

Dilith Jayaweera: Guts And Grit



In the recent past we have heard his name come up in various fora. At times in a positive sense as a man with the guts and grit who spoke out in defence of a positive Sri Lanka and at times as a controversial stock market figure or a mafiosi. His name became affiliated with the stock market especially with the market mafia. Dilith Jayaweera is considered to be a powerful and influential person in the country. However, he does not agree with the title that has been bestowed upon him as he does not belong to any market mafia.

He stresses that their core business is in advertising – Triad – and that whatever decisions and investments have been made as a company not as an individual. He says that Sri Lanka needs to recognise true entrepreneurs and value innovators. Well, is Dilith Jayaweera the mafia and the manipulator? This is his story.

By Udeshi Amarasinghe | Photography Menaka Aravinda and Mahesh Bandara

Who is the God Father?

I am not aware of any God Father other than for Al Pacino in the movie God Father. While it amuses me to be tagged this way, it also gives me a wild aspiration as being recognised as the “Capi de tutti Capi”, which has its benefits and if not anyone else my nieces and nephews will be impressed.

First of all, I enjoy the whole idea of trying to make me a part of a mafia. If they liken me to a god father, it gives me some sense of satisfaction. The reason we named our organisation – the original company – Triad, was because when we looked up the meaning of Triad in the dictionary it said; a strong combination of three people or three things, coming together towards achieving a common objective. A further definition given in the Oxford Dictionary for triad is a Chinese secret organisation. In a general context around the world however, Triad actually means – the mafia. Even then, we felt that this name had attitude and spirit. The only sad thing is that it seems to have taken us almost 20 years to really acquire this title and recognition!

A while back, at the height of the Chillies Advertising Awards when Triad started winning ‘The Agency of the Year’ status year after year on three consecutive occasions, some decided to call us the Mafia and scammers. This time around, some have found a new route to tag us the same way. They must have their own reasons though for thinking so.

Could you talk about your involvement in the Colombo Stock Market?

As far as the stock market is concerned, I must tell you the whole story in order to give the full context. Triad was started in 1993 when we were still in the Law Faculty. Personally, I didn’t believe in following the conventional path of becoming a lawyer and I felt that we could do broader things to fulfill our aspirations.

This business was our first option as it did not require capital to start. Thereby we commenced Triad and positioned it as a “local agency”. That went against the accepted and widespread belief of that time, since almost all the local agencies went with multi-national tie-ups.

Being the local agency convinced our clients that we best understood the Sri

Lankan consumer's psyche and behaviour far better than any multinational company. We believe we have mastered the art of finding locally relevant human insights. This was our unique positioning which was channelled from the inception to build local brands. We came up with the motto "Sri Lanka Can" and on every occasion that we could express our collective philosophy, we did so by rallying together under the national flag. You would have noticed our team on the stages of Chillies Awards year after year. Our approach has always been national and patriotic. This gave us the edge to differentiate ourselves from others. Looking back almost 20 years later, we believe we have made a difference in the business of communication in Sri Lanka. Our recognition at creative awards locally and internationally stands testimony to this.

Our business model is to reinvest the money we earn without taking money out as dividends. All that we have earned we have reinvested in new ventures. In 1996, we began our backward integration by investing in an offset printing press. We bought a second hand Heidelberg grey cord printer from Premadasa printers and put it in the garage at our Claessen Place Triad office. That was our first subsidiary. From thereon we set up a new venture almost every year. A colour separation company, outdoor advertising company, commercial photography company and then a commercial film production company. These were all investments that we have made to strengthen our communication product.

At the same time in 2004/2005, due to our stringent financial discipline we managed to save some extra funds from handling the election campaign, "*Rata Perata*". This we invested in a company called Asia Commerce. Today it is George Stuart Finance. It was first a leasing company, and the requirement for a leasing company was to have a capital of 75 million rupees. This was our first forward integration effort.

