

Twenty Questions



Shay Popat of the Chinese Fireworks Company in London Road, was 47 the day he wrote these answers. He lives with his wife and two children in Sheffield and has been selling fireworks for 30 years, establishing one of the UK's biggest single retailers. He supplies celebrities, stately homes, councils... even nudist colonies

Rocket man who makes sparks fly

1 When you were a child, what did you dream of being when you grew up?

A millionaire!

2 Can you remember any advice your school careers adviser gave you?

You will never be a millionaire!

3 How important was your education in getting where you are now?

Not very important, but having dedication, determination, being humble and striving to be successful all helped towards achieving my goals in life.

4 What was your first proper job?

Working at Footprint Tools.

5 Did you have a Saturday or part-time job?

Working in a local chippy

6 Do you think young people have a tougher or easier time in their chosen career these days?

Much easier in some ways harder in others, data required is to hand, via internet, that makes life easier, but job security makes life tougher.

7 If you weren't where you are now, what would you be doing?

Selling postage stamps on the Wicker (was a postmaster in 1976).

8 What is your ultimate goal?

To have wealth in health, wealth in friends, and wealth in itself, (also a wealthy second wife!)

9 What has been your greatest success?

Creating the largest single independent fireworks outlet in the UK.

10 And your most dismal failure?

Still awaiting.

11 What has been the most rewarding personal experience of your life?

Having customers come back year after year, giving me excellent feed back of the service, quality and their pleasure of fireworks I have recommended and supplied.

12 Are there any things you regret in your life?

Not having a crystal ball at a young age.

13 Do you have a role model?

My father.

14 How do you get away from the stresses of working life?

Champs followed by Nonna's, followed by Vodka Revolution, finishing off at Napoleons for breakfast.

15 Whose opinion do you most value?

My father's.

16 What was the best piece of advice you ever received?

When I was young and I had asked my father to pay me a wage for working at the family business on Saturdays whilst at school. His reply was "this is all for you in the future, nothing is mine and yours, it is all ours."

17 What would be the best piece of advice you could give?

Treat others as you would like them to treat you. Stand up with double zeal and march on towards your goal, hence laugh out your shortcomings and difficulties. Your goal is at the other end.

18 Retirement - when will it be and what will you do?

November, 6. The day after Bonfire Night. They all say that I only work five weeks a year. So I cannot wait for November 6. What will I do? Any suggestions?

19 How do you think other people see you?

They say I have the biggest tocket in town.

20 And how do you see yourself?

I have rockets large enough for NASA.