



with Keith Vaz

one to one

ARUN PATEL

Founder of The Polio Children Charity

Arun was born in Uganda, he contracted polio when he was just 1 years old, he did not let that affect him. He came to the UK worked hard and at the age of 22 he qualified as a Chartered Accountant. After having worked for KPMG he started his own Accounting firm, which he later sold to retire aged 53.

Arun started two International Charities that has helped over 30,000 poor and vulnerable children across the world. He recently published his memoir "Out Of My Way, Polio".



1) Which place, or city or country do you most feel at home in? (50 words response)

A small town called Chaklashi in Gujarat, my father's birthplace. It encapsulates the best of India, the warmth of the people and the place. Although I was not brought up in India, I do not feel that I am an NRI whenever I am there

2) What are your proudest achievements? (50 words response)

Workwise, having built up a professional practise from scratch and selling it to retire at 53. However, nothing compares with the sheer delight of winning "twice" at golf competitions which are dominated by the able bodied

3) What inspires you? (50 words response)

Whenever I meet a child with disability who exudes energy and enthusiasm for living and thriving despite the heavy odds stacked up against him or her

4) What has been biggest obstacle in your career? (50 words response)

At times a little voice inside me warning me to exercise caution and slow down. It stops me from daring to make bigger moves

5) Who has been the biggest influence on your career to date? (50 words response)

Whilst running my professional practise the late Mr Jeremy Kane, one of our esteemed ex clients. He was full of enthusiasm and highly optimistic in any given situation. He helped me enhance my self-confidence by telling me to always "box a few notches above my weight"

6) What is the best aspect about your current role? (50 words response)

Running charities (as opposed to

running business) means that one is never short of work. I know this does not sound well but it is a welcome relief from traditional businesses where one is always looking for more work

7) And the worst? (50 words response)

The ever increasing need for resources (both human and material) to meet the pressing needs of the beneficiaries of our charities. It is our constant companion

8) What are your long term goals? (50 words response)

In Uganda, we have recently completed the construction of an orphanage that will look after 90 orphans aged 6 to 10. It will be a centre for academic and spiritual well-being for many of those traumatised young lives. I would like that model to be replicated whenever it is required

9) If you were Prime Minister, what one aspect would you change? (50 words response)

Every minister with responsibility in the cabinet or otherwise should be subjected to an annual "impact statement" review that would evaluate how effective he or she has been at work. He should be made available in public domain

10) If you were marooned on a desert island, which historical figure would you like to spend your time with and why. (50 words response)

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for his timeless and life transforming wisdom. His Transcendental Meditation technique has had a huge impact on my life and I would dearly like to have more of that wisdom