



Interview of Tamara

Family & Childhood

Who cared for you when you were a child?

Tamara: It's a very a broad question. Who cared for me the most is my dad who raised me.

Interviewer: Can you tell me three things about him, things that are meaningful for you?

Tamara: Okay. Because he's always there for me. He always does everything in his power to help me. He always loves me unconditionally.

Interviewer: How does that manifest itself? Give me an example of two, three attitudes. You said "he loves me unconditionally", what makes you say that or how does it come about?

Tamara: Well, for me the description of unconditional love is that someone loves you, and respects you for who you are, and whatever happens - it doesn't matter what you do, you know. So it's like even if you make mistakes, you can always go back to this person, and it's fine.

Interviewer: You have brothers and sisters?

Tamara: Yes, I do. Yeah. I have two little brothers, and one older brother, one older sister.

Interviewer: How did they help you grow up?

Tamara: I grew up with my little brothers until I was teenager or like a teenager. I'm very close with my little brothers, and then afterwards I also became close with my older siblings. They helped me a lot. They support me a lot too.

Interviewer: What kind of interactions you have with them? What kind of help?

Tamara: Well, whatever I need I guess. Like friends they help each other out, you know.

Interviewer: Someone else who made a difference in your childhood?

Tamara: I had two ex-boyfriends who are also very nice, and supported me a lot. Yeah. I guess you can say that they made a difference.

Interviewer: Do you remember a moment when you were a child, when you felt very special in the eyes of somebody?

Tamara: Yes, always in the eyes of my dad.

Interviewer: Is there any, I would say, concrete moment or concrete case?

Tamara: Because he always thinks that I can do anything or everything. I don't know what's the correct word; everything, I guess.

Interviewer: So it's the confidence that he has in you, and he shows that to you?

Tamara: Yes. Even if it's not always true, haha. That's what makes it so special.

Growing

When did you feel that you had become an adult, and how do you define it?

Tamara: I think the first time that I thought that I'm more mature or an adult I guess is when I moved to New York. For me the definition of an adult is when you make choices which don't only affect yourself, if that makes sense?

Interviewer: What are the good memories from childhood? What are the differences between childhood and now?

Tamara: I'm grateful for my entire childhood - with its ups and downs. I don't even think that there are bad times, I think everything teaches you so much - so you should be grateful for them as well, if that makes sense. So yeah, there's nothing I would say I wouldn't have wanted to have or would have wanted to be different.

Between being autonomous, and being cared for, where does your heart lie

Tamara: What is autonomous?

Interviewer: Autonomous, meaning you do things on your own, and you fend for yourself. You have to take care of yourself, but you are free to do what you want. Being cared for is when someone is providing you with what you need or comfort, and things like that. Where does your heart lead you? What do you prefer fundamentally?

Tamara: Oh, I see. Well, I think one definitely has a preference which would be for me, being more alone, and autonomous. In the end, in reality, you need people to help you, you need them, because you can't do everything on your own. That's the reality.

Has anything changed in recent times that you believe made you a better person?

Tamara: No. I don't know.

Interviewer: You were good from the start ?

Tamara: (Laughs)

Interviewer 2: She was always a good one.

Interviewer: So no moment where you said, I'm happy I moved on, or I'm happy I'm not doing this compared to what I was doing before, and that makes me a better person.

Tamara: Okay. Well, there are definitely things I'm happy about. Maybe I can't be friendly with the term "better person", because that could imply that I wasn't a good person before and I don't even know if I'm a good person now. The term is a little bit weird to me. Yeah, I'm definitely happy about being able to live and work in New York now, and like yeah, that's what I'm definitely happy about.

Interviewer: Is that a move that you have decided yourself, that you have organized yourself?

Tamara: Well, you can't say that - again - it's not myself only. I had a lot of support. For instance, I got a scholarship - Fulbright scholarship - which made me able to come to the US, and study here. And my dad helped me a lot because you also have to eat and, you know, live somewhere. And pay the remaining percentage of the tuition fee. My dad has supported me a lot. Not only financially, also emotionally, I can always tell him how great or shitty my day was. Then, you know, everyone who helped me with my applications, all the essays or, like, whatever I had to write, and provide. So yeah, I had a lot of help from friends and my family.

Interviewer: How long ago did you move to New York?

Tamara: In September it's two years.

Interviewer: So quite recently.

Tamara: Yeah, I can't say anymore one and a half years. It's about two years.

What makes you beautiful?

Tamara: I don't know.

Interviewer: What do you think?

Tamara: I think beauty is a choice made by the viewer. For instance, the same way I decide for myself that this person is beautiful - someone else doesn't agree and doesn't see it this way. And both answers are correct. Because they are opinions. And everyone has a different opinion. So if you say I'm beautiful then that's your impression. I think it always depends on the one who's sitting across from you, you know. So I can't answer that question.

Interviewer: Do you define beautiful more as a physical characteristic or more as an attitude based characteristic?

Tamara: Well, for me it's always more attitude. Of course, you can also say that it's physical, but I would then rather say that people are pretty or they're good looking, you know, not beautiful. Because beauty comes from the inside, it's a character or a way a person express themselves or what they do. When someone is beautiful they're also a bit magical to me.