We Never Thought Of The Stock Market As A Tool, Where You Buy, Sell And Make Money. We Have Always Looked At It From A Creative Perspective.

By 2010/2011 we had set up at least 21 subsidiaries. We had also experimented with certain ventures and then decided to do away with them as we found them to be unsuccessful. Article 14, which was our furniture designing arm producing wrought iron furniture and a café named Café Freedom located at the same place were both such unsuccessful ventures for varied reasons. But we were happy we attempted various initiatives as we believed in being value innovators.

Using creativity as a tool to innovate value for our clients is what we did. Compared to our competitors we tried to apply this theory to ourselves, in innovating value within our own company, to assure that our biggest asset – the Triad Team that they have long term benefits for their efforts. Just as one may decide to ask a horoscope reader or palm reader as to why they can't read their own palm or horoscope, there may have been those who could have asked us why we don't innovate value for ourselves, if we hadn't done all what we have to innovate value using the tool that we know and have mastered- which is creativity. When we apply ourselves, we apply to something that Sri Lankans can appreciate, if they are willing to and are generous enough to think that way.

When Varuni, Ishini and I started the company, two of us were law students. I knew nothing about advertising. I came into the industry as a fresher. We learnt everything on the job. Today our printing press has six machines and a brand new Heidleberg. We have expanded each and every one of our businesses, but we have remained low key. Only after the war, did we seriously think of taking on greater tasks.

We felt Sri Lanka was ready for it. One of my colleagues and partners Sarva, had decided that we should invest in the stock market. I was not too keen on it at the time. Three or four months later I saw the gains and since I had ample time on my hands as all of our companies were running independently, decided to manage our portfolio with the view of creating value using non conventional thinking.

Then we put more and more money into it and gradually started trading in the Colombo Stock Market. When the money was not sufficient, we took a small margin facility, bought more and one fine day we realised that we had bought a considerable stake of a company in the process. In fact we were interested in buying stocks for trading but those quantities were too big for us to trade.

This share was called Reefcomber, which we later rebranded as Citrus. Then we had to look at a long term plan which we had to keep in mind. This is how we have carried out our expansion process. We never thought out and strategised. We didn't go through lengthy financial proposals or plans, and feasibility studies as such. It was a gut feeling that gave us the go ahead.

As a company, today we are stepping into our 20th year. None of us have taken dividends from any of our companies. We have our salaries and our basic facilities just like any other company. All the money that we have saved we have reinvested.

Regarding Citrus, when Dhammadika Perera got Nimal Perera to sell it in the market, we realised that we couldn't dispose of such a large quantity in the market. We decided to take it as a challenge and take over the management of the hotel and give it to professionals to run it, innovate value, rebrand and contribute creative thinking into the hospitality business. We added value from that perspective. That became our first acquisition into the leisure sector. We wanted to innovate within that sphere as well. We never thought of the stock market as a tool where you buy, sell and make money. We have always looked at it from a creative perspective.

Being simple people, we have never desired for big money. We are not people who spend extravagantly and like to live the so called "elitist" life in Colombo. We are hard working people who enjoy doing what we do, creating value for our companies, the people within these companies and our country as a whole.

We Have A Theory That We Use In All Of Our Investments; That Is The Worst Case Scenario Analysis.

Insider Trading?

The only accusation that was levelled against us was when we declared a Rights issue and attached Warrants – one issue and three warrants attached in one day. The accusation was, how could we have decided on such a complicated format in a period of one to two hours. They thought it was too complex for a newcomer to take such a decision. Right through they wanted to know if we had prior knowledge before the date of the board meeting. What they did not probably understand is that we approached all our decisions during the course of our career in this manner. To us, while the nitty gritty financials and the works matter, what really creates the adrenaline rush is a gut feel. We enjoy the freedom we have as a young team to try different things. Some work, some may not but we enjoyed the experience. We know it's a little maverick but the greatest achievers of all time seem to have thought in a similar manner.

