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west area for almost seventeen years now. Um, and I've been in Houston for that long so, uh, and this is after eight years of training that I came to practice here.

TH: Okay, um, so we read on your, uh, survey thing that you gra—you were born in Vadodara.

MW: Yeah. [TH: Yeah] So I was born in Vadodara. Uh, used to be known as Baro—well it was initially known as Vadodara. When I was born it was known as Baroda, and now it's back to Vadodara. And it's in the state of Gujarat, uh, in India. I-I was born there, but I came to the United States when I was two, so I grew up here. But growing up, uh, my parents used to take us to India almost every two years and we'd spend the whole summer there. Uh, so that was like three or four months at a time, so, uh, in-in that sense I was able to keep my, uh, culture, so I can still read and write, uh, our native language, which is Gujarati, and, um, and so that was a good—big benefit, even though ra—being raised here I can still keep my culture from back home.

TH: So, uh, what were your parents’ profession and why did they come to the US?

MW: Sure, my dad is a civil engineer and he came here on a student visa to do his post doctorate, uh, to do his Ph.D. at University of Texas at Arlington. My mom is a, um, high school graduate, um, she, I think she may have gone to one or two years of college, but she didn’t graduate from college. Um, in—when she came here she, uh, worked as a, uh, back then it was called a data processing technologist, uh, and then she also did some babysitting and, uh, things like that. But, for the most part growing up she was at home.

TH: Okay, um, and how was it for them adjusting to, um, moving to the US?

MW: Sure, I mean it was very difficult. Actually, my dad came here first, so he was by himself for two years in college, uh, while we were at, uh, back in India. Um, of course it’s a fairly typical story for somebody that at—in that generation. I mean he came with fifty dollars in his pocket, uh, not knowing anybody, um, took a cab from the airport, he tells this story, but he took a cab from the airport to a person’s house he was supposed to, uh, stay at. Well he went there, knocked on the door and nobody answered, and this was in the middle of the night and apparently these people had gone, uh, out of town. Uh, of course there are no cell phones or anything like that back then, so he was kind of stuck, uh, out on the streets for a couple of days, but he did find another person that he could stay with until these guys came back, and then he sort of, uh, got his feet wet and, uh, you know, started his, uh, tra—uh, his, uh, Ph.D., um, cer—uh, training and-and was in school. And then after two years he felt comfortable enough to bring us over here, his – my mom and, uh, at that time my, uh, other brother, um, so there were two of us, um, and so then we, uh, came here. I was two, my older brother was four.

So, it was a difficult transition, I mean, coming all the way from, uh, from a whole different country, um, especially not, uh, having, uh, the financial, uh, backings or really any technology backings back then. So, uh, but it was a – it was something that, uh, he really wanted to do and was a way to, you know, most people come to this country, or at least at that time to-to, uh, better their education, to better themselves, and to have better opportunities for their family, so that’s what his goal was.

TH: So, it was like a long-standing dream to go to the US?

MW: Well it was really not a dream. I mean, he had no idea. My dad actually comes from very, uh, a very small village in India. His dad was a farmer and so he grew up, uh, he didn’t even think he was going to college, but he did very well in school. His, uh, parents never encouraged him to go to college,
but his teachers did. So, he did end up going to college and then, uh, but — and education was always a big focus for him. Um, so, he did his master’s degree as well and then he went to work and then he found out about the opportunity to come to the United States, and so that’s what he did is come here. So, it was never a dream of his long term, it’s just something that happened, and, uh, he wanted to keep, uh, his education going, and this, uh, was, uh, a great opportunity for him, so.

TH: Um, and was there an Indian community in Arlington?

MW: Um, back then? When he came? No. I mean, in fact he was one of the first Indians in Arlington, which is in the Dallas Fort Worth area. So, uh, but there was not a big Indian community, compared to what it is now.

TH: So, like how did they find Indian food and, uh, like maintain their culture?

MW: Yeah, so, when he came, um, there was no Indian restaurants, no Indian stores, uh, there were a few other graduates that he, uh, met and he has still kept in touch with them, and, uh — so, over time, you know, once — for the first few years when he was here by himself, really he wasn’t able to keep his culture, but then when my mom came and he actually — she actually brought groceries in the bag with her, uh, but over time the, you know, more and more people started coming, and the first Indian, uh, store came up in the Dallas Fort Worth area, and then the Indian restaurants came up, uh, and so, they were able to, uh, keep their culture. But again, like I said, we used to go back almost every two years, uh, and spend a significant amount of time, uh, in India to keep our culture. And for my parents, the reason we went back is they can both work while we stayed with my relatives, like my grandparents and my uncles and aunts, and they took care of us over the summer, so it was much less expensive for them to send us to India and spend four months there, then to have babysitters or send us to daycare or school or anything like that.

TH: So, was there a big extended family?

MW: Yes, uh, my mom has, um, five sisters and two brothers that were in India at the time. Now they’ve all immigrated here. Uh, my dad has, uh, three — or two sisters and two brothers, um, and only his brothers immigrated. His- his family has stayed over there otherwise.

TH: And, um, as a little kid, like how did you make sense of the difference between India and where you’re growing up?

MW: Right, I mean, there was definitely a cultural divide, um, and it was — it could, I mean, it was two ways, there—there was a bit of a confusion because you felt like you really were different and didn’t belong here and-and-ab what not, uh, and then when we went back home, uh, people knew that we were different as well, cause we weren’t part — so, you know, there was this identity issue where we may not know exactly where we were from, but looking back it was actually an advantage. I mean, having, uh, being brought up in two different cultures and knowing those two different cultures, you appreciate the, uh, differences, uh, and gain, uh, from those differences. It ma—I think I makes your, uh, makes your horizons broader and just makes you’re a well-rounded, a more well-rounded person. So, I definitely think it was a good thing.

TH: Um, so, uh, can you describe your elementary school, um, like, uh, who were your classmates, who- who were you friends with, and like…
MW: Sure, well that—well, you know, and recently I was asked, what was one of the – what was your one-one thing that you may have remembered from your childhood? And one of the things that I vividly remember is in second grade, um, I ran for vice president of our class and I won, and it was like, it was a great, um, memory. It was a great experience. I ran on the campaign of, uh, I handed out candy, while my, uh, part—the other person that was running against me handed out gum. And so, my campaign was—was gum was worse than candy for you and so anyway I was able to get all the votes and, uh, and became president. So, it was a great memory. But, yeah, as far as elementary school, uh, you know, uh, my dad at the time had already finished his post grad-graduate degree and he was working, and, um, uh, so I went to a—and so we did move around quite frequently, so I went to four different elementary schools, uh, growing up. So, that was a little bit of a challenge, cause then you, uh, are in a new environment, new friends, um, and, uh, and so that—that – but, again, it was also unique because we got, uh, you know, we moved from Arlington to Houston, uh, and then we moved back to Arlington, um, and so I got to see sort of that di—that, uh, how it was in different places. Um, but saying that, up until sixth grade, because we went to four different schools, I didn’t really have that, uh, tight friendship with anybody, um, uh, up until sixth grade. Then from sixth grade to twelfth grade I was at the same place and grew up with the same people and then was-was able to make some friends who I still can keep in touch with today. Uh, one of the other memories I have of, uh, this was third grade, was, uh, breaking my arm. We were playing in the gym and, uh, doing some jumping and calisthenics and I fell and broke my arm, and I was in a cast for six weeks, and I remember my brothers and all my friends got to—the-the next week we were supposed to go meet Ronald McDonald from McDonalds, and I didn’t get to go because I had this cast, and-and, uh, so I-I remember that vividly. [Laughs]

TH: You could’ve still gone with the cast on.