Friends

Can you think of three objects that your friends would associate with you?

Tamara: Can you give me an example?

Interviewer: I remember I had a friend. Every morning at around 11 a.m., she would open a can of Coke, and drink it. The Coke was kind of the sacred moment in the morning where she would have a pause at work.

Unfortunately, she passed away; that was a sad story. When we spoke of her afterwards, everybody said, you remember every morning when she used to bring that can of Coke that was part of what was representing her.

It can be something that has to do with, you know, your trait, your traits of character. If you like skateboarding, and you're just wild on the sidewalks, you might have a skateboard as an object that represents you, but it's really open. Think of it maybe for a while and let it run at the back of your head.

We'll come back to the question a bit later.

Tamara: Thank you.

What are you known for by your friends? What do they tell you about yourself?

Tamara: Well, I guess I can be very stubborn, and a perfectionist, which can be very annoying, and that everything has to be a certain way, I guess.

Then, I can forgive very easily, and work things out, but on the other hand, I can also move on very fast if something is just not working out.

Interviewer 2: I told you, she's precise.

Interviewer: Yeah, I heard you (smiles).

Tamara: Yeah, it was like how many questions do you have for one-and-a-half-hours? (Laughs)

Interviewer: No, it really depends. Some questions can open a whole field. If you want to tell a story, it can take a while. For me it's very important that the interview runs at a pace that is fine with you.

Tamara: Right. Yes. Some editor just told me, "oh, can't you write more", like "why are your answers so short". So I've been definitely told this in the past, but it's like: these are the answer I want to give, you know.

What was the last gift that you gave to someone?

Tamara: Two days ago - a big flower bouquet, and empty book and a little teddy bear. I gave it to my friend Siqin, because she helped me when I came back from Germany, and she let me stay with her for a while when I came back, and I didn't have an apartment yet. Yes, she helped me a lot. And I wanted to say thank you. Yeah. She likes to write so I bought her an empty book so she can write something.

Interviewer: If you go back to the three objects question, if you think of three objects that would that your friends would associate with you, and why would they associate them with you. Has anyone any object come up in your head?

Tamara: Do you know Family Guy, the TV series?

There's an app or something where you can make your own characters, you can be a "Family Guy". It's so funny, you should check it out. I was playing it with two other friends. We were starting to make the characters on our own, but then we realized - we should let the other person do them for each other. So my friend made my character wear black clothes only.

So I guess that's something I could maybe be identified with.

Yeah, that's the only thing I came up with.

Interviewer: That's cute. The black is the color of photographers so that they don't reflect in their images. Does that make you choose it?

Tamara: No. Haha. I just feel comfortable in black. It's comfortable but still elegant, it's simple but still determined.

Life

What is hard when you get up in the morning?

Tamara: I think for me sometimes the hardest part is falling asleep, I'm a nightowl.

I don't meditate. I don't have any rituals so I just wake up, shower, get dressed, and leave the house. That's pretty much it.

What is your most pleasant moment that you regularly go through in a day or in a week?

Tamara: When I achieved something, I think that's a very good moment. When a new job is coming up or I wrapped up another job or you know sometimes it's just a nice message from my family or my friends.

What makes you happy when you've done something with someone?

Tamara: Can you give me an example?

Interviewer: Well, I also like photography. When I've done a photo shoot with a model, the interaction with that person for me is extremely satisfying because it's a joint creation. What satisfies me is when I see the enjoyment I was able to generate also with the model, that is not just unidirectional. So when there's a good exchange that isn't unidirectional is one thing that satisfies me a lot. That would be an example for me regarding that question.

Tamara: Photoshoots used to make me happy, now Film shoots make me happy - a lot !

On the opposite, what makes you sad?

Tamara: I think I am very good in taking criticism, when someone tells me why they don't like something. I think what I'm not good at is dealing with someone who is mean, like, if there's no reason to insult someone or be mean about something, because they have a problem with

themselves or someone else, they're anxious and not confident, I guess that makes me sad. But sometimes I also don't care. It depends on the person.

What is your favorite tradition?

Tamara: Christmas. It's because I spend time with my family. There's also been Christmas eve's where I was only with my dad, which is very nice.

Christmas holidays are the only four days a year where nobody bothers you about anything, literally. You can just eat and drink as much as you like.

What puts you at ease with other people or what unsettles you?

Tamara: In my personal life?

Interviewer: When you interact with people personally or professionally, whatever makes sense for you.

Tamara: I mean, professionally it's a different topic. Because I think as long as everyone does their job, I'm very comfortable, you know. In my personal life, I don't like when people judge how somebody looks or dresses. It doesn't unsettle me, it just says a lot about the person who is saying it.

What would unsettle you or make you uncomfortable?

Tamara: Well, I just think that people who are so concerned about how somebody looks, don't have a character I can agree with, if that makes sense or I don't match with, I think that's a better way to say it.

Caring

Who takes care of you?

Tamara: Regarding what?