When we first invested the money that we had saved at the time in a printing machine, it was a decision made on gut feel. There was an individual whom we met when we advertised for an Account Executive position who was 45 years old. At our interview, I pointed out that the position was for young people. Then when I went through his CV I found that he was a printer. I told him he should be our Printing Executive. We did not have such a position but we created it at that moment. He said that he could manage a printing press. Within a week, we purchased a used

printing machine from Premadasa Printers. There was no lengthy business plan.

Setting up our pre-press business was also similar. We ventured into a business of our own to do colour separations, as the suppliers our press was working with were not meeting tough deadlines and we as the printer were getting the flack from clients. It was then that we decided to set up our own colour separation machine in-house and bought a brand new Katana machine offering a digital pre-press solution.

Manipulation Is A Criminal Offense... If You Ask Me If It Happened In The Market, Honestly From A Bird's Eye Perspective, I Would Say Yes.

We have a theory that we use in all of our investments; that is the worst case scenario analysis. We analyse what would happen in the worst case scenario. What if the printing operation fails? Nothing will happen as our core business will continue to run. We may be able to recover part of the money invested. We start again as far as our investments are concerned. Examples are as I mentioned before, Article 14 – the Freedom of Expression, which was an experimental project. We converted part of our outdoor advertising arm to convert left over rods into small furniture. It yielded profits but considering the management time that we put into the business it wasn't sufficient. We started a small cafe, with a freedom theme. We ran it for about a year. Then we realised that the involvement was too much and shut it down.

Similarly the stock market was no different. It was an opportunity to innovate value for our company with whatever tools that were available to us. We started with trading, buying and selling, and making capital gains. Then we went into acquisition. That is Reefcomber, which we rebranded as Citrus, then as we did not have money for expansion we went in for the rights issue and three warrants. With that money we converted the 40 room hotel into a 94 room refurbished hotel in less than six months. We used new technology, our thinking and that itself is an example. They could not see Citrus being expanded as it was only on two acres. Again as value innovators we saw a different option. We put a tower at the road frontage and built up five floors overlooking the old building and converted the first two floors for services and large banquet facilities. We believe in change through innovation.

From rights, warrants to acquisitions, we then moved on to private placement. We bought a land in Waskaduwa. Through a private placement we collected the money

and fully funded the whole purchase of the land. Thereafter we went in for an IPO. We did the same with Kalpitiya where we bought a beautiful 74 acre land from the money we acquired through private placement. The investors had faith in us, they put in money. Now we are going ahead with these projects. It is the same with Passekudah. Through the tools available in the stock market, and value formation we have formed new capital, which we did not have. We keep shares in the Bank and acquire facilities. The banks are willing to support, as we have something to offer as collateral. We keep this as collateral and expand.

The money that we raised from private placements and rights/warrants of Citrus, we invested in Colombo Land and acquired a 20 percent stake. We negotiated with the Singaporean shareholder, and convinced them to become part of its development. Liberty Plaza will have much more additional space being built and the whole place will be refurbished. Another tower just adjoining the original structure will also be constructed, which we have purchased from a private party. This is the kind of value innovation we like to be involved in, not petty mud slinging campaigns.

People begin to wonder how we have got the money. At times we are accused of obtaining funds from politicians and politically connected people. They don't understand our little formula through which we have raised close to four billion rupees within a period of one year and eight months. It is very simple.

That is in fact why, we went to courts when we were accused of making money through drug peddling. There is a case being heard in the Colombo District Courts. We filed action against BBC as well. That case is also being heard. According to the law of defamation in this country, the challenge is for whomever that made the defamatory statement to prove that the facts are correct. You have to subject yourself to it, and in the dock they can ask you any question about every cent that you have earned. It is only because our hands are clean that we have confidently filed action. We are strong believers of the judiciary and we have no qualms about fighting for what we believe is right. To us corporate ethics and integrity are very important. If you talk about corporate cleanliness we are 100 percent clean. We have never used anything other than our creativity, our thinking, our commitment, our spirit or our teamwork for any gain.

