

Making the most of yourself



By Laila Nasry

"First impressions are often formed within the first 15 seconds of meeting a person," says a very good looking Indian and I wrack my brains frantically to recall how I spent the first 15 seconds in his company. Did I appear warm and friendly, smart and witty at the same time? All I could remember was my wind-blown hair and discreetly trying to smoothe it down. I put on my best attentive look and pray to God I'm asking intelligent questions, but the challenge he goes on to tell me, is to make a last-

ing impression.

Minocher Patel is here on the invitation of the Maharaja Institute of Management for a two-day training programme for the corporate sector on First Impressions. Patel is a motivational guru who has trained professionals, entrepreneurs, young executives, housewives and students all across India and abroad, including Switzerland, UAE and now Sri Lanka. He offers training in business etiquette, personal effectiveness, presentation skills, telephone etiquette and international cultural sensitivity. An educator

and trainer of international repute and also founder Director of India's first residential finishing school, his self-development workshops are known for their ability to maximise a person's potential.

"I was lucky I got the right training at the right time," he says recalling his early days. In 1988 he went to Germany for a Train the Trainers programme where he was awarded the prize for the Best Presenter and later on a similar scholarship to Switzerland where great names in the field like Dale Carnegie had been associated.

Funnily though, back in Bombay, he started out his career as a Brand Manager for a range of food products for which he was also the country manager in Dubai. His job entailed travelling a lot and in the course of it he used to constantly come into contact with people from all walks of life and experienced first hand their failings in etiquette, personal effectiveness etc. "The phone would ring and they would pick it up and say 'tell me'," he says. "Tell me what? A story?" he asks chuckling. "They would not open the door for a lady and frequently



Minocher Patel



Pic by J. Weerasekera

sit before a lady," he remembered. Privy to all of this he says, "I had a reverse guilt trip," adding "I always knew I could change somebody's life for the better."

Soon he began approaching big names in the corporate world about training their personnel. "I used to tell them I have this skill for training people. Just give me a day or two with your staff. We can talk about money later, and they would agree." The positive feedback from among the staff subsequent to the programmes soon developed to the companies themselves beginning to approach him, which brings him to where he is today.

Minocher is of the view that in today's competitive world, relying on one's MBA alone to get to the top is not sufficient. "There are bull-s***ers who work themselves through right to the top." What is needed, as Minocher sees it, is an attitudinal change. "In this part of Asia, we don't invest in our own growth, to be better professionals and humans. We don't feed the soul emotional food."

He believes the initiative to change has to come from the people themselves. "I can talk but I can't walk for you," he tells them. On the other hand, for those without the self-realisation to change for the better he says, "If you are a duh, you will remain a duh forever."

One of Minocher's pro-

grammes involves confidence building. "I can't make you confident, because I'm not God. But I can help you find your confidence," he tells those who come, at the outset.

Children's confidence should be boosted often. "Have a fun environment at home. Don't instill fear in the children saying, 'I will tell father when he comes home...'. Let them take the small falls so that they will be prepared for the bigger falls of life."

An important factor for building one's confidence is to know one's strengths and weaknesses. Often he tells people, "If you want to be a Sales Manager, then start acting like one," for, the more you give the more you get. You can never keep a good man down. Also time management plays an integral part. "Most successful people are perfect time managers." Nevertheless, he adds, "Confidence has to be balanced with humility."

Satisfying his audience at his programmes is his primary concern and having an audience ranging from students to housewives, police personnel to marketing executives, can make it all the more challenging. "I research my audience and the material is always audience relevant."

"Unfortunately people today are not living their dreams because they are not believing in them," he says adding, "I lived my dream and I'm glad about it."

7 steps to success and happiness

- Explore, open up and search.
 - Learn to think differently and take different perspectives
 - Look for options, alternatives and opportunities.
- Be clear about your values
 - Focus on what's important.
 - Make sure your behaviour is consistent with your intention.
- Clarify what you want to achieve
 - Visualise what you want to create or achieve.
 - Become a leader in achieving this.
- Do what you have decided to do
 - Harness your personal energy.
 - Make and keep personal commitments.
- Build trust
 - Be trustworthy. Trust yourself.
 - Trust first. Build trusting relationships.
- Listen to others, seek to understand them
 - Ask open questions, listen and share.
 - See and feel things as if you are the other person.
- Re-invent and renew yourself
 - Take time to be in touch with your real self. -Love yourself.
 - Take care of your body, emotions, your mind and your spirit.

How not to succeed

- Keep telling yourself, "I can't do it".
- Every time you have a new idea, tell yourself, "it probably won't work".
- Tell yourself, "nobody wants to hear my opinion".
- Tell yourself, "I won't be able to do it again".
- Blame others.
- Not admitting your dreams even to yourself.
- Live only in your dreams, out of touch with reality.
- Think you will win/lose.
- Avoid things that make you feel good.
- Focus only on the short term.