

CityMasala

A smiling man with glasses, wearing a suit and tie, standing in front of a city skyline. The man is Aakash Patel, the subject of the magazine cover. The background shows a dense urban landscape with various skyscrapers, including one with a 'PNC' logo visible.

July 2017

The Leading Lifestyle and Entertainment Magazine for Today's South Asians

Immigration

**H1B Changes
Time to Panic?**

Healthy Habits

The cost of sitting

Stop Conforming

Do your own thing!

Education

College Applications 101

Meet Aakash Patel

Businessman, Networking Guru and Political Aspirant

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A Lifestyle and Entertainment Magazine for Today's South Asian

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Published By
CityMasala LLC
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Valrico, FL 33596
Phone: 813-476-5415
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Making strides - Aakash Patel

A familiar face, a contagious smile, an excellent networker, our Tampa homegrown businessman, Aakash Patel, needs no introduction. His drive to succeed and to be involved in the community helps him remain relentless in achieving what he sets his mind to.

CM: *How did you end up in Tampa Bay area?*

AP: My parents divorced when I was young and my dad relocated to Tampa in 1994. I moved here to live with my dad in 1998 to start Sickles High School. After graduating from Florida State in 2006 I decided to come back and make the Tampa Bay Area my permanent home.

CM: *What kind of a student were you growing up?*

AP: I was a dedicated student who waited until the last minute to turn in an assignment. I always surrounded myself with people that were smarter than me and I always asked a lot of questions.

CM: *How come you didn't choose medical, engineering or law school?*

AP: I thought about a legal career but medical and engineering never crossed my mind. I took my LSAT in 2008 in hopes to attend Law school but I realized a legal career was not my true passion.

CM: *You chose an unconventional profession - what influenced you? Typically desis don't even network, let alone make it their career!*

AP: My friends in 2009 were becoming entrepreneurs and were seeking my guidance in community involvements. After a series of meetings with them and my mentors I realized that there was a need for Elevate, Inc. in the Tampa Bay Business Community.

CM: *Tell us more about the position you are running for and why?*

AP: I am running for the position of Hillsborough County Commission District 1. I have always had a passion for public service and would like the

opportunity to be a young diverse representative for the citizens of Hillsborough County.

CM: *What can we do to help?*

AP: I'm thankful for the encouragement from the Indian American Community and I look forward to bringing fresh ideas to the Hillsborough County Commission.

You can reach out to me at my campaign website www.patel2018.com and can provide financial support and help spread the word to republicans of District 1.



CM: *You have been involved in so many community related organizations - be it Indian or non-Indian, how do you do that? How do you find the time?*

AP: I make time for what is important and I try to prioritize as much as possible. On a given week I have 3-5 events, sometimes twice in one day. The most important to note is that even if I am not available to attend that I contribute in some regard otherwise I

mean to be a FBI Citizen's academy graduate? Do you get to wear black suits and use fancy gadgets? ;-)

AP: There are 57 FBI Citizens Academy's in the nation and I am a graduate of the Tampa division. I participated in an 8 week course held at the FBI Tampa headquarters.

CM: *What is your role with ELAC? What inspired you to get involved?*

AP: In 2014 Governor Scott asked me if I would serve as the Chairman of the Early Learning Coalition of Hillsborough County and I graciously accepted. I also serve as his appointee to the Florida Early Learning Advisory Council. A conversation with the

don't participate in the organization.

CM: *What is 6th air mobility wing and what did you do with them?*

AP: The 6th air is the department that handles the logistics for MacDill Air Force Base. I am very fortunate to serve as honorary commander to director of staff Col. Robert Bonner.

CM: *What does it*

Governor during the Bollywood Awards in 2014 inspired me.

CM: *Leader's Friday Luncheon - is it still around, how can people get involved?*

AP: Yes, it is still around and to date we have had over 500 community leaders involved and 6 Annual Receptions. People can contact be directly to get involved or visit www.leadersfl.com to learn more.

CM: *What is an in-demand speaker and what do they do?*

AP: An in-demand speaker means the topic of networking using social media is prevalent in today's business community not matter what industry.

CM: *If you were to think back, what is your most impressive achievement?*

AP: Serving as Chair of the UT Board of Counselors and raising the most money in the organization's 32 year history.

CM: *What is the most difficult change you have made in your life? How did that help?*

AP: Focusing on five organizations and determining which ones I would like to serve in a leadership capacity. It helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses which I could share with my clients as they can now relate the advice that we provide them.

CM: *Your definition of success and how have you achieved it?*

AP: My definition of success is over delivering on our client's goals and expectations after our 6-month engagement has ended.





Discussing expectations and goals weekly with clients in person helps us achieve and maintain success.

CM: *Tell us about Elevate Inc. Whom do you help and how?*

AP: Elevate, Inc. ("Elevate") is a Florida-based strategic business development consulting firm providing a multitude of service. We help companies of all sizes get involved in the community, strategize their business development efforts and maximize their social media presence. Whether you are looking to expand your public relations efforts, community relations activities, or general marketing endeavors, the Elevate team has the talent, experience, and resources to meet and exceed your organization's goals. Our mission is to help our client learn about the community, connect with others, and grow their bottom line using our creative service offerings and existing relationships.

CM: *Tell us more about your*



business philosophy?

AP: Our motto is Learn, Connect, and Grow. We want our clients to understand their environment while getting focused on their outreach and social media efforts. Our Vision is to differentiate ourselves in Tampa Bay, our team believes in the power of a firm handshake, being present, and having a genuine interest in others.

CM: *What is your typical work day like?*

AP: A typical day for us consists of meeting with clients, attending events and attending a board meeting to better serve our community.

CM: *Does the workday ever end?*

AP: No. At any given time, we are always helping our clients engage with others.

CM: *Advice for someone that wants to follow in your footsteps?*

AP: Reach out and ask an executive for some advice. There is no executive who is too busy for 5 minutes of face time. If you don't ask you don't get. Be BRAVE, Be BOLD, Be YOU.

CM: *Final word for our readers?*

AP: Always be yourself and honest with whomever you interact with.

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Dare To Be Different!

By - Vishnu Subramaniam

Are you the kind of person who has no interest in climbing the social ladder, hopping up the financial ladder, spending your life paying off a mortgage or being an active part of the rat race, read on.

While most of us try to stay busy, move up in our careers, and buy nicer homes and fancier cars, you may be the one thinking this “keeping-up-with-the-Joneses” way of living is maddening.

There is nothing wrong with you. If your spirit is shining brightly and your soul is focused on your inner pursuits, don't march to society's tune. Live life your own way.

