

Raising A Differently Abled Child During Covid Times | Pooja Khanna, Mother of Norah

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SUMMARY

The conversation centers around the resilience and positivity of Pooja, who shares her experiences as a mother navigating challenges during the pandemic, particularly with her child Nora, who requires special care. The discussion highlights the importance of maintaining routines, the role of therapy, and the need for self-care amidst parenting challenges.

- Pooja is praised for her resilience, positivity, and authenticity, both in person and on social media.
- The importance of maintaining a routine for children, especially those with special needs, is emphasized.
- Pooja shares her experiences with therapy, both for herself and her child, and how it has become a crucial part of their daily life.
- The conversation touches on the challenges of parenting during the pandemic, including managing anxiety and the need for support systems.
- Pooja discusses the coping mechanisms she employs, such as humor and recording therapy sessions for reflection.
- The significance of self-care, including taking breaks, is highlighted as essential for maintaining mental health.
- The discussion includes insights on judgment and expectations from others, particularly in the context of social media presence.
- Pooja encourages parents to embrace their unique journeys and find joy in the small moments amidst challenges.

hi guys i have known pooja for i think over three years now and she's fantastic like she's so resilient i i just sometimes don't know where she gets that energy from how is she so positive how is she so honest how does she uh manage to be so vulnerable and still turn out to be so positive so i i have just so much to learn from her each time i meet her chat with her stumble upon

her instagram page she is just fabulous and for everybody like you know instagram sometimes i feel can add this layer of filter to people she is um literally the person that you meet and the person that you see on instagram is the same person which is a very very rare quality guys so um so much more power to her you guys hi hey see that's why i tell you you know you're like sunshine you're just like

you know you just exude that sunshine dude what are you made of like you know i was no no no right now i was listening to what you were talking about me and i'm like like this you are so amazing how have you been i have been good today i am good i was super excited i've been waiting like okay now it's like one hour to go half an hour ago okay no i'm serious it's so much fun to like

catch up i know especially because i hardly we hardly get to meet go out now actually we don't get to go out so this actually it feels like oh my god i'm finally getting to socialize so yes i'm super excited yeah no but really we've seen everything that has been happening whether it's nora's third birthday or all this all the awesome stuff that you're doing you know like my kids are way past that age but i still

love like the yesterday the therapy that you did which was the hand therapy that you were doing with her you were rolling something and she was on the board i think you were doing something yeah yeah the tactile play okay yeah she's supposed to guess the yeah i i was like wow she is so patient so patient and i'm like when can i be like listen let me tell you you there there is a there is an app called like

edit right so you don't see that i'm not patient so it all always appears that i'm always so like but it's not true yeah like somebody asked me the other day how are you so patient and what do you do when your kids fight and i'm like i'm trying to think and i i'm you know i'm such a goofy parent and you know this i just said i've just started recording their videos and showing it back to them so they know how they look

when they're like clawing each other apart right because i don't know what to do like i think these guys are supposed to fight and they continue to fight so i said i don't really have an answer but i have a nice answer to it which is start filming them now do you want to be that you decide if you want to continue if you don't want to say you really do this i was like or i can't think of

anything else yeah i don't know how parents can but it's amazing because because as a like when i take nora for therapy what they tell us to do is when you record their stuff and make them watch it they know what they're capable of doing so they have the confidence of doing it so this is pretty much like you show them this is what you're capable of doing and you shouldn't be doing it right so and and i just learned it like

you know when i'm when i'm practicing one of my yoga poses or whatever and you know i i need to correct myself or i don't if my alignment is right or whatever because you know i haven't seen a teacher for over four months so i just haven't just record so i know where my body is going or whatever and it's like cello same rule let's implement it here let's see if it works right um i have

seen you do yoga and i think two people that super impress me is like one you and my mom my god you guys have like literally yoga body goals like i i cannot even imagine my any part of my body bending in that direction or whichever direction you define gravity trust me if you do it every single day for the last 10 years like i wasn't born uh born with a gymnastics

