

COVER STORY

PROBLEMS ARE THE CATALYST FOR BECOMING SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE

Education fascinated me from an early stage of life, and is the reason behind me adopting it as a profession.



In Conversation with...

Prof. (Dr.) Divya Tanwar

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by Gurbeer Singh Chawla



You are highly educated and have a number of educational degrees. Our readers would like to know about your educational achievements?

Education is an unending adventure for me. I did PhD in Computer Science with M Phil, M.Tech, MCA & MBA . Presently, I am into doing a Post Doctorate (Dsc.) in computer science. Education is a completely transformational process. Your capabilities, confidence, opportunities, aspirations and achievements are immensely enhanced with the improvement in education level. Academics trains us to address large audiences, who lack knowledge of the subject. We learn to communicate with the weakest of the students. We appreciate the importance of easy language, simplified content and suitable examples in communication. Education fascinated me from an early stage of life, and is the reason behind me adopting it as a profession. Education is instrumental in enhancing my professional success towards social work on electronic and social media.

Why did Divya Rashmi Tanwar want to be an academician?

My both (late) parents were in academics. Not in terms of professional choice, they have a profound impact on my life in every aspect. At a very early stage, I understood, academics is an amazing profession in terms of positive contribution to society. Even for my interest in social service, the values imparted by my parents, helped me develop strong belief in the importance of paying back to society, as we progress in life. Interacting with students gives me ultimate happiness and a satisfying feeling of contributing towards nation building.

What were the challenges and experiences to establish your professional career in the field of higher education?

Higher education today is very commercialized. Parents are spending all their life savings on the education of their children. The education system has not really improved proportionately. Children are dictated to acquire skills required in the job market, with least emphasis on enhancing their inherent talent. The result is most students end up joining only a few popular courses. The result is a glut of students with a select few degrees. We urgently need drastic changes in our higher education.

The education system should identify the inherent talent of students, enhance those talents and motivate them to join professions where they can be happy working and grow. This approach is required from the school stage itself. The New Education Policy, 2020 has attempted in this direction but we need more such efforts.

What is the importance of the struggle period in your professional life from education to becoming a successful academician?

Struggle is always in terms of being updated and relevant. Knowledge is dynamic and an academician has to continuously update his/her knowledge. Computer Science is again the fastest changing field. What you prepared and taught in one semester to students may no longer be important.

One has to continuously update their knowledge to be relevant as an academician. In computer science, very often, the students know more than the teacher. Also, it is very important to update what are industry trends and skill requirements, so that the student gets the benefit of their education in their placement. After all, education is very costly and we have to do justice to the students.



How do you accept hard times in your life and how do you overcome tough situations in personal and professional life?

Problems are the catalyst for becoming successful in life. I had enough of them too. As a happy and energetic child, I was my father's favorite, whom I lost when I just completed 12th Std. I was in utter shock and mentally imbalanced for a couple of years. I was married at an early age. My educational journey is post marriage, attributed to the support of my husband. In my professional life, I faced serious problems due to my happy nature and good looks. My professional performance is often less appreciated, which always challenges me to work harder and prove myself.

I have a very positive attitude towards challenges I face in life. For me challenges are an opportunity to strengthen you and grow. Challenges prepare you for the next level of growth in life. If you are not having enough challenges in life, you should

know that you have stopped growing. Challenges are always there, they are required, they are good, that is how I take them in life. How one deals with challenges separates achievers from non achievers. In a very spiritual sense, god has given you challenges because you can solve them.

In your professional and personal career, who supported you the most, men or women?

I am really blessed with amazing people in my life, everyone has really wished and contributed towards my success in life. My experience of life is that if you are sincere and have clarity of what you want in life, people are ready to help you.

I am not definitely the victim of gender bias. My husband was my biggest encouragement and support in my pursuit for higher education. Dr. Nitin Malik, (now Registrar, Ambedkar University helped and motivated me during my education. Dr. V. N. Rajashekharan Pillai, the Vice-Chancellor of Somaiya Vidyavihar University and Provost of Somaiya Vidyavihar, Mumbai, (then Vice - Chancellor IGNOU) is my mentor during the professional journey of academics.

In the present scenario all age groups are suffering from depression and anxiety. What are the basic reasons for this?

Depression and anxiety are individual issues, we can't generalize reasons across all age groups. To me depression is a feeling of being left out, whether it is professional or personal growth. The affected person loses the confidence to catch up with other people in this race called life. He becomes under confident and insecure.

Anxiety is when you start expecting things in life, you have not really worked for. Success is like constructing a house, you build brick by brick. It takes its own time and one successful step prepares you for the next level. Anxiety is when you lack



patience and want to achieve success, without caring for your efforts & time. You want your destination, without undertaking a journey.

In our society mostly women ignore their mental and physical health. They are also ignored by family members. What is your message for them?

