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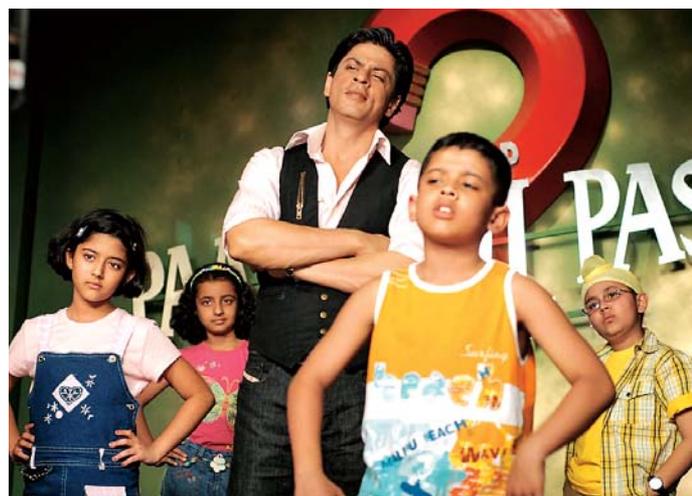
Hosting reality shows, quizzing Laloo Prasad Yadav, reminiscing about his school-days, spending quality time with his kids... King Khan unwinds to tell all.

Text: Saroni Roy

“I am very good at multi-tasking. I can do seven-eight things at the same time,” declares Shah Rukh Khan, the actor, the businessman, the father, the husband, while addressing the media at the *Kya Aap Paanchvi Pass Se Tez Hai* press conference. So who is the real SRK? “Even I don’t know. I am acting the whole day. I do a lot of things that are larger than life. The line between the two gets blurred after a while. The closest I came to playing myself was on *Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)*. Onscreen, if you see me being naughty, sarcastic, or hugging someone with love, I think more or less at that point in time I am emoting the way I would in real life.”

Shah Rukh, who kick started his career with the small screen, went on to rule Bollywood but never went off the TV radar. It is over two decades now and he still rules the screen, be it with his Bollywood blockbusters, as a brand icon, *KBC*, his recent stint in cricket with the Kolkata Knight Riders or the ongoing *Kya Aap Paanchvi Pass Se Tez Hai*, Star Plus’s quiz show which will shortly complete its first season. “It’s not me who has become big, the television has become big. The media has been kind to me because I’ve nurtured a lot of goodwill. So whenever I am promoting something, for example my team, it’s TV that has made it popular. It appears that I am more often on TV, simply because there are more cameras. In the old days, there were just four cameras, two microphones, mostly notepads; now suddenly there are hundred cameras, movie vans!” says Shah Rukh, taken aback by the transformation in the media.

‘360 degrees entertainment’ is what Shah Rukh follows. With media getting larger the distinctions between being on TV or cinema has narrowed. Shah Rukh



adds, "Television has taken a huge leap in the last five years and cinema is no more the only mode of entertainment. We are talking about watching TV on phones now. Five years from now, if I am doing a movie that is going to be released on a phone, have I become smaller or has my reach become bigger? I am glad that I exist in times where I can entertain people through different mediums."

How involved does Shah Rukh actually get with shows, like *Paanchvi Paas*? He reacts, "I get emotionally involved with the contestants. I like to win and I also like others to win." An anchor's job is challenging: complex sound technology, lights, unknown contestants, questions, answers, technical difficulties, time limitations. SRK pulls it off with perfection. "TV is difficult... almost like a live shoot. If it's a one-hour programme, it's shot in an hour and fifteen minutes. I'm the central focus in a certain way and at the end of it, I need to pull the show and look into its tiny aspects."

As an anchor, Shah Rukh also understands the psyche of the contestants. "What's interesting about *Paanchvi Paas*... is that kids, even if they don't know the answer, will speak whatever comes to their mind. They never act; they are just the way they are. Adults are suspicious. Because our minds are conditioned that way we fail to believe that a rupees crore-worth question

can be simple. And that's how they go wrong." Ask him about the soaring number of reality shows coming up each day and SRK feels that TV needs to come up with more interesting formats instead of similar shows, even if they are inspired by international formats.

Even after a tedious shoot for *Paanchvi Paas*, Shah Rukh's all gung-ho about spending time with his kids. "When I go home, I ask my kids all the twenty questions that I asked on the show. So I sit down on my dining table, and ask them. I take a print out of the questionnaire after the show", chuckles Shah Rukh.

"I am honest and I want to be honest."

He happens to be a passionate teacher as well. SRK believes that studies, if made fun, can work

wonders for kids. He elaborates, "My son is in the 5th grade. The other day, while I was teaching him bar graphs, I realised I had forgotten the concepts! But I make studies fun for them... Like I create treasure hunts where they have to run around the house and find the answers to my questions. Even my kids' friends want me to teach them because I make it very entertaining! If a fun environment is created in schools and colleges, then studies can get interesting and children would also score more." He believes his participation in shows like *Paanchvi Paas*, is simply a way to reinforce a fun way to better education.

An all rounder at school, Shah Rukh won several awards and was the blue-eyed boy of his teachers. "My teachers would tell me I have the devil's smile. I did naughty things but I used to get away with my dimpled smile. I could study in a very short time and get good marks. So a lot of the guys would envy me."

SRK enjoys life's simple pleasures – receiving small gifts, a cycle ride or playing with his kids. He adores and identifies with the unrestricted freedom, naivety, and innocence, often a bit of rudeness, of children. "Children behave very differently when they are young. They are unrestricted in their behaviour, and that's why sometimes rude but forgivable. As we grow older we are told how to behave in public," says Shah Rukh. Despite his success, his biggest high remains executing that perfect shot onscreen. "Nothing excites me more than knowing that I have done a shot, it has reached millions of people."

SRK has an interesting take on his mercurial rise, "Competition is a kind of restriction. I am like a horse who doesn't see who is running next to me. To be successful, the most important thing to be kept in mind is that what we are about to work on might go wrong, it might become a failure. Once we are convinced about this, we become very confident. I might sound like a philosopher, but we all know that we are going to die, still we work hard at life! So can we do that at work? We all know it is going to be zeroed down, but we still give our best shot. So even if the result is 0.1%, we feel better. I know it for sure that I am not special, the success and love I have received, cannot be all because of me."

Having produced several blockbuster films under the label Dreamz Unlimited and Red Chillies Entertainment, Shah Rukh has plans to initiate another arm, Red Chillies Idiot Box, to produce TV shows. Fictional-short films, hi-end mini series, and abstention from soap serials, will be the production house's unique selling point. "I like new ideas and I like to create events around those ideas. The creative person should not feel that his ideas are misused. I think that's what my USP is as a producer. I am good at marketing," he summarises, wrapping up things for the day. □

