I am also learning to speak up when I am uncomfortable about something. This may come as a shock to some of you, but sometimes when I am in a situation where I feel unsure or uncomfortable, I don't want to rock the boat. I think many women suffer from this malady. Especially when the environment is highly charged and chaotic and there are time constraints and that time is literally money. Who wants to be a nudge (Yiddish for a pain in the neck) in that environment? No-one, especially women. Women very quickly get a reputation for being difficult when they raise questions or speak up, whereas men are expected to behave that way. And on a sexist movie set, however well meaning and fun the set is, which this one very much is, this can happen in the blink of an eye.

Luckily for me, some people on the set already know who I am and have a sense of what my nature is, and fully expect me to speak up if I am unhappy. I stated very clearly on the first day of shooting that I was unhappy about the way I looked and that the next day I wanted a proper make-up and hair job. The make up artist was also snowed in. I announced this to everyone on the small set. I was not capable of this two years ago on the set of a short filmthat I had written and was the brainchild behindand was therefore very unsure of how I was coming across on screen. I think that fully and negatively affected my performance.

The director on this film was very nice and said, "Please don't worry, we will make sure she is here tomorrow and takes care of you." And she did. As a result of my speaking up, I was able to let go of this worry and enjoy myself and have fun with the character. The director seems happy with it thus far and as an actor my main job is to help the director achieve their vision and give the editor as much coverage or options for editing as possible. It really is so simple.

I was so nervous about acting on film after my bad experience acting in a short (with that producer who I need to stop hating and wanting to smack. I am still meditating by the way) that I was shy and defensive the first day. I needed to take myself in hand and say, yes, Sharbari you are afraid and that is fine but you need to be generous and kind and not assume that everyone is out to belittle you. This is not like before.

I was struck yet again by how I internalize so many of my fears from past experiences and let them spill on to the new situations and people unfairly.

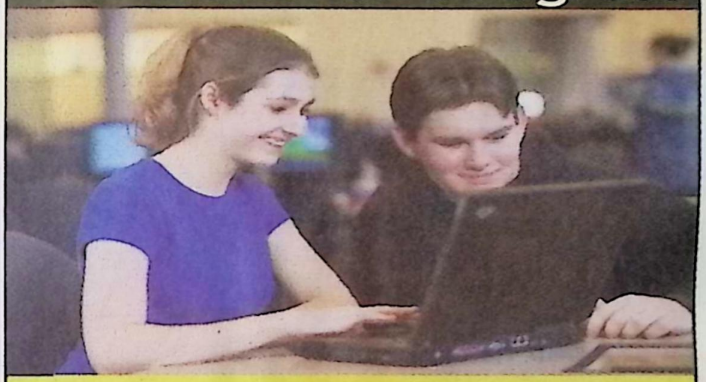
I am not in a perfect situation on this set but I have already learned so much about myself and had the point driven home once again that I love films and making them and I will be doing this for as long as the universe allows. And that there is something to be said for being a little crazy. ■

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