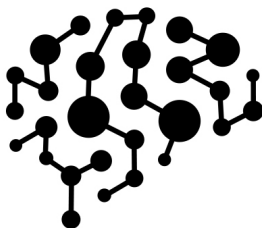


ONE GOLDEN NUGGET



**HOW TO
SURVIVE
AND
THRIVE
VOLUME III**

**JOE FOSTER, FOUNDER OF REEBOK,
RETURNS WITH POWERFUL NEW STORIES OF
RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION, CHANGING THE
WORLD ONE PAGE AT A TIME.**

Joe Foster



RASHMI DUBÉ

Disputes/ ESG Lawyer, Chartered Director,
and Tech Founder of Ki

Back in the ‘80s, I made the move to the US to grow my company. Reebok was thriving in the UK, but with a population of over 235 million, I saw the US as a land of endless opportunities. Around the same time, seventeen-year-old Rashmi Dubé was doing the opposite — returning to the UK after six years in America. Though our paths were taking us in opposite directions, both moves had a similar effect, offering us fresh perspectives and unlocking new possibilities.

As the author of *Making a Splash: A Personal Guide to Networking*, Rashmi clearly mastered the art of building meaningful connections from a young age. At just eleven, her family relocated from the UK to the USA, forcing her to adapt swiftly to her new surroundings and cultural norms. She explains, “There was a naive belief that I was going into something familiar, because of the shared language. Instead, I felt like a true interloper, trying to navigate a new culture as a child desperate to fit in.”

Though she acknowledges that the transition wasn’t always smooth, the experience enriched her understanding of diverse cultural expectations, sharpened her ability to communicate with different people, and taught her “a lot about being an entrepreneur,” particularly in the way she adopted their “their positive, can-do attitude.”

With several start-ups to her name, Rashmi credits her parents for teaching her invaluable lessons about succeeding in business. She recalls a pivotal moment at sixteen, when she accompanied her mother to a business meeting. During the negotiations, a deal was presented with a firm “take it or leave it” ultimatum. She remembers her mother saying to her, “Listen and watch carefully,” before standing up and refusing the terms. The



pair confidently left the boardroom, only to be called back to renegotiate just as they headed towards the lift. Rashmi describes the experience as a “big learning curve,” and a vital lesson in knowing when to walk away.

A year later, Rashmi returned to the UK to pursue A Levels in physics, chemistry, and economics. Once again, she faced a period of adjustment as an “Americanised” teenager, having to adapt to her new environment both socially and academically. The UK education system was ill-equipped to accommodate an almost eighteen-year-old entering the sixth form. Consequently, Rashmi was faced with an ultimatum: either continue her education under strict conditions or leave to pursue an “office job,” as suggested by the school. Rather than wasting time battling the system, Rashmi chose to outsmart it by working within its framework. She made the strategic decision to step back and complete five GCSEs in a single year, preparing herself for the academic demands of further education in Britain. This decision delayed her educational journey by nearly three years, but Rashmi remained undeterred, resolutely focused on her ultimate goal.

After successfully completing college, Rashmi continued her education at university, earning a law degree. Alongside her training and qualifications, her life experiences of adapting to new environments and learning to fit in fostered an open-mindedness towards others. She explains that when meeting someone for the first time, she considers, “Where is this person coming from? What have they gone through? Why do they see things the way they do?” This perspective makes her an intuitive lawyer, able to view people within their cultural context, and beyond their immediate need for litigation.



**“Back yourself fiercely. The
crowds appear after success,
not during the struggle.”**



This mindset has been instrumental in Rashmi's success as a lawyer and mediator, ultimately leading her to establish her own law firm in 2013. Reflecting on the challenges she encountered as a woman in the entrepreneurial world, she shares, "It was incredibly difficult to find the support I needed at the time. The firm was growing so quickly, we had about fourteen people, but I kept hiring the wrong people." Over time, she realised the importance of investing in top-tier talent. Initially, her focus on hiring at entry level left her deeply involved in the day-to-day operations of her firm, limiting her ability to focus on the bigger picture and to secure new business opportunities.



It was a harsh lesson to learn. Rashmi explains, "There was a major downturn, and I found myself panicking, crying, and questioning how something I had built with so much effort could unravel so quickly." She highlights the contrasting perceptions of business closures in the US and the UK, noting that in the US, it's seen as a natural part of the business cycle — so much so that transferring funds from a liquidating company into a new one is common practice. In the UK, however, a business closing is often viewed as a failure. Rashmi's resilience, determination, and hard work pulled her back from the brink — driven by an unwavering belief in herself and her ability to succeed.



The cultural differences between the two nations are further highlighted in their

attitudes toward success. Rashmi notes that in America, success is often celebrated and seen as an inspiration for others to aspire to. In contrast, she feels that in the UK, success is more likely to be met with scepticism, and, occasionally, negativity. Regardless of cultural perceptions, one universal truth remains: failure often teaches more than success. Rashmi embraced this lesson and founded Ki Hana Ltd, an innovative AI-powered app designed to empower individuals at all levels. The app facilitates meaningful networking, helping users stay connected, follow up effectively, and collaborate seamlessly.

She also advises the Cabinet Office on simplifying procurement processes to make them more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises. In addition, she plays an active role in committee efforts tackling late payments and advocates for legislative reforms to support businesses. She recognises that advising on policy provides a unique opportunity to “impact businesses and transform lives.” In her work with the Institute of Directors, as the UK’s Policy and Governance Ambassador and National Spokesperson, Rashmi’s role was to shape legislation through a “two-way dialogue of communication.”

Her advice to small and medium-sized businesses is to focus on details, as “small things can make a big difference to your business, your bottom line, your reputation, and your brand.” As both a lawyer and a business professional, she recognises how much people today are “looking at companies that consider their Environmental, Social, and Governance criteria.”