We don't believe in unjust enrichment. We don't believe in short cuts to become rich or powerful. Every cent added to this company or value added to this company is through our creativity and hard work. Of course we are a group of people who are not scared. We only look at the worst case scenario. I travel by bus when I want to, I

visit any bar. I am not someone who has got accustomed to a luxurious lifestyle. It is the same with our colleagues. The worst case scenario is that you get into a three wheeler, you go to a road side food outlet and you are still the happy man you have always been. Then you have that much leverage to play with your additional money that you have saved. Your investment decisions could be based on that since you have nothing major to lose. If you look at the way that we have taken risks in the stock market, that is the spirit in which we have taken decisions.

Someone who doesn't want to know us could view us as people who have laundered money, or have acquired some sponsored funds or used other ways of making money. I am confident that we can prove our work ethics in court. It is obvious that they will question us on each and everything that we have done in the last 50 years, including our private lives, so we are open to it. We can explain anything, anywhere.

Touching on market manipulation or insider trading; in my honest opinion the market really opened in post war Sri Lanka. Many newcomers came into the market. Though I bought my first shares in late 1980s when the Sampath share issue came, I was a small trader. I did it for two to three years and gave up completely. We returned to it like many others after the war. Manipulation is a criminal offense. Criminal offenses are generally looked at from a legal point of view as mens rea, or the mental involvement or intention at the time of committing the act. If I buy shares and manipulate knowingly to benefit from it, it constitutes a criminal offense. As a company, we didn't do any manipulation ever.

In Fact The SEC, Securities Exchange Commission Is A Quasi Judicial Body. What The Head Of That Body Says Makes A Big Differencein Somebody's Life And In Society.

If you ask me if it happened in the market, honestly from a bird's eye perspective, I would say yes. If you study stock markets around the world to see to what extent there is manipulation, it is a subjective issue. How do you decide at which point a person had criminal intent? If you look at some transactions, it is fair to come to the conclusion that there has been some manipulation techniques involved. As a criminal offense it has its own punishments attached to it. There is a procedure. You can't name someone as a criminal until proven guilty. We forget such principles when we start naming people as manipulators.

The stock market basically functions on perceptions. Reality has very little value to

that. When you say a market is being manipulated, what happens to that perception? Firstly you drive away members, and stakeholders from the business. This is our fight, personally. It has nothing to do with insider trading or malpractices. We are simply trying to say that if there are manipulators, get hold of them. Take them through the process; punish them. That is how a civil society works. You do not go public since it can create a negative perception. It goes against the system. If not by the time manipulators are basically declared innocent the market would have fallen into a grave.

There are manipulations happening elsewhere, in the US, the most developed market in the world. We are all against it. Suddenly, when the regulator himself makes a statement to the newspapers about manipulators, we consider that to be a bigger crime than what actual manipulators have done. Investors never expect a regulator to do that without going through the process. Such loose statements make a huge impact against the market. During the 30 year war, shares were traded at one rupee and ten cents. How does a market operate? It is the most open place. There is always a willing buyer, and a willing seller. It happens out in the open. No one can force another. It is all about disclosures. We are supposed to disclose each and every act. When we buy shares we have to control our stake of the company. It's not a market like any other.

In fact the SEC, Securities Exchange Commission is a quasi judicial body. What the head of that body says makes a big difference in somebody's life and in society. They base their decision, on the information that they get and that can have a major impact. That was our struggle and we are very happy and proud that nothing was done behind anybody's back. A presentation on the state of the stock market was made to the President himself, in front of the then Securities Exchange Chairperson, the Colombo Stock Exchange Chairman, and the rest of the stakeholders. The intention was to prove to the stakeholders that this was something that they have to look at seriously. There wasn't any other intention. I personally got trashed in the newspapers for going ahead with the presentation, whereas the press pronounced that other stakeholders like the SEC were not afforded the same opportunity. That was all wrong. It was a complete misrepresentation of facts by the media. Not that I have much faith in the mischief making press community who take pleasure in gloom and negativity in a person or as a nation.

