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Rising Star: Adya Beasley

By [Ashley Alexander](#) July 7, 2017



Adya Beasley was deep into editing mode when I called to interview her for her recent [Rising Star award](#). Adya is a Senior Video Journalist at [The Wall Street Journal](#) in New York, where she has worked for the last year and a half. She has also worked with *MTV*, *The Star-Ledger*, *PBS News*, and *NPR*. With no such thing as a “typical” day in her work, Adya is usually in one of these modes: writing, shooting or editing.

Adya has a lot to show for her hard work, as she is a seven-time New York Emmy Award winning reporter. She has done it all, from works on the education system to documenting [the process of selecting who has the role of George Washington in the annual reenactment of the crossing the Delaware on Christmas Day](#) (which, by the way, is very similar to the selection process of the *American Idol*, according to Adya.)

One of the Emmy-winning films was one of her first major assignments at the Star-Ledger, “[State of Reflection: New Jersey 10 Years after 9/11](#).” Adya had six weeks to compile the photos she was given and make them into a 30-minute documentary. She struggled with weaving together all the voices and continuously found herself pacing the room or staring at the walls. Once figuring out the composition of a particularly difficult section, she cried tears of happiness. That is when she knew she wanted to be a documentary maker.

“When you can cry from happiness after hours – no, weeks – of frustration and still not hate your job, that’s when you know,” Adya says.

The awards aren’t everything; she has other reasons for choosing this career: opportunities to travel, gaining life experiences, attending events and general life enrichment. The life experiences give her the opportunity to understand other people better.

“It changes you...after each story you’re different than you were before,” she says.

She wants people to know journalism isn’t dry and boring. Despite the image some outlets present, journalism doesn’t require sensationalism. She makes sure to get this point across whenever she has the chance to, whether it’s speaking with high schoolers, college students or family friends.

Adya also advises journalists to have their own voice, despite how easy it is to get caught up in what others in the industry are doing. If you keep your own technique and voice, people will eventually recognize it. In general, she believes in focusing on the things you do naturally.

“People should choose jobs in something that they do without being asked,” Adya says. “Ask ‘What would I have been doing anyway?’”

Adya would be a journalist anyway. She’s a natural storyteller; reporting came early on. She would come home from preschool each day with a report on the day. As she got older, Adya remembers watching the nightly news at each hour, despite the stories being the same.

While still young, she signed up for classes at a local independent media station. At 17 years old she began interning with *MTV*. She studied broadcast journalism and international relations at New York University. After graduation in 2009, she found entering the industry at her age to be a huge advantage.

“The young people who choose to stay in the industry despite an unpredictable future are being looked to,” she says. “People want to know what young people are thinking – ‘What is the future, what’s next?’”

Adya’s own thoughts on the future of the industry are uncertain yet optimistic. She believes that people will always have a desire to hear stories that help in understanding other people’s lives. While not concerned with the future format or platform of journalism because she’s open to anything, Adya knows there is a cycle of what works for the industry, that there is always a difference in the news as time passes, and that news is a general reflection of the world we are in.

For Adya, journalism hasn’t so much been about finding a career for herself – it’s just who she is.



Ashley Alexander



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