MW: No, I couldn’t, my doctor wouldn’t let me go, and my dad’s like, well if he said that you couldn’t go, and I was like, okay. [All laugh]

TH: Okay… Um, okay, so, you said that it was both like a challenge being sort of in between not fully Indian, but not fully American, [MW: Mhmm] but then you learned from it and it made your life like richer [MW: Sure]. So, um, what—what was that point where you sort of didn’t – started not struggling with it as much? [MW: Yeah] And like realized…

MW: I think in high school. I think you look back and you realize, wow, I can speak, you know, three different languages. I know, uh, two different cultures, uh, extremely well. I’ve gotten to travel the world, uh, you know, going back and forth. And that’s something that ninety-five percent of the people I was with didn’t have the experience to do, and, so, um, I really felt like it was a great asset, um, and at the – I probably didn’t appreciate it up until ninth grade, tenth grade, you know, when we entered high school.

TH: Mhmm. So, what was it like in like, before that point?

MW: Oh, yeah, before that point it was a little bit of a struggle because you don—almost – but, you know, again, you don’t know just being an adolescent and, uh, being in junior high, cause those struggles are there, uh, even for my kids, uh, when they were there. Uh, for different reasons, um, uh, cause, you know, you may not have had the right clothes, you may not have had the right shoes, so, so, you know, fitting in is always an issue for-for kids. Um, but, you know, again, at that time, uh, there was a little bit of an identity issue because you didn’t know if you were, you know, uh, you-you lived in America, yet your roots are in India, um, and so where’s your allegiance? Um, and, you know, the answer you find out is that it – you don’t have to have allegiance just to one—one country or one person, it could be, uh, to both. So, um, uh, but, yeah, uh, but, again, you know, growing up we were so busy with school, we’d
come home, we’d go – and then, you know, back then we didn’t watch a lot of TV or play a lot of video games. We were outside riding our bikes or throwing the football around or, you know, and-and we would come home and be outside and come home for dinner at 7:30 or 8:00, and then eat dinner and do our homework and go to bed. So, uh, that was sort of the routine.

TH: Okay, um… so, then as a teenager, what did you hope to be when you grew up?

MW: Yeah, um, it was probably in eleventh grade that I – that, uh, that I got interested in-in, uh, science and in the medical field, and that’s kind of when I thought I’d, I’d, uh, want to pursue, um, extra education and go to medical school. I-I remember there was a representative from an organization called HOE, it was Health Occupations Education, and essentially for-for two years, the eleventh and twelfth grade, so they came in when I was in tenth grade, I could actually go to school for half the year, or for half the day, and then work for half the day. Uh, and what appealed to me was, wow, I can go work and make some money and that was, that was very appealing, and so, my – so I-I joined this organization and my first, uh, job was with a physical therapist. Uh, and I did that for a few months and I went back to the, uh, person that was in charge of this, uh, Health Occupation Education, I go, uh, well this is, you know, I’m-I’m not finding that this is the best thing for me, you know, and-and, um, I was like, you know, I really wanted to more in the med—I want to see what a physician does, what a doctor does, and go towards med. So, uh, so then I got transferred to a, uh, orthopedic clinic in-in Arlington, and, uh, there were five – it was, uh, a clinic with five orthopedic surgeons, and my job was to bring people to the x-ray room, position them. There was a radiol—there was a-a radiology technician—technologist that did the x-rays, but I took the x-rays and I processed them. So, back then you had to go to the dark room and process the x-ray, and that was what I did. Uh, but, it was a-a great experience cause, uh, you know, I got to see all these patients with, uh, fra-fractures, arthritis, hip problems, back problems, uh, and then there were days when we were a little slow, then – and I got the opportunity to follow the doctor around from room to room, uh, and see how their interaction with patients were. And it was at that time after spending time with them that I realized that this is something that I think that I would want to do. And, uh, so my, uh, goal when I was going to, uh, after graduating college, or after graduating high school, was to go to college and try to go to medical school.

TH: Um, and what about the Asia Imports job?

MW: Yeah, so that was my first ever job. So, my dad, even though he’s a trained, uh, he has a doctorate in civil engineering, he always was business minded. He wanted to own a business, and a lot of this was because he called over – because of him, he sponsored a lot of the family members. For example, my mom’s five sisters and two brothers, and then his-his family also came, and he thought, “If I have a business then these guys would automatically have a job.” And so, uh, Asia Imports was – there were in the Da—whole Dallas Fort Worth area in, and this was in 1980, there were two Indian grocery stores. Okay, Sherna’s was one and Asia Imports was the other. And somehow he, uh, found out about it and-and-and he bought the store, and, so, um, so I was in sixth grade, and every weekend my brother and I would split, I would either go Saturday or – and-and he would go Sunday or vice versa, but one day a week we would, uh, spend twelve hours at the store, uh, and we would work, uh, you know, whether it was at the cashier, whether it was, um, packing, uh, bags, or unloading trucks, uh, cleaning the store, I mean, this is what we did for two years. Uh, and so it was a great first job. I mean, and a lot – at the time, you know, my friends were spending their weekends doing fu—you know, doing fun things or playing baseball or-or what not, but we were stuck, but, you know, in – at the time it may have – I may have felt like ugh, but, you know, looking back it was a great experience. I mean, I got to, uh, learn the business aspects of things, meet a lot of people, so it was, it was a lot of fun.
TH: Uh, did your friends ever go to the grocery store?

MW: Um, I had one friend, uh, in sixth grade who actually came and worked there as a summer job. Uh, his name was John, uh, and we were best friends up until college, and, uh, he actually spent the summer there, um, so we worked together at the time.

TH: What did he think of it?

MW: Well, I mean for him it was a job. He wanted to earn money, um, and, uh, um, so he enjoyed it, yeah.

TH: Um, so – wait what?

XL: Oh, I just want to ask, like, so what kind of population did the grocery store serve?

MW: It was ninety percent Indian.

XL: Okay.