Countries Should Celebrate Entrepreneurship, Countries Can Only Move Forward If There Is Entrepreneurship.

The press conference organised by us was purely and simply to convey the truth and correct the misconception created by “a media mafia”. I knew that from a PR point of view it could be a huge blunder but my conscience didn’t allow me to take it lying down, simply because of the unfairness of the situation.

Managing the media is no novelty for us who have been in this industry for so long. We are part of the media and we have had long standing positive relationships with many of them. In fact, through our communication services we promote these media houses for their sustenance and success. Managing perception is what we do for our brands. We are proud to have created the country’s most far reaching perception managing campaign in the likes of “*Api Venuwen Api*”. So its wrong to say I was caught unawares at the press conference. I was prepared. But above all, I wanted an opportunity to tell the truth. The real truth, which some media distorted.

This was more a CSR issue, we felt it was our duty. There are so many dependent people involved in the stock market transactions. It was our duty. We delivered. We have always done so in the spirit of Triad. And we are happy about it.

Why do you think SEC came out with their message?

First of all, SEC initially didn’t appreciate the spirit in which everything happened. A five rupee share that has remained so for the past thirty years suddenly becomes five hundred rupees. It reflects the expectation of the average Sri Lankans at that time. On that expectation alone people bought shares.

Suddenly the Commission introduced close to twelve different regulations to control this. Finally they themselves removed those regulations. That shows the desire to control. What is there to control except the people’s aspirations and expectations. This got reflected in the share prices and the share market. You don’t look only at past records only when you buy shares. You look at the future potential. In that process there may have been those who tried to manipulate. In any society it happens. In any industry it happens. In order to address that, there is a system. Instead of using the system, they started depending on the media and making statements.

Why are you always portrayed in a negative manner?

Most of the time people want to hear the negative side not the positive. It is in every average human being’s psychology. If you are not doing well, you want to

justify why you are not doing well. Then you have to call the person who is doing well a scammer, rogue, drug peddler, market manipulator or a criminal, otherwise how will you justify to your coterie as to why you are not doing well. This is sociology.

Sri Lankan society is a very close and inter-connected one. Therefore your neighbour's wealth has a major impact on you and the entire neighbourhood. People find the need to justify why one person has money and not the other. The media too will connect to the majority, when in actual fact it is pure economics. In that sense the majority has failed.

If you look at the tourism campaign of Great Britain, where they have taken Great as the keyword, and promote the various features of the UK as great singers, great places, great music and much more. One such poster was great entrepreneurs and they had a photograph of Sir Richard Branson. Will a Sri Lankan ever do that? Will we ever recognise a Sri Lankan as a great entrepreneur? Who were the first and the last entrepreneurs that Sri Lanka recognised? There are none. Everyone has been degraded as either a scammer, rogue, drug peddler or a criminal. There isn't a single entrepreneurs who has been recognised by Sri Lanka, for their creativity, for their entrepreneurship and their risk taking ability. Countries should celebrate entrepreneurship, countries can only move forward if there is entrepreneurship.

I feel extremely proud when I see the inflight magazine that is now completely produced in Sri Lanka. I remember the struggle where the production and printing of our national carrier's own magazine was being done by a foreign company. Why is that? Because we are unwilling to give our own people a chance. This country has a sociological issue and it is not just limited to entrepreneurship. It's called a 'colonial hangover'.

Let us look at Sri Lankan politicians, we always try to criticize them. I cannot think of any Sri Lankan politician that we have celebrated irrespective of their party. We need to recognise the achievements of others. Just because you couldn't become one, you should not drag other people down. Why can't we celebrate our top lawyers, engineers, doctors and other professionals without always looking at the negative aspects?

