

“ A JOURNEY IN DESIGN..... ”

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When it comes to design, Ayodhaya doesn't repeat herself; instead, she recognizes that each client has their unique vision for their project, and she and her team collaborate closely with them to make their aspirations a reality.

Ayodhaya Jayewardene, the Managing Director of Ayointerior, is a proud Bishopian. She had previously acquired a Bachelor of Arts in History at the age of 22, but when she returned to Sri Lanka, she had few employment alternatives other than teaching. She did, however, earn a second degree in Interior Design from Birmingham City University a few years later. Ayodhaya worked at two prominent architecture and design firms in Colombo for the following several years before deciding that it was time to establish her own Interior Design studio after nearly eight years in the profession.

When asked about the most difficult hurdles she experienced as an entrepreneur, Ayodhaya said that taking the initial step was the most crucial. After working in the industry for around eight years, she realized she wanted to open her own design firm. She admits that self-doubt held her back for a while, but after speaking with others who had previously embarked on the entrepreneurial path, she decided she was ready. Ayodhaya says she's never been happier in her business life, which she's been doing for about three years now. She notes that while there are always hurdles and new things to learn when running a business, she wakes up every day with a sense of self-satisfaction and fulfillment.

Values are the cornerstone for every entrepreneur. Ayointerior values relevant, good design, and high-quality finishes, among other things. Ayodhaya notes that because client briefs and goals vary from project to project, it's crucial to make each design distinctive to the client. Rather than following industry trends, she draws inspiration from culture, fashion, art, and architecture, claiming that using these features as inspiration and the backbone in their final designs transforms them into timeless practical environments.

Apart from Interior Design Consultancy, Ayodhaya emphasizes that they provide turnkey solutions for the production component of the project, as clients with a hectic schedule prefer this service because her team manages the entire project from start to finish. If it's a corporate client, she adds, they consider the company's branding while creating the design. She makes it apparent that she and her team realize that the building's interior, exterior, and even semblance must all be in sync with the brand and its personality.

In terms of handling the current pandemic and how it has impacted the business, Ayodhaya explains that as a design studio, they are continuously on the road, checking on the quality and craftsmanship of ongoing projects at sites and in their workshop. When the pandemic first struck, all site and workshop activity came to a halt, forcing them to carry out design work from their homes. During the most recent lockdown, however, a few of their sites continued to operate, and they maintained in touch with them via site progress photographs and WhatsApp video conversations, which is now the new normal, and they've adjusted accordingly.

In summary, when asked why she chose to pursue a career in interior design, Ayodhaya emphasizes that a 9-5 desk job has never been her cup of tea. She desired a career that offered variety, adventure, and creativity. The field of Interior Design was that to her, speaking on how she spends some days in the studio designing and others out in the field, on job sites, or in the shop. She'd have to dress up to see clients some days, and other days she'd casually be in jeans, flip flops, and a t-shirt. As an individual, a business owner, and a designer, she enjoys the variety and freedom that this sector offers.

“It makes no difference how many peaks you reach if there was no pleasure in the climb” – Oprah Winfrey sums up Ayodhaya's approach to life and work. She is a firm believer in hard effort and endurance, emphasizing that one must remember that their journey/climb is theirs alone and that no one else can walk/climb it for them. The speed with which one climbs is governed by their activities and the amount of effort they put in. Although she believes that hard work will lead to success sooner or later, she also regards that one should enjoy the process rather than focusing on the ultimate result.