**BE BRILLIANT**

Episode 105: Fe

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| **SOURCE** | **DIALOGUE** |
| **TEASER -**  **SPARSH SHAH** | *Every obstacle, every trial, every setback, every struggle that you go through is meant to make you stronger in the end.* |
| **PRE-ROLL MARKER** |  |
| **DEMI ADEJUYIGBE, HOST** | **Hey, everybody. It’s Demi Adejuyigbe. And this is … BE BRILLIANT.**  **Throughout this series we are talking to innovators, entrepreneurs and students about – how to create your own unique path to success and reach your goals… and share YOUR brilliance with the world.**  **In this episode, we’re exploring the path to health and wellness.**  **A whopping 94percent1 of Gen Zers said being mentally and physically healthy makes them the happiest.**  **Now if you don’t feel great or you have a negative outlook all the time or you’re just totally stressed, you lose focus, right? I mean, we can all identify with those moments.**  **So, what can we do?**  **What choices can we make?**  **We’re gonna hear from two people who spread positivity and wellness daily.**  **An extraordinary and inspiring teenager whose joy is contagious**  **And a former music exec whose search for a more holistic approach to life was the catalyst for founding his global wellness company.**  **First up is Sparsh Shah. He’s a 16 year old singer and songwriter from suburban New Jersey.**  **He travels around the world, motivating students, businesses, and pretty much anyone he comes into contact with.**  **He’s got a huge global following thanks to the internet.**  **His cover of Eminem’s “Not Afraid” got more than 65 million views. 65 million!**  **Here’s Sparsh with an original track of his.** |
| **SPARSH SONG**  **“This is Me”** | **Now here I am through all this struggle…cleared my dams from all the rubble...rose up from the wounds that I took. Got so much booms you’ll be shook...move around faster than a castling rook...shine of God’s light through each cranium nook...read that book ‘cause I’m writing my pages...getting orders i’m fighting these stages...** |
| SPARSH SHAH | My name is Sparsh Shah a.k.a. Purerhythm, that’s my stage name.  So what you just heard was, well, a little sneak peek of an original that is yet to be released but I would say is my most lyrically intense piece so far. It's called “This Is Me The Rap Prince” --  Somebody said Tupac wrote the book of rap, Eminem finished it. So I said my mission in life was to write the sequel to that book--  but not just rap. I wanted to start a whole new chapter in the history of music and the history of life.  It is more so about my purpose of life and I think it also -- it intertwines with the very purpose that I exist and that is to be a light to others because what else have I to do? |
| **DA VO** | **Sparsh’s passion here is pretty obvious.**  **But that’s not the only thing about him that’s extraordinary.**  **In fact, he’s not your typical wannabe rapper or suburban teenager for *another* reason.** |
| SS | I was born with a rare and incurable genetic disorder, and it's called *osteo genesis imperfecta* --  I came out of my mother's womb with 40 fractures, literally almost everywhere in my body; hands, legs, ribs. Just name a bone and there's an 80 percent chance I broke it.  I was given two days to live in the hospital, they asked my parents to sign a slip that would order them to take me off of life support, my condition went further, worse, you know I stayed in the hospital for the first six months of my life.  My parents had to fight to bring me back home because they said put me in an institution it would be better off.  I had to be lifted in a pillow because I was so delicate. I had six diapers underneath me at once. So I like to say I was like the literal version of Super Diaper Baby you know for all those comic fans. I love that comic by the way. |
| **DA VO** | **Sparsh’s condition means he can’t bear weight on his legs or hands.**  **He’s confined to a wheelchair.**  **And since birth, he’s spent a lot of time in hospitals.**  **Music is what gives him his greatest joy - but pursuing his passion hasn’t come easily to him.** |
| SS | My student life has influenced my creativity both indirectly and directly. You know juggling around my homework and my schoolwork and my extra curricular stuff that I of course do outside and go out to the world and speak and sing. That all of course influences me because a lot of the songs that I've written come from very deep, personal experiences in my life. And so you know I like to say if you put my songs together in the order that I wrote them you basically have the story of my life in a nutshell. And everything I was going through, everything I was thinking what I was... my opinions, how they changed and how I evolved as a person.  But also directly they've influenced me, because a lot of times I mean whenever I get like an open-ended project by a teacher about something and they say you know you can make a Powerpoint, you can make a movie, you can make all those different things-- I always choose to write a song.  It's much easier to you know write about your pain and suffering. But somebody once told me that it is easy to write the darkness. Anyone can write the darkness but not everyone can write in the light. |