How do you achieve a life that you want and not be bothered by what everybody else is doing?

Some reminders when you're going against the crowd. Do what feels right to your soul and spirit.

Follow your intuition and live your life as you want to live it. Do not let the actions or lifestyles of others influence you even though nearly everyone you know is going after society's standards of achievement, fame and fortune. You do what you do, no matter what anyone else does.



Know what you want.

Stay true to your heart and your dreams. Ask yourself regularly what you want, not what your parents or society expect you to want.

Stay away from the comparison zone.

Remove yourself from situations in which others compare you, judge you or make you feel bad about yourself. Don't associate, partake in activities or hang out with people who

you know will depress your spirit or minimize your value.

Find peace in moments of judgment and comparison.

If you're in a situation in which you're feeling bad about yourself in comparison to others, use that moment to practice an inner meditation. Take out your journal and write down your feelings. Talk to another friend who lives their truth.

Others need to see you living your truth.

Know that while many people may not agree with you or

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what you think, many people will find you inspiring. Even when they don't agree with you, you might slowly shift the minds and thoughts of other people. When you're living your truth, you'll be inspiring other people to live their truth. You may spark change in someone else by simply being you.

Learn to embrace your imperfections.

Once you can accept that you're not perfect and that you don't have to live up to anyone else's standards, you will breathe a big sigh of relief. You are your own person. Remember that you are enough regardless of what you do or achieve.

Be patient with the life and relationships you desire.

Do the inner work and become more attuned to your truth and you will get what you want. Many people live another life or a copycat life because they think that this will get societal approval. It's not about anyone's approval but your own. Be patient with yourself, work on your inner game and let life meet you when you're ready.

Let go of expectations, timelines and deadlines.

Feel peace and happiness in the present moment even if

you're not where you want to be.

Timelines and continual striving are society's games. You must do certain things by a certain age. If you're not educated or if you're not married or if you don't have a child by x age, you're not enough in society's eyes. Give up on the dumb rules and expectations that society has created. Live according to what feels right to you. Just be yourself.

Surround yourself with people who follow their truth.

Have your own circle of confidantes and friends whom you can trust and who understand you - others who are going against the grain and living their own truth. Rely on your circle of truth-seekers and soul-seekers to support and uplift you.

Vishnu Subramaniam is the writer behind the popular self-help blog www.vishnusvirtues where he writes about starting over in life.



Is sitting too much killing Indian Americans?

By Dr. Panchajanya Paul, MD

Are you having problems sleeping at night, controlling your weight, or managing your blood sugar, pressure, or cholesterol? Do you feel tired and listless at work? If you are a white collar worker, you are probably sitting too much and for too long. And this may be the greatest health hazard we all face. We have subdued our natural surroundings, controlled infectious diseases, and reduced warfare. The human lifespan is at an all-time record high, but the civilized lifestyle may be a mixed blessing. Indians living in the US are succumbing to the so called western diseases or life style diseases like asthma, cancer, chronic liver disease or cirrhosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, depression, sleep disorders, and obesity. Our sedentary lifestyle, along with easy access to processed food, poses grave dangers to our health and wellbeing.

The human body is a product of millions of years of evolution. It was never meant to be sedentary. New science is revealing

that being immobile and sitting at the same place for hours has dire consequences. With time, we have relegated more and more of our physical work to machines. We have harnessed the energy of fossil fuels and electricity to replace physical labor. A person can get all his work done and buy all things necessary for survival with just a click of the mouse. If you are an average Indian American, your usual day begins with sitting at the dining table to eat your breakfast, then sitting in your car or a bus or train to go to work. At work, you will sit at your desk for eight hours and then return home sitting in a motorized vehicle. You will have dinner while sitting, and then watch TV while relaxing on a couch. Some of you may go for a run or lift weights for an hour in the gym. In total, the average Indian American is sitting more than 9 hours in a day. This is an all-time high in recorded history.

There is a vast amount of data linking a physically active lifestyle to lower rates of morbidity and mortality. Health organizations recommend that everyone needs around 1 hour of exercise a day.

The American Heart Association and American College of Sports Medicine call for a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate-intense physical activity 5 days a week or 20 minutes of vigorous intense physical activity 3 days a week. *New research, however, reveals that one hour of activity is not enough to mitigate the harm caused by 23 hours of inactivity.* This new finding is revolutionizing how we think about exercise.