MW: Yeah, uh, and it was, uh, again, um, that was one of only two stores, uh, and it was a, it was very busy cause this is where people were getting all their Indian groceries. We sold Indian videos, um, at the time for movies. We also did, uh, electronics, uh, which were 220 volts, so, uh, people would actually buy the electronics here and take it to India for family back home [TH: Oh]. But then we sold rice, grains, uh, fruits, vegetables, um, uh, everything that, uh, and-and, you know, you see it at the Indian grocery stores now as well, so. My biggest memory of that I can tell you is, uh, one day, it was a Saturday night, we were closing the store and, uh, a guy comes in, and he was non-Indian, he comes into the store and he’s like, “You know, I wanna buy that.” We had this electronics and, uh, there was a boombox up there, so we took it down for him. It was like 150 dollars or something like that, and, uh, it was after hours, so we were about to close up. But anyways, so we bring it down, but he held us up. He, uh, he took the gun out and-and say “Well this – well I really don’t want that. Give me all your money, checks and all that stuff.” So, he took all that, and he took everything that we had on us, and then he, um, came outside with – he’s like, “Okay, well you guys need to come with me.” So, we locked the door got into our car, he got into our car and, uh, basically said, “Okay, you have to take me to downtown,” and, uh, so we went to downtown Dallas, uh, and then he got out and goes, “Okay, you guys need to stay here for thirty to—or for forty-five minutes and if you move I have somebody watching and they will, uh, they will kill you.” Uh, and so, I mean obviously he was bluffing, but at the time we were just like, we were just happy that he was out of the car, and he left, and we waited. I was with my uncle at the time, uh, cause he was also working with me at the grocery store. And, uh, so anyways we waited forty-five minutes and finally got home, it was like two o’clock in the morning or something and so everybody was worried cause we didn’t have cell phones or anything like that back then, but fortunately, I mean he got all the stuff but, he kept us safe, so we were, uh, it was, that was definitely a memorable experience. [laughs]

XL: How old were you?

MW: I was in seventh grade, so I was twelve. [XL: Oh] Yeah, so I didn’t drive or anything like that. [laughs]

TH: So, it was just your uncle and you.
MW: Yeah, [TH: wow] it was just my uncle and me, yeah. So, um, but otherwise it was a great experience of course [all laugh].

XL: So, where did, where did you get all your product? Like your Indian products.

MW: Indian products?

XL: Yeah.

MW: Um, that’s a good ques—I mean, you know, back then I think we got it all from New York, because New York was where most of the grocery stores and hubs and big grocery stores were there. So we would get it from them, they would export it to, uh, import it to us. [XL: Mhmm] But, uh, but, originally, all of the stuff came from India, but I'm-I'm not sure we got it directly from India, but…

XL: Okay, um, so-so you were saying there’s a large Indian population like around the Asian Import grocery store?

MW: Mhmm. Yeah, and again, in the Da—it was the whole Dallas Fort Worth metroplex. We were the only two stores there, so, um, now eventually more stores came, and now there’s a-a bunch, so we eventually, you know, were phased out. [TH: Oh, okay] So, what ended up happening with that is after three years, um, my dad wanted to go into the motel business, uh, so he actually bought a hotel in Wichita Falls. It was a, uh, twenty-two room hotel and he got an offer to sell the store, so he sold the store, bought this, uh, hotel. And again, my uncle, my dad’s brother, he was sort of his right-hand man, so he ran the store, and then from the store he relocated to-to Wichita Falls, um, and we would go there maybe every other weekend and work, uh, at the motel. Um, and that lasted about two years, and then me bought a motel closer to Dallas Fort Worth in the Grand Prairie area, and it was a much bigger hotel, it was 101 units. Uh, and so we actually moved from our house to live at the hotel, um, and so we helped run the hotel. Um, and so my uncle and his wife, they full time ran it, but you know, there were, uh, times where, you know, the desk clerk didn’t show up, and so we would have to go and do a shift at the, uh, at the front desk. Or there was a time when the maid didn’t show up, so we’d have to go clean rooms, or we’d have to go do laundry, we painted, we did everything back then, so that, and that was from, uh, about ninth grade, uh, or no tenth grade all the way through college, so.

TH: Must have been cool to live in the hotel, besides the chores.

MW: Well, it was, yeah, it was, you know, we got our own room. Uh, now I think my dad if he looks back he’ll tell you, you know, we sacrificed a little bit of family time because, you know, we’re so busy with the business and all that, we didn’t really sit down, have dinners together, or take vacations and that kind of stuff. Uh, but it was, um, you know, got all this other experience that I was talking about.

TH: Um, so what were your parents’ like hopes for you and your brother as you grew up?

MW: Yeah, my dad was always, and it-it was fairly typical Indian, but, I mean, his focus was on education, uh, hard work and education. He definitely wanted us to, uh, excel in school and, uh, try to, uh, advance, uh, our education as much as possible. Uh, but, you know, and he himself, he himself was a hard worker, so, I mean he would, you know, wake up early and work a twelve-hour day, then come and do all the motel hotel stuff and so, you know, uh, that-that’s where we got, that’s where I got my work ethic from for sure.
TH: And how about like starting a family or…

MW: Um, in terms of me, for me, or for my dad?

TH: Yeah, for, yeah, you and your brother.

MW: Yeah, um, well, I mean, we all have dreams of having families and kids and what not, but again, education was always the focus. Uh, I met my wife, uh, in, uh, in college, uh, and, uh, she was two years older than me, uh, so she graduated, we had sort of a long-distance relationship, um, and then when I-I went from college to medical school and then after my first year, uh, we decided to get married. Uh, and so I got married and we had two kids. Uh, my son is twenty – is nineteen and my daughter’s twenty-two. So, um, and we were married for seventeen years, but then we got divorced, and so, we got divorced, uh, ten years ago. Um, and I didn’t remarry, and she hasn’t remarried either, so.

TH: Was she also Indian?

MW: She was Indian, yes.

TH: Uh, let’s see, uh, so what were the biggest challenges and rewards in raising children?

MW: Okay, [laughs] well, you know, the rewards are this, you know, the kids are the extension of you and your heart and-and, uh, you know, you just – they give us a-a sense of purpose, um, it’s unconditioned lo—un-unconditional love that you get, um, and it’s unconditional love that you give. Um, and so those are all the rewards, and of course, you know, watching them grow up, um, you know, whether it’s, uh, getting them to take their first step or saying their first word or taking care of their first tooth, all the way up to, you know, catching their first baseball or scoring their first goal, um, watching them in a school play, I mean they – there is so much to-to look forward to when they were growing up. And now they’re in college and just to see them, uh, you know, becoming young adults and taking care of themselves and fulfilling their dreams, I mean, those are all very rewarding experiences. As far as challenges, I mean, parenting is just a difficult thing. Nobody has a secret to-to parenting, and there’s always challenges, you know. Uh, kids get hurt, they get bullied, they, uh, uh, they get their heart broken by boyfriends, girlfriends, uh, and to see them suffer, uh, that, uh, that definitely, uh, causes us to suffer as parents. Um, and then there’s always challenges cause, you know, you think one way, they may think another way. There’s a generation gap, there may be a cultural difference, um, uh, you know, they like to use headphones to listen to loud music and me being an ENT doctor, I'm like, “It’s gonna hurt your ears. Stop doing that.” I mean, so there’s always, uh, challenges and-and conflicts, um, uh, in-in raising kids.

TH: Uh, especially were there any conflicts between Indian an-and American culture?

MW: Um, as far as my kids are concerned?

TH: Yes.

