

# The Second Act



## WEEKLY LEARNINGS 2023

Weekly Learnings 4 / 2023

Archana Dutta, the 'conversation coach' anchors 'The Second Act' podcast. My ex-boss KK Sridhar is on it, as is Gautam Dutta (CEO-PVR Cinemas), so is the author Aarti Kelshikar and my friend Annadurai. Archana celebrated 100 episodes of The Second Act recently and I spoke at the event. Here is what I said:

1. A second Act is something you do, related or unrelated to what you did earlier. A second act can be a continuation of business, it can be philanthropic, or non-profit, and a monetizable hobby or talent.
2. Life is a multiact stage today, being in the wings doing just one thing is rarely fulfilling, so everyone needs a second, a third and a fourth act. The average life span is 74 years, kids now will live to be a 100. So, you have at least 10 to 15 years after 60 to contribute. Multiskilling is the foundation of second acts.
3. You never are fully prepared for a second or a third act – circumstances make it happen. A Second act enabler is digital platforms, with low cost and hi impact. Digital helps test your second act in beta mode.
4. Let's look at '**related- successful**' second acts. Steve Jobs is one, the technology czar. He left Apple for Pixar and returned to Apple to redefine six industries. India's current foreign minister S Jaishankar was Foreign Secretary and then joined Tata's as President - Global Corporate Affairs before turning Minister. All his acts were in the foreign diplomacy area, three related but distinct acts. Professor Ram Charan, my Guru, is a professor, a consultant and a prolific author, all in business concepts like Execution, Strategy etc. Sunil Gavaskar, Ravi Shastri are good examples of successful second acts in cricket.
5. Let's look at '**unrelated-unsuccessful**' second acts. Michael Porter, CK Prahalad are great minds, terrific Professors and Management thinkers. Both went into business with low success. Porter did Monitor and CK did Praja. Two examples of unrelated unsuccessful second acts are Amitabh Bachchan and Chiranjeevi. Both entered

politics to realize its futility. However, Amitabh Bachchan was a sublime KBC quizmaster, an amazing act after ABCLs failure.

6. We also have **‘unrelated - successful’** second acts. Three Chief Ministers of Tamil Nādu – Mr. MGR, Ms. Jayalalitha, and Mr. Karunanidhi all were big names in movies, and all entered politics to make a mark. Mr. NT Rama Rao’s legacy doesn’t qualify as a total success. Ronald Reagan is a great global example. Vijay Amritraj is a super example, he covered Masters golf after Tennis! Kapil Dev represented India in Golf!
7. In the **‘related – unsuccessful’** second acts we have singers in Bollywood trying acting, actors turning directors or producers, in advertising, we have creative directors, successful in one agency, but sad in a new Ad agency. This is true for CEOs when they job hop and fail in a related industry.
8. A big danger is believing one’s invincibility due to decades spent in an industry. Dev Anand was a great, successful actor. However, the moment he started being editor, story writer, screenplay, lyricist, in effect an all in one, he was unsuccessful. Jack of All Acts has unsuccessful outcomes.
9. What can professionals do a second/third act in? They can teach, write, get onto board directorships, anchor programs or podcasts, start coaching, and consulting. Here, a good network and a solid reputation are gold dust.
10. Second acts need Courage and Contribution. Courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to overcome it. Every second act causes weak knees and a weaker heart. If your second act contributes to people beyond making money for you, that’s fantastic and will be valued.

Summarizing:

	Unrelated Area	Related Area
Successful second act	MGR Karunanidhi Jayalalitha Amitabh Bachchan Vijay Amritraj Kapil Dev	Steve Jobs S Jaishankar Ram Charan Gavaskar Ravi Shastri Rahul Dravid
Unsuccessful second act	Michael Porter CK Prahalad Amitabh Bachchan	Singers turning actors Actors doing more than acting Ad agency creatives CEOs

So, Mr./Ms. Professional do start... your second act beckons you. There are 100 inspiring stories on Archana's podcast.

Enjoy

Shiv

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27 January 2023