job or relationship or kids or so have you whatever. So the focus I tried, I'm trying to go and it's very difficult because I'm not a every time I tried the focus to go on me, I keep thinking I'm a selfish person. I should be doing stuff for other people because that's how I am. But I've just sort of pushed myself said no, no, unless you cant do stuff for yourself, you can’t pour from an empty kart.

M: What do you feel about your map?

Su: I think it's very likely could be… could be more like elaborate and more like, smart creative, but it's just that I just. On a journey level, I think its fabulous. I think I've had like the best of a lot of worlds. And I'm very blessed to have had this opportunity like, you know, success of my own, but like, it's been great, like, you know, like the moving to Pakistan bit was was a little difficult after university, but I think that really, really helped me it's like, move on to this level where I'm at right now. So I would say this present. It's really all of that has helped me to move on to this level.

M: Would you consider migration elsewhere?

Su: I'd say maybe UK or North America. Say California. A - better weather, B - Just, you know, I don't know, I just feel like, you know, I love this city and everything. It's great. But I think I struggle with people's mindsets a lot, because I think people are very opinionated over here. But they try not to be.. They try to be very proper. And I think that gets to me, because it's like, if you have an opinion, just put it off. You know, like, instead of, like, sort of, if I, you always feel like… “oh my god, Did I say something wrong?” Did I say something culturally inappropriate or religiously inappropriate, or did I say something about something about someone’s weight or making innuendo? Yeah, and I'm just like, you know, theres too many like self righteous people, at least the people I've come across, in the sense that they're always like, okay, we'll fat shaming and there shouldnt be thin shaming, then there's that then there's that… and you're like, Okay, what do I say? How can I have a conversation with you? Like I just sit there and be like, I am not okay with this, and I'm not okay with that. I have an opinion. But I respect you having your own opinion. And that doesn’t really exist here I think. I don't know, at least amongst the people I know.