MW: Yeah, you know, and the biggest struggle was trying to keep the, uh, Indian culture, uh, alive, and, you know, we were, we would try to go every Sunday to Sunday school. Uh, it was a place called the Chinmaya Mission, and it was like pulling teeth, and-and dragging-dragging, you’re trying to get them to go on a Sunday, you know, and, uh, it, uh, it was a challenge because for them, I remember that, you know, one time I'm telling this, “You should learn how – you should keep our language alive. You keep our language alive, you keep our culture alive.” And like, “Well, dad, when am I ever going to use
Gujarati? Nobody speaks that here in the United States.” It’s – you know, and, uh, and it’s a difficult – it was a good-good, uh, question. I'm like, “You know, I don’t know how you want – how you would want to speak Gujarati, but, you know, you keep your culture, I mean, you keep your language alive, you keep your culture alive. And I think in the long run you'll understand – like I benefitted from knowing two different cultures, two different languages.” Uh, it’s not a concrete benefit. It’s not like it’s gonna ben—it benefits me as a, uh, you know, I can’t put my finger on it, but it is from a, uh, brain development, personal development, I think it is good, and so those were the kind of challenges we had. Uh, you know, in terms of, uh, uh, for example, eating, you know, growing up, I mean, seven days a week we ate Indian food. My mom cooked, we ate, we didn’t go out to dinner, there was no fast food, I mean that’s what we did. Um, so any time we got to have a slice of pizza or, uh, eat something that was french fry or American, it was like a big treat for us, you know, for our kids, you know, that’s not the, that’s not the case because now growing up and once they drive, I mean, they can go to restaurants, they can go fast food, it’s a different time and age, uh, and so, um, food is another way to keep your culture up and I don’t think they got the experience that I got.

TH: Um, so you [laughs] I mean, like how many days a week would you cook Indian food?

MW: Uh, at home when I was a kid, or now an-an adult? With the kids? With my kids?

TH: Uh, yeah, an adult.

MW: Um, probably one or two.

TH: Oh okay.

MW: Yeah, uh, and then the other days we’re, you know, something they would, you know, spaghetti or pasta or sandwiches or we would go out, that kind of stuff. Because the cultures different. I mean now, uh, I mean, it’s a-a totally different thing. Back then we couldn’t afford to go out. When the kids were growing up going out to a restaurant as a family was a privilege, and it was, uh, it was fun to do, and it was a way we could all sit together and-and, uh, and have a good meal. Um, so it’s just a different, uh, generation.

TH: Mhmm. So, it’s a little bit like, um, you sort of eat more American food or you go out more because it’s – feels like, you know, like higher quality maybe? Or…

MW: Right, um, I think it’s convenience, [TH: Yeah] uh, is one thing. Uh, the kids definitely enjoyed it more. Uh, there’s no cleaning or cooking, and so that was that and, uh, um, yeah, it’s more convenient, more affordable, um, those were the two reasons we could do it.

TH: Okay. Um, okay, so, um, what religion do you practice?

MW: Hinduism, yeah.

TH: So, that was passed on from your, from your parents?

MW: Correct. In-in-in what I've been taught and what I believe, you know, we were born, uh, as-as a Hindu, uh, and, uh, growing up my parents, again, you know, we spent a lot of time back home in the, in our motherland, but even at home my mom and dad did daily prayers, um, uh, they did daily what's called arti, um, and, uh, so we saw that, um, and, um, and, uh, we read about – read the Bhagavad Gita. That was
our, sort of the, uh, Hindu bible if you will. And, um, and then on weekends there were social get
togethers or gatherings that would involve all this stuff. Um, and, uh, so that’s how I grew up. Um, now
as far as my kids, uh, this was something that we tried to reproduce, uh, but because there’s so many
choices, so many different opportunities and so many different things to do, I don’t think we were as
consistent as-as my parents were. Um, and in fact, my kids grew up, uh, doing this, but they also, there
were days, Sundays, like dad, I want to go to church with-with so and so, and like, fine, I mean, you
know, and I'm all about being exposed to all this stuff, and so, um, so they grew up probably more, uh,
diversified, i-in that sense because they had more opportunities.

TH: And, uh, was your wife also a doctor?

MW: No, she was a, uh, she, uh, majored in biology and she did research, uh, for a while, and then she
stopped working once the kids were born.

TH: Oh… um, what role has religion played in your life?

MW: Okay, well, you know, religion from childhood has probably, um, and it’s played a significant role.
I mean, again, seeing my mom and dad doing daily prayers and vigils and arti and, um, reading the
Bhagavad Gita, I think it does form a foundation of our values, uh, a sense of belonging as to, as to, uh,
who you are, um, and overtime as we become more educated, more experienced, we see other things, I
thi—my thought is religion turns more into spirituality, uh, so it’s not about necessarily, uh, listening to-
to the, to the devotional songs all the time or-or going to church or going to the temple, but it’s more
about what you believe in in your heart, the faith that you have, uh, so for me it’s more of a spiritual issue.

TH: Um, around what age did you sort of like get the spirituality?

MW: Yeah, well I think it’s an evolving process [laughs]. So, I don’t even know if it’s, if it’s there yet.
Um, but, I think there’s always a little bit, little bit, but it was probably, um, you know, after-after actually
finishing my education and training because it was hard to actually focus on anything else other than –
until then. But looking back there was always this sense of, um, sort of a blind faith, that you knew that
you weren’t the, uh, uh, control-controller of your thoughts and actions. I-I always felt like there was this
supreme power, supreme being that sort of guided me and-and, you know, we all come to-to forks in the
road and whether we take a left or a right it’s a, it’s – you know, you look back and you’re like, why did I
make that turn, and there’s got to be something that, uh, that guided me, and I felt – and I bel—I still
believe in that.

TH: Um, so, uh, was – sorry, was the Gandhi Library, uh, affiliated with Arya Samaj?

XL: No.

TH: No, okay.

MW: Well, in some ways – so, the Gandhi Library is a, is a separate organization. The way it’s affiliated
with Arya Samaj is they’ve always been an active supporter, and in fact we use the Arya Samaj, we use
their library to hold our meetings, uh, we’ve held our, uh, speech contest. We’ve done a lot of functions
there, so they’ve always been a-a devout supporter of our library.