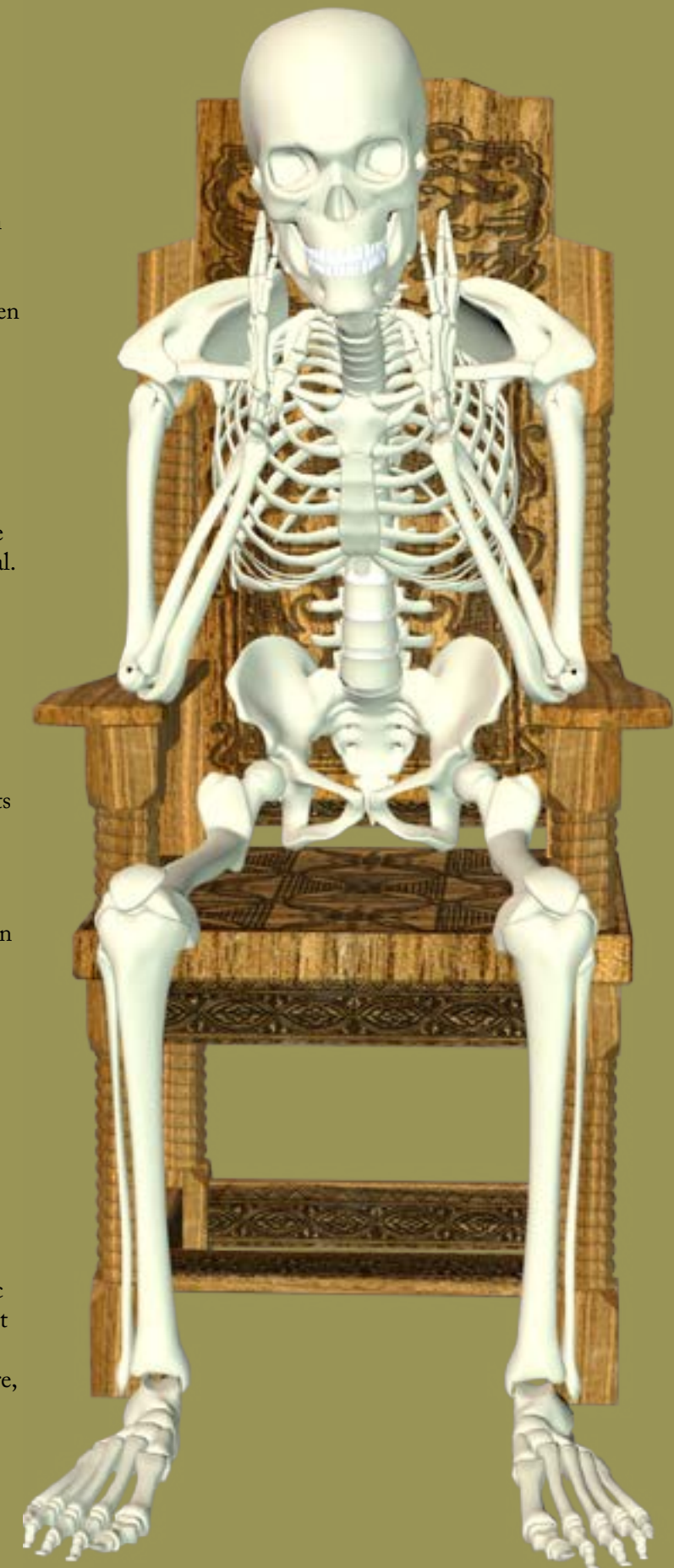


The association between sitting and mortality is dose dependent; the more you sit, the less you live. This is independent of leisure activity or baseline BMI. It means that no matter how much exercise we get, how healthy we eat, how slim we remain, the dangers of prolonged sitting will still cause harm. Nothing can counteract the detrimental effects of prolonged inactivity. Sitting shortens lifespan. Sitting is as harmful as smoking cigarettes and can be considered a disease like smoking. Studies have shown that even four hours of sitting will change your body's metabolism. Sitting is especially harmful for women. Women who sit for more than 6 hours per day have a 40 percent increased all cause death rate compared to those sitting less than 3 hours per day! This association is not affected by the amount of physical activity women receive.

If we look back in history, until very recent times humans have always been moving. In the beginning we were all hunters and gatherers. We used to forage for food. Then the economy switched to pastoral and later full time agricultural. At that time most people worked on farms with limited machinery and no electricity. All work at home and outside was accomplished by human and animal labor. After the industrial revolution, things began to change as fossil fuels and electricity replaced physical labor. Now we are at the extreme end. In this digital age, almost everything can be done seated. Although tools and technology changed our environment, our body has not had time to evolve. Scientists and anthropologists conclude that the human body has not changed much over the last 40,000 years.

Most Indians living in the US are white collar workers. They are engaged in the Engineering, Research, Information technology, and health care sector. Most do their work either at an office or from their home sitting in front of a computer. They may argue that since they work with their brains, they need to sit in order to focus and concentrate. They may say, "We are technocrats, we have degrees, and our job demands us to make smart decisions. We cannot stand and move around. Deep thinking and contemplation requires the meditative stillness of sitting." This may seem like a valid argument, but it may not actually be. The brain has enormous plasticity. It can produce new neurons and make new synaptic connections throughout life. Scientists have found that a protein called Brain Derived Neurotropic Factor (BDNF) plays an important role in brain function. It improves memory, attention, mood and concentration. We produce more BDNF when we exercise and move. Therefore, moving more may not only make us healthier, it may also make us smarter.

Now comes the challenge - how to create circumstances where we can coax our bodies to move when it serves no additional benefit? Humans are purposeful animals. That is why it is so difficult for us to motivate ourselves to eat



healthy and exercise more. But does this mean that we are all doomed to sit on our buttocks and die early? Is there any hope? Well, human are also ingenious and problem solvers by nature. As the old cliché goes, necessity is the mother of invention. We see that the market has responded with many creative fitness gadgets to motivate us to move, and make it easier to exercise.

One such innovation is the Standing Desk, which makes you stand and work, and the Treadmill Desk, which makes you walk and work. As companies are becoming aware of the cost of sitting and the sedentary life, some are offering standing and treadmill desks for their employees. Many stylish products are available in the market from Lifespan, NordicTrack, Exerpeutic and more. Another cool device is the wearable fitness tracker which measures heart rate, steps, miles walked, sleep hours, and hours of activity and inactivity. There are many choices in all styles and prices from Jawbone, Fitbit, Garmin, Apple and Samsung watches.

Some of the products available today are very expensive, but prices are becoming more affordable as the market expands. There are even inexpensive DIY options. You can

The solution is simple- MOVE.

make a workable standing desk using a box or stool over the regular desk. A spare treadmill or standing cycle can be placed under the desk. And pedometer smart phone apps are available that, although less accurate, will record all steps and movements of the day.

As a practicing Indian American psychiatrist I had to spend a lot of time sitting and listening to people’s stories, and then documenting them. As I got busy in my practice, I began to develop back and neck pain from prolonged sitting. And there was weight gain, despite eating healthy and exercising regularly. It made me rethink the way I structure my day. I made changes to my schedule. I placed a small table on top of my desk and converted it into a standing desk. I try to do all my reading, typing and writing while standing. When I get tired I sit down and rest, then I get up to stand again and continue. Some of my coworkers have seen me do that, and they have also put a small platform over their desk in order to use the computer keyboard while standing. Many of us suffer from back pain, neck pain, and wrist pain. Many people, including myself, have seen these pains go away once their posture is changed from sitting to standing.

I strongly encourage everyone to have a standing desk or make one. While you are working, get up and move every 15 minutes. Use a pedometer or a fitness tracker. A mundane and boring activity like walking and moving can become fun and competitive once you measure and compare with family and friends. I wear a Fit-bit Charge and try to do the

recommended 10,000 steps per day. There are several other small lifestyle changes you can make. Park your car a little further, so that you are forced to walk. Run as many errands as possible by walking. Walk and talk instead of texting or emailing when you can. Stand while you talk on the phone. Prefer to speak with the person face-to-face rather than texting them. Seek all opportunities to move. Some offices are holding standing and walking meetings. People are surprised how things speed up when we move. Lastly, I got rid of the copier and printer from my office. It has freed up space in my office and forces me to walk down the hallway to get my printouts. I stopped bringing bottled water and now use a recyclable mug. Every time I get thirsty, I walk to the common area to refill my water. In addition to moving, it allows a chance to share ideas with your colleagues and catch up with the latest gossip.