I am a strong advocate for women empowerment and I continuously work for it. But, I don't believe in the victim's approach towards women. The women have to take responsibility for their conditions, the society and government have to give women a proactive helping hand, to bring them at par. The nation or society is known from its weakest segment. Our economic and social development is incomplete if 50% of our people are not able to contribute their best. My message for women is, we don't have to compete on gender basis, we have to understand that in so many aspects we are superior. We have to put our talent and best foot forward. Education and financial independence is important for women empowerment.

How do you define Women Empowerment?

How important is it for a country like

India? Women Empowerment has different meanings in different situations.

At the family level education of girl children and financial freedom of women means the upliftment of family in society. At national level Women Empowerment powers GDP growth exponentially. As per an IMF report, Women Empowerment powers macro economic growth of a country. For corporate female representation in senior positions (Board level) improves profitability from ranging 3-8 %. "She Grows Business". Women empowerment results not only in a more skilled workforce but their skills are different and not present in women. Women bring not additional skills but different skills to companies. Their skills are different from that of men. There is a significant cost to Countries or Companies from the gaps in Empowerment of Women against Men. When an economy operates by a constraint where half of its labour force is prevented from participating as productively as it can, half of the country's talent is wasted. Which results in loss of productivity and income. Nordic Countries i.e. Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Island have been champions of women

empowerment and gender equality, both in workplaces and at home. India should learn from them, to meet the aspiration of becoming a developed country.

You are also the Chairperson of Divya Foundation. What are your goals and wishes that you want to achieve through this?

For me, as we grow in life, how we pay back to society is very important. I believe a nation is as good as its most unprivileged people. We can't build 21st Century India, by leaving people from rural India and urban slums, on government efforts & support to improve their lives. During the last two & half decades of market economy and liberalization of education in India lots of quality educational institutions, at different levels have come up in the private space. What has not shown visible improvement is rural and public educational institutions. The skill development, which results in employability, especially for women and the poor is the most laggard. The industry and progressive individuals should actively contribute towards bringing them into the national mainstream. Divya Foundation is an attempt to provide basic education and skills to the children living in

urban slums of Delhi. We provide skills to women & children for making and selling handicraft products in the market. We work for protection of women against domestic violence, by educating them about their rights, providing them legal, medical, and mental support in case of a crisis. During the lockdown, we provided cooked food to people in need in unauthorised colonies of Delhi.

The common perception is that women are most vulnerable and victims of cyber crimes. How much is this true? What advice do you have for women?

Women definitely are most vulnerable to cyber crimes. The pics and private life, which we share over social media is used by criminals to exploit women. My advice to women is to be careful about the information, pics, videos they share over social media. Such information is misused to exploit them. Cyber crimes can be committed by criminals from distant places and are difficult to detect. Once the information is posted in cyberspace, it is permanent and can't be easily deleted. The victim has to face the discomfort or burnt of crime for years to come. Women, once aware of the magnitude and types of cybercrimes, can protect their children and elders as well from such crimes.

Who inspired you the most in your life?

Ratan Tata: For his famous quote "I don't believe in making the right decisions. I take decisions and then make them right." His humility and simple lifestyle always inspired me.

Steve Jobs: For his words on the truth of life before death. "If you don't stop running after money, nothing will be achieved and you will become like me. God has given us the power to understand and do love. I cannot bring the amount of money I have earned in my life with me here, in the hospital. Here I have only been able to bring memories with me. Spend time with your family, love your partners and talk to friends."



How do you define success in life?

"Success is the most desirable thing and at the same time most misunderstood." Success not only means different things to different people, but to the same person, success means different things at different times. For me success means completion of a task, which results in innate happiness." Defining one's own parameters of success is the most daunting challenge every human being has to face.

Success is only possible, when you put in your efforts into something you really enjoy doing. Success is inevitable, once you do things which are based on your interests & strengths.

Successful people enjoy the process, i.e. visualization, hard work, focus, dedication, commitment. End result is just one component of success. Success may not be timed as per your desires, sometimes it just builds up over time and efforts. Success means positivism, humbleness and feeling of gratitude. Success is not about money, education, social service or for that matter anything else.

You always have that calmness and positivity on your face and that pleasant smile, what is the strength behind this? Where did you get this inspiration from in life? What is the reason behind this spontaneity and simplicity in your nature. Whom would you like to give credit for your charming personality?

Thank you for this wonderful compliment. When you pass through extreme challenges and difficulties, it is easier to understand what you want in life. Loss of my father at an early age made me hardened for challenges in life. The clarity about your strengths & shortcomings makes life easier. Motivation comes when you are into things which you enjoy doing. I enjoy my work, enjoy helping needy people and do creative art work, therefore motivation is always there. Sense of gratitude and willingness to contribute to the welfare of society are important motivators for me. I enjoy helping people and solving their problems.

I am a happy person by nature and always try to protect that. I do things which I really enjoy and am out of an unhealthy race to earn money. These qualities have come from my parents, especially my late father.