TH: Mhmm. Okay, so how did you get involved with the Gandhi Library?
MW: With Gandhi Library? So, and I, uh, remember this distinctly, it was in 2003 we went to a fundraiser, it was an Indo-American charity fundraiser, foundation fundraiser. And Mahatma Gandhi was somebody that I always – I read about and, uh, so I didn’t know too much about, but I knew that he had these values and, uh, and-and I wanted to learn more about him, uh, but I felt like he could be if-if I were to pick three leaders in my life he would be one of them, you know, something in that sense. So, but anyways, I went to this charity and at the charity banquet the-they had a, um, auction, you know, for trying to raise money, and there was this life size, um, uh, chakra. Um, the chakra, I don’t know if you know what that is, it’s a spinning wheel. If you, if you look at the Indian flag, you know, it’s saffron, white, and-and green, in the middle there’s a wheel, and it represents the chakra. And the-the chakra is one of the symbols of freedom for India because back in-in the early 1900s when Britain was still – or when India was a colony of the, of, uh, of the British Empire, one of the ways India sought it’s freedom, and this is all, uh, the doings of Mahatma Gandhi, but one was they decided that we don’t want to rely upon the British Empire to import clothes anymore. We want to make our own clothes. And so they did this by using the spinning wheel, it was a cotton spinning wheel. And so, they would, and all day, all night they were spinning and making their own clothes. And sure enough, they became – and they actually took off their existing clothes and burned them all cause they were all made in Britain. And, uh, the textiles in-in Britain when – were going bankrupt at the time. And so, British realized you know, India is no longer a, uh, they don't need us. We're not getting anything from them, they're not buying anything from us. And that was one of the ways, uh, that it slowly became, uh, independent. Um, so anyways, getting back to the – so there was a, there was a life size replica of the chakra and I bid on it and I bought it, okay, and, uh, I thought it would look good on my mantle at home. Well, a couple weeks later, this guy, Mr. Atul Kothari, calls me and he goes, "I heard you bought the chakra, you must be a Gandhian." I'm like, "Well what's a Gandhian? I don't know what that is." [TH laughs] And uh he goes, "Well I want to come talk to you." I said okay, so he came to my house, we had tea, and, um, and he was telling me about the Gandhi library. Um, and it was sort of a brainchild of four or five people, and they're like, you know, we want to sort of bring him back to this, um, uh, to-to this, um, uh, culture and this environment, and sort of relive his-his values of peace and truth and nonviolence, and we want to teach this to the kids and so I want to form this library and, um, and so he showed me the stuff that he had been doing and-and I bought on. I thought it was great. I'm like thi—and I was like, "Well this is great for me cause I get to learn about this.” And then, my kids at the time were, uh, four and-and, uh, six, and I'm like, “This would be perfect for them to learn about it.” And so, uh, that's sort of how I came to, uh, uh, came in touch with the Gandhi library. And then I've been part of the organization since then.

TH: Uh, what's your role right now?

MW: So, you know, we don't truly have a, um, uh, sort of a leadership ladder. Um, but you know depending on various things, I mean, uh, of course Atul Kothari is the founder. Uh, and then if we need to do any applications or anything he'll always put me as president, or the executive director. Uh, I would say if you wanted to make any terms, I'm part of the board of trustees, uh, of the Gandhi Library, and, uh, a very active, um, volunteer. So, um, that's sort of the role.

TH: So how do you balance like your work life and volunteering for them?

MW: Yeah, well, as far as work, and I'm fortunate to be in a specialty that, um, uh, more it's typically Monday through Friday, 8:00 to 5:00, uh, my, uh, schedule is not as – is not very flexible during the week, but over the weekend it's very flexible. Uh, it was more of a challenge of, uh, uh, uh, sort of, uh, juggling my kids' activities, raising them, uh, uh, friends, social stuff, and then the Gandhi Library. But
you know for everything that you're passionate about, you can find time. Uh, and we all can allocate time as we need to, and I realized that this was important for me, and, um, and it was something I wanted to learn about, I wanted to be engaged in, and so I made time. And, fortunately, the commitment was, you know, even now, we meet once a month, um, and we meet at the Arya Samaj, and it's usually about two, three hours that we meet, and during the week, I mean there's emails, there's some stuff to do, but it's, uh, you know it's-it’s definitely something that doesn't, uh, uh, I don't feel like it, um, uh, that I don't have time for.

TH: Um, so where are you right now in the...

MW: In the Gandhi Library?

TH: Yeah.

MW: So, we are now almost fifteen years in existence. Um, uh, every year we have been celebrating the Thousand Lights for Peace, uh, which is a celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday on October 2nd, and we typically do it on the Sunday around October 2nd, and it's at the Miller Outdoor Theater. It's a, uh, international, uh, program with songs and dances, and then we also have an awards ceremony for, uh, all the students that win, uh, the competitions that we hold for, uh, for this celebration. It's called Mahatma Gandhi Week, and there's poster contests, there's a speech contest, essay contests, iTribute contest, so we hand out a lot of awards on stage. Um, and then there's usually some guest speakers. Uh, and we've had you know, uh, um, Mayor Lee Brown, we've had, um, Annise Parker, uh, we've had Mattress Mack, we've had, um, Congressman Al Green. So, we've had a lot of, um, uh, popular speakers come, and they sort of talk about how Gandhi has touched their lives and-and-and, um, and whatnot. So, it's a, uh, two-hour program, it – the grand finale of the program, and this is why it's Thousand Lights for Peace, is everybody that's there gets to light a candle as their pledge for peace, and that's how we end the program. So that's, you know, so we've been doing that every year for the past, uh, twelve years now. Uh, there's a Walk for Peace that's right before, uh, that we've been doing. Then we also do, uh, in January we commemorate something called Shraddhanjali, which is a commemoration of his death day – death anniversary, which is January 30th. And we do this, uh, in, um, uh, with, uh, Unity Houston, which is the, uh, church on, uh, 59 and Hillcroft. Uh, and so, they have been hosting this, and again it's a one hour program, uh, commemorating his, his death. And so, there's songs, devotional songs, and speeches and whatnot. The biggest thing about the Gandhi Library – or, and then – so those two things are there, and then every month we meet we, uh, it's one hour's an organizational meeting, and then one hour we actually read a chapter out of his autobiography and discuss that. Um, and so we've been doing that consistently for the past, uh, twelve years. Um, we also go to different events. Uh, for example, International Festival, we go to the Vegan Festival, we go to [inaudible] and we have our, what's called the Gand—the booth there, the Gandhi Library booth. And so, we present all the books that we have, the artifacts we have, and then we tell people about what we're doing, talk to them about Thousand Lights for Peace or Shraddhanjali, and so we've been doing that, all this, fairly consistently for the past twelve-plus years. Now, we are coming to the point where, uh, we're embarking on something even, uh, bigger. Something that we never even dreamed of doing, and that was, um, we're trying to bring what's called the Eternal Gandhi Museum to Houston. I don't know if you've heard about this or not. But, um, uh, it's a, uh,
this all started, you know, there’s a, there is an Eternal Gandhi Museum in Delhi. And they've preserved his room that – it was the room, uh, where Gandhi spent his last night in before he was assassinated. They've traced his footsteps to the point where he's assassinated. And then they built this, um, sort of uh, um, uh, technological museum, uh, about his life and times and about his teachings and whatnot. And it was, uh, it's-it's-the museum has been installed there since 2005. Anyways, um, we got – now, I would say Atul Kothari got into connection with the Birla Group, and they're like the Rockefellers of India. And they're the ones that brought the museum out. And, you know, as he was talking, they thought, "Well why not have an Eternal Gandhi Museum in-in the United States?" And like, you know, we have three copies of our exhibits. One is already going to Birmingham, uh, England. And so, we would like to have one go to the United States. And so, this was four years ago. And so, Atul, Atul Kothari, came back and he talked to the board of trustees at the Gandhi Library, and we were like "This is phenomenal, this is great! We would love to have an Eternal Gandhi Museum." And so, um, at this point we've already purchased the land, we're, uh, formulating, uh, we've got the business plan formulated, we have architectural renderings, we have a museum, uh, curator, uh, so we're, you know, about to break ground in the construction of – it's a 10,000 square foot, uh, museum. And we're getting advice from, uh, you know, uh, we formed a board with people like Dr. Anne Chao, the, the, um, director of the Menil, the Rothko Chapel, um, and so there's a lot of people that have, uh, that have joined hands with us in trying to get this going, and hopefully, uh, our dream and goal is to open this museum October of 2019, which will be the sesquicentennial anniversary, uh, birthday anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, so his 150th birthday. And that's when we would want to open the museum. [XL: Okay] Now, the other thing that we're doing – so that's one project. Speaking of his 150th birthday there's a, another committee that's being formed. It's called the Gandhi Sesquicentennial Committee, and this is being chaired by none other than Dr. Anne Chao, who is the director of the Asia Society. And it's a one year long celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, starting October 2nd. And what we've done is we've reached out to different organizations in the Houston metroplex. Um, you know Rice University, the Boniuk Center, um, Menil Connection—collection, the Rothko Chapel, um, and then, uh, the Arya Samaj, uh, um, just different organizations, and what we're asking them to do is whatever they typically do. Whether it's a book club, it's a, uh, competition, it's a cultural dance, um, uh, we've reached out to restaurants, like, find something that you can do to commemorate Gandhi's birthday. Something you typically do but just dedicate it to him. And, uh, uh, again this is all to expose his values, or promote his values, of peace and truth and nonviolence. So, it's gonna be a one-year celebration, uh, uh, of his 150th birthday. Uh, there's a website that will list all the activities that are, that's going on throughout the year, and it will be dedicated to that. So, that's also on the plates for the Gandhi Library.

