

Maybe You're The Reason

At the end of last year, we traveled to New Delhi for the first time together to meet one another's relatives. Over two blissful weeks, we enjoyed countless cups of homemade chai, risky but rewarding street eats, and were able to share with each other our perspectives on a country we had each separately visited several times. We stayed with Pooja's Nana, who at 96 years old is more spirited every morning than either of us. We spent time with Pranav's Nanu and Nani, both 88, who were impressed by Pooja's Hindi, and still kind about the paltry progress Pranav had made from his recent Hindi lessons. We learned more about Pooja's mom, looking through her life in beautiful scrapbook photos. Then the rest of our uncles, aunts, and cousins all visited one another, offering to one another copious quantities of snacks and gifts.

During this trip, it dawned on us how much bigger our upcoming (now imminent) wedding was than all the long hours of outfit shopping, vendor meetings, and spreadsheet logistics. Our families emphasized the spiritual significance of marriage, such as when Pranav's Massi greeted Pooja's arrival to their flat in Noida with a ritual pouring of oil over the door, or when Pooja's Massi took us to her temple to receive blessings for our lives ahead. Pooja's Nana reminded us of the history we were going to join, after he recounted the challenges he'd faced in his childhood surviving and rebuilding his life after the Partition. Here we were, no longer just with one another's families, but *our* family.

Halfway through the trip we celebrated Pranav's parents' 38th wedding anniversary with a dinner in Delhi. His grandparents became unexpectedly reflective before dessert, recalling the tough decision they made to put their limited savings towards his mom's medical education, an opportunity rare for a child in their village. Almost half a century later, that child, with a marriage and kids of her own, and a full career as a physician, was taking them out to celebrate in the big city that had also become their home. They inspired us in sharing how they maneuvered

through an uncertain future together, having faith during their hardest choices that their investments would pay off.

We are getting married because the love we share has become the logic of our lives. There is no one else we'd rather experience the best and worst times with. We have chosen one another daily, growing and learning, and becoming stronger with every celebration or challenge in equal measure. We also know that what we have is in part the product of the seeds sown by our families and communities.

Thank you all for being a part of our story. Some of you were present in our early days, when we were still deciding whether to pursue the feelings that ultimately pushed us together. Others were key parts in making San Francisco become our shared home. Many of you helped raise us as children and instill in us the values we would come to admire in one another. We have laughed with you, cried to you, offered you our hopes and dreams, and shared with you as some of those hopes and dreams started to come true.

This wedding is one of those dreams materializing into real life! We are so grateful each of you were able to come here and celebrate. When we say we truly couldn't do this without you, know that we also mean that we *wouldn't* do this without you. We are excited for you all to meet one another and understand why.

Love, P&P