

IMRAN AMED

THE BUSINESS OF FASHION

The Business of Fashion founder and editor in chief Imran Amed is an early riser. This tendency to wake up before dawn can be traced back to his childhood. “When I was growing up, I had a really insatiable appetite for reading and learning,” he explains. If he had a test the following day, Amed (a self-described “big old nerd”) would set his alarm for 4 a.m. to study. “No one forced me to do that,” he clarifies. “I always had this thing driven into me from a very young age about excellence and just doing the best that I could.”

Now, instead of waking up for the sake of learning, the young entrepreneur starts each day with a moment to himself; he meditates. “I’m never the best version of myself when I don’t have that time in the morning to reflect,” he admits. Meditation, he says, has a long tradition on the Indian subcontinent that his family hails from, and his grandfather also used to meditate daily. “What I learned from my meditation, which is based in Buddhist philosophy, is that you should maintain equanimity, regardless of what’s going on,” he reveals. “If bad stuff happens, don’t react to it or reject it; just accept it for what it is, and it will pass.” He applies the same lesson to successes: “Celebrate them, but don’t let them define you,” he advises.

→ “Fashion is a \$2.4 trillion industry,” Amed told *GQ* in 2017. “What \$2.4 trillion industry would be happy with sycophantic fluffy reportage?”



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While attending university in Montreal, Amed worked at the Gap on weekends, an experience that he says gave him insight into retail and consumer behavior.



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Meditation also played a significant role in the creation of his multiplatform company The Business of Fashion (as such, it has also become a daily practice for a group of his employees). Amed hasn't always been an industry insider—he studied management consulting and went on to work for the firm McKinsey & Company, until at 29, he realized that he missed the “mix of left-and right-brain work” that he thrives on. He left for a 10-day Vipassana meditation retreat in South Africa (“You couldn't read, write, speak or make eye contact with anyone”), a break that proved life altering.

“It took that pivotal moment, that time to pause and reflect, to really get to know what I wanted,” he says. The London-based Canadian explored creative industries from film to music but ultimately landed on fashion. A friend of his, who at the time worked for the British Fashion Council, snuck him into shows and he “just felt really drawn to it.”

The inclination wasn't altogether new. As a child, Amed watched the Canadian television show *Fashion File* “religiously.” As a 10-year-old, he was enraptured by the international stories shared by the show's host, Tim Blanks (now *The Business of Fashion's* editor-at-large). “It made me see that fashion was more than clothes, more than fashion shows,” Amed recalls. “There were all of these interesting people who made this world tick.”

It is those people who continue to drive Amed today. “When you're in the position as a journalist or writer, you get to sit down and

interview incredible people and ask them basically whatever you want,” he says. “Every day, I get to meet people like that and learn from them. Maybe it's not even learning a concrete skill; it's learning what drives them, how they live their lives, where they get their ideas or how they built their businesses.” Though it's been over a decade since he started the company, Amed's love for his job remains palpable.

“With no background in fashion or media or technology, I'm now running a fashion, media and technology business. Every day over the past 10 years or so has been a very steep and very exciting learning curve for me,” he explains. After running through the various skills he's acquired and experts he's been able to work alongside, he adds, “All of this is new to me, and I love that. There are so many different facets to what I do, so it's never boring.” Today, Amed has a long list of accomplishments—he has been named to *Fast Company's* annual list of the Most Creative People in Business, received CFDA's Media Award in honor of Eugenia Sheppard and was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire for his service to the fashion industry, to name a few. Yet Amed is humble and very aware of his role. “My job is being the leader and helping to provide direction, inspiration and guidance for a growing group of people,” he says. “That takes energy, and you have to find the energy from within yourself to do that every day. I'm really grateful for this opportunity that I have, and I want to make the best of it.”*