In summary, for the first time in human history, we spend most of our time sitting. All over the world, we are sitting on average 9.5 hours per day, which is more than the time we are sleeping or doing any other physical activity. Our body was never meant for just sitting, and the sitting life style is killing us. Sitting is the most inactive and passive thing we can do. It plays havoc on our metabolism. Sitting decreases the enzyme lipoprotein lipase, which can cause fat accumulation. Prolonged sitting increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancers, as well as reduces our life span. Prolonged sitting increases the risk of death from all causes, including cardiovascular diseases, irrespective of a person’s BMI, leisure activities, and exercise.

The solution is simple- MOVE. Make use of the fitness gadgets and tools available to make you less sedentary. Lastly, make a personal commitment to stand more, move more, and sit less. Look at your daily routine and keep a daily activity log noting your position at each hour. Try to find more opportunities to move rather than sit. We become healthier, happier, and smarter as we move more. As you finish reading now, you may stand up, and ponder what Nietzsche meant when he said “Only thoughts reached by walking have value”.

Dr. Panchajanya Paul, MD, ABIHM, ABPN, is an American Board certified - Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatrist. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Integrative and Holistic Medicine. He holds adjunct faculty position at Emory University School of Medicine; University of Georgia & Georgia Regents University, and University of Central Florida School of Medicine. He is a fellow of the American Psychiatric Association. He is a freelance writer who lives in Atlanta.

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By: Kristen Moon

College Planning Starts here!

What Students Need to Know About the New Common App Essays

The Common App announced some significant changes for the 2017-2018 college admissions cycle. Two essays have been added; increasing the essay selection from five to seven. Revisions have also been made to three of the five current choices.

The Common Application, used by nearly 700 universities worldwide, is the most widely used college application. Students select one essay prompt and craft a response that is up to 650 words. Each university the student applies, using the Common App, will see that essay. As you can imagine, this is one very important essay.

Now, the big question is: Which essay prompt is best?

Well, I do have my favorites.

But first, let's discuss the point of the essay.

The college wants to know: What can you offer? What makes you different from the other 30,000+ applicants applying?

This is where your essay comes in. The essay makes you three dimensional; more than a few sheets of paper. It is your chance to show the university how awesome you are, how you are one-of-a-kind, and how lucky they would be to have you at their college.

The essay must add something to your application.

- Avoid reiterating things that can be found on your application; the essay must add a new element.
- Avoid summing up all your extracurricular activities and accomplishments; this can easily be seen on your application.

Grab a cup of coffee because we are breaking down each essay: the good, the bad, and the pitfalls to keep an eye out for.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story. [No change]

This used to be my favorite prompt, but now it's tied with #5 and 7.

This prompt gives a student leeway to tell a story of their choosing. The topic selected should feel easy to write about and expresses something meaningful about who you are as a person. Here are some questions to get the creative juices flowing:

- What makes your family different from other families?
- Does your family celebrate cultural holidays?
- Do any of these hold a great significance to you?
- Do you have a special family tradition?
- What single achievement are you most proud of?
- What is the nicest thing you've done for someone?
- What do you aspire to be?
- What have you done throughout high school to explore this career choice?

2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience? [Revised]

The key here is to focus on what you learned. Too many students spend way too many precious words focusing on the failure. Briefly, describe the setback and spend the majority of your word count detailing what you learned, how you grew as a person, and why you are stronger because of the experience. Portray yourself as a fighter; a person who has resilience and determination.

3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome? [Revised]

Don't fall for the bait here. Please, please, please do not discuss controversial topics. Hate Trump? Love Trump? Believe marijuana should be legalized? Doesn't matter; this is not the place for that type of discussion. If you are asking yourself: Is my topic controversial? The answer is probably yes.



TIPS FOR A RIVETING COLLEGE ESSAY



START EARLY

Plan ahead. Start working on your essay the summer before senior year starts. A compelling essay takes time to write and typically requires a few drafts. Start your senior year with a polished Common App essay ready-to-go!



DON'T BE REPETITIVE

Your essay should not repeat things that are already listed on your Common App. No need to sum up all your extracurricular activities or achievements. These items should be detailed on the application itself.



STRONG OPENING

The opening paragraph must grab the reader's attention. It must be riveting and leave them wanting to read more. A great way to draw the reader in is by detailing a snippet of a larger story: an anecdote.



SHOW, NOT TELL

The essay is a time to SHOW, not TELL. No need to tell the reader how smart and intellectual you are. Instead, use your story to communicate the message you want the admissions staff to hear.



PROOFREAD

Nothing spells laziness like a simple spelling error that spellcheck would have easily caught. Proofread! Proofread! Proofread!



THE CLOSING

The closing paragraph must tie everything together. Make a reference to the opening paragraph and main idea of the essay. Wrap it all up.



4. Describe a problem you’ve solved or a problem you’d like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma — anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution. [No change]

I call this the Miss America question. Hint: Your response should not include the words “world peace”. The problem needs to be specific and personal to you. The trick to watch out for is the “or a problem you’d like to solve” part. Colleges like doers. The world is filled with planners and dreamers. Few people actually take the initiative and make things happen. If you discuss a problem you’d like to solve, make sure to detail the steps you intend to take to improve the situation.

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others. [Revised]

One of my favs. See #1. Hard to go wrong with this question. This essay lends itself to an anecdote.

Ps, anecdotes are my favorite way to open an essay.

6. Describe a topic, idea or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more? [New]

This is your opportunity to show your love of learning. What are you passionate about? How have you cultivated this passion?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you’ve already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design. [New]

What’s not to love about this question; you can write anything you want. Heck, you can even reuse a previous essay. But, before you hit Ctrl c + Ctrl v and paste that school essay you received an A on, think for a minute. Does this essay portray who I am as a person? Provide insight into my values? Highlight the qualities I want the admissions staff, at my dream college, to pay attention to?

There you have it, the seven Common App essay prompts. As the school year is winding down and summer is about to kick off, give yourself a gift. A gift of time. Year after year, I hear the same story from my students and their parents. They are shocked how much time and energy goes into applying to college. The average student applies to 7-12 universities. Each application can take up to ten hours. Spend the summer strategically and complete the common app essay before senior rolls around. It will free up a great deal of time come fall. You can thank me later.

What is Really HAPPENING?

By: Neelofer Syed, Esq



Welcome back CityMasala readers!

Once again I am here to offer you immigration related guidance and answer your immigration related questions and concerns. My immigration related articles may generate a wide interest over the span of the next four years.... wonder why?!

As before, I will try to explain things in the easiest layman terms without any legal mumbo jumbo such that the changes and new events are easier to understand.

