

From the moment he'd been told of his scholarship to the University of Namibia Medical School, Shilli wasn't sure it was the right choice. He and his twin, Matheus, talked about little else. It was March. Time was running out.

Shilli and Matheus shared a bedroom. After another long night talking about each and every pro and con, it was 3 A.M. when Shilli awoke from a nightmare, immediately shaking Matheus. Shilli - "I was lost, no idea where I was, where to go. It was awful." Matheus knew well what it felt alike to be afraid. Matheus - "Once you decide, everything will change."

"Shilli - You already know what you're going to do. So does Neil. If I turn down the scholarship, Mom and Dad won't just be disappointed, they'll be furious. I'll have to move out, find work, a place to live. Matheus - "You're the only one who can make the decision."

Shilli and Matheus' mother's best friends, Elcey and her husband Henrico, lived on a nearby farm. Matheus was going to spend the next few years working with them, learning about farm life, helping in any way he could. His two interests were sound waves and decreasing world hunger. He'd never forget the first time he'd heard someone say "If you don't eat, you die." Neil, Shilli and Matheus' cousin, now the oldest living person with Progeria, had decided to teach others about graphology, how certain writing exercises could positively affect feelings and behavior. Shilli, Matheus and Neil; from early childhood, the three, nicknamed "Tri," "Um," and "Virate," never judged one another.

At dinner that night, everyone talked about Namibia's transferring their broadcasting from analogue to digital. Shilli - "Frequencies are everywhere. Underwater sounds, ice quakes, protons, alpha sound waves, meditation." Matheus - "After all the research you've done, what's the most important thing you learned?" Shilli - "When we first went to the farm, seeing how sound waves healed Dankie, the horse who'd been hurt. If sound waves can help the physical body with injury, stress, illness, and trauma, isn't it obvious that's the future of medicine?"

Since he could remember, when facing problems, doubts, frustrations, Shilli was drawn to the deepwater natural harbor he loved. The following morning, walking in the cool morning fog, he thought about what happened on the same beach, three years past. Hearing a voice in his head, “Do what you love,” he’d looked down to see a piece of driftwood. When he began carving, people came from miles away to buy his unique printing blocks. He’d never been happier.

The following year, on the exact stretch of sand, a white Pelican landed directly in his path. “We need your help. Learn about frequencies.” In an instant, a logical thinker became an idealist.

Loving the feel of sand on his bare feet, he asked himself question after question. “How could I understand what a Pelican was communicating? How was it clear to me what Marcus, Snug and Youri, (a Labrador, tabby Cat and a Kelpie), were saying?” Answering his own question. “You weren’t the only one. Emilie, Julian, Asha, and Samuel heard exactly what you did!” Thoughts spilled into his mind faster than he could keep up. Marcus - “Ask for help.” Samuel - “I usually pay attention to my instincts.”

At that precise moment, another white Pelican flew toward him, landing at his feet. “All of us. Frequencies” As the bird flew away, Shilli turned to face the ocean, yelling. “Humans aren’t the only ones on this planet who can communicate. What about the Venezuelan poodle moth and the coconut octopus?” Now, finally, everything was clear. He’d continue to study frequencies, not in medicine, but in the field of communication. It was time for an interspecies corridor.

That night, he had another dream. In a forest glade, a light rain falling, he watched as a rabbit, white crow, porcupine and an animal he’d never seen before, a combination of a goat and an antelope, sat together in the clearing. Waking up, he remembered how safe and at peace he felt being there.

The next day, while watching a cricket match, Shilli told Matheus and Neil his decision. “Matheus - “What are you going to do?” “I have no idea.” During the trial in the Hague, each of us knew what changes we would champion. I’ve changed my mind. Imagine what the natural world, animals, birds, cetaceans, could teach us when we find the way to communicate.”

Sitting down to dinner, Shilli had rehearsed what he would say to his parents about not going to medical school. Before he had a chance, his mother handed him a large envelope. The invitation to Asha’s July wedding in Chandigarh, India had a handwritten note. “We’ve rented a house for everyone. Can’t wait to see you.”

Emilie, Julian, Asha and Lapis would be together for the first time since the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony last December. A perfect time to tell them his idea.

The week before leaving for Asha’s wedding, Shilli received a letter from Paul Osprey, Raoul Lapin, Rene Hibou and Jane Green, the four attorneys he now considered his friends.

“Dear Shilli,

Go ahead and make your plans. Decide what you are going to do with your life but, as you do, remember that there are people places and things that are, at the moment that you are reading these words, on their way to you, to change your life in ways you cannot imagine. We invite you to spend a week with us in Bhutan, beginning September 28th. We will be out of touch until then. All travel arrangements have been made, your airfare and lodging our gift. If you or your parents have any questions, please contact Raoul Lapin’s office at the United Nations in Geneva.”

The four lawyers had been among the first Shilli told about his decision to turn down his scholarship. Keeping them up to date about his interspecies corridor research was a given.