TH: Um, do you think that there's anything in particular about Houston that made like the Gandhi Museum and Library possible, and all these people to come together?

MW: Sure. Well, and Houston is the fourth largest city in the country. And, uh, again Gandhi was a universal person, not, you know, every religion, every culture can relate to what his values are. And, of course, Houston's the melting pot of this country. I mean it's multicultural, uh, so many different organizations, um, and so, um, and of course a very, uh, large, uh, Indo-American population. So, uh, and with a base like the Gandhi Library provides, I mean we've been already doing this for more than twelve years, uh, I think we're the perfect organization for them to come to and collaborate with, uh, to bring this
TH: And uh, what's been the response to all of the Gandhi Library events? Like is it uh, mostly the Indian community comes, or?

MW: Yeah. That's a good question. So, I would say it's not mostly. I mean we are more, uh, you know, if you come to the Thousand Lights for Peace you'll see, on stage, you know, there's the African-American community, the Hispanic community, um, the, um, uh, Muslim community. It's-it's very multicultural. Um, I would say that our board and our day-to-day, we're-we're mostly Indians. But, um, I think one of the things that we're proud about is that we-we're really inv-involve all cultures, all ethnicities, all religions, um, and, uh, uh, and we want to be that way, and that's how Gandhiji was too.

TH: And, uh, finally, what are your hopes for the Gandhi Library and Museum?

MW: Yeah, well my hopes are this. Um, I-I hope that it, uh, adds, um, a, uh, adds to the already sort of, um, you know, Houston is already known for its arts and museums an-and I hope that, uh, uh, this will be another, uh, jewel in the crown of, uh, uh, of the Houston community. I also hope that, uh, one of our biggest things about this museum is we really want to expose Gandhiji to the kids of, uh, today, and we want to do this through field trips. Um, and so our dream is that, you know, we have, uh, on a weekly basis, busloads of kids from the entire Houston community, uh, and they come and they visit the museum. It's gonna be very interactive, we're gonna try to make it fun, uh, but they leave, uh, sort of being exposed to the values of peace and truth and nonviolence, and how this is something that we, uh, sort of learn from a guy that we call Mahatma, who's the noble – the great soul, but it's something that we can do ourselves. It's not, uh, you don't have to be the Mahatma to be – to do what he did. Um, and, uh, if we can instill that into our kids, um, I-I think it'll be better for everybody.

TH: Um, so also you participate in Faith in Practice? [MW: Yes.] So, what is that and how did you get started?

MW: Right. So, Faith in Practice is a Houston-based organization, uh, and, um, it's a faith-based organization, uh, Christian, uh, faith. And, um, what they do, they have, um, uh, sort of, uh, they have a hospital in Antigua, Guatemala, which is Central America. And every year, uh, once a week for six months, so from January to June, they send a team of volunteer physicians, nurses, staff, and, um, they treat the illnesses of the, uh, people in Guatemala that, uh, can't afford to have it done. And so, I got ex—uh, I got involved in this about ten years ago. And one of my partners here at work, he is, he's on the board, and he's been going for almost eighteen years now, and, um, at the time, he's like, "Well, there's one team and they need an ENT doctor, and —cause one of them backed out." Um, and he, and he asked if anybody could go, and I'm like, "Yes, I would like to do that." So, I volunteered to go, and it's a three-hour flight. We go from Saturday to Saturday, um, and the first time I went, you know, I did thirty-eight surgeries, saw a hundred patients, um, and I worked hard but I felt very fulfilled and, um, had a lot of fun, and, uh, and I probably got out of it more than my patients got out of it because it's just something that, you know, you-you take for granted here in the United States. And so, um, and, uh, you know that part of
service, I was lacking here in the United States and I felt like, you know, um, this is something I want to do year after year. And this'll be, uh, in fact we're leaving in two weeks. My team is going in two weeks. This'll be my eleventh trip to go. Um, and, uh, it's a fantastic organization. Uh, they-they, uh, raise a lot of money because these trips do cost a lot of money, uh, and we try to use the technology we have here and bring it, uh, to the, uh, folks in Guatemala. And this is a third-world country, a lot of poverty, uh, the basic, simple, uh, things that we take for granted here are not accessible over there and we do provide that, uh, or we try to provide it. And, um, and so it's been a very fulfilling, um, uh, part of, or activity for me to do on a year-to-year basis.

TH: Um, so have you made friends with the people that you work with in Guatemala?

MW: Sure. Yeah, and in fact, uh, one of the, uh, uh, guys that I, uh, uh, sort of clicked with, he's a oral surgeon from Guatemala, and he actually, at this hospital, um, dedi—he's a private practitioner there but he dedicates, uh, he volunteers at the, at the, at this hospital, so I got to know him very well. I met him, I think, eight years ago on my third trip, and we've been keeping in touch, and in fact last summer, he came and stayed with me for a week, uh, and I showed him what medical, uh, what, uh, uh, medicine was like here. He came to the operating room, uh, followed me around, and so we've become lifelong friends. Uh, and like him, there's several others. I mean he's the only one that had sort of, uh, that has actually come and visited me and all that stuff. But, uh, I go back and see a lot of the same people, a lot of the same nurses, the, uh, the, uh, orderlies in the OR, uh, the, uh, administrators in the hospital, um, and, uh, so yeah it's great to see them on a weekly basis. And then, I've also made great friends with-with the people that—cause when I went, I didn't know anybody on the team, and our teams, each team is about thirty people. Um, uh, five physicians, five anesthesiologists, and the—and then, uh, twenty, uh, you know, nurses, uh, surgical assistants, translators, PACU nurses. So there's a team of thirty people, and so, uh, I've been with the same team for the last eleven years, and, uh, I feel like we're, you know, lifelong friends.