With the recent change in the Government combined with their haste to bring about changes in the U.S. Immigration, as promised during the campaign, immigrants in the U.S., both who are legally present as well as those who have fallen out of status at some point are getting overly concerned.

The fact is that since November last year our office phone has been ringing non-stop. Even those who maintain their legal status in the U.S., including Permanent Legal Residents or dual Citizens have been reaching out to us and other attorneys to ensure that their status will not be endangered due to the change in Government. It is unfortunate that the current administration has created a perception of being so anti-immigrant that we even need to deal with questions like “Would the Government take away my Green Card/Citizenship?” Hopefully the terror that has been instilled among immigrant masses will diminish with time, but it will all depend on the policies the sitting Government adopts.

So far the Government has made a few promises and seems bent upon not only deporting people who have crossed the border or are out of status otherwise, but also getting rid of hard working immigrant workers legally present in the U.S.

While the agenda of the Government is apparent and, so far there is no real change in that, nevertheless it is also true that we are not seeing any actual measures taken or any different laws enacted to affect the changes desired by the sitting Government.

In this article, I will touch upon a few popular topics that concern most of the immigrant population. This article stands true as of the date of writing which is May 2017.

IMMIGRATION

H-1B Visa:

The sitting administration of the U.S. has made sweeping statements at various occasions regarding the most popular of all, H-1B visa program. The anti-foreign worker rhetoric has also resulted in several rumors which are erroneously being believed to be true. The fact is that so far, as of now, the H-1B visa program is being continued in the same way as the last several years.

There is a possibility that some changes may be introduced in the future, but until the changes are proposed, approved and adopted as law, the program will continue in its current form. Therefore, to address specific rumors/concerns, let me share the facts.

- H-1B program is still unchanged;
- H-1B quota limitation is still the same;
- There is no requirement for the Petitioner/Employer to offer over \$100,000.00 for a worker on an H-1B, this is just a rumor;
- There are some authentic resources discussing that the H-1B prevailing wage may require the offered wage to be a level 2 wage instead of level 1 in the future. Nevertheless, so far it is still at a discussion stage and nothing has been done to impact that change;
- The previous requirements for eligibility are still the same;

What should we be concerned about when it comes to current H-1B Visa Holders?

- The worksite Inspections are on an increase. In other words, expect immigration to show up at the work place to verify that the H-1B worker is in fact working in the offered position and at the location mentioned in the Petition.
- If during the worksite inspection, the immigration officers conclude that the H-1B holder is performing duties which are not listed in his job description; or that the H-1B holder is not present on the location of employment; or if the people around do not know of anyone by that name (H-1B holder's name) works there (this is important because a lot of foreign workers use Americanized/Nick names at work places instead of legal names which are sometimes longer and harder to pronounce); then the chances are that USCIS will issue a Notice of Intent to Revoke the already approved H-1B. Therefore, try to avoid all the above scenarios if you are on an H-1B.

H-1B program is still unchanged



Enforcement Priorities and Removal:

Not many people are aware but the number of annual deportations was largest under Obama administration. Nevertheless, the previous administration prioritized such deportations by making the removal of the people with criminal background the top priority. Under the current administration there does not seem to be any priority system so far.

The current administration is focused on removing anyone who is present in the U.S. illegally whether they have any criminal background or not. Not to mention, the current administration has defined the term "Crime" very broadly and is applying it very broadly as well.

If you are living in the U.S. without authorization, or have crossed the border or otherwise have a criminal record you are a potential target for removal.

The worst part is that the local police in various cities is being given the power to ask people about their immigration status when stopped for any traffic violation. Many incidents have been reported from various cities suggesting that Police stopped people without any traffic violation just to inquire into their immigration status. This is very concerning on so many levels because it is a recipe for racial profiling. In other words, if you don't "look" American enough, you may be perceived as illegal and stopped by the Police.

Increased activity is being witnessed in enforcement - in other words - immigration related raids and/or police stops in various states & cities, to identify the people living in the United States unlawfully and to initiate their removal from the country.

We are witnessing several immigration related inspections (based on reports from various cities and various states) around the areas where there is a concentration of foreign owned businesses. In some areas city enforcement officers have raided foreign owned businesses like restaurants etc., to seek out the people that may be working at such establishments without authorization.

Certain Constitutional Rights Of Undocumented Immigrants:

There is also a possibility that Immigration Custom Enforcement (ICE) officer comes knocking at your door inquiring about your immigration status. Now there are certain constitutional rights everyone has, including the undocumented people. If an ICE officer knocks on your door, please know that you have the following Rights:

- You do not have to open the door or let the ICE officers in UNLESS they have a valid search warrant signed by a Judge. An ICE deportation warrant is not the same as a search warrant and it does not give ICE officers the right to be inside your home unless you verbally allow them. If they say they have a warrant, ask them to slide it under the door and check if it has your correct name and address and it is signed by a Judge. If it is not, you don't have to let them in.
- You have the Right to remain silent. If the ICE officer asks you any questions you can refuse to answer and you need to say it out loud that you choose to remain silent and you wish to talk to an attorney. Make sure you do not lie to the officers and do not show any fake documents to them, in case you have them.
- If you are detained or taken in Custody you have the right to speak to a lawyer. If you do not already have an attorney, ask the ICE officer to provide you with a list of pro bono attorneys. You can refuse to sign any or all paperwork until you have already spoken to an attorney. You may also contact your consulate and request them to help you locate a local attorney. Not all, but some consulates of some countries can be helpful. As for any Indian or Bangladeshi or Pakistani Consulate, they might be helpful ONLY IF they answer the phone.

For all the undocumented people, it is extremely important that you seek the advice of an immigration attorney to determine if there is a way to cure your immigration status in the U.S.

Email immigration related questions to legal@citymasala.com.

Until next time, stay safe!

Kesha Ram

By Rishi Kumar

Kesha was elected at 22 to represent Burlington in the Vermont House of Representatives and served four terms. She served on the House Ways & Means Committee, Housing & Military Affairs Committee, and Natural Resources & Energy Committee, where she was Vice Chair. In 2016, she left the legislature to run for Lieutenant Governor, falling short in her bid but becoming the first woman of color to earn a double digit share of the vote in a statewide race.



RISHI: About your background. You grew up with a Jewish mother and a Hindu father. When we look at our Indian American community here, we could very well model ourselves after the Jewish American community that have done very well. And, it seems culturally we are a little bit aligned. I wanted to get your thoughts on that.

