



Famous motivational speaker inspires professionals 'to walk on fire'

By Mudassir Raja

Life is not meant merely for one to survive. It is actually meant to thrive with a mission and passion. To thrive and to achieve a certain goal, one must challenge one's abilities and need to go beyond one's ordinary capacities.

To do so, we need to have constant motivation and inspiration in one way or another. One such way is to get advice from professional motivational speakers.

In this connection, Inspire Training Academy, one of the premier professional training institutes in Doha, recently organised an inspiration workshop titled 'Go Beyond With Priya Kumar.' The workshop was meant to provide motivation and inspiration for professionals from different sectors of Qatar.

Priya Kumar is an internationally acclaimed motivational speaker and the bestselling author of 10 inspirational books. In her 24-year-long journey with motivational speaking, she has worked with over 2,000 multinational corporates across 46 countries and has touched over 3 million people through her workshops and books, and is the only woman speaker in India to have done so. She is the only Indian author who has won 31 international awards for her books.

The workshop was a day filled with inspiration, passion, motivation and humour at Al Wajba Ballroom, Intercontinental Hotel and Residences. The workshop by the most sought-after personality brought together representatives from different industries of Qatar, ranging from educational institutions, banks, shipping companies, entrepreneurs and businesses.

The host, Inspire Training Academy, has state-of-the-art training facility. The academy carries the expertise to design, develop and deliver courses with their professionalism, passion and love for education.

Prominent among those who attended the workshop were Sheikh Fahad bin Hamad Jassem Bin Jabor al-Thani, National Tourism Council representative; Ashud Ahmed, Ambassador of Bangladesh to Qatar; Surinder Bhagat, First Secretary (Political & Commerce) Embassy of India; Dr. Sameer Moopen, CEO Aster DM Healthcare; and Dr. R. Sentharaman, CEO Doha Bank. The prominent figures also addressed the gathering during



WORKSHOP: Priya Kumar, an internationally acclaimed motivational speaker and bestselling author of 10 inspirational books, covered topics such as 'Start Small - Think Big', 'Challenges to Opportunities', and 'Commitment to Deliver' during the workshop.

the workshop. As many as 150 people attended the workshop. The audience termed the workshop one of its kind to be held for the first time in Qatar.

Priya, known for her unique style, kept the audience engaged and motivated, helping them align her story-telling approach to their vision as professionals.

The audience was driven by the motivational speech to outperform themselves. Priya's power talk covered topics like 'Start Small - Think Big', 'Challenges to Opportunities', and 'Commitment to Deliver'. The workshop went hand in hand with experiential activities like board breaking and the most unique and

inconceivable - 'Fire Walk'.

Fire Walk - Priya's experiential USP (unique selling point) - made the workshop extra special. She said: "Come and walk on fire with me. I have been doing the 'fire' work for 20 years now. While some believe it is a symbol of spiritual transformation and mind over matter; for me, it is

"Come and walk on fire with me. I have been doing the 'fire' work for 20 years now. While some believe it is a symbol of spiritual transformation and mind over matter; for me, it is an analogy that the past does not equal the future"

- Priya Kumar, motivational speaker

an analogy that the past does not equal the future. You may have been burnt with fire before. You may have been hurt before. You may have failed before. But, do not allow that past failure to be that past accident to set the bench mark for your future and destroy it. Because, if you can take one step forward in seeing the difference between that failure, that heartbreak and the reality that stands before you today, holding an opportunity to change your life. Now, that is an awakening that fire walk (where fire is a positive energy) promises.

"Do not believe what I say. Believe what you see. See for yourself that this fire does not have a connection with your past burns that this fire does not sell ruins. It invites celebration. Let this be an example that the past does not equal the future because a person who can distinguish his past from the present is a person who is on his way to conquer the future," Priya said. Speaking on behalf of Inspire Training Academy, its director of Sales & Marketing Minal Saluja said that the academy would continue to evolve with new training and learning methods through the partnerships. She thanked all the participants, guests and the sponsors for making the workshop a successful event.



CHALLENGE: Participants take part in the board breaking activity.

LIFE@WORK

MID DAY, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2007

If you think getting the pay hike you deserve is not viable, you need to indulge in the impossible. At least, that's the message new-age motivational exercises and corporate training regimes give out. If you can get a stubborn horse to give in, overcoming your boss's obstinacy will be a cakewalk. If you can bend an iron rod with your neck, you have the focus and determination to ask for that pay hike. And if you can attend a corporate camp that requires you to walk over simmering cinders, you will probably go to any lengths to get the increment you deserve. Here's why motivational seminars are just not enough.



By using focus and intention, they learn how to look at the future differently

- Priya Kumar

Why bank on the bizarre?

PRIYA KUMAR is the CEO of International Centre for Training Systems, a company that prescribes fire walking, rod bending and walking on broken glass, to get ahead at the workplace. Elaborate techniques, bordering dangerously on the bizarre, is what their workshops entail. "In today's scenario, 95% of the working population works for the other 5%. The growing disparity is not on account of physical and mental inabilities of the first half; it's because of **mental blocks**," explains Priya, who works with employees at every level. And by getting people to conquer seemingly

impossible tasks like walking on coal and broken pieces of glass, mental blocks like "I can never reach the top" are busted. "By using **focus and intention**, they learn how to look at the future differently," she says. Lessons you can learn from:

FIRE WALKING: How to use intention and faith to conquer obstacles.

BEND AN IRON ROD WITH YOUR NECK: The seemingly easy way out is not always the simple and right way out.

WALKING ON BROKEN GLASS: How to concentrate on the task at hand.

