



FAMILY PARTNERS

**Brother-and-sister team
Suraj and Reetu Gupta
are redefining the phrase
“family office.”**

Written by Courtney Greenberg

Photography courtesy of The Gupta Group



On their own, the two Gupta siblings, Reetu and Suraj, are impressive and accomplished leaders in their family business. But together, they've become an unstoppable brother-sister duo, spreading happiness and challenging the status quo in the entrepreneurial space.

"My goal in life is to add as much value to the world as possible," says Suraj as he sits beside his sister in a meeting room at the Nexus Global Summit at the UN building in New York City. "I want to do that by helping people, by crossing cultural barriers."

Suraj is the chief investment officer of the Easton's Group of Hotels—one of the largest hotel developers in Canada—and Reetu is its president and CEO. Reetu also made the list of Canada's Top 40 Under 40 and was named one of the country's most powerful women in 2019 by WXN, while Suraj lends his expertise to York University's incubator as an entrepreneur in residence and acts as a mentor for Techstars Colliers.

As if that wasn't enough, the siblings co-founded the angel investment firm Rogue Insight Capital.

"Reetu and I have worked together our entire lives. She's my best friend. We always planned to do everything together. About 10 years ago, we talked about the idea of launching a venture capital firm of some kind," says Suraj. "Two years ago, we made it final."

What makes Rogue Insight Capital different from other firms is its dedication to working with businesses that have at least one woman, visible minority, or immigrant in a leadership position. It also focuses on companies that make a difference within a community.

"There's a notion that investors can't make impact and for-profit investments," remarks Suraj, adding, "We're really showing the market that you can actually do both."

The siblings' optimistic outlook is largely due to their spirituality. They learned life-changing lessons on a trip to South India in 2011, when they met a man who would become their guru.

"He always says, 'Don't let something that's really silly take up any space in your mind. You're giving that person free real estate. Why would you do that?' It's those small kinds of quotes that he says which are really amazing," explains Reetu.

The siblings have since become advocates of spreading the message of happiness in their day-to-day lives as well as within the workplace. They say it's more important to live with happiness than for happiness.

"When I first heard that lesson, it kind of made sense, but I didn't really understand the basis of it," says Suraj. "The more I thought about it, the more I incorporated it into my work and how I thought about things. It really changes your perspective on life."

The siblings practice what they preach: Suraj is a mentor to the younger generation, and Reetu established the Shakti Society, an organization to empower women and instill spirituality.

Suraj and Reetu with Barack Obama

“In terms of philanthropy, it’s really important to both of us and to our entire family,” Reetu says. “I teach meditation for free. I feel that meditation has brought me so much clarity, so much peace, that I want to be able to bring this into the corporate world.”

When she’s not working or running meditation classes, Reetu can be found speaking to women to inspire them and help them realize their worth.

“I’m also hoping that five years from now, we won’t have this problem where people say, ‘Okay, so we need more women on this board. What are we going to do?’” she shares. “For me specifically, I work in real estate development. There are no women in real estate development, so five years from now, I want to walk into a room and it’s not just going to be me and a bunch of men around that table. I’m really hoping to change that.”

Suraj is also hoping for change and leading by example when it

comes to business. He wants to alter the perspective that investors might lose money if they work with largely untapped communities.

“These companies with diversity at the helm can be a lot more successful. I think less than 1 percent of all global venture capital goes to people who are either women, visible minorities, or immigrants,” he mentions. “It’s an absurdly small number, but their returns are consistently quite high. Even if you were to take the social side of it completely out of it, from a financial standpoint alone it actually makes perfect sense to be looking at these companies.”

Being bold and unafraid to be a catalyst for change is what allowed Suraj and Reetu to dive into their past and current projects. To the younger generation of budding philanthropists, they say it’s crucial to take the leap when it comes to any kind of endeavor.

“Often the idea of getting started in one of these fields, the idea of starting one of these missions, is way more convoluted and way more



Suraj and Reetu Gupta



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complicated until you actually start,” advises Suraj. “You don’t need to sit there and think about the perfect plan first and then execute.”

And it’s not always about the dollar signs. Donating time is just as important, he says, and so is teaching and inspiring others.

“I would use the words of the Dalai Lama,” says Reetu, when explaining how to push through adversity and doubt. “He says, ‘When you have a sincere vision that your path will be clear for you, then you will be able to go down that path.’ I have always believed that and I have always felt that. And there’s always going to be bumps in the road, but when it’s sincere, and your intention is sincere...that is when all of the paths will open for you.” **LM**