KESHA: Yeah, I would say my upbringing was quite unconventional. I, as you said, have a Jewish American mother who was originally from Chicago, and my late father is from the part of India that became Pakistan, originally. And then, they met in college, at UCLA, and opened an Irish pub together in Los Angeles, so [laughter] they raised the three of us in their Irish pub, sort of learning how to give back and pitch in, and not really take anything for granted. And I have thought a lot about the importance of having a sense of community and accountability to people beyond you, to your parents importantly, but to other adults that, you know, stay engaged in your life and push you to be the best you can be.

And I do, without trying to stereotype or generalize, feel that I experienced that in equal measure on both sides, with having Indian and Jewish relatives. It was always funny to have Jewish folks, saying, oh you must get a lot of guilting or pushing you to be successful from the Jewish side.

I was like, believe me, Indians are very much the same. [laughter] Yeah, and I think both have a healthy and robust relationship to civic life, and civic participation, always thinking about how to give back, but the Indian community is newer in stretching its wings, in terms of political life as a part of civic life.

I think what's interesting is that might take shape in a generational, in an intergenerational conversation about how politics can come full circle in the Indian community, that Indians created some of the greatest methods of protest and non-violent resistance that exist in the political realm. Young Indians have the opportunity to really reengage and think about our legacy of leadership and activism from that perspective. So, while our parents and our grandparents may be worried for us if we take to the streets or get fully politically active, it's a big part of our history, and I see that as a valuable way for us to be relevant in a critical moment for our country.

RISHI: You know many of us came into this country as first generation immigrants; we are still trying to establish ourselves in the country, so perhaps we have not engaged, we are still new to the country. But you don't see any issues at all from the standpoint of engaging when there is a need; you expect the Indian community to rise and do what needs to be done?

KESHA: Exactly, I expect that, and it's sometimes easy for our parents and grandparents to worry about us, because they may have been concerned about exposure, on that front. But they gave us the gift of feeling very safe and welcome in this country and established, and I hope they see it as us honoring that gift to use our voices and very strongly speak up for our political beliefs in this critical juncture.

RISHI: Do you get a sense that the Indian American community

is a little shy, and they are not willing to express or be involved?

KESHA: I had a story that may be common among Indian political players, where my grandmother would hope that I went back into music, rather than [laughter] do politics. She thought I would never earn enough, and it wasn't a particularly noble procession. She was always very proud of me, but she definitely didn't understand how I could make my life out of political engagement, let's say. [laughter] My father had very strong political beliefs and instilled that in me, but for him it was a matter of gaining a foothold in the economy – starting a business, bringing people together over food, and keeping politics in the private realm. He still was very proud, and he should have been.

He was a big part of how I learned how to assert myself and stand up for my beliefs. I would be giving a talk to a group of Indian Americans, and they'll say oh, I wish my daughter could be more like you – she's only a doctor, or she's only running this business, or this firm or agency.

And I would say, well, it's funny, I think my family would say I should be more like your daughter. [laughter] I think my overall message is, you know, as someone who has been in elected office since I was 22 years old, the kids are alright. Our generation is finding its way, and it is thanks to the generations that have come before us, but I just don't want those generations to feel like we're not fully honoring everything they've given us to work with, when we go out and speak in the political realm and engage in the political realm.

RISHI: I heard about your father's passing, and it sounds like he inspired your run, and that he is one of the inspirational figures. You were in the [Vermont] House of Representatives at the age of 22, and that's probably a world record of sorts. [laughter]

KESHA: Not a world record. [laughter] Yeah, my parents were a major influence. My father more; he always taught us to think about who was left behind. It meant that at times he could be very critical of politics and people who engaged in politics, because he always would try to focus on the virtue, and saw a lot of politicians as in it for power or personal gain, and so, that stuck with me for a long time. If I was going to go into politics, I was going to do it to do something, not be somebody.

And, my mother, it was more in the exposure she gave me to women and civil rights leaders in politics; it was important to her that I read biographies and understand those in this country and around the world who fought and lost opportunity and, in some cases, lost their lives for me to participate. So, who am I not to take that mantle of responsibility and make sure that the next generation has more opportunities and has more equity on which to build representation and political opportunity.

RISHI: So, Kesha, you talked about, you touched upon it, which is what your dad was talking about. From an Indian American perspective, we have sort of very pacifist roots; we are hardworking, we bring a level of pragmatic intelligence to our work and community, and that's what I see in Silicon Valley here. We are sort of helping the economy, we have very



and governorships. And right now that's probably where a lot of the opportunity for change lies.

RISHI: What would it take for us Indian Americans to engage in these non-glamorous city councils, school boards? What do you think should happen for us to get engaged locally in these other political roles that will help us get started?

KESHA: The good news is it's not hard for us to go from marginalized to the margin of victory. We have the numbers, and we have the right mindset. It's just about getting organized and thinking a little differently about participation. So as simple as voting, and it sounds simple, but it's still something people need

encouragement, or a push, or accountability. And there are new Asian American/Pacific Islanders organizations that are getting started to build that mobilization and make it more convenient and urgent for the Indian American community to vote.

The good news is it's also really easy to participate in local government. If you look around you, often people are begging folks to run for local boards, commissions, and so when business leaders say I want to get someone in Congress who listens to my interests, actually your local elected officials are going to fall all over themselves to listen to your interests.

Calling in about issues you care about or seeking to get an appointed position on a local board or commission or even running for office; often these local elections are uncontested, because it takes up time and energy. But if people are retired or find themselves with time in the evening, it's actually not that hard to keep your full-time commitments to work and family and serve on one or two local civic boards, so that you can really have a voice on what your open space looks like, or how your child's school is run, or what the business climate looks like in your community.

RISHI:: Yes, and that can be very energizing and empowering; once we engage we can realize the potential of taking and creating an impact of our intentions in the local community, and I think that's the story that's popping out, based on what you said.

KESHA: Exactly, and what I do what to emphasize, because it's just in my DNA, is that what has been really exciting for me is this was a breakout year for Indian women, for women like Pramila Jayapal and Kamala Harris, and even for me to run for statewide office and break a lot of barriers to do that. I

want to emphasize that no matter which culture we're in, it's often men that might look in the mirror and say Sure, I'll go run for the city council, and it's not as often our women and girls. We need to be just as encouraging of their voices and their participation, or we won't be fully representing our community.

RISHI: So, let's shift gears a little bit. We had a couple of issues that happened that impacted the Indian American community, which was: there was a shooting in Kansas, and in Seattle, and then we see a few incidents here and there which are very minor but seems like the climate of the country has changed a little bit. What would you like to do or, perhaps, you would like the Indian American community to do, to address this problem?