so there's just no way that i would have inherited those jeans for sure the commitment and consistency is amazing it's motivating trust me when i watch that i'm like i should be doing this and mommy's like you're too sick i'm like promise i'll do it you know you only push her you don't do anything which is amazing because you know i always feel he always channelized towards doing one thing at a time right so right now your priority is something

else it really doesn't matter yeah but tell me how you been how is it to work with you know work with nora in these times when you are so anxious you are so stressed how do you how do you just stay sane because that anxiety has to pass off to your child as well right no so fortunately for me uh what has happened is these like started going when the lockdown happened you were like okay i

wouldn't it will be for some time or whatever let's just enjoy so it all started with being not having a routine as such having a routine but not having therapy in my that we inaudibly see the effects of her not going through you know going not going out to play not doing anything so you know you tend to become dull and i didn't want that for her because i used to get bored fortunately we had online school so that would keep up busy

with our activities but therapy was equally important unfortunately we had done medic therapy in uh we had done an intensive in december so uh i had got everything made those equipments and they wanted to buy right oh no that was in hyderabad the therapist was down from toronto and she was it was the first time ever medec was in india and yeah we were doing that and not a lot of people have heard that therapy either so and then the second

one we did was uh in jan in dubai yeah i picked up a lot while seeing that and i thought if i could you know i had all the videos with me so i was like you know if i replicate that at home and try and do it i'm you know she's learning i'm learning we could just see where it goes so we just started doing that every day and i mean i got the hang of it she

got the hang of me doing it with her so i guess therapy is no looking back then we started speech and other normal therapies as well in school and no looking back from there so it's as routine as how it was before lockdown for us at least in terms of therapy and stuff would you recommend that parents continue to have that routine and continue to have the therapies while the kids are at home because it kind of

puts that sort of continuity yeah i think uh therapy for kids who need it who have low muscle tone and even generally kids for us also if we need therapy if we have that break if i'm seeing a psychologist or a psychotherapist and i get that break it's going to build up in me i need to have that for any one of us so even for nora she needs it this is a part of her growing

up it's not like you know it's almost like breathing it needs to it has to be done so it's it's almost like that like it's almost like you doing yoga you have to go because you feel good so it's just like just because it's locked down you won't stop doing it not like me but i'm just saying so yeah so it just keeps us that routine just keeps us going there's one constant which is there for her which helps her

process and i think that is very important for us no matter what happens you have one constant going for you also how did that pan out right because you also have how are you kind of managing the schedule right because um you know literally like you had to absorb everything in-house so did you learn everything along with her like you feel like you've literally become the teacher in the process and yeah uh how does that happen because you're

everybody is saying no online school no online school and you feel do you feel like that education is important for your child at this point of time that online learning process i early years of education and development child development is only that much right so it doesn't matter what chaos or what noise is around you i mean there is a you need to focus on that because there's only six years or seven years that you could give into as much as you

can get out of it i mean in your own way however you would choose to incorporate it i am i prefer somebody helping me leading me the way because i don't know how to go about it so i prefer the online school method where they give us the activities to do so at least i don't have to lack my brain oh my god what do i come up with or you know what am i supposed to do if i need to teach her

these concepts like how do i come up with those concepts so at least there is a guideline and you know it's also helpful to have somebody communicate with i'm not able to do this or maybe because with nora always had guidance so i feel like it's a part of you know learning for me along with her so i prefer having that guide along with me at all times whether it's in school whether it's therapy or whether it's just

generally goofing around we are anyways doing that so which is interesting and tell me in this process you also met you also your husband and your mother-in-law right i'm not mistaken yeah yeah they both both got covered at the same time so did you feel like there was a support system breakdown and that was just too much pressure on you and what happened was uh my mom was not feeling well so i mean she was vivek was anybody supposed to go and

meet her and in that that morning we got know that she was a little angry so he went there to meet her and then he's like i think it could be cold let's just get your test done so they got the test done and she tested positive and then he got his test done so obviously he tested positive so that we so fortunately i bought my parents to live in with me but when vivek left my parents left too

so that one week i had no support system in terms of family so uh they also left to go home uh vivek was tested positive with covid so for one one one and a half week i had nobody to so i would literally call my like my neighbors from down and be like okay i have a therapy session i need one of your family members to come up we need to i need help for therapy so i was

