



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

FILMMAKING FOR THE CLUELESS

PRIONTI DIPITA NASIR

One day, in my adolescent confusion, I had fearfully acknowledged my interest in filmmaking. It came out of watching cinematic masterpieces and wondering if I could ever hope to be a part of the picture off-screen. I had pushed the idea back inside my head because it seemed wildly distant. But filmmaking as a hobby or potential career has become more accessible since, and it's about time we figure out itineraries to distant dreams.

Riasat Salekin is a young film enthusiast who just finished working on his directorial debut. His story takes him back to fifth grade, when he would find himself on IMDb all day, researching about the off-screen particulars of the filmmaking process. He eventually taught himself the workflow of birthing an idea, writing a script, taking it through development, finding producers, surviving production and post-production. Now a few ventures older, he advises newcomers to publicise their love for the art. This is how he found like-minded people in French lessons, music festivals and online.

"It's important to let your hunger to learn drive you in the early stages," he says, "I approached industry regulars unabashedly. Few responded, but I have since gone on to form strong bonds with them, and by the time I was 'of age' to actually attempt projects past the development stage, most of my support came from seasoned people in the industry."

Asif Mojtoba Kabir, having been a scriptwriter for many successful projects, provides similar insight. "It's okay to be a nag," he repeats confidently. "Social media is a powerful tool for those with palatable independent projects but no connections," he asserts, "and if you cannot reach the director, contact his assistants, and the assistant's assistants. It's okay to be a nag, really." I assure him I trust his experience. He also suggests forc-

ing oneself to watch repulsive Hindi and Tamil movies to understand what not to do.

Indie director and artist Shiron Mahmud is mindful that not everyone can put up with the financial investment involved. "Explore older cinema, learn how effects were achieved that would otherwise seem unfeasible," he advises. Technology was primitive then, but directors were creative enough to express the visuals they imagined even within limited technical capacities. Hence, Shiron does not believe minimal gear can impede cinematic brilliance.

It took me little effort to find a few recommendations for formal learning. Pathshala South Asian Media Institute is a one-stop solution for the absolute beginner. Goethe Institut, Alliance Francaise and Bangladesh Film Institute regularly arrange courses and workshops on filmmaking. EMK Center in Dhanmondi holds workshops on aspects such as sound design and scriptwriting. It also accommodates a full-fledged sound recording studio and editing panels. Most importantly, these places host communities of creative people.

When asked where one can find equipment at reasonable prices, Shiron names Bashundhara City and Multiplan Centre, and Asif recommends Buy and Sell groups on Facebook, especially known for great secondhand finds.

Riasat emphasizes that amidst a sea of technical knowledge to be garnered, it is also of utmost importance to gain perspective.

"Research, browse Reddit and Quora, be in touch with issues and trends in experimental projects worldwide. A filmmaker isn't solely someone who chooses lenses for a shot and screams 'Action'," he says, "He's an artist who paints fictional realities and weaves stories out of flesh-and-blood actors and real-life spaces. It's therefore equally important to know about culture, psychology, politics and the society to be a great filmmaker."

How to deal with guilt

AYSHA ZAHEEN

'To err is Humane; to Forgive, Divine.' Alexander Pope delivered a message that has withstood the test of time. Whilst we have shown our allegiance to the said popular quote, how much of it do we apply to ourselves?

We often make mistakes and the realisation tends to hit us pretty hard, even when it may not have been done deliberately. We dwell over it, unhealthily obsess, and denote self-worth down to that one mishap. Whilst it is necessary that we learn from our mistakes and do not transgress in a similar fashion further, we also need to learn to let it go. Learning is essential, blaming is not.

People with anxiety have a harder time dealing with guilt. The lack of confidence and self-deprecation that follows is extremely damaging. However, there are ways to deal with guilt.

HOW MUCH HAS YOUR MISTAKE AFFECTED THE PERSON

Whilst it is necessary that you learn from your mistakes and not repeat them, you also have to understand how much it has affected the person. If it has terribly harmed them, then you can try your best to make amends. Often, doing so gives one peace of mind. However, it is still okay to be unable to make amends, more so if you have ascertained all the places you went wrong and bear responsibility.

It is also quite likely that it has not really affected them much and merely made them upset. In that case, a proper, heartfelt apology would do for both of you. Apologies may not feel enough, but you also have to acknowledge your limitations and learn to be okay with it.

HOW WOULD YOU HAVE REACTED IF IT WAS DONE TO YOU

Whilst the perspective narrows itself down this way, you still get to have a different point-of-view. Were it done to you, would you have let it go and forgiven it or would you have thrown a fit and cut the individual off entirely?

Once hypothesised how you would have dealt with it, try to accommodate theirs to yours. If they behave the same way, totally justifiable. If they don't, still justifiable. What you are doing is putting yourself in their shoes and learning from that as well. That effort made alone should contribute to freeing you from the overbearing guilt.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

You have control over your own actions to not make the same mistake again. Hurting yourself is no way to repent just because you have hurt someone else. An apology should be enough when there is no other way to make amends. If you look back, you will realise you've forgiven people who have wronged you, too. If they deserve forgiveness, so do you.

You can also try using the Socratic Method if all else fails. The Socratic Method is when two individuals orchestrate a cooperative dialogue to trigger critical thinking. You can also hold a conversation with yourself. Ask yourself under what circumstances you made the mistake, where you went wrong, have you apologised sincerely, and if you're capable of making any substantial amends. Speaking with yourself is often associated with lunacy; however, it can ease your mind and help you relax.

Different things work for different people. Thus, I encourage you to find your own ways of dealing with guilt. Once you do, it gets a lot easier.

Aysha likes her coffee bitter and her tea sweet. Send her prayers at zaheenaysha@gmail.com