| **DA VO** | **Sparsh’s view of life is so influenced by his music.** |
| SS | I always like to say that you know music and I are so, so connected. You know it's it's like you know, you have that one childhood friend who grew up with you and you’re best friends with -- that's how I feel like about music.  Whenever my parents used to listen to songs on the radio I would just sing along. I would hum along.  So they put me in keyboard lessons, but I kept breaking my arms so I wasn't able to play the keyboard often.  My mom liked to say you know, “Sparsh no matter how many bones you break in your life your voice will never break.” |
| **DA VO** | **It’s easy to understand how music became the most important thing in his life -- from the very beginning.**  **And now his home studio -- is his sanctuary.** |
| SS | Whenever I come into this room, I feel pretty energized -- especially if I know that I'm going in there to like do some work, especially in music.  Like if I'm going there inside to do a project I feel kind of pumped, you know? I feel energetic, ‘cause this is the whole place where everything happens. You know it's like that's what they say, ‘this is the place where the magic happens. This is the place where everything happens’.  So. It's really really cool. It is my place to get on my grind, you know? And I often, when I'm especially doing music stuff I will spend hours and hours and hours in the room --  It's an amazing jamming place. It's the best place where I can have my jam sessions. |
| **DA VO** | **Listening to Sparsh’s story, I’m hyper-focused on his mindset.**  **He was born with this rare disease. So the complications, the pain he’s endured - those weren’t *choices* for him - they’re simply his reality, day to day.**  **BUT, what was a choice**  **Is HOW he wants to live his life -- with joy, to be happy, to see positivity wherever he can.** |
| SS | I guess you could say what people might just be the most surprised about is that I manage, “manage” quote unquote-- manage to still be happy and still be positive and bubbly despite all my obstacles. But you know, it's a normal part of me.  I'm pretty much like everyone else, you know I have pretty good friends, a great loving family. And yeah you know, I have school. I have to balance schoolwork with music and I tell people whenever they ask how do you juggle school and work-- Let's be real. It's a juggle. It is not an easy thing.  You ask any person with a disability and they will tell you-- we just live normal lives in a different way. We live normal lives, differently. So that's why I say there's no normal you know? |
| **DA VO** | **Sparsh’s world isn’t just school, homework, hanging with friends and music.**  **He figured out a way to balance his student life with a nearly full time career.**  **He speaks to thousands of people around the world**  **And his inspirational speeches are like a master class in how we can all find positivity and happiness.** |
| SS | I think whenever I give advice or if I have to help my friend out or guide my friends and people my age in just finding happiness and finding joy in life I think--  Every obstacle, every trial, every setback, every struggle that you go through is meant to make you stronger in the end. That is the firm belief that drives me. And I think my family also contributes to my happiness, because they inspired me to take on that view.  I think my mom and dad understood it first, of course, and they were the ones that taught me not to hold myself back. They were the ones that taught me that you could do anything that you set your mind to. And because of that you know I'm here today.  When I was in my spinal fusion surgery I think after the first day my dad was like, “How do you feel?” And I woke up and I surprised myself by saying, “I feel empowered.”  I was determined. I said, “I can't let this hold me back.” So. That is what drives my happiness, the will to never give up. |
| **DA VO** | **Turning your circumstances into the very thing that makes you feel powerful -- that’s a true-blue superhero origin story.**  **And that determination and drive is exactly what makes Sparsh’s story *so* inspiring.**  **He is all about the power of positive thinking.**  **And he’s working hard to spread that message -- so others can find their own potential, their own purpose and live their own best lives.** |
| SS | My disability does not hinder me. I do not believe it hinders me. I always say that I have “dissed” my disability. So my disability is no longer a disability for me anymore, but it's an ability.  So I may not be able to walk and stand, but hey I can rap and sing and I can write and I can produce and I can go speak. And so yeah, you know, it's not a disability. It is an ability, but you have to see through it.  And that's why I like to say, you know, In life you gotta learn to survive but once you learn to survive you have to learn to thrive. That is the only way you can achieve success. |