KESHA: Yeah, when my father came to the United States sixty years ago from India, the first thing he heard was someone yell to him on the street go back to Mexico. After September 11, he didn't leave the country for ten years, because he was just afraid he might not be able to get back in. So, we find ourselves as a very unique moment in time, but one that our community has been through in various ways before. And I think it's a valuable reminder that we sit at an interesting intersection for different communities in the United States.

That we often enjoy the benefits of upward mobility and our own accountability towards success, but that doesn't make it any different for us as a target of xenophobia and hatred, because often people might not know exactly where we're from but they can associate us with cultural groups that are experiencing a lot of bias and hatred right now. So, in that context, we have the unique ability to empathize and to find new ways of connecting with other immigrant communities and other communities of color to help be a united voice. And I know that's been my role in Vermont, which is a very white state, but I have taken on this role of being a cultural broker for all kinds of new Americans and farm workers and people who don't otherwise have any representation at all.

I may not come from their specific community, but I know what it's like to walk down the street and feel treated differently. And



if we can continue to put ourselves in the shoes of others, we can play a pivotal role in making sure that we maintain our democratic American values through what is a trying time.

RISHI: Your final words for an Indian American looking to engage in the community or would like to find a position of leadership in the community, what's your final words of inspiration for them?

KESHA: Yeah, figure out what your passion is, and how you can make a difference, because it's important to take a leadership role, to do something rather than to be somebody. That will make you happier, ultimately, because you're in it for the right reasons and you're not simply, you know, we as Indians are good at thinking about our ego and trying to absolve ourselves of it, and politics is not for those with a fragile self-image.

So, if you're in it for all the right reasons, and you are making a difference, and you are elevating others who need a voice, then you'll feel good about what you're doing every day. Those people are needed in the political realm now more than ever; we're at a critical moment where people are being empowered to engage in politics for very different reasons.

We know that many in our community want to engage for all the right reasons; to expand opportunity and to make sure the next generation has every tool they need to be successful and to bring our country closer together. And if those are your aims, I and so many others who are currently in leadership will do everything we can to help those next generation of leaders to rise.

positive intentions. And, is this something that is a strength for us in terms of how we will grow from this that we offer to America, as one of the highest earning demographics in the country, into becoming a little bit politically energized? Is that a strength that you think we have?

KESHA: Well, the opportunity is there, and all the conditions are there. Indian Americans are high earning, they're well-educated, they give back quite a bit in their communities. What the gap is turning that into results in the voting booth. I'm sure you've heard that before, from folks, who are lamenting that there are many in the Indian community who might give money but don't see translating into their need to vote.

We are people who come from the largest democracy, and are now in the oldest democracy, and so we will quickly be able to turn that around, with a little bit of engagement and focus. What I think is our real opportunity is to jumpstart our representation at all levels. What I think is important for the Indian community to latch onto and they have started to, is that it's not just about Congress. Congress is backlogged right now.

It's hard to imagine what will get done in Washington, and yet our states are huge experiment stations and thought leaders or what we can do to improve our access to healthcare, education, some of the basics that the Indian American community cares a lot about. So, what I would like to see as well is for the Indian community to realize they can get great return on their investment, for supporting candidates from city council and school board all the way to state legislatures

Food Recipe Corner

Easy one dish meal



Ingredients

Fresh Ingredients

Shrimp - one pound
Onion - one small thinly sliced
Tomato two - sliced in half inch slices
Red Pepper one - sliced in half inch slices
Spinach 6-8 ounces
Mushrooms sliced (4-8 ounces per preference)
Basil (10-12 leaves) tear the leaves or rough chop*
Garlic - two cloves smashed
Parsley (half a cup or more) rough chop*

From the Pantry

Olive oil 2 tbsp
Salt per taste
Black pepper - one tsp
Paprika - half tsp
Red pepper flakes - quarter tsp or more per preference
Capers - per preference
8 ounce Pasta packet of choice
* Can also substitute dry basil one tsp and parsley one
tbsp.

* Variations - Omit shrimp to make it a vegetarian dish. Substitute leftover rotisserie chicken for shrimp. Throw in your favorite vegetables for added flavor.

Clean and devien shrimp.

Cook pasta according to instructions. Drain pasta.

While pasta is cooking, heat one tbsp oil in a pan. Add garlic and red pepper flakes. Saute for 30-45 seconds. Add onions, cook for about 4 minutes or until translucent. Then add mushroom and red pepper slices. Cook for another 5-7 minutes, add spinach, let it wilt for a minute or two. Add the seasoning. Stir, add tomatoes and capers.

Meanwhile, heat one tbsp oil in a flat skillet. Cook shrimp without overcrowding the skillet. 2-3 minutes each side. Cook in two batches if necessary.

Now add shrimp to the pan with vegetables. Stir gently. Cook for two minutes and then add pasta to the pan. The pasta will absorb any liquid released by the vegetables. One trick is to keep seasoning a little bit at each step.

Bon apetit!

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MANISH’S ZODIAC PREDICTIONS – July 2017

Cancer - 21 June to 22 July

This month may spur you on to make major changes in your life, especially with regard to career or your ambitions for the future. You'll feel revitalized. The second half of the month will be marked by a definite change of pace as you become increasingly concerned with the details of your relationships. This will be a period of deep reflection for you and should bring a number of very useful personal insights that will help you communicate with your loved ones more effectively.

Favorable Dates : July 1, 8, 10, 17, 19, 26

Favorable Colors : Red & Yellow

Aries: 21 March – 19 April

Expansion of business and profession is likely in this period. You may start working on big projects. You will be continually in motion due to your efforts and vigilance. You may have to travel abroad for professional purposes. Expenses on professional activities will be increase. A surge of ambition overtakes you, but don't let yourself get bogged down by responsibilities – reserve some time for fun. Romance, however, will bring its fair share of challenges - it could be that you are not entirely sure of someone's intentions.

Favorable Dates : July 7, 8, 16, 17, 25, 26

Favorable Colors : Blue & White

Taurus: 20 April – 20 May

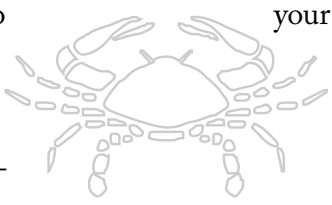
This month will start with bundles of potential, but you will need to seize the opportunities. Your plans are all laid out and you see clearly the innovative and courageous steps you must take. Your co-workers and seniors will come to know about your talent, by which you will get the inspiration of putting in the best of efforts. You will start seeing the results of tasks performed earlier. Those waiting for a job or transfer may be successful during this time. Romance will go through the usual hiccups as you waver between wanting intimacy and needing independence.

