

# Felicia

**Radha 00:01**Hi, Felicia, welcome to Mrigashira. And it's great to have you on our podcast.

**Felicia 00:09**

Hello and thank you for having me.

**Radha 00:35**

PR professionals undergo severe stress, and particularly during the pandemic, we have seen, you know, a lot of magnification of what it is for the industry. Somewhere, I also read in one of your interviews that, you know, you always make it a point to have me time, you know, and I did read that you know, how you get, it's very interesting that you use the driving time as, as your mean time. So, I mean, it's great. I'm just trying to understand, you know, how can because in India, most of the industry is under a lot of stress and duress. So what are some of the, you know, useful tips that you could give us in terms of how we can, or as a matter of habit, because for you, it seems to be like a habit, it seems to be more like a routine. So I want to understand how we can get to that, you know, allocating some amount of knee time daily, as a matter of routine,

**Felicia 01:40**

We'll use the best word allocating. So the workday that begins at seven and ends at six, there are a bunch of hours in that day, that you can carve out to say, this 30 minute window, whether I eat lunch or not, is my time for rest and relaxation. The other thing that I would say is have some boundaries, some boundaries, that will not be crossed. I remember working at a company, and I'm a Christian, so I go to church on Sundays. And people would be and that's when I had a Blackberry, and they would text an email and expect me to respond on a Sunday morning. So I let everybody know, look, from 11am to 1pm, on Sundays, do not expect me to respond. And if you can't respect my boundaries, then maybe this is not the best place for me. And I recognize and a burgeoning market, that may be difficult, but who else is more responsible for your health and safety than you? The other thing that I would say is protect your peace? What do I mean by that? Mental health challenges were on the upraise, during COVID, loneliness, worry, stress. So as much as taking these times, this time to take care of yourself, and then having boundaries helps your physical body, that also helps your mind you become a better creative person. So I hope that helps. Yeah, that's interesting.

**Radha 03:24**

And in fact, you know, you have spent almost a week you said in India, and, with PRCI, and the team. So what strikes about the PR industry in India? And what are some of the similarities and some unique features that you find about the industry here.

**Felicia 03:46**

We are more like PR S A, and PRCI than we are different. There are some differences. But here's where we are alike. We are all both striving to create a class of professionals that are equipped and

ready to do the job. We both organizations believe in the ethical practice of public relations and strategic communications. And both organizations are working hard to build that next level of talent through student engagement. It's really exciting to see but thing that I would say that's different is the maturity of the industry. In India as an example, I share it with deep tea. We have a roughly 90,000 members in PARCIA and roughly 8000 Student members, PRs CII is developing that model. Plus, I've been advised that the industry here in India is fairly small as compared to that in the US, the US Bureau of Labor and Statistics. This industry in the US is in the hundreds of 1000s. So those are kind of the differences.

**Radha** 05:07

Yeah. So that also brings in a lot of challenges, right. So globally, how do you see or, for example, in the US? How do you see the challenges the industry faces, let's say over a five year horizon, versus the kind of challenges that you see India have sounder and how do we overcome it?

**Felicia** 05:27

So this isn't, it's not an end, this is not an MD or US issue. We have some serious, systematic challenges with the reputation of our profession, and overcoming the worldwide issues of myths and disinformation, the way they are stakeholders, consumers, politicians, government, everyday people are looking to us to help them understand really important big issues. So those are some challenges we have to wrestle with. The other thing that I would say is, we have we both are working to overcome the talent pool challenges. If COVID showed is nothing else, it showed us that companies are leaning into communications, public relations professionals, far more far more than marketing, than advertising, you cannot advertise your way out of a situation, you cannot market your way to helping people become competent around a global crisis services like COVID-19, you need strategic communications professionals to do that, right. And so the challenge is making sure we shore up the talent pool. The thing that I understand the reason, the work life balance in India, perhaps maybe less than ideal is because the companies need support, they need help, and they needed them great measure. And so you're working and taxing your practitioners a great deal. I think in the US, we have come to a point of view that if you don't take care of your talent, your talent will leave you. And if you don't have the talent, you can't fulfill the promises you're making to your clients, or your customers or your end users. So the other thing that I say is this ethical issue at the code of ethics is sacrosanct within PRCI, making sure that we are consistently honest, have integrity are transparent. And we are not sloppy in our work, meaning we do our research. So we have a high degree of responsibility. So it's not easy, but you know what they say? What does the spray say? What is easy? It's seldom Excellent. But we got

**Radha** 08:15

you also say that you have been, you know, in India, interacting with a lot of students., how do you see the supply on one side, and the number of people versus the quality of talent and the kind of skill that is required for, you know, PR professionals to excel in, in the market, five years hands? So what are typically some of the challenges that you see there? And also, what is your advice to practitioners, you know, practitioners who are, let's say, five years into the industry, you're probably 10 years into the industry, as well as people who are coming into the industry, you know, with probably no experience.

**Felicia** 09:39

So honestly, I'm going to say the same thing to a new Pro or new practitioner, that I say to an existing data reveals that we will need to reinvent our skill sets every three to five years. So that's a new professional coming out versus one that's been in the game for While social media has changed everything, however, I do not believe that technology will ever take the place of a human being. So yes, AI and AR they are really, you know, catching on. But the technology only augments what the human does. Therefore, we do have a requirement to understand leveraging social media and our work in a greater, more robust way. But we also have to keep our own skill sets high. By first being honoring the number one covenant of our profession, the number one covenant of our profession is writing, we will never, ever get away from that, in order to be a great practitioner, you must must be an excellent writer, hands down, then an excellent oral communicator, then you must build your technology set. In terms of challenges, I sometimes think that the social media space has eroded the depth of thought around writing, I really do. So we just have to hone that skill and don't and not think that a computer can take our place. Other thing is just up skilling. I got my PhD, I got my PhD in 2021, did I have to get a PhD? No, it was a rigorous exercise. It is not for the faint of heart. But it is incredible and important to stretch your mind, learn something new. It may not even be applied to a job learning doesn't have to be for a job. In terms of these shifts, I think we are in one right now that people are recognizing, but I'm goanna articulate it. One is going from tactics, promotional to purpose driven communication. The other is in America being so US centric off and say that, you know, Americans, we think we're the center of the universe, but you take one step out of the country. And you see there's a big bold world out there with a lot of great ideas, we must become more globally minded, culturally sensitive. So those are just a few. That I hope they responded to your question effectively.

**Radha** 12:45

Yeah, sure. One last question. You know, these days, every person understands the importance of communication, , any professional, not just in the industry, and some are giving a lot of emphasis on being better communicators, you know, personal branding, for example, has taken center stage. There are a lot of, you know, influencer marketing, which probably was very nascent few years ago has now become a full blown industry. So, do you still feel PR having a relevance of its own? Or do you see it also probably transforming into another author in the future?

**Felicia** 13:29

Now, I think PR is fully relevant. Without a doubt. The here's the thing, though, in my mind's eye public relations is the umbrella on a lot of categories. And that's where the relevancy comes in. So investor relations, media relations, content creation, Social Media Development, website development, lobbying, governmental relations, all of that falls under the rubric of public relations in my mind's eye. So no, we will never become irrelevant. Maybe some of those pillars will be more actively utilized than others. But at the end of the day, it is still good public relations that moves the needle.

**Radha** 14:19

Great. That's a fantastic positive statement to you know, sort of end this show. Thanks a lot. Felicia, thanks for your time. And it's great to have you on this podcast.

**Felicia** 14:29

Thank you for having me.