| **DA VO** | **It’s amazing how we can all learn so much about life and happiness from a 16 year old, but Sparsh’s outlook is filled with lessons we can all take with us.**  **We’ll be right back.** |
| **MID-ROLL AD BREAK** | (Music)  We know it’s not always easy being a student. You’re busy, you’re on a budget, and you need a lot of stuff for school! Books, devices, headphones to block out your roommates… We understand…    Microsoft Store has a lot of what you need. We have devices, apps, and training that can help you achieve your goals, inside and outside of school.    Plus, students and parents can save up to 10% on most Microsoft products and devices. All year long, not just during back to school. You get free shipping if you order online, or you can buy most products online and pick-up at the store!    Microsoft Store also has workshops and tutorials for tips and tricks like building a resume or taking better notes, or even events like gaming tournaments.  Check out your local store for details.    And, Microsoft Store offers support online, OR you can set up a one-on-one appointment at the Answer Desk in one of our stores. We have experts there who can help you with the things like getting your device set up, or helping you format your PowerPoint presentation, or answer whatever questions you have.    So, you get a student discount, free shipping, training and events, and if you have questions, we’re here for you. Microsoft Store supports you to share your brilliance with the world. Check it out: Visit Microsoft Store in person or online at microsoftstore.com/studentdeals. |
| **DA VO** | **And we are back…**  **Wellness is really important to students.**  **72 percent of Gen Zers surveyed by Unidays, a marketing app for students, say that managing stress and their mental health are their most important health and wellness concerns.**  **Unlike Sparsh, Jeff Krasno discovered his path to health and wellness *later* in life.**  **He was well into his career as a music executive in New York City when he realized he really needed to reset -- not only his work life, but also his overall well-being.**  **Now living in Los Angeles with his wife and three daughters, he’s the co-founder of two companies - Wanderlust and Commune.**  **They’re both focused on helping people pursue healthy and inspired lives -- by living mindfully.**  **If you go to one of his Wanderlust events, you’ll see thousands of people coming together for group yoga, concerts, lectures, and guided meditation.**  **Here’s Jeff on the origin story of Wanderlust.** |
| JEFF KRASNO | I had an office. I was running a music business down in Lower Manhattan in the financial district, right near the World Trade Center when 9/11 happened. And we were in the tiny little radius around ground zero.  I got a- a front row seat to watching that community -- and you know just to give that more context, obviously there were people going through tremendous amount of shock and grief at that time in New York and particularly in lower Manhattan.  The initial inspiration came from Skyler, my wife who is a yoga teacher. And this was at a time when yoga studios were not on every block.  So this became this little funky studio that you had to kind of wind up these very steep stairs with this strange fluorescent green paint that's still there.  It was a safe place to sweat, but then to also kind of share their stories and cry it out and hug it out and rediscover their creative spark and really to heal. So I - I really took a lot of that in and, and saw firsthand the power of community and embodied practice to really transform people and to heal people.  And that really kind of bent the arc of my life and my kind of personal mission and what I wanted to do.  And that was kind of the inspiration, the initial inspiration, for Wanderlust. |
| **DA VO** | **Jeff and his partners began putting together big outdoor festivals combining music and yoga and other events to bring that sense of community to people beyond the four walls of the yoga studio.** |
| JK | Music for us at Wanderlust was also just about making it feel like fun, that yoga and meditation weren't like a drag or something that your aunt did in a field with a crystal, you know the way it used to be. I mean nobody really thinks about it that way anymore. But when we started yoga was kind of like your weird aunt you know. She was cool but a little weird little funky. And now that's not true at all. It's like it's pretty mainstream. |
| **DA VO** | **Over the next few years, Jeff put his plan into action and used his entrepreneurial and music backgrounds to build this purpose-driven business.**  **He also began to build out the community in the digital space with another company called Commune -- to bring it to the world at large.** |
