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WE EVEN HAVE AN ALL LADIES ADULT COMEDY NIGHT JUST SO WOMEN CAN TAKE A BREAK FROM THEIR DAILY ROUTINE, COME OUT WITH THEIR GIRLFRIENDS, AND UNWIND

signed me up as the opening act for a renowned comedians show and that's when I started writing my material and discovered myself." While she is inspired by her mentor Faiza Saleem who taught her improvisational comedy, and names Sarah Silverman as her favourite comedian, she has opened shows for some of the top comedians in Pakistan like Junaid Akram, Tabish Hashmi and Faheem Adam.

With a busy day job, Natalia feels that millennials have evolved to multitask. "I believe life is too short to be stuck with one boring job. For me every day is different. I transition from being a dentist to a comedian to an actor and finally to a writer." But it has not all been hunky dory. Last year, she faced death threats for a video she uploaded on Facebook that offended the Sindhi community. "I survived a whole lot of backlash that I faced for being a bold comedian. The attacks were not on my comedy, but more on my character, which is something that women everywhere face. I

also think that the audience tends to sexualize women on stage instead of finding them funny. So I try to dress down as much as I can, wear sneakers, and act tough on stage."

There have, however, been memorable moments too and she counts her performance at *Lahooti Melo* for an audience of 2500 (that egged her to continue) as her best. She believes that comedy is a way to make positive change, and that women have the power to empower other women through comedy. "Standing on stage with a mic in your hand is the most powerful feeling ever and through comedy you can talk about anything and everything in a very light hearted manner. What we now need is more acceptability and free speech."

Natalia is also part of The Khawatoons, Pakistan's first all-girls comedy troupe. "This is a sisterhood; we uplift each other and empower other women with our comedy. We even have an all ladies adult comedy night just so



women can take a break from their daily routine, come out with their girlfriends, and unwind."

Her advice for women who want to try their hand at stand-up comedy is simple. "If you think you are witty come join us at open mic and try it out. You might just surprise yourself, because comedy is therapeutic – it allows you to speak your mind."

Natalia is currently writing a feature film and a web series that she is really excited about as

both revolve around women as the main characters. In her spare time, she loves gardening and admits that she plants whatever seeds she finds to see if they grow. "I challenge myself to try something new so I am either learning a new song on my harmonium, reading a book on how to be better storyteller, playing with my nephews, or just hanging out with friends. All of this is very conducive for my creative process."