Dilith Jayaweera's name goes hand in hand with controversy. Why is that?

I always believe in anticipating and being prepared for the worst case scenario. I

lead a very simple life. The reason as to why I lead a simple life is, because I do not want to compromise my beliefs for anything. If I get used to a different lifestyle than what I lead now, I may have to keep certain principles aside to maintain that lifestyle. Therefore I try to be as simple as possible in my life. I should be ready to give up anything and everything at any given point. Why? I have my values and ethics. That is how I have been brought up; thanks to my parents. I will always speak up for what I think is right. It may be seen as controversial. Even in the stock market, I was the last name in a prepared list of all the large stock market transactions. I have not been involved in any malpractice or criminal action. I have not dealt with government funds and I have not dealt with any of those controversial transactions. I have only done some trading, and made medium and long term strategic investments.

However, I thought though I am not involved, my duty is to come out and say what I think is right. This is what everyone is criticizing about. It could be seen as controversial, because – I don't know whether this is right or wrong – many are timid and do not want to take risks.

Power Is Both Subjective And Relative. Power Is Not Something That I Aim For.

Some entrepreneurs, though they are supposed to be taking risks, are not willing to do so. They play safe fearing negative repercussions. Even in this case and may be I should have expected this, people would not come out and say that what he is saying is the truth. I volunteered and I went on my own. I was not representing anyone, or any stock broker, investor, group of investors or any mafia. Because I was the one who opened my mouth and spoke because I felt it was the right thing to do, I became the bad guy. But this is the spirit of our company. Our team supports my decision fully and we are proud of our contribution to this country. That is all that matters in the final equation.

You are considered powerful. Is that true?

Power is both subjective and relative. Power is not something that I aim for. We live in a civil society, and the need for power, I personally feel, has a lot to do with insecurity. I am not an insecure person to need power. I consider myself to be a very strong person therefore I do not need power. Even if you look at the way we operate in our businesses, we follow a model, which is a organic flat hierarchy. We are on first name basis with everyone. Power is not on my list of things to achieve. I

would love to think that if there is no power, you can have anything.

The Truth Is That We Never Planned To Do Any Of The Things We Have Done In The Past. If We Look At The Origin Of Triad It Was A Sudden Decision.

Where do you hope to see your companies in the next few years?

The truth is that we never planned to do any of the things we have done in the past. If we look at the origin of Triad it was a sudden decision. We did backward and forward integration and all the other numerous decisions we made, if I look back now I would say that all happened purely by chance.

If we take Derana as an example, I must start from the beginning. During the time we had massive power cuts, the advertising industry did not do well. Half the day, we didn't have work. Therefore we decided to open a restaurant in Rajagiriya by the name of Oodles. The operating model was to be one where all the staff would work at the restaurant in the evenings. We got together one day and thought why don't we run a restaurant. Oodles was to be a fast food place. We conducted training, designing logos, purchased equipment and everything else that was required. However, we soon realised that the investment required to run an operation like this was massive and the returns would be very little. Furthermore by the time the project came to the point of launching, the power cut was corrected.

We soon started getting campaigns and the staff was busy again. We converted the company into Powerhouse Television Company. This production company never got big business. We gave this to our original partner, Ishini, to run. Due to personal reasons she could not continue with the business and as she was planning to move out of the business we met Anup Chandrasekaran who had worked for the Maharajah Group previously and was looking for a job. We asked him to run Powerhouse Television Company. He started producing Tamil programmes.

Anup brought down the people from Raj TV, India as they wanted to start a channel here. At that time it was very difficult to obtain a license, but they managed to get an appointment with President Chandrika Kumaratunga. They asked us to join them for the presentation. At that time it was essential to have a local partner to obtain the license and Anup suggested Triad as the local partner. The President gave her approval on the condition that the license would be given to the local company and that an MoU had to be signed between Raj TV and Triad. However, terrestrial

transmission in Sri Lanka is very expensive and they were not willing to bear the cost. They left and then Anup came up with a proposal to start a Tamil channel. However, we decided to change the medium from Tamil to Sinhala as we could not get into a business where we did not understand the content. This is how Derana came into being.