| JK | Wanderlust is very much focused on bringing people together in real life.  It's an experiential events business where we pull together the world's greatest teachers and create these kind of very interactive experiences and bring them to distant mountain sides and parks all over the world.  There’s 68 of them in 20 different countries. And then we create these experiences for people that are looking to connect around healthy living, yoga, mindfulness, organics, spiritual development. Essentially, all of the things that populate what I would call ‘the Mindful Life’.  And Commune is really sort of the digital mirror of that, where it's essentially we're creating online coursework -- places for people to connect and learn, but in a digital environment. |
| **DA VO** | **The timing for Jeff’s businesses could not have been better.**  **More than previous generations, millennials and Zs are basically digital natives, meaning we have no memory of a life without screens or social media.** |
| JK | Movement keeps you in the present moment. This is not where we often live. We're often thinking about ‘what if’ that's the future or ‘what if’ that's the past. But rarely. Right here right now.  I think this is one of the reasons why yoga and yoga studios are so popular |
| **DA VO** | **It seems like everyone is at least *interested* in a holistic approach to life.**  **For me? I love the apps that track my sleep and exercise. And I have friends who love the meditation apps because they help them fall asleep faster**  **Ok, back to Jeff.** |
| JK | The real “there” there for Wanderlust ends up being community and the connection that people create there when they start to open up and relax. You know they've done a yoga class, they’re in some beautiful mountain top; they've done a hike and they're there with like-minded people who share their interests and passions and all of a sudden they're connecting in a way that it's very difficult to connect in kind of day-to-day modern urban life.  We're wired for connection, chemically, we're wired for it. When we interact face to face, you know our brains are secreting different kinds of naturally occurring opioids that make us feel good.  So there is I - I think like an actual neuroscientific answer to that question, in terms of why we crave community and why it makes us happy. |
| **DA VO** | **So how else can we get to that calmer place in the mind?** |
| JK | People meditate because silence has no beginning. It has no end. It's infinite. It has no time. It's outside of space. It has no location. So when we sit quietly and look at a sunset or close our eyes and immerse ourselves into that silence that is the closest that we can then get to understanding what is infinite.  So this is part of the spiritual journey for so many people is to find and to cultivate you know what is hidden within.  And if you can start to cultivate that awareness and then live from that. You'll find that you are a much happier and content human being and that the people around you are happier and that in many ways content and happy people attract each other |
| **DA VO** | **There are so many different ways to calm down. Jeff has a few suggestions and maybe it’s best that you find your own.** |
| JK | There's a lot of breathing techniques and exercises that we do where essentially you can close your eyes and start to listen to the sounds around you.  Oftentimes we just hear sound as one big wave, but actually almost at any time there's like fifty, sixty different little micro sounds happening. And it is a very, very sneaky little trick to actually get yourself focused and in the present moment, where you start to listen to ‘oh I can hear a hum on the left side of the sonic spectrum and I can hear someone talking over there in the right and I can hear the air conditioner going on, that's kind of over there and in the background’ and all of a sudden you get this stereo scape-- this polyphonic stereo scape, where you're so keyed in and focused that you can separate each track as if you were a music engineer.  And you know what you find is a trick to actually get you very focused and in the present moment.  But I mean even just literally the most simple breathing techniques, like counting to ten with your breath. It's actually really hard. I mean try it. Just counting to ten, breathing, and counting the ten and not getting distracted and losing where you are at six. It's not as easy as it sounds. |
| **DA VO** | **Honestly, none of this is as easy as it sounds.**  **But taking control of our own wellness journey is really important -- the better you feel mentally and physically, the happier you are.**  **If, like Sparsh, you find that jamming to music brings you happiness and strength, spend some time strumming your guitar or writing a song.**  **If, like Jeff, you turn to yoga, meditation and special breathing techniques - to calm you, help you focus, and be more productive in the long run - then whip out that yoga mat and downward dog yourself to that special place.**  **There are countless approaches to wellness -- choose what’s best for you.**  **Throughout this series, we’re gathering tips and guidance, not to be *like* someone else, but to be the best version of YOU -- to be joyful, to be productive, to be healthy, and to Be Brilliant!**  **Hope you enjoyed this episode of BE BRILLIANT, produced in collaboration with Microsoft Store. And don’t forget to subscribe to the series.** |
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