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1. Timeline of Key Events

- **2021:** Passes 10th grade; struggles with English. Begins 6 months of intensive learning.
- **2022:** Discovers podcasts (English With Lucy, Langomarina); practices daily. Starts college (1st year).
- **Jan 2023:** Launches YouTube channel *How To Seek* (later renamed *Top SIAS*). Learns scripting, editing, and social media.
- **2023:** Drops university plans after studying wealthy entrepreneurs. Faces ridicule and rejection.
- **Mid-2023:** Tries phone repair, perfume, and shampoo businesses—all fail.
- **Late 2024:** Moves to Lahore for work; returns disillusioned. Heartbroken after a personal rejection.
- **Early 2025:** Relocates to Islamabad; lands a social media manager job.
- **2025:** Starts *Deep Ocean Digital Agency* with uncle's support.

MY STORY: THE UNSTOPPABLE JOURNEY

Chapter 1: The Boy Who Couldn't Speak English (2021)

The summer of 2021 was humid and heavy with shame. I'd just passed 10th grade in my small Pashtun-majority town, but one truth gnawed at me: *I couldn't speak English*. Not properly. Not like the confident boys in viral YouTube videos or the polished actors in Hollywood movies. My sentences stumbled, my grammar collapsed, and my accent thickened like curdled milk.

One afternoon, I overheard classmates laughing at a boy struggling to order fries in English at a café. That boy wasn't me—but it *could've* been. That night, I tore a page from my notebook and wrote in jagged letters: "*I WILL LEARN ENGLISH.*"

For six months, I became a ghost in my own life. While friends played cricket, I cycled 12 kilometers daily to a cramped academy in Mingora. My teacher, Mr. Asad Khan, drilled basics into me: "*Present simple! Past participle! Articles—a, an, the!*" I repeated phrases until my throat ached. At home, I glued my eyes to YouTube—*English With*

Lucy taught me pronunciation; *Langomarina* showed me how natives *actually* spoke. I shadowed their voices like a parrot, recording myself and cringing at the playback.

Note: *The world laughs at you until you prove them wrong. Let their laughter fuel you.*

Chapter 2: The Birth of a Creator (2023)

By 2023, English wasn't my weakness—it was my weapon. But I craved more. My brother Imtiaz, an electrical engineer, tossed me a lifeline: *"Start a YouTube channel. Teach what you've learned."*

On January 1st, 2023, with trembling hands, I uploaded my first video: *"How to Think in English."* The thumbnail was hideous—blurry text, my face awkwardly squished in a corner. Three people watched it: my brother, my best friend, and a bot from Latvia. But I didn't stop.

I became a mad scientist of content. I dissected viral videos, scribbled scripts on napkins, and edited until 3 a.m. on a laptop that wheezed like an asthmatic donkey. My channel *How To Seek* (later *Top SIAS*) was my laboratory. Growth was slower than a Swat winter—50 subscribers after 6 months. Friends whispered: *"Izhar, focus on college. This is a waste of time."*

But I'd tasted a new addiction: *creation*.

Note: *When you start, you'll suck. Sucking is the first step to not sucking.*

Chapter 3: The Valley of Failures (2023–2024)

College felt like a straitjacket. I'd read how Steve Jobs and Zuckerberg dropped out—why couldn't I? In 2023, I quit university, armed with a half-baked dream: *"I'll be a millionaire by 25."*

Reality punched harder than my optimism.

- **The Phone Repair Disaster:** For two months, I apprenticed at a repair shop. My fingers, clumsy as sausages, fried a customer's motherboard. The owner hissed: *"Stick to studying."*
- **The Perfume Hustle:** I bought 50 bottles of "French fragrance" (likely diluted detergent). Zero sales.
- **The Shampoo Fiasco:** With friends, we mixed coconut oil and herbs in my kitchen, bottling "Swat Herbal Shampoo." Our "office" was a 1000 PKR/month closet. The only hair it cleaned was ours.

Each failure left me emptier. My father's words haunted me: *"Learn a real skill."* Even my brothers—a doctor, an engineer, a scholar—doubted my path. The lowest night? December 2024. A girl I loved for years rejected my proposal. I sat on my roof, watching snow dust the mountains, wondering if I'd ever *win* at anything.

Note: *Rock bottom isn't the end—it's the foundation you rebuild upon.*

Chapter 4: Escape to Islamabad (2025)

In January 2025, I packed a single bag and boarded a bus to Islamabad. No plan. Just rage against my own helplessness.

