



own path but fate

of us'

R AND LIFE CHOICES

What kind of roles would you want to play?

I feel there are very few roles where a female is the centre of the plot. I want to break that mold, I want to challenge the stereotype of eastern cinema and play roles where a female character can hold her own. I have turned down many films and TV scripts where a woman was a victim or as a shadow of a man. I excel in a challenging environment and don't want to repeat history.

Tell us that something not many people know about you?

I am shy. (Laughs) Does that come as a surprise to you? There is more. I'm very much inclined towards my religion especially after the death of my beloved mother. And I am particular about friendships. I have fewer than few friends and that is how I intend to keep things. I am a mother to my three sisters and they are the apple of my eye. Last but not least, I have a wicked sense of humour that is awarded only to the deserving.

What are your biggest passions away from work?

Modelling is amazing and I have been blessed with recognition and unthinkable success, but I do aspire to be a business owner for which I am considering a few options. Expanding my brand is something I am passionate about. I want to provide an experience and carve a new niche.

What is the best advice anyone has given you?

Listen to your heart and don't pay much heed to what people say, especially those who don't matter to you. Be grateful to people who are the pillar of strength in your life and even more grateful to those who leave no stone unturned to bring you down; for it is them who challenge you to push harder to become a better version of yourself.

What advice would you give aspiring models?

Don't mix work with pleasure. When you are at a job, be extremely professional – no one is your friend when it comes to work. Avoid the casting couch at all costs and build your name through hard work and merit. Whatever is meant for you will be handed to you on a silver platter.

Finally, what inspires you?

The love for god, endearing memories of my mother, happiness of my sisters and laughter with a few close friends re-energises and invigorates my spirit and acts as an inspiration for me.

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#ThisGirlCan

VERY few Indian women can say they have had success in both India and the US, but Priyanka Chopra (PC) can. So what is it about women like Priyanka that makes them so accepted by not just Indians but audiences worldwide? I'll tell you.

Priyanka, who is the same age as me, was Miss World in 2000 and that's what our earliest memory of her will be, but we have so many more magic moments of her. After moving from the catwalk to the big screen, she did a number of average movies where we got to know her. Then she starred in some amazing movies like *Fashion* and *Barfi*, where we saw a new, talented side to her.

This was followed by a music career where she made songs with international artists like Pitbull. However, Priyanka didn't forget her Indian roots and made an extremely inspiring movie like *Mary Kom*, where she opted to play an Olympic athlete instead of a run-of-the-mill Bollywood heroine. What made her ever more fabulous was her choice to go totally un-glam and show that it's okay to do so. Also after watching *Mary Kom*, I wanted to just go to gym and get super healthy.

Recently I have really started adoring another woman alongside PC, Deepika Padukone (DP). I'll be honest with you, I didn't think she was amazing at first. Then she took on the establishment after that 'cleavage incident' and recently opened up about her depression. I have so much respect for this woman, it is unbelievable.

As someone who has gone through tough times, I can imagine it was 100 times harder for DP being in the public eye constantly. It must be so hard for famous women to be completely open with the public.

Growing up I was always told that you have to look good and behave in a certain way, but I'm the kind of girl who will indulge in 'unladylike behaviour' and who cares.

Recently I have been inspired by the #ThisGirlCan campaign on TV, which is getting women to embrace their inner foxes and work out however they like, whether it's dancing, climbing or running – sweat like a pig, feel like a fox is the slogan and I love it.

So this is my message to women in Bollywood. Don't just concentrate on what your designer is doing for you, but like Priyanka, inspire women to do more. Don't just be famous doing average Bollywood movies or for your fashion sense; like Deepika, be real and speak up about your issues.

This isn't just for Bollywood actresses but for every woman out there – be yourself and don't be scared to try new things or to speak out about issues that are close to your heart even if other people aren't.