reaching out to and i would call my dad can you just come for like i have therapy from this time can you just come for that time at home because you know i i need help unfortunately because our nanny is pregnant so i wouldn't like she wouldn't be able to help so only for that one hour of like physical therapy session or something i would get like big borrowed like please tell me i need somebody but apart from that it was okay

i think it was mentally more very disturbing because i mean vivek is like all the time for so long for so many months we were all together and then suddenly now he's gone and not like he's just gone to meet them but now he's also fallen sick extra cautious because uh does does the nora have a weak immunity system so were you extra cautious that would she be able to deal with this pandemic because now vivek has also got

it madrid knows also like you literally like them getting in but you literally don't know who's transmitting it to you right so were you extra cautious should parents uh be extra cautious with with children i know that uh see kids we're told that kids with uh special needs have low immunity so we need to build on their immunity so that is another reason why i we didn't take nora out for almost four and a half months

now we just took her down in the building like a few days ago so when vivek did go there and he did get it i was like in a way that's good because you get done and over with it while i take care of her and then when i get it you will be there to take care of her so either how do you see the positive in everything yeah this is just fine no this is just something that seemed

practical at that point you know you get done and over with it so that you know whenever i have to get it then i get done and over with it so that is my music you know i i looked at it i saw it at times like you know there have been times where i'm like the only time i'm going to be alone is when i have kovaid so maybe it's not that bad you know one

time when i'm just like pulling my hair apart maybe that's what i need i just need covet and then i'll be alone for 14 days down time i'll be suffering but at least i'll be alone and doing my thing so that's how i feel if you get it you get your down time you recover and you get over with it because all of us are going to get it at some point we just have to be practical about if we can get

our kids to me you know we have caretakers for our kids it's just nice so that's right but but so you were extra carry like precautious right like you would like double sanitize every single thing because yeah yes i uh yeah we have been paranoid uh my dad has been extra paranoid so i think it's like rubbing on to us as well because you because of laura mainly because of nora and yeah so tell me any any uh tips there that

you want to share with people this is what i did i think it works anything like that so we just like whenever we get our veggies from outside we just put like put them in a big you know in a big tub and we put water and then we put like apple cider vinegar it's basically the same thing we put it for wash and then we get it and then we any any box that comes won't be like

spraying sanitizer all over it keeping it out for some time in the in the balcony uh and the next day we get it and we open it up and then sanitize pretty much sanitize with five liters of bottles of sanitizers but tell me also uh when vivek got it how did you like what was it that you told yourself to stay sane like how do you say i'm gonna get through this when he got it uh he

underplayed his situation so that calmed me because if he had told me what he was going through like literally play by play i would have lost it so he like majorly underplayed it and you know he's like it's nothing literally i am not feeling anything and then when they when they were in the hospital my mom and he both he was underplaying it then as well for me he's like actually i'm just come for her but he lit it was a good thing

that he was there because when he came back i realized that he was so weak and this is when he got better so i can't even imagine what it must have been when he was really sick so he underplayed the whole thing so i guess that just worked in our favor the only fear i have is that i need to stay healthy for my children like what about them so did that kind of cross your head that if something

happened what will happen to me and nora did that cross your head so i no i the only thing i told him is like you know where young we'll get over it so we've gotten over a lot of stuff so i think this is this is fine and also i think our way of dealing crisis has changed a lot after nora has gone the way our threshold for crisis has gotten higher so i feel that also helped because

considering that we what we were where we were in a place three years ago this just felt like you know what it's just you fall in sick you'll get over it you feel better just come home after so i think that you just make it sound so easy it's not i'm telling you it's only because when you go through something where you feel it's the end of the world and then something and you get over that

and then you feel nothing else phases you out so i it just didn't phase me out or actually didn't phase him out either he just said you know i'm gonna be fine and again he keeps joking about it and he keeps joking even at his worst and coughing and struggling all over the place but he kept underplaying it so it helped us tell you also you know i'm very curious to know puja what's a day in your life like i i just i'm just very