For a week, I slept on Ehsan Paracha's floor, applying to every job on LinkedIn. Rejection. Rejection. Then—a *reply*. Waqar Ahmed from Takshala Punjab messaged: *"Come for an interview."*

I wore my only collared shirt, sweat pooling under my arms. Waqar asked: *"Why should we hire you?"* I didn't lie: *"I'm not an expert. But I learn fast, and I won't quit."* He smiled.

Two days later, I became a social media manager. Salary: 25,000 PKR. To most, peanuts. To me—a lifeline.

Chapter 5: The Agency Dream

Islamabad taught me ruthlessness. By day, I managed accounts. By night, I called my uncle, Syed Muzzamil Shah, a seasoned businessman: *"Teach me. I'll work for free."*

He agreed. For months, I absorbed everything—pricing, client handling, scaling. In April 2025, we launched *Deep Ocean Digital Agency*. Our first client paid 80,000 PKR for a website. Today, we're onboarding our 12th.

Note: *Opportunity doesn't knock. You kick down the door and drag it in.*

LESSONS I LEARNED: THE HARD-WON WISDOM FROM MY JOURNEY

1. Failure Is Not the End—It's Your First Step

I failed at phone repairing, perfume selling, shampoo business, and even got rejected in love. But every failure taught me something:

- **Phone Repair:** Not every skill is worth learning if it doesn't align with your passion.
- **Shampoo Business:** Partnerships without clear roles and vision will collapse.
- **YouTube Slow Growth:** Consistency matters more than instant results.

Takeaway: Every "no" is a redirection, not a rejection.

2. No One Is Coming to Save You

I waited for a mentor, for luck, for someone to "discover" me. But reality hit hard—nobody cares until you prove you're worth caring about.

- I begged my uncle for business advice for months before he took me seriously.
- I applied to 50+ jobs before getting one.
- I edited 100+ videos before getting my first 1,000 views.

Takeaway: Be your own hero. No one will hand you success—you have to take it.

3. Respect Is Earned, Never Given

When I spoke broken English, people mocked me. When I dropped out, they called me a failure. But when I started earning, speaking fluently, and building a business—their tone changed.

- **True respect comes from results, not words.**
- If you want people to believe in you, first achieve something worth believing in.

Takeaway: Don't demand respect. Build something undeniable, and it will come.

4. Rejection Is Protection

The girl I loved rejected me. The jobs I wanted ignored me. The businesses I started crashed. But:

- If she had said yes, I might've stayed in Swat, comfortable and stagnant.
- If those jobs hired me, I might've never started my agency.
- If the shampoo business succeeded, I'd be stuck in a small-town hustle.

Takeaway: What feels like rejection is often God's redirection.

5. Motivation Is Fake—Discipline Is Real

I made videos when I was depressed. I applied for jobs after business failures. I studied English when everyone else was sleeping.

- **Motivation** comes and goes.
- **Discipline** is what builds empires.

Takeaway: Fall in love with the grind, not the dream.

6. You Don't Need a Degree—You Need a Skill

My brothers are doctors and engineers. I'm a dropout. Yet, I earn more than many degree holders because I learned **high-income skills**:

- Copywriting
- Video Editing
- Sales & Marketing
- Web Development

Takeaway: The world pays for value, not certificates.

7. Your Circle Determines Your Success

- The friends who laughed at my English? Gone.
- The ones who said "YouTube won't work"? Distant.
- The people who supported me (like my brother Imtiaz and uncle Muzzamil)? Still here.

Takeaway: Surround yourself with believers, not doubters.

8. Money Follows Mastery—Not the Other Way Around

I chased money first (shampoo biz, phone repair) and failed.

Then I chased **skill** (content creation, digital marketing) and money followed.

Takeaway: Become so good they can't ignore you.

9. Comfort Is the Enemy of Growth

- Staying in Swat = Safe, but stagnant.
- Moving to Islamabad = Scary, but life-changing.

Takeaway: If your dreams don't scare you, they're too small.

10. The Only Approval You Need Is Your Own

- My family wanted me to be a doctor.
- Society wanted me to finish college.
- But I wanted freedom.

Takeaway: You'll never win living someone else's life.

Final Lesson: The Journey Never Ends

This is just the beginning. If I can go from "*zero English*" to "*agency owner*", imagine what's next.

Your turn. What's your dream? And what's stopping you?

— Syed Izhar Ali Shah

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