TH: Um, so before we move on to the last few questions [MW: Okay] did I miss anything? I think I might have skipped.

XL: Oh, um, so how many siblings do you have?

MW: How many siblings? [XL: Yeah.] Oh, I have – so I have two brothers. I have an older brother who's tw—uh, two years older than me, [XL: Uh huh] and I have a younger brother who's four years younger than me. [XL: Okay] So, there's three boys.

XL: So, do you take care of your younger brother, like when you were kids?

MW: So, um, my older brother and I are, uh, you know like I told you, I was two and he was four. [TH: Yeah] My younger brother wasn't born. So, he was born four years after me but what ended up happening, is my parents left him in India for five years. So, he grew up in India, he was raised by my aunt and my grandmother before he came here. Because I was in school, my bro—my older brother was in school, my mom needed to work, my dad needed to work, they had a baby, and they couldn't afford
babysitting or daycare, so they actually took him to India and left him there, and we – that's why we would visit him so often too, you know, but he didn't move back here 'till he was five years old. Anyways, we're, uh, so I didn't – when he came here, uh, he was five, so we took care of him at that point. Um, you know, uh, and, uh, um, but we're very tight, we're very close, so.

XL: Were there any like cultural conflicts between you and your parents when you were kids?

MW: [laughs] Well, you know, of course. Uh, my parents were very traditional, uh, and they were raised in a very conservative family environment. [XL: Mhmm] Uh, again going out to eat, or drinking, or anything that-that had to do, you know, out of – was something that they just couldn't understand. Um, they were, because of the financial situation, they were very thrifty, um, and so of course we wanted – we growing up, uh, saw our friends wearing Nike shoes or wearing Levi jeans and we wanted that but we couldn't necessarily have that. Uh, so there was always, uh, uh, conflicts in that sense.

TH: Okay.

XL: Uh, were there like a lot of like a huge Indian community when you were growing up?

MW: No, I mean in fact, we – there was not a big Indian community. But growing up, I mean every year we saw it progress. It got bigger and bigger and bigger. And, in fact, my parent—my aunt, uh, and this was in 1976, in, at least in the, in Texas, or at least in Dallas-Fort Worth, had the first Indian wedding, ever. So, we got to attend that. Uh, uh, bu-but again, uh, back then that was the first time that-that somebody had gotten married through an Indian traditional ceremony. Now they – it's all, it’s, um, all the time, that that happens, so. But we-we got to see the growth of the Indian community.

XL: Do you have like any Indian friends when you were growing up, like in, maybe in primary school or like middle school?

MW: Yeah. So, in primary school, no. Middle school, um, starting seventh grade, um, that's when I, uh, probably met my first Indian friends. [XL: Oh] Um, and then, uh, uh, and again knowing them was great because we, you know, they were very culturally adept as well and so we used to go to Gar—the-the festivals with them like Garba, and go to the temples with them, uh, and, uh, so it was probably after seventh grade. And then in – from seventh grade on, very tight-knit Indian community and a lot of tight-knit Indian friends. And even now. So, um, again that's the advantage of having, um, exposure to both sides. I mean I have, uh, Cau—you know, friends from – tight-knit friends from the Indian community as well as the, uh, uh, Anglo-American commu-community.

XL: Okay. So, uh, you say you moved to Ar-Arlington at two [MW: Mhmm] and then you moved to Houston, is that correct?

MW: Mhmm, yeah.
XL: And then you moved back to Arlington. [MW: Arlington, yes.] When did you move to Dallas-Fort Worth?

MW: Yeah, and Arlington, when I say Arlington, that's Dallas-Fort Worth. [XL: Oh, okay, sorry] Yeah, it's the same, because Arlington is a suburb of the Dallas-Fort Worth area. [XL: Alright.] So, uh, so I moved - we came to Arlington when I was two, uh, from India. And then, uh, my dad finished his PhD and was working, but then he got another job in Houston. [XL: Mhmm] So, I remember going to Houston, and, uh, we were in Houston for second and third grade, and then moved back to Arlington in fourth grade. And then we were at one school in fourth grade but then had to move to a different neighborhood so we were in a different school for fifth grade, and then we moved again when I was in sixth grade and then from sixth grade on we stayed at the same place.

XL: Okay, so when and why did you move to Houston?

MW: It was basically cause my dad got relocated, for his work was the main reason. Oh, you're asking for me, ask me. [XL: I mean like you, yeah.] Okay, yeah. So, um, as far as my background, so I-I grew up in Arlington. I finished high school in 1986, okay. I went to Baylor University in Waco for one semester. Um, and, uh, at that time my dad was in the hotel business and it wasn't doing very well, and, uh, financially he was very strapped so I had to, had to leave college, or leave Baylor, and I enrolled at University of Texas in Arlington. Um, and it was ten times cheaper to go there and I could stay home and all that stuff. So, I graduated from UTA in 1990, came to Houston to go to Baylor Medical School. Uh, and so I was in Houston from 1990 to 1994. After I graduated medical school I went to University of Tennessee in Memphis, cause that's where I matched for my residency in otolaryngology. So, I was there for six years, [XL: Okay] uh, training. Then, I did a one-year fellowship in Chicago, uh, cause I was especially interested in head and neck cancer and sinuses, so I did a one-year fellowship there. [XL: Mhmm] Uh, but I always wanted to come back to Texas. Um, and I liked Houston and there was a great offer, uh, opportunity here in Houston with Texas ENT Specialists. And so, I started with them in 2001, and I'm still with them [laughs] so.

TH: So, did you ever want to live anywhere else besides Texas or?

MW: I really did, I mean I lived in Tennessee, I lived in Chicago, um, but I kind of wanted to come back to Texas. And maybe because of my family's here, uh, uh, you know, my parents and aunts and uncles and brothers. And then weather-wise, um, you know it's – Chicago is just so cold. [laughs] And so, uh, it just seemed like a – so I just always wanted to come back to the South. But I knew I wanted to be in a city that was large, multicultural, um, multiethnic, uh, sort of a melting pot, and that's why Houston was a great fit. Now we moved to the suburbs because we had young kids, and the schools were-were better, or at least we thought that they were better, and it just seemed like a better place to raise kids. And that's why, uh, when I say Houston we actually moved to Katy, which was a western suburb of Houston.

XL: So, speaking of kids, so what – do you have any expectation for your kids?
MW: Well, we all have expect—of course, yeah. [laughs] So, um, you know, and, again, I, from my parents I learned, uh, you know my work ethic, how important education is, um, but for my kids my expectations are for them to be happy. To do what they like to do. Um, and, uh, you know there is this one part that says, you know, I want them to enjoy life and make the most out of every day. Um, but I also want them to be responsible. I want them to be contributing citizens. I want them to, um, uh, you know, have a good life for themselves, um, and take advantage of every opportunity they have. And that's that's sort of my expectations for them.

