

WANDERLUST



Lalit Khaitan

CMD, Radico Khaitan

Far-Out Destination Alaska by cruise. Experiencing the frozen wilderness was a once in a lifetime experience

Indian Surprise Gulmarg, Kashmir. The valley has become lively again and it was wonderful to see the new hotels and facilities which have come up

Bon Vivant Moment The moment we boarded the Allure of the Seas, the largest passenger ship ever constructed. It is a destination in itself and offers something for people across all ages, including a Central Park with real plants, mini golf, rock climbing, ice skating, whirlpools, shops, restaurants, live entertainment

Outdoorsy Activity Climbing the tree tops and doing the zip line in Centre Parcs, UK

Emptied my pockets In Vegas! It is rightly called 'sin city'!

Panoramic Views The view from Lands End, the tip of South Africa
Best Drive Salzburg to Vienna. It gives you a view of nice cross-section of Austria with opportunities for stop-overs at major tourist attractions

Gourmet Gaffes Had to spend 12 hours without food on a flight once, because vegetarian food was not made available in spite of the advance request made

Street food surprises The cafes along Ocean Drive, Miami. The vividness of cuisines coupled with the artistic atmosphere is quite engaging.

Best bar Sirocco bar in Bangkok. It claims to be the world's highest alfresco eatery and is located on an adjacent open-air patio. It gives a splendid 360 degree view of the city.

Bazar Bargains Spice Market in Istanbul. You need to be skilled to bring down their sky high prices

Traveler Tips If things don't turn out the way you want don't get irritated. Enjoy the surprises.



Ashwin Sanghi

Promoter, MK Sanghi Group

To the Power of Five

Five Pandavas were at the centre of the Mahabharata war. Draupadi had five children and Yayati had five sons. The chariot flag of Bhishma bore five stars while Krishna asked Duryodhana for five villages. Panchamrut is a mixture of five elements used in Hindu worship. There is something almost magical and mystical about the number five. So here are five key takeaways that I absorbed from my journey as businessman to author. Here's to the power of five.

The only thing that money gives you is the freedom of not having to worry about money

When I was just twelve, my father would send me during vacations to learn from our family's accountant. I was passionate about reading from an early age and I would always be carrying a different book each week. These books were handed over to me on a weekly basis by my grandfather who was a poet and writer himself. On one particular day, our accountant observed that I had made several errors while tallying the trial balance. Admonishing me, he said, "If you gave a little more time to book keeping rather than book reading, there wouldn't be so many errors in your work!" I protested. I argued that reading books was my passion. Smiling wryly at me, the old man declared, "If you must read, then try reading a balance sheet! At least you will be doing something worthwhile." The next day, I spoke with my grandfather about the exchange of words. My grandfather thought about it for a minute and said, "Lakshmi without Saraswati is always a problem. Remember that the only thing that money gives you is the freedom of not having

to worry about money. More than balancing the figures, try balancing Lakshmi and Saraswati in your life."

Do you want to be just another rat all your life?

At thirty-five, having spent over twenty years running varied businesses for my family, I decided to sit down and write my first novel. I had never written anything longer than a couple of pages till then and was foolishly attempting to write a hundred-thousand words. My father, in particular, was a little concerned that I may cast aside my business avatar and become a fulltime writer. I was far too realistic to do that—I knew that the Lakshmi-Saraswati balance was key. The odds of getting published were low and the chance of earning royalties to sustain my living costs seemed next to impossible. One evening, over a drink with a very close friend, I discussed my predicament. The friend in question was a businessman having successfully overseen several large enterprises. "I have realized one important facet of business life," he said to me, his eyes looking directly into mine. "What?" I asked. "I have realized that the winner of the rat race is still a rat! Do you want to be just another rat all your life?"

In life ninety-nine per cent is about good luck

Two years later, I had finished writing my first novel and I started the process of making submissions to literary agents and publishers. I sent out well over a hundred letters but was sorely disappointed when some polite and some not-so-polite rejections began arriving. A year later, it had become evident that no one was really interested in my work. One of my father's friends was having dinner at our place and I described my situation to him. Taking a large gulp of his third peg of whisky he said to me, "In life ninety-nine per cent is about good luck. Just remember that!"

In a slightly argumentative tone I asked, "but what about the balance one per cent? Surely that must be hard work, talent or perseverance?" Laughing loudly he declared triumphantly, "The final one per cent is also known as bloody good luck, my boy! Simply keep at it and wait for your bloody good luck to kick in!"

Count your failures as your biggest blessings

That particular conversation determined my next course of action. I decided to self-publish and take my chances. My self-publishing adventure led to my work being picked up by a traditional publisher and eventually hitting the bestseller lists. That led to two more bestselling novels. One day, I was in a conference with my publisher and I laughed about the number of rejections that I had received. "You've heard of the Latin phrase, Cogito Ergo Sum?" my publisher asked me. "Sure. Descartes came up with it. I think, therefore I am," I replied. "In your case it was: I sink, therefore I swam! Count your failures as your biggest blessings. You wouldn't have been even half as successful if you hadn't failed initially."

An absence of training is often an advantage

After writing each novel, I would spend days poring over suggestions from my editor. One day when we were discussing my latest work, she told me that she loved reading my work because it was completely different to anything else that came before her. "Maybe it's because I have no bloody idea of what I'm doing," I joked. She didn't reply immediately but sent me an email a couple of hours later. She had reproduced a quote Somerset Maugham, the English dramatist and novelist. It said, "There are three rules for writing the novel. Unfortunately no one knows what they are." An absence of preconditioning and training is often a big advantage because it allows you to remain fresh and innovative. □