



Aarti Shahani

Topics

Activism and Social Justice, Best Selling and Award Winning Authors, Common Reads/FYE, Culture and Society, Diversity and Inclusion, Immigration, Journalism, Science and Technology, Women's Interests

Travels From

California

Bio

Aarti Shahani is an award-winning journalist, critically acclaimed author and seasoned public speaker who's been invited to deliver keynotes at companies including Google, Apple, Starbucks, Square and the Skoll Foundation, as well as leading universities and high schools. You can hear Aarti on NPR or watch her on Amanpour & Company, where she is a regular contributor. You can also listen to her show "Art of Power" (a co-production with WBEZ), which features leaders across industries, from grassroots activism to entertainment to Big Tech. Shahani is not your typical journalist. She spent her 20s as an activist, working in prisons. She then pivoted to business reporting and enjoyed a meteoric rise at NPR, as Silicon Valley correspondent. She has guest hosted the flagship shows All Things Considered and KQED's Forum, and contributed to Planet Money. She's had in-depth conversations with Tim Cook of Apple and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella (even traveling through Mexico City with him), as well as

jailhouse lawyers and hackers. “I enjoy people who have intense life experiences, from whatever walk of life.” Shahani is host and creator of the new flagship show “Art of Power” (a co-production with WBEZ), which features leaders across industries, from grassroots activism to Big Tech. Aarti’s first book, *Here We Are* (Macmillan), chronicles her family's 30-year campaign to make America home. The Shahanis' journey from undocumented immigrants to citizens included extreme ups and downs -- poverty, prisons, deportation, kidnapping, Harvard. It's a rare window into the first generation experience, youth activism, and working-class Asian Americans. An Amazon bestseller, the memoir has garnered critical acclaim and been added to school curriculum as essential reading.

SPEECHES

First Gen & Proud The immigrant has become an object of distrust, scorn and even hatred. Yet for many migrants, including Aarti, this identity is a source of profound pride. Her Asian American family fought three decades to make this country home. For almost half that time, Aarti played family lawyer, campaigning to stop the deportation of her father and hundreds of other immigrant New Yorkers. Her journey from undocumented kid in Queens to NPR Silicon Valley Correspondent is nothing short of remarkable. Aarti shares her inspiring story with humor and searing lessons on the American Dream, as well as the nightmares that threaten to take it away. You’ll leave her talk seeing this country and your own human potential differently.

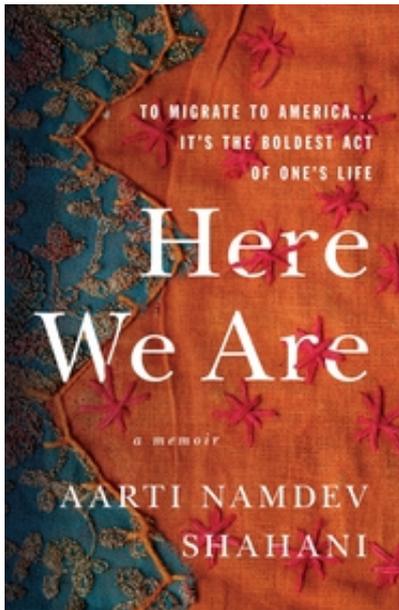
Creativity Aarti wrote her riveting memoir *Here We Are* in six months flat. At NPR, she enjoyed an unprecedented, meteoric rise to lead correspondent in Silicon Valley. She turned COVID-19 into a time for deep creativity, and designed and sold “The Art of Power.” It’s a new show on leadership that Aarti is hosting for WBEZ – the premiere NPR station that created *This American Life* and *Wait Wait... Don’t Tell Me!*. Aarti shares unconventional wisdom on how to turn one’s passion into a career.

Women’s Empowerment Aarti’s parents came to the U.S. after her mom was abused by extended family. Aarti grew up between cultures, fighting patriarchy in her traditional home, and deportation agents who threatened the men in her family. This is, in some ways, every woman’s story. Let’s talk about it.

Allyship How can we empathize with co-workers, see power disparities clearly, and use the privilege at our fingertips to improve culture? That is, how do we become deeply meaningful allies? Aarti shares the roll that allies have played in her life, helping her to succeed as the scholarship kid at a fancy private school, and as an unconventional journalist at NPR.

BOOKS

[Here We Are](#) To Migrate To America...It's the Boldest Act of One's Life



Celadon Books

Here We Are: American Dreams, American Nightmares follows the lives of Aarti, the precocious scholarship kid at one of Manhattan's most elite prep schools, and her dad, the shopkeeper who mistakenly sells watches and calculators to the notorious Cali drug cartel. Together, the two represent the extremes that coexist in our country, even within a single family, and a truth about immigrants that gets lost in the headlines. It isn't a matter of good or evil; it's complicated.

Trade Paperback

REVIEWS: "Aarti is both a phenomenal speaker and helped communicate hard, complex topics in a manner that made everyone feel safe and comfortable. And on top of that she did it virtually. Thanks to her, it's allowed us to accelerate our conversations on race, diversity, and equity."

- DJ Patil, first U.S. Chief Data Scientist (appointed under President Obama), CTO of Devoted Health

"Aarti shared her story and facilitated a conversation for the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship's virtual Fall Conference in October. Aarti's conversation was so personal yet touched upon a host of universal themes, from the power of personal narrative, to navigating family dynamics, building a career and making a mark as an immigrant. Aarti's journey became a launching pad for a deep and meaningful conversation amongst the fellowship community during the conference. By sharing her story in such an honest and open way, Aarti inspired this already accomplished group of young adults to consider how both their struggles and their triumphs can help them make a difference in the world."

- Craig Harwood, Director, Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship For New Americans

"Aarti's discussion about the immigrant experience, our legal system, and her personal journey was as interesting and compelling as her memoir. The presentation resonated in a thought provoking way that is sure to generate ongoing talks and reflection about today's meaning of the American Dream."

- Malachi Jones, Williams & Connolly LLP

"Aarti shared her family's story, as detailed in her book *Here We Are*, with our AI2 team in late Summer 2020. As an AI research institute, our invited talks often feature new learnings from renowned AI researchers or paper highlights from top-tier conferences. Hearing Aarti's story, which speaks to our collective humanity, was a welcome and refreshing change. Despite the bitter battles she details that touch on a flawed immigration and justice system, her talk was inspiring, honest, and relatable. Aarti speaks openly and conversationally about her deeply personal story. In this year filled with challenges,

Aarti's talk was a highlight."

- Oren Etzioni, CEO Allen Institute for AI (AI2)