Interviewer: On mostly daytoday basis or regular basis if you need something, if you need help, who can you go to and who gets it for you, if anyone?

Tamara: I mean, financially, I'm taking care of myself. If that's the question.

Interviewer: Yes, so you're pretty much, at the moment, dealing with daytoday life on your own. You have relationship, but not, I would say, kind of living together and one taking care of the other or something like that?

Tamara: Oh, I see. No, I'm single.

Who are the people that you care for?

Tamara: Well, I don't have children, so this way I would say, I'm not taking care of anyone.

What is your superpower and how do you use it?

Tamara: I was told that I can be very persuasive. Yeah, I guess that's my super power.

How would you describe the color yellow to somebody who's blind?

Tamara: Well, I mean it can be a warning signal, but it can also be a very bright and warm color. I guess it's a matter of perspective.

The World

Do you see or do you find if there is someone out there doing something right at the moment?

Tamara: Definitely. Everyone is doing *something* right.

If you had a magic wand and you could roll back something that happened in the past, in your past, or more generally, in the whole world's past, what would it be?

Tamara: In the whole world's past?

Interviewer: In the whole world. Anything that you would undo if you could?

Tamara: Well, I think that wars are always something which I would undo if I could, and prevent them from happening in the future. Because so many people die. I don't think there is anything which could justify that. I mean Germany is the best example.

And regarding my own personal life, there is nothing I would want to wipe out because I think, you know, it's like a puzzle. It only becomes the whole picture when all the pieces are included.

The future

Where do you see yourself in the next few years?

Interviewer: Where in the generic sense, not necessarily in a geographical sense? What do you want to be doing or where do you think you could be that would make you happy?

Tamara: Right here in New York. I think that would make me very happy.

Interviewer: So, you found your home here?

Tamara: Yes, I think so.

Interviewer: What gets you most excited about it? What is the greatest thing you see coming out of that?

Tamara: I really like the people who live here. New York is a city with a lot of diversity, which makes it so interesting and so comfortable. Most people accept other people how they are, and I really appreciate that. I think that's great and I think that's how it should be. Of course you always have some responsibilities, but it's a very free city I would say.

Interviewer: I once saw a sign that said, why should I go to therapy when I can live in New York and be weird all I like? I thought that was very nice.

Tamara: That's very good, yeah. There's another ad (from *Seamless*), not as good as yours, but it says something like, we provide all American food. Then it said Chinese, Vietnamese, etc. all those different nationalities. I thought that was nice, because this is, in the end, what New York is, so many different lives, different cultures combined in one.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's a really cool well, it's a great melting pot as far as I see it here. I share the excitement of all the possibilities that are here and the way people live together. It's very different

lifestyles, but all meshing into one another both in terms of social class, of income class, of ethnicity, of lifestyle. So it's an absolutely wonderful place for that.

Tamara: Yeah, I agree.

Interviewer: Are you living the dream? You are living the dream from what I understand.

Tamara: Well, even if I'm not in New York, I always feel good where I am, if that makes sense. But of course, there's some sort of, like, the best possible way to where someone could be or where I could be. Yeah, that's definitely here and where I am right now.

Closing

Would you have a message or anything that you would like to say to anyone who is reading your interview?

Tamara: I think it's important to always respect other people and be kind to them.

Since it just happened the other day I'm referring to Kate Spade. I believe that one can say that she didn't want to live anymore, and I read an article, which said, that it's a very a rough world and we should be kind to each other. I really liked that statement. There's no reason to be cruel to each other, if that makes sense.

What would be the impression that you would like the people who have read your interview to walk away with?

Tamara: Well, I think it's like whatever you hear, whatever you see, I think there're things you can take away where you say, oh yeah, I can agree with that. Or you say, oh no, that doesn't make any sense to me. I think if they can take away something, that's great. If not, that's also totally fine. Everyone should be able to have their own opinion.

I hope I didn't waste their time too much, haha.

Interviewer: "Now that you've read everything, if you don't like it, unread it". (Laughs) No, I think that makes a lot of sense. I want to thank you very much for that.

Tamara: You're very welcome. Thank you.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for having accepted our invitation to answer our questions and for taking the time to come here. It means a lot to us.

Tamara: Of course. I think it's great what you're doing.

Interviewer 2: I had a last question if you are through because I know about her passion of photography. I would like to point it out with one question, so that she has the chance to explain with clear words why she decided to come to New York, to prefer New York instead of Germany because it's not typical to be that powerful to move alone from Germany. So there must be something that caught her. So just to give her the chance to express her passion for photography because I know she is a real perfectionist and I know her work. It's very unique and exclusive. So maybe we should give her the chance to say something about her work if she likes.

Tamara: To be honest, I'm not that proud of my photography at the moment. I'm more proud of what I do in film right now and I'm grateful to be working on many productions.

I had an interview for a photographing magazine last month and they asked exactly those questions, why did you move to New York? What is this with photography? I think it's totally fine to ask them, I'm just saying, today's questions have been very refreshing and interesting.

Interviewer 2: You see the smile on my face, I'm happy with the result. Great, cool.

Interviewer: Thank you.

Tamara: Of course, thank you so much.