

When she talks, the world listens

PREETI MEHRA



NEW DELHI, 24/02/2014: (For Metro Plus, to go with Preeti's story): Visually impaired motivator, Preeti Monga speaks during an interview in New Delhi on Monday, February 24, 2014. Photo: Shiv Kumar Pushpakar.

THE HINDU

Physical limitations notwithstanding, professional motivator Preeti Monga has created a world of possibilities

She doesn't spout quotable quotes like many others. Nor does she give you examples of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. She merely picks up vignettes from her own life — how struggling with blindness she often fell, but every time got up and walked again.

"Motivating myself became such a habit that I started doing it for friends as well and found their lives changing. I suddenly realized I could hold the attention of an audience... and presto! That's what I wanted to do — make a difference and earn a living as well," says Preeti Monga, now a professional motivator who has stacked up all the odds in her life and turned them to plusses.

Though she is now invited by large companies to speak to their blue and white collar workers whenever they experience dwindling motivation levels, declining profits, rising attrition and customer discontent, it has not been a cake walk. And that is why when she talks about her own life and asks people about theirs, there is pin-drop silence, listeners are spell bound.

The first shock came for Preeti when she was six and realized that her failing eye sight is irreversible. The second when she was forced to quit school as the principal did not believe she could cope and be included in the classroom. The young girl then turned to music. "You can become Ravi Shankar," said her ever encouraging parents. The wow factor of such a dream kept her practicing eight hours a day for six and a half years. "When my guru said to me that I cannot perform because I don't have the 'swar gyan', I was shattered. I dumped the sitar never to pick it up again. For me it was the best or nothing," she recalls.

On the relationship front too, Preeti took many a hit. "I dreamt of settling down with a good marriage, kids and a

reasonably comfortable home... torments lay in my path for daring to dream such dreams.” A broken marriage and two children later she found herself alone, struggling to fend for herself and her children. Refusing to give up, Preeti became an aerobic instructor and started to take regular classes. “People from all walks of life were my students. Some would invite me to their schools, their offices, and even kitty parties. I found them so responsive and realized I could hold an audience. That’s where it all began.” For several years the motivator worked with the Dr. Shroff eye hospital in Daryaganj, encouraging people to come to eye camps and get their eyesight rectified.

Later Preeti took to motivating as a profession and started her own company – Silver Linings – helped by her supportive second husband, Avinash. Now that the clouds have receded somewhat and speaking to a 500-plus audience of mine workers in the remote areas of Odisha and Chhattisgarh or to World Bank employees in the five-star comfort of a ballroom has become common place, her motto remains the same and jumps out of her visiting card – ‘Dream it, do it’. And on her list are corporate clients such as American Express, Samsung, Vodafone, Idea, TCS, HCL and Maruti whose employees she has motivated.

“In the Chhattisgarh and Odisha motivation for Monnet Ispat, at first I was really scared. We were meeting out in the open and I was to speak in Hindi in a four-hour programme. Would this audience sit here and listen to me for four hours? I found that not only did they listen, but many of them related their stories... I did 12 sessions and no one left the venues,” she reminisces explaining that slipping motivation in employees not only negatively impacts their professional output, but has a detrimental effect upon their physical and emotional well being.

Preeti has evolved several motivation programmes for companies, people with disabilities, students and the elderly. November 2013 saw the launch of an inclusive club – Fusion. Its aim is to facilitate face to face social network meetings where people with and without disabilities can come together to build friendships, relationships and partnerships to create an inclusive society. “Give life your best shot,” she does not only say, but does as well.

Keywords: [Preeti Monga](#), [professional motivator](#), [Silver Linings](#)

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