TH: Have you ever taken them to visit India?

MW: Uh huh, I have. Uh, I've taken them, um, uh, well, actually only once, and it was, um, it was about ten years ago we went, um, and so they were fairly young. And, in fact, we're planning another trip with them in December. [TH: Oh.] Yeah, cause it's been a while since they've been back, so. I have taken them to Guatemala on one of these mission trips. [TH: Oh] [all laugh] But not to India.

XL: How do they like it?

MW: They loved it, yeah. So, you know, they got a sense of what a third-world country is like, [XL: Mhmm] what mission work is like, um, what the hospital system there is like. Uh, they got to, um, uh, relate with the kids there, they got to play with them, see how their schools are. [coughs] And for them it's a good way to know what the world is like. I mean sometimes we're sheltered here in the United States and so, uh, um, that definitely is, uh, an opportunity that they'll – I-I think it's one of those things that, uh, they'll never forget, and they enjoyed it. And they would love to go back, but there's always time constraints when you're in – now they're in college and stuff, so.

XL: Mhmm. Uh, so I saw the photo [referring to a photo on the wall] of you and—

MW: Oh, Bill Clinton, yeah.

XL: —Bill Clinton, so can you tell me more about that?

MW: Yeah! Well, you know, and this was, uh, two years ago when Hillary was running for, uh, presidency. [XL: Mhmm] And, uh, one of my good friends, um, uh, uh, invited Bill Clinton to come to his house. So, it was a fundraiser, uh, and, uh, he was campaigning for Hillary Clinton at the time, so, um, I got the opportunity to go and meet him and take my picture with him, and have him sign his book, his autogra—got his autograph, and he gave about a fifteen-minute spiel, and it was really more about campaigning for Hillary Clinton. But he's definitely one of my, uh, uh, favorite presidents. Um, I thought, uh, you know, um, what he stood for, his values and, um, uh, was something that I could relate to. So, I, um, definitely, uh, took the opportunity to go see him and meet him.

XL: Um, so—

TH: I can do the last questions.
MW: Okay.

TH: So, currently how would you identify yourself, uh, culturally?

MW: I would say I am... how would I identify myself? Well, um, I am an American, uh, I'm a United States citizen, with, uh, a, uh, background in the Hindu culture.

TH: Okay. And, uh, besides culture are there any other like, things that immediately come up first?

MW: Um, about what though? Like—

TH: You know, like religion, your job...

MW: I see what you mean, okay. Um, religion, not really, I mean i—I would say that, uh, when I think of religion I think of Hinduism and I think of spirituality. And when I think of values I think of Mahatma Gandhi and, uh, uh, I think of, uh, peace and truth and nonviolence. When I think of my identity, I think, uh, as a physician, a father, uh, and, um, a, uh, a citizen of this, of this community.

TH: And so finally, do you have any advice for young people today?

MW: Yeah. Well, my advice would be, um, and when you say young, how young? Or anybody? Like you, or?

TH: Yeah, uh, sure, our age.

XL: Our age. [laugh]

MW: Your age, yeah, okay. I would say, um, try to expose yourself to as many things as possible, and in this day and age there's so many opportunities, uh, that it can become sometimes mind-boggling, uh, and confusing. But when you look back, all these opportunities and experiences that you have really formulate you as a person. One thing I would tell you is-is keep a journal. Uh, and I tell this to my kids. Anything you do, and if you can do it on a daily basis, it's great, because over time, you do tend to forget some of this stuff. But if you can write down a pearl of wisdom every day that you've learned. or you've been exposed to, or that you've thought of, and you can document this and-and-and sort of journal it, um, in the long run it'll help you. And-and-and I, and I haven't done that as faithfully as I wanted to but I have done a lot of that, and, you know, a lot of times, you know, when I'm traveling, I'm in the airplane, and, you know, instead of watching another series of Game of Thrones or something, I'll look back at my journal and-and go through all my experiences, you know. Uh, all the pictures that I've taken and all the places I've been to and all the people I've met. Uh, I've even saved, uh, text messages from my kids, whether it was conflicts, or things that they were happy about, and it's, uh, it's so nice to go back and relive those experiences. And it does make you a better person, uh, because you run into these things again., and if you've, uh, sort of, uh, learned from your experiences or your mistakes, uh, I think that's the best way to
do it. And trust me, as you get to my age, you forget so much. Uh, and, uh, if it's written down, then it's- it's there for you to-to-to look back through, so.

**XL:** So, when did you start journaling?

**MW:** I probably started, um, after – I can tell you more, it's probably when I first to Antigua, uh, ten or eleven years ago, eleven years ago. Uh, prior to that I didn't, and it was probably when we started having cell phones because I can take notes, uh, on the phone, uh, and that's kind of when I started doing it. Now I've had, um, you know, looking back I've-I've, uh, there are – I have some diaries that I've kept from medical school and from residency, um, that I've looked back on as well. So, I-I was doing it back then, but not as much as I do now.

**XL:** So, when you look back on yourself, like, what do you feel like in general? Do you feel like, "Oh, I was too young," like, "This is so stupid," or something like that? [laughs]

**MW:** [laughs] Uh, yeah, looking back, um… Well, again we all come to forks in the roads and have to make decisions. [XL: Mhmm] And, um, fortunately, you know things did fall into place for me, from an education standpoint. You know, um, uh, even though I didn't get to finish at Baylor University because of financial reasons, I went to UTA, it was a blessing. I got to meet so many people, got a great training, and, um, uh, but that was my, uh, lead into getting into med school/ I was so fortunate to get into medical school. I mean it's so difficult, uh, you know, with the competition and whatnot but, got into medical school, and then from there we had to – I had to apply for a residency training. And, uh, and I fell in love with otolaryngology, head and neck surgery. I was fascinated by the anatomy of the neck, the ear, the nose, uh, and it was one of the toughest residencies to get. Uh, uh, but fortunately I was able to match in, uh, in Memphis, Tennessee, and then I was there for six years and then I got into a fellowship. And then I came to Texas ENT, which is one of the most prominent organizations in-in Houston for ENT. So, um, you know I-I do feel fortunate and blessed, uh—now, we all make mistakes as-as we're growing up and I could sit here and talk to you about, uh, a lot of those mistakes. But, you know, whether it's in parenting, whether it's in, uh, uh, marriage, whether it's being a – being the son, we've all made mistakes. Uh, and we learn from them, and that's, uh, and I think journaling helps. I think, uh, uh, knowing your values so that you don't make the same, uh, mistake twice. I mean I can tell you, one of the things about Mahatma Gandhi that, uh, that I, um, value the most, is he was a man that made many mistakes, but he never made them twice. Um, and uh, um… so that-that’s-that's something that I value, and I-I wish I could say the same, but I still make the same mistakes over and over, [laughs] but that's part of learning and that's part of spirituality and growing and-an-and whatnot.

**TH:** I think that's all we have.

**MW:** Okay.

**TH:** Thank you so much.

**XL:** Thank you so much.
MW: You're welcome! Hope all that came out okay.