Then if we look at Sarva Integrated where Chrishantha Jayasinghe is our Managing Director; he was thinking of joining us as a client servicing personality. But we said how can you be an Account Director when you have been a CEO before. We offered him the building in Thimbirigasyaya and asked him to start an agency.

All our businesses have started in an organic manner. We have always enjoyed what we have done and in fact the bottom line is, the last thing on our mind is profiteering. We give the very best to our clients and in the process profit is a by product. We are committed to enhance the value of the company. We reinvest and keep investing. We enjoy the work we do and when we enjoy the work the money comes as well. We are able to live a good life and as a team we work together.

Though I became the face, I never invested as Dilith Jayaweera. These were not my personal investments. I always invested on behalf of the company. Not a single cent has been invested as an individual. Initially we were buying shares through one of our subsidiary companies but now we have Divasa Equity, which is our investment arm. We do everything as a team and everyday in the morning we come in with a lot of energy and we work till about nine in the night. We enjoy living our life in a meaningful way.

Who is Dilith Jayaweera?

I am a very simple person. In fact if you ask a school friend of mine who may not have met me for years and meets me now, he would say that I have not changed at all. Even with the people I work with both directly and indirectly, they will all say the same thing. I have always wanted to be simple because I only believe in the Buddhist philosophy.

I believe in the Atalo dahama. I am not someone who goes behind profits because I know what follows according to the principles of Buddhism. It is in this spirit that we do everything. We have created an organisation where there is no single HR Executive, we have an organic flat hierarchy. We are all friends. We believe in Sri Lanka and that is why our theme is 'Sri Lanka Can'. We want to celebrate this spirit

and take it to the people and tell them this is how we should be. We believe Sri Lanka gives ample opportunity for growth. We would like to be an example to others. We are not the ones who would go behind money and power. Today you may have everything and tomorrow you may not have anything. You should be able to accept things as they are.

We Can't Move Forward, Because We Are Becoming A Society Which Is Reflected In A Negative Sense. We Should Be Positive, As A Nation We Need To Be Positive.

Do you wish to enter politics?

Among the many things I could have done, it is politics. I was heavily involved in University politics, which I always highlight in order to emphasise that once outside the University, I have not ever engaged in politics. Many who were with me in University and involved in politics are now engaged in national politics. I have respect for politicians but it is not a sphere that I want to be part of.

I don't have the commitment to give my heart and soul to this type of activity and involvement. But I do appreciate the commitment of representatives of the people who actually do this day in and day out. I feel that politicians are a section of people that the Sri Lankan people should try to recognise. None of us are perfect and none of the systems are perfect. If you tell me that they are corrupt then the private sector is even more corrupt. Together, the private sector, public sector and politicians should all recognise each other without blaming each other. The private sector cannot afford to blame politicians because the politicians did not get corrupt on their own.

I want to enjoy what I do and I really love what I do. Everyday I come to Triad and I spend most of my time there. I like to write copy I like to draw things, I enjoy sitting at the computer and improving a layout. I like to go and watch a shoot and also edit.

Final thoughts.

While understanding our limitations we should also look at the bigger picture and widen our perspectives. Sri Lanka is an island and we are a close community therefore we tend to look at things in a very narrow way but it is time for us to take a broader perspective. We can all enjoy our lives, the opportunities are there.

Unfortunately due to sociological reasons and narrow perceptions this growth is not aggressive. The growth I refer to is not only material or monetary but also moral growth. We can't move forward, because we are becoming a society, which is reflected in a negative sense. We should be positive, as a nation we need to be positive. This is the truth and the ultimate happiness of being.





