

# Love & Inspiration: Navjyot Singh Sidhu speaks of his Career

*Ms. Ghazala Wahab*

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When I was only eight years old my father started a cricket club. Though he was a lawyer and had nothing to do with the game, he was very keen that I become an international sportsperson. I think that was the turning point in my life. Before that I was a regular kid who loved fooling around, but once I realised how serious my father was about cricket, I pledged that I would work very hard to realise his dreams. I became a cricketer only to fulfil my father's dream.

After I made my debut in test cricket in 1983, a part of the media dubbed me as a 'strokeless wonder'. This was the second turning point in my life. The article hurt my father so much that he wept silently. I was so shattered by my father's tears that I swore that I would make the critic change his mind about me. I pasted that article inside my closet and used to see it every day. That criticism, despite being so biting, fired me. I worked hard to improve my strokes and my style of batting.

Unfortunately, my father didn't live long enough to see me succeed. He passed away in 1985. At that point, I nearly made up my mind to quit playing, but my wife and a few close friends convinced me that I should play for the sake of my father. I am glad I did, because later I felt that my father could see me play. I made a dramatic comeback in the Reliance Cup and that same critic called me a 'palm groove hitter'. I tore off the first article from closet and never looked back.

I believe that life is what happens to you when you are busy making other plans. After I retired from cricket in 1999, I was looking forward to a quiet life with my wife and two children. Since we have property in Patiala, I wasn't hard up for money. Besides that, I had a job with the State Bank of Patiala. But out of the blue, I was invited by MTV to play 10 of my favourite songs. I had never faced the camera before, but I was comfortable and the show was a great hit. Soon after that I got an offer to commentate and before I knew it, I was a full-time commentator.

Today, I have developed a style of my own. I get a lot of fan mail and basically I am enjoying myself. After playing cricket for 17 years, I talk about the game today which is a lot of fun. ❖