Rashmi explains, “The more I ran my own businesses, the more I realised the importance of defining the company’s purpose, shaping its strategy, making thoughtful decisions, and understanding who is being impacted.” She emphasises that today’s high street presents a challenge for businesses that need to be convinced to adopt an



**“Thrive in change.
Excel in stability.”**

ethical perspective. She points to the retail trade as a prime example of an industry notorious for neglecting basic human rights in the workplace, with low wages and poor working conditions long exploited to maximise profits in “fast fashion.” She states, “The only way to impact businesses is either through regulation to enforce behaviour change or by influencing consumer behaviour to demand better practices.”

Rashmi has also observed a gradual but undeniable shift in consumer behaviour, particularly in retail. “There’s a growing movement away from buying new clothes and towards opting for vintage or renting,” she notes. She suggests that if the fast fashion industry continues to decline, it will have a positive impact on the environment. The harmful dyes used in fabrics and the increasing landfill problem caused by discarded clothes will lessen as consumers adopt more sustainable practices.

As a litigator and mediator, Rashmi is a skilled negotiator, able to understand diverse perspectives and stay focused on achieving the best possible outcome. She stresses the importance of “words, language, and tone,” whether written or spoken, in shaping conversations. However, she observes that even today, “as a woman, you are not always heard or seen.” Reflecting on the experiences of many women in business, she explains, “You will see women’s voices are not given equal weight or immediate



credibility. It highlights the ongoing need for inclusive communication practices and organisational cultures that genuinely value and amplify diverse perspectives.

Nevertheless, as a lawyer, Rashmi sees certain advantages in being “underestimated as a woman.” She recalls working on construction dispute cases where her male counterparts assumed she wouldn’t “fully understand construction” because of her gender. Rather than feeling discouraged, Rashmi uses their underestimation to her advantage, turning it into a strategic strength. She advocates not only for more women in decision-making roles but also for greater diversity overall, stressing that “if you don’t have diversity, you don’t have a full understanding of empathy regarding the problems.”

As a founder and businesswoman, Rashmi admits that in the early years she “constantly felt in survival mode,” primarily due to cash flow. In these moments, she believes creativity is essential, along with the ability to rely on “good people.”





**“Trust is an invisible bridge of faith.
Believe in the outcome, even when the
journey seems impossible.”**



Rashmi celebrates her successes by treating herself to something special. Early on, it might have been something simple, like a “hot chocolate with marshmallows.” As her success grew, so did the significance of her rewards — starting with a book on Banksy, followed by an original photograph of David Bowie, and later leading to artwork pieces. With numerous business awards recognising her efforts, Rashmi feels even more inspired to achieve even greater things.

As a columnist for *The Yorkshire Post*, Rashmi is excited to write about business, delving into its current impacts, future prospects, and offering a global perspective. Earning her Chartered Director qualification demonstrates her expertise in making boards effective. Rashmi considers it a career highlight, stating, “You can complete your exams up to a point, but you won’t become a chartered director unless you have significant board experience, accumulated over several years and in various situations. It proves I understand how good governance on a board level leads to excellent strategies for the organisation.”

As a practising disputes lawyer at Gunnercooke, Rashmi stands out for her reliance on instinct when determining the best course of action to achieve her clients’ objectives. She explains, “Most lawyers focus on the case and the law, but I prefer not to be limited by conventional approaches.” While acknowledging the importance of evidence, Rashmi emphasises the need for a broader perspective, stating, “Solving the puzzle requires a comprehensive view beyond strict legal parameters. In today’s world, this often includes considering the impact of media — social or otherwise — on a case or a person’s personal brand.”

Rashmi's multifaceted career as an author, lawyer, entrepreneur, and public speaker highlights her unwavering commitment to empowering others. As a motivational speaker, she passionately advocates that "motivation is a muscle to be exercised" and emphasises the power of emotional influence, stating, "Your emotional state is contagious — positive, calm energy attracts and connects people far more effectively than tension or negativity. Success in communication isn't just about the words you use but the emotional resonance you create."

Her ability to inspire others is rooted in her own strength of self-motivation. In 2019, the active Rashmi, known for her fit and healthy lifestyle, completed a 27-mile charity boat race along the River Thames. However, after suffering an allergic reaction to an insect bite, she ended up in hospital, unable to walk. Initially confined to a wheelchair and later using a walking stick, she faced the challenge of relearning how to move. Reflecting on the experience, she says, "I had to rebuild myself, and I never wanted to be in that position again, so I wanted to be strong, both physically and mentally." To regain her fitness, Rashmi took up powerlifting and is focused on improving her technique before entering competitions. In addition to her commitment to physical strength, she maintains her mental well-being through reading, exploring the arts, staying active, connecting with others, and, most importantly, ensuring she's "laughing as much as possible."

Staying productive is a priority for Rashmi, who balances a wide array of pursuits, including publications, speaking engagements, and numerous awards. While still practising law, managing her new start-up, writing columns, and advising the government, she exemplifies what can be achieved with focus, drive, and motivation. Rashmi's journey is a testament to the power of resilience, determination, and the unwavering pursuit of growth, both professionally and personally. Whether she's navigating the complexities of law, driving innovation in business, or inspiring others through her speaking and writing, she consistently demonstrates that success is built not just on talent, but on the strength to overcome challenges and the commitment to make a lasting impact. Rashmi continues to break boundaries, proving that with a clear vision, hard work, and a genuine desire to help others, there are no limits to what can be achieved.



“Words inform, but emotion transforms.”



**“Life is like a musical instrument: you must
commit fully to play it and create music.
Halfhearted effort yields no melody.”**



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AND
THRIVE







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