



ve to be on point'

FACES IN HER CAREER CHOICES



Priya Mulji



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Taking stock and looking forward

IT'S BEEN a rollercoaster year for me – a break-up to start 2015, finding new friends, making up with friends I had fallen out with, new jobs (plural) and a lot of crazy dates. I started my own business and it has really taken off. I won't lie though; 2015 wasn't great emotionally, but as the year comes to an end, I'm positive that 2016 is only going to be wonderful.

One of the main things I have learned this year is that the people who really want to be in your life will make time. They will push and claw their way into your life to make themselves a part of it and that is something I absolutely treasure. This shows that someone cares for me and values me being part of their lives. An example of this is talented singer Rita Morar who is one of the busiest people I know, yet she still always makes time for me, even if it just a text when she knows I am having a rubbish day. Rita always makes me smile.

Of course there are many other friends I would love to mention, but I'll be here all day – so thank you ladies for being amazing. You know who you are. From old friends to making new ones, I learnt the importance of this. In life we rarely have the same set of friends. As we grow, develop and change, so do our friends – this isn't to say we don't love our friends from the past, but sometimes we just move in different directions.

This year I have particularly bonded with my fellow *Eastern Eye* columnists Mita Mistry, Dal Dhaliwal and Dimple Sanghani, who regularly fill my life with pearls of wisdom or do something to make me smile.

While I learnt the importance of having an amazing set of friends, I also discovered how important it is to travel. Not just worldwide, but in your own city, like parks, lakes and taking in the beauty of everything around you.

Health is something that has also been really important to me. In August I invested in a personal trainer and since then, Samera Hassan has helped me to lose almost a stone. This has been through sheer hard work on my part and perseverance on hers; my moaning and groaning about hating certain exercises didn't stop her from pushing and helping me do something I never imagined possible. I'm actually lifting weights, squatting and enjoying it.

In 2016, I'm looking forward to more quality time with friends, seeing the world and being a better (and hopefully more toned) version of myself. I want to thank everyone who has supported me this year; through the tears, laughter and when I'm being miserable. Thank you all. Here's a toast to 2016 being an amazing one and who knows, maybe it will be the year I find true love!

What would a guy have to do to impress you?

I do have very high standards, I will say that. Not just because of who I am, but as a girl I believe that. First of all I like shy guys, but being someone who has been in the business and in the spotlight for so long, I don't think I would like to be with someone who is scared of being in the spotlight or shy about it. My dad was a showman, so I would definitely be with a showman.

Tell us about the experience of working on *Bajirao Mastani*?

Bajirao was an incredible experience. It was a film I took on because I love Sanjay Leela Bhansali. I am a big admirer of his. We have a strange silent sort of understanding. I am very much a director's actor. He is a complete actor's director. He gives you so much respect and space, but at the same time he holds the reins super tight. So it's really amazing working with him.

What was it like playing Kashi Bai?

Kashi Bai was, for me, such a different character to play. I've played these extremely tough, weapon-wielding, badass women, but it was super challenging actually for me to play Kashi because she is the one that history literally forgot about when the love story of *Bajirao* and *Mastani* was being spoken about. Everything that was said about it was so scandalous, but nobody ever thought about her. I love the fact that Sanjay sir decided to make Kashi an integral part of the film because it is true. What would have happened to that girl who got left behind?

It must have been a challenge to play?

For me to think like that and not be the independent girl that I am today, who in that situation would have said 'peace, I am out', was challenging. But hundreds of years ago, Kashi being the queen that she was and having the responsibilities towards not just her kingdom, but also her family and society, she had to have grace under fire. Be heartbroken, yet graceful. It was so convoluted, all the things she was feeling, that it really was emotionally depleting for me as a part.

Finally, would you like to give us a message for your fans?

I have always been so well supported by my friends and well-wishers that I really truly believe I am where I am because they are the wind beneath my wings in everything I do. I can tread uncharted territories because I know I have this mafia behind me that holds me up and I am so grateful for that. I hope I can keep doing work that inspires you to support me for as long as I can. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Bajirao Mastani is in cinemas now.