

FLIP SIDE

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Childhood's fondest memory

Travelling to Chennai for annual holidays by train in sleeper class coaches. Every year the same destination and travel took three days.

Strange at school

Always among the toppers but not the topper. Once switched the medium suddenly to Hindi. Learning geography (Bhugol) and history (Itihas) in Hindi was difficult, but cleared through rote.

Playing day dreams

Not very talented - average you could say. But used to open the innings in cricket despite mediocre talent, as others would avoid this position.

Anxious moment

I got news of admission to Birla Institute of Technology in Ranchi, but ran out of money to buy train tickets. There were no cellphones or wire transfer, I couldn't connect to my family for help.

Teacher beyond teaching

Unforgettable maths teacher Mr Saini, who lent me Rs 500 to take a train for the interview. After searching for him in vain for 30 years, recently I asked ICICI Bank staff to go to my school and find out his whereabouts. Finally, skip-traced him out at Agra and called and thanked him profusely.

Love doing

Been running 2-3 marathons a year for 13 years now. Learning the guitar. Performed at a public function as Elvis Presley and Stevie Wonder for two fund-raises for Genesis! Its on Youtube.

Moment that lifted hope

Anything I start, I always believe it will work. When looking for equity for buyout of the company, every time I met a prospective investor, I believed "this one will click".

Advice to youngsters

India is a land of amazing opportunities. Stop wasting time doing junk on WhatsApp and Facebook. Honour commitments. Deal straight.

Favourite movie?

The Pursuit of Happyness. How Chris Gardner, sleeping in and living out of dorms, public toilet or church shelter, single dad, climbed out of hell and founded Gardener Rich. He just never gives up. Another great movie is Forrest Gump: Forrest is dim-witted but goes places, he makes a mark with remarkable effort and simplicity.



Work/life balance?

It is difficult to separate work and life. I pour over problems or ideas even at midnight, and family is on my mind even when I work.