curious like for everybody else you know like i know there are things that keep me safe like when i go through your page i feel like i know everything about puja as a mom but i want to know puja the the woman right like what is she all about what how does she manage to have this smile radiating positivity everywhere like how do you do it like what's a day in your life like so literally uh as of right now my day

revolves around nora unfortunately there is no way around it because you're not doing anything else so we wake up at 6 6 30 and then uh vivek gets gets a breakfast ready for breakfast so i am my morning is off i don't do anything in the morning i just sit relax i have my coffee or whatever and then i read a few things and that's it and then i take over we have therapy in the morning like we have

speech therapies physiotherapy and then we play games with nora we just like you know doing things with nora like basic and then lunch time we feed her lunch and then she goes to bed uh she takes a nap and then when she wakes up we'll now we started going down or we would do a second round of therapy just me and her and vivek uh off my deck and then post that we would play a few other or we go

down to our neighbor's house because she's very fond of them so we'll go there relax or we like meet up in at the end of the day once or twice a week we meet up just to have a drink or two discuss like what's going on and i mean that's how we've been saying the past four months last four months yeah because it's not much to do for me apart from being with tara so yeah from being

a maid to uh yeah yeah being a therapist to help to a bhajiwali to everything to a cook and now moving on to now we have uh and especially through these times where a lot of i cannot even tell you the amount of people who written to us in terms of you know when we post our sunday affirmations and they write to us that

listen i needed to read this today uh or people sending that you know i'm struggling with my family or i'm struggling with the situation at home and i i just want to get out of this and they see escape as only uh you know something very very extreme did you ever question why me and and that's the typical thing right when anything goes wrong in our lives people always say that hey why me right do you have a question that i

dealt with my why me and now i feel like there is always the resultant of your why like what was the answer that you got out of that by me like everybody has you know like when you're uh i think you always go through something because you've got to be pushed the next level and if you're not doing it on your own the universe is going to throw you in it so that you can go to the next level it's gonna break

you and it's gonna push you and it's gonna if you're not gonna ready because there is no way you can accept change in a very happy manner unless you want it if it's just thrown at you you'll always question why me so and i think it's very important when something's thrown at you it's if you like go through it you're going to realize that it's it's going to make you a totally different person at least for me

i have realized why me has been the best thing for me like it has changed me to like a completely different person i was completely anti-social i was i used to be like i'm okay i don't need to meet people ever i don't know why people exist really i thought yeah i was the most anti-social person like when people tell me i'm so bored of this lockdown or whatever and i'm like yeah like this could be my life forever right but i've

understood that for people like us being on anti-social we're just selectively social i don't know who i want to hang with i know who i want to be with like i could be physically present in a party but i could be mentally completely tuned off yeah and that's me because i'm very absent-minded also uh so i know but also because you also because you you feel like you want to be at a place where you know you're getting

stimulated and you're there is like a crowd that's like-minded or you're able to connect with right because then if you go to a place where you're not able to get along with anybody in the sense you're not connecting with anyone you're just like okay this is just what people think that i'm an extrovert and things like that i'm not right it takes doubly hard for me to kind of uh you know go up to somebody and speak to them it

actually needs like a lot of talking uh and that's sometimes misunderstood as arrogance in my case but actually that's not the case it's just uh i think it's because you're you're like you're considered like you know like like the boss right so you have like you're fond of kid stop press and like people have the expectation out of you and how can you be like you're gonna get a job you're so good at everything you're like getting

things together you're like reaching out to millions of people and then you don't want to socialize i'm telling you

i've always had this this arrogant tag on me and i'm also very uh so like i said just because i am a little bit of an introvert it takes me a little bit more time right but once i find my comfort with somebody a month better off but yeah you're right like somebody will think like

unfortunately it's because it's because of your title people mistaken you for like oh she just has arrogance but that's not true you're just like you know you're just the person who's shy that's it or just like not very open to speak about things or whatever so i get it yeah i feel you yeah i i'm glad somebody does because uh it's it's uh and i always tell people just give the other person the benefit of doubt because maybe they are you know

they're like me who doesn't intend to or mean it or whatever but you know kind of uh kind of just has to you know play the part right so just give the other people the benefit of doubt and we when people say mean or nasty things i just say it's okay maybe they're having a bad day just give them credit right we all go through our so that's how i leave it and i feel like if you apologize or say things that make

