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On a recent jaunt through Italy, Ruchi Sanghvi and Aditya Agarwal drafted a family mission statement. Dedicated to their soon-to-arrive child (their son Avyan was born in October), the parents-to-be applied some Silicon Valley muscle—he's the vice president of engineering at the file-sharing behemoth Dropbox; she was Facebook's first female engineer who is now exploring the venture capital scene—to the decidedly more chaotic world of parenting. Though Lake Como and its languid shores aren't exactly associated with industrious behaviour, the two devoted nearly five hours to a "robust discussion," before settling on seven ironclad values. Among them were "compete with yourself" and "always think from first principles."

IT'S COMPLICATED

If their tenacious approach to child-rearing sounds like it was plucked from a start-up's strategy plan, it's not entirely accidental. "Ruchi loves being intentional," Aggarwal says. "We've been working together longer than we've been dating," reveals Sanghvi, referring to their 16-year-old connection that began in the labs at Carnegie Mellon University, where Agarwal embarked on a steadfast two-year pursuit after first spotting Sanghvi ("a vision in white trackpants and a purple sweatshirt"). "He would show up outside my classroom with coffee and cook me macaroni and cheese at 2am," Sanghvi recalls. "I'd call it perseverance. I, however, got an ultimatum. He said, 'Either you date me, or we can't be friends.'"

Since then, their relationship has endured a detour or two, including Sanghvi's brief encounter with the arranged marriage circuit, and her post-graduate stint at a Wall Street trading firm (Agarwal was then working with software giant Oracle). "When I first saw the sea of cubicles at work, I panicked," says Sanghvi. "Manhattan felt like a very lonely city."

The pair soon reunited on the West Coast, bringing their formidable engineering chops to Facebook. Their most memorable endeavour there was also one of the company's most controversial: the 2006 launch of the News Feed >

NET WORTH
Sanghvi and Agarwal first met as engineering students at Carnegie Mellon University

DOUBLES

Love in the time of social media

Smart, savvy and driven, **RUCHI SANGHVI** and **ADITYA AGARWAL** live up to their image as Silicon Valley royalty. The digital power couple talk to AARTI VIRANI about their passion for the industry and hopes for the future

Styled by LAURA HOLLABAUGH   *Photographed by* THAYER ALLYSON GOWDY

PARTNERS IN CRIME
The couple left Facebook to launch Cove in 2010

Sanghvi and Agarwal tied the knot in 2010, even getting their boss—"brogrammer"-in-chief Mark Zuckerberg—to swap his signature hoodie for a silk sherwani at their Goa wedding. Soon after, however, the duo left Facebook and co-founded Cove, a platform for digital collaboration tools that was acquired by Dropbox in 2012. "I'm a strong proponent of partners working together—there's an innate trust and it fuels a sense of empathy. Though, you also tend to become competitive and talk about work—all the time," says Sanghvi. Agarwal offers a slight variation on that sentiment. "It's a shared wavelength, which means you get higher highs because you're able to share so much," he adds, recalling a time when their house walls doubled as whiteboards.

STATUS UPDATE

Today, their stylish home, nestled in a sun-drenched pocket of San Francisco, is equal parts rustic and chic. Channelling a modern-day salon, the space is a charming contrast of clean, contemporary lines and antique furnishings. The showstopper—a sleek turntable, which Sanghvi presented to her husband as a wedding gift—is a nod to Agarwal's love for electronica. "For two years, every Thursday, a bunch of awesome local DJs would throw these raves at our place, though we don't do that anymore," says Agarwal.

Their path to parenthood, however, has been anything but straightforward, a taxing multi-year journey consisting of a miscarriage and rounds of fertility treatment. "It doesn't make sense for the fertility subject to be taboo," says Agarwal. "Modern science helps us live longer, be healthier, and this is just another aspect of it. I couldn't be more proud of Ruchi for sharing our experience with the world," he adds. When Sanghvi eventually broke the news about her pregnancy this summer—fittingly, through a Facebook post—she bravely and poignantly disclosed their full story. "[Aditya and I] have been on many adventures together, from our days in college, to starting a company, to having a stratospheric rocket-ship ride at Facebook and Dropbox… but this feels like the craziest one yet…this baby is a miracle of science and love," she wrote.

Agarwal and Sanghvi marvel at the fact that a platform they spent sleepless nights creating was the vehicle they used to broadcast such a personal announcement. "If I wanted to share my IVF experience 10 years ago, I'm not sure how I would have done it," says Sanghvi. "We built some good stuff," quips Agarwal, as the two share a playful high five. "And it's kind of recursively passing on." ■

"I'm a strong proponent of partners working together—there's an innate trust and it fuels a sense of empathy"
—RUCHI SANGHVI

feature, now considered one of Facebook's trailblazing components, spurred outrage from vehement critics who voiced privacy concerns, and spewed vitriol towards Sanghvi, who was part of the core team. But she remained undeterred. "I love how principled Ruchi is," says Agarwal. "No one can tell her there's a single way to do something. She has a strong moral compass from which she rarely deviates."

That very compass steered Sanghvi towards a computer engineering degree in college. It was the first step towards challenging her father, who owns a company that lends out heavy machinery for infrastructure projects, based in Pune—it's where she was born and raised. "I had dreams of taking over my dad's business; he has the largest crane rental company in India," she says. "But he told me it wouldn't be feasible because it's a man's world."

Agarwal spent the bulk of his childhood bouncing around south-east Asia, courtesy his father, a chemical engineer, landing in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia before arriving in the States. "My mom and dad were able to bring a slice of what it meant to be Indian to our lives," he says. "They also gave me a healthy dose of whatever culture we were immersed in. It's limiting to be mono-cultural today."