# Transcript

## Standing together video

### Ranjna

Hate, I think is from ignorance, and I think that ignorance is learnt behaviour.

It's what your parents tell you, it's what your parents do, that you then replicate.

I am the granddaughter of a gentleman that left India the shores in the 1920s.

He bought a fruit shop in Herne Bay, and my dad, and my uncle took over.

At 18, my parents decided I was too wayward.

So they said “We better look for prospects for you.”

And so I went to India on the 27th of November. Met my husband on the 30th of November and married him on the 8th of December.

And it'll be 50 years this year.

I have three children and eight grandchildren, six girls and two boys. They are my pride and joy.

We began our business life in 1977. My husband wanted to be a specialist. He's a very bright doctor.

But a very wise specialist took him under his wing and said New Zealand's not ready for a coloured doctor with an accent. Nobody will refer to you.

Harsh words but, growing up in New Zealand, it was difficult to accept.

Okay. You know, he recognised unconscious bias back then, which was amazing.

And he said, go and work in an area that looks like you and sounds like you.

So in those days it was Ponsonby or Ōtara. And it just so happened a practice in Ōtara became available.

The model of delivering health care was 9:00 to 12:00 and 3:00 to 5:00.

And the community came only with appointments. And so we said we've got to change what we do.

And so, we grew. Which made us more audited, more mainstream being very suspicious of what we did.

Our peers all thought must be that dodgy Indian couple, stereotyping, that must be doing something wrong because they're getting too busy. Must be inferior medicine.

And so in the end, they stopped us seeing patients.

And there's an Indian saying that when a light comes to your door, you never blow it out. You invite it in.

And my husband said, we're not turning anyone away. I would just hire locums to take the overflow. If I'm only allowed to see X number of patients, that's what I'll do.

But the practices grew to the largest medical practice, private practice in New Zealand.

It wasn't hate that the doctors would not refer to him if he was a specialist. It was ignorance.

If you look different, why am I dressed in a sari? My family's been here over 100 years.

Here I'm perceived as fresh off the boat. When I go to India and open my mouth, I'm a foreigner. So I don't belong anywhere.

So this is to give people the confidence to be who you are.

Indian. Ethnic. Pacific. Māori.

The fact that you look different.

People from Europe don't get judged as much as we do.

There used to be this guy at primary school who had the same last name as us, didn’t look anything like us. But he was our brother because he was a Patel.

Yeah. I didn’t like it. Yeah.

So how many generations have to tolerate it?

Now, I feel at my age I've got no day job. I've got nothing that can backlash on my career,

that I can now voice these things which my children or my grandchildren will not voice.

They may at a subtle level, but I feel now I've got to make the difference.

It's still a big taboo, in family harm and racism and hate speech that you just live with that.

And how do you encourage people to do it?

You know, I encourage my granddaughters and my grandson to speak up, and I can see they speak up. But what they're having the problem with when they speak up is that teachers have no idea how to deal with it.

They brush it under the table and then there's no one to follow through on it. And you know, how do you fix that? Is our whole system broken? That we are just accepting intolerance from everybody, which then becomes ignorance, which becomes hate.

So that's another thing they face. They're twins, but they're still very, very different in appearance.

And the teacher, it's now September and still can't tell them apart.

But if they were two white kids then they probably would be able to tell.

It's not that she can't, it's that she told us on the first day of school she didn't want to try.

Yeah, she said, “well, I'm not even going to try tell you guys apart”

Little things, you know, you suppress those memories a lot more. You have to really think about which one hurt you or which one you just flossed over. And majority of them, as my children also say, we just ignored them.

You get labelled very quickly if you have the diversity of thought and they don't agree to it. Even around a board table, it's very, very difficult.

And so, you know, how much do you actually sit at the board to give you a view, and how much do you know when to say something and not say something? Because it will be labelled as you are a troublemaker.

They’re subtle. How do we change people to be more open? More open to diversity of thought. That my way is not necessarily the right way.

I think the only way we can fix it is by starting in primary school, because you can't change behaviour overnight.

As I said, it takes three times, five times before someone will accept someone else's

diversity of thought. Diversity of food, diversity of language, accents, you know?

I always laugh about it. If it's Indian accent, “Oh, I can’t understand”, but if it's a French accent, you love it, you know?

So how are you going to change that behaviour?