somebody feel a little more comforted and better i'm like okay do you ever feel that you will be judged because you you share too much do you ever feel that i i don't feel it but yeah i mean you're going to be judge your respective so whether you share things or whether you don't share things like like in your case you're you are highly successful people are going to judge you for it for for another reason

if you do something you're going to be judged irrespective because people are there to talk and anyways it's not going to make a difference in your life how it was never a thing that um did you ever question yourself before you put things out there that should i share this should i not share this and anything like you debate a lot before you put things out onto social media i i don't i i should sometimes have a filter

but i i don't only reason being i feel like i'm not saying anything to harm someone but if it comes across that way and someone does reach out to me and tell me that it is offended then i will apologize but if i'm not seeing anything with any malice in my heart or anything that i have then i'm just going to speak my mind and because you share so much that's one of the biggest reasons why i feel

so connected right like i cannot believe that somebody is strong all the time like somebody has no story or or something to share where they are in their weaker moments i don't this is because because one of the biggest reasons i feel like i connect with you is because you share right that's why i can correct with you right because i just feel like if that wasn't that imperfect side of you then i don't know how uh you know like it's

just too ice cold for somebody to feel like and people always ask me that okay how are you so perfect or you know what's so correct about you and whatever and i said if you actually know me and if you meet my class moms you'll know that i'm the goofiest parent who forgets everything like it's actually a good thing that my children have become extremely capable and responsible after that but uh i am pretty much uh the most

goofiest one who has been reminded listen have you filled this today is the last day so i i totally get it uh when

you say that that you know there's no other choice and people will judge you irrespective so it doesn't matter i mean exactly and you must be ignoring i mean you know that because you've come up and you've built you built whatever you built for yourself not because people are judging you build it in spite of and

in spite of that because you you know i mean you believe what you're going to do is going to affect and help so many other people and well there are going to be some people are going to judge you but it's going to help so many others that you're like you know it's totally worth it it doesn't mean yeah like you know when i started out my mom told me this very important thing which is kind

of stayed with me forever and she said you know whenever you start anything in life just remember one thing which is you know right just keep that into your head put blinkers on and don't turn back you know because most often than not and she's like you're starting something and you and my you know i come from a very academic family and my parents were like oh my god you're leaving such a good job and you know like how are you

going to do a do it do you know what if this doesn't work or whatever and i was like mom what if it doesn't work she's like it may not work be prepared for that but uh and and that that's something that people will always tell you that you know why you're leaving a flourishing job and whatever i'm starting something but she's like you know that's the perks of uh those are the perks of entrepreneurship right that you start

something and if you like something then you'll go on with it right she said but don't worry people pull you down because that's their job uh and just look for the nicer people who will you know help you go up but yeah but just don't worry about what others say because it'll never happen before we sign off anything that you want to share that can really help parents um you know what you've been through or what really helped work for

you what really helped you or worked for you in the last four months that they can make note off or take count off i think what has really worked for us which we've not really thought much into it is because uh just have your routine as to what you would do normally with your child or what needs to be done get those things aligned and then apart from that you know just figure some goofy stuff out that you can do with yourself and

also take a lot of bathroom breaks not going to the bathroom but taking a break in the bathroom because that's the only place i mean i do that i take a lot of bathroom breaks in the middle of things i'm like okay now i can't shut the door off because nora's going to be banging on the door so i i take my phone inside quietly go sit down and literally have messages on the pot saying that you know

i'm so bored i want to just like you know can you just talk like let's just hang for some time and i've like spoken to her and then caught up with somebody else okay okay then i'm like getting out so i do that i'm wondering that when nora grows up she's gonna wonder why did my mom do this like every time she slept in a bathroom which is which is amazing so how much time do you spend on instagram every

single day i need to know that that's a lot must be because every time nara goes to sleep in the afternoon i am checking something or i'm writing something so i'm replying so it i think maybe maybe like two hours or something thank you so much and i'm going to see you hopefully very soon yes i'll hound you yes please do thank you for giving me a platform and talking to me awesome love you always bye love you bye