Favorable Dates : July 5, 7, 14, 16, 23, 25

Favorable Colors : Red & Yellow

Gemini 21 May – 20 June

You will achieve success in intellectual activities. You need some retreat and quiet time away from the hustle and bustle and also from your job responsibilities. Getting away from it all for just a few days can give you a new perspective. If you are



your

already in a relationship it is likely that some chance events will lead to a much deeper level of mutual understanding. If you are single then this will be a real rollercoaster month emotionally and the road to true love will not run smoothly.

Favorable Dates : July 2, 3, 11, 12, 20, 21

Favorable Colors : Red & Blue

Leo 23 July – 22 Aug

This month is likely to start on a rather dreamy note as your imagination takes over. You'll tend to be in quite a romantic mood too, seeing all kinds of possibilities. Drop the thinking game all together. You'll be amazed at the freedom you will realize. There will be some fantastic opportunities for romance, and until then channel that over-active imagination into something constructive, such as redecorating your room or your home. You should get your heart's desire or certainly get closer to achieving it. You are moving to brighter shores.

Favorable Dates : July 1, 2, 10, 11, 19, 20

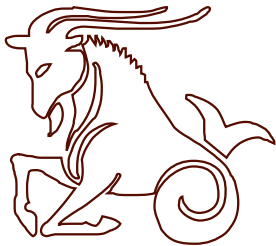
Favorable Colors : Purple & Yellow

Virgo 23 Aug – 22 Sept

This could be a month of significant changes for you in almost every area of your life. The key to making those changes successful is to rely on your instincts and intuition. Financially, this is a period of ensuring that you have a carefully planned budget. If you budget well there could be some major gains by the end of the month. Keep an eye on the spending, and try to restrain what will be a rather lavish frame of mind. You may earn profits from overseas contracts by skilfully using your abilities.

Favorable Dates : July 4, 6, 13, 15, 22, 24

Favorable Colors : Blue & White



Libra 23 Sept – 22 Oct

You will feel overloaded with work and will need to take some down time or it will affect your health. You will then be able to focus on the work you need to get done and have spare time for yourself.

Discussions and brainstorming at work can lead to manifesting great things. Take the time to make a fresh start in your

personal life, and there's no time like the present to open up and connect with those you love. You will feel a lot more energy and more centered about where you are in your life.

Favorable Dates : July 2, 5, 11, 14, 20, 23

Favorable Colors : Purple & Green

Scorpio 23 Oct – 21 Nov This is a month that will challenge your patience and emotions. When your emotions and tongue are tempered with compassion, your sensitivity is very helpful to others. A delicate approach may help you focus your desires successfully. Family members will approach you this month and ask you to help them out for various reasons. It is important to let them know that you can only do so much. Your kind nature can sometimes wear you out and it is important to honor your emotional health right now.

Favorable Dates : July 2, 3, 11, 12, 20, 21

Favorable Colors : Yellow & Green

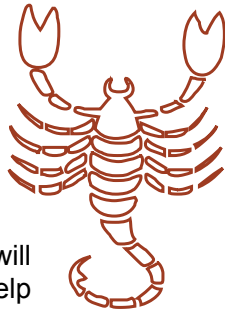
Sagittarius 22 Nov - 21 Dec

You will become more understanding and caring and will make the ones close to you very happy by expressing your feelings.

On the career side you will be full of life and this will reflect in work. Your communication skills will come into light which will bring you gains. This month is about finding the inner connection with yourself. You will discover new ways of connecting with different areas of your life. The more you connect and feel the people in your life, the more you will feel the difference it can make.

Favorable Dates : July 2, 6, 11, 15, 20, 24

Favorable Colors : Blue & Green



Capricorn 22 Dec – 19 Jan This is a great month to take some time to play. You have a tendency to be in your head thinking a lot and work can become very heavy. This is a time about letting yourself go and experiencing freedom. It is time to see how you are connected from that vantage point and how you are gratified and at peace with it. A need for change comes from your personal values and sense of self-worth that may need adjusting so that you may have a more positive approach.

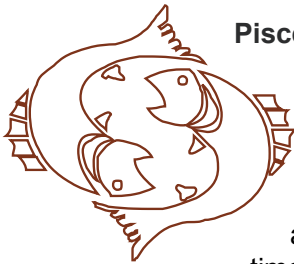
Favorable Dates : July 4, 7, 13, 16, 22, 25

Favorable Colors : Red & White

Aquarius 20 Jan – 18 Feb This month will be full of responsibility and you may find yourself flustered with the little things that really don't matter. Pay close attention to what those little things are teaching you and allow yourself to be inspired by the lessons. You will find that communication gets better in your life and the people who are draining you will handle their own issues. Broaden your horizons and look at the bigger picture and while making sure you can see where you will be and if you truly will be happy.

Favorable Dates : July 1, 3, 10, 12, 19, 21

Favorable Colors : Purple & White



Pisces 19 Feb – 20 March Excellent opportunities will present themselves during this month. This turns your attention to your financial situation and can see you spending more than might be wise, perhaps in an attempt to show off. This is a good time for sorting out anything that has been bothering you,. Be as flexible as you can, and don't count on others. It may be best to resist some promising new must-have and hang on to what you've got. A passionate affair, probably a secret one, is indicated with someone connected with work. Be careful with sexual indiscretions.

Favorable Dates : July 4, 7, 13, 16, 22, 25

Favorable Colors : Red & White

Manish Kumar Arora, 91-9871062000

K.P. Astrologer, Numerologist, Tarot Card Reader &Vastu Consultant



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Paresh Patel

Shilen Patel
Kris Persaud
Dr. Pawan Rattan
Dr. Hoshedar Tamboli
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Tamer Youssef

*Host committee in formation

Featuring Special Guests**

Hon Hillsborough County Commission Chair Stacy White
Hon Hillsborough County Commissioner Victor Crist
Hon Hillsborough County Commissioner Ken Hagan
Hon Hillsborough County Commissioner Sandy Murman
Hon Representative Shawn Harrison

**Special appearance does not constitute an endorsement

Tuesday July 25, 2017
6:00 - 8:00 PM

Westin Tampa Bay
7627 W Courtney Campbell Causeway
Tampa, Florida 33607

Minimum contribution \$250. Host committee raise minimum \$5,000.

Please RSVP by July 20 to el@patel2018.com

Contributions are limited to \$1,000 per person or business.
Make checks payable to: Aakash Patel Campaign
Or donate online at www.Patel2018.com/donate

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