For more information, log on to www.priya-kumar.com





Priya Kumar is the Director of International Centre for Training Systems

If you have an office related question to ask Priya, feel free to write in to us at specialfeatures@mid-day.com

Don't go krazzy

Want your career to take off? Priya Kumar lists out four crazy mistakes to avoid

On a flight I once sat next to a very gorgeous lady, a model I presumed and I asked her, "What do you do?" She replied, "I am in the business of looking good." After reflecting on it a little while, bingo it dawned on me that we're all in the business of looking good. Over the years I have learnt that to be successful you need to take big risks and do some crazy stuff. Many celebrities and successful people who are now living the life of their dreams will vouch for this funda.

Here's some crazy stuff one **SHOULDN'T DO** in order to be unsuccessful. I will call these the Krazzy 4 principles, and mind you, any analogy to the movie is merely coincidental.

► **Unclear goals:** If one has unclear goals about what one wants to accomplish at the end of three hours, or even thirty days of work, it is the perfect recipe for a disaster in the box office and likewise in your own office. A lot of people are quite confused about what they want from themselves. I have seen that only five per cent of people actually plan their days or months, and these are the ones who walk smiling to the bank with the pay checks they anticipated. If you do not have a clear goal with your career, then

don't complain when your efforts are not appreciated. With a clear goal you can make a plan of execution in alignment with that goal. Any other way is a waste of time for you and the people whose lives you are going to impact as a result of your work or performance.

► **Unclear roles:** A lot of people are quite unclear of the role they are playing in the bigger scheme of things — whether it is personal or professional. If you are clear about what your role is in influencing the profits of your company or the success of your movie, then you would take personal accountability to ensure its success. When projects fail, people weasel their way out and blame it on poor management, poor script or even poor guidance. The bottom line is that no one's role is too small as not to influence the success or failure of any project. Step up and find your role, for the success or failure of your firm will also define your future career path.

► **Over-promise and under-deliver:** The smartest way to tick people off is to over-promise and under-deliver. You can run super promos to bring people to the big screen, but if the product is not what was promised then you have killed the future sales. Most professionals over promise on projects and targets and then don't live up to the deliverables.



BE SURE: Be sure of what you want in life and work towards your goal to achieve success

This is the fastest way of losing credibility. It is only fair to be honest and reasonable in your pitch to sell yourself or your product. Today is the time when people and customers and even your seniors are more vigilant and vocal than ever. A promise in the wrong direction can cost

you heavy losses professionally. ► **Put your money in the production, the PR will take care of itself:** A lot of people spend time and money in making an impression. If only they could put their time, effort and money in action and execution, then their work would speak for itself. Ask any entrepreneur or

project leader and he'll vouch for this. It is action that speaks not PR and promos. Instead of wasting time in the talk, put your mind and effort in the walk.

If you're smart enough to avoid these 4 Krazzy mistakes, you'll find your career sky rocket in no time!

Glass walk helps to deal with negative people.

For this activity, I get glasses, bottles and vases and ask the participants to smash them on the ground. After having done that, I gather it in a pile and ask them to walk on it barefoot. I challenge them that if they can keep their attention and focus on their feet, they will not get cut. This is a mind blowing activity, because it shows that energy flows where attention goes. It is a profoundly spiritual lesson and it finds a place in the corporate world. I discourage and boo them when they are crossing the bed of broken glass. I do everything I can to put them down and scare them. And the more I do this, the more their determination, focus and will builds up. I have not understood this phenomenon, but it always happens. Not once in my career of 11 years have I come across a participant who got discouraged and did not attempt the glass walk, and I have an amazing track record of zero injuries. This is what I call a personal breakthrough, because something that has hurt them in the past was totally in their control. "It was like a bed of roses" is what most of them exclaim. And about not getting discouraged they say, "I was not paying attention to what you were saying. My whole focus was on my feet, because even to listen to you would be a distraction!" It is this realisation that is a turning point in one's life. Your focus on what you are doing must be so strong, that you cannot afford to pay attention to things that do not contribute towards your task. You can't make it your business to go and change the negative thinkers and trouble makers. The only way out is to stay focused on your work and where you need to go. The more attention you give to negative people, the stronger impact they will have on your lives. Your success will take a nose dive because you will find yourself down and depressed and inefficient at work. By putting your attention strictly to work and things related with it, you become bigger and powerful. And success is the best revenge after all.



Glass walking

The steel bar activity is similar to the firewalk and the glass walk and falls in the category of personal breakthrough.

In this the participants bend steel rods with their bare neck. Two people stand facing each other and place the steel bar on their neck. As they move forward towards each other, the steel bar bends. It is a seemingly impossible activity and requires far greater commitment than the firewalk and the glass walk.



Steel bar bending

When the person places the steel bar on his neck, he literally shivers at the perceived life threatening risk he would have to undertake in order to bend the bar. It takes deep commitment to move forward despite the perceived pain involved. It is still an enigma to even fathom that a steel bar, which bends with great difficulty with the hands, bends with ease when placed on the neck.

The lesson: that life is unpredictable. By playing safe or working in one's comfort zone, doesn't mean that one will not suffer or be under pressure. So if pressure and pain is a common denominator in this game called life, one must be smart enough to use it to move towards achievement and success and not crumble under it. Often, the participants take the bent rods back home, to remind themselves that if they can do this, they can do anything.

Any form of learning is incomplete if it does not involve the experience of the concepts learnt.

In my adventure-based learning programmes, we take participants to exotic locations, usually to the outskirts of the city, and put them in real-time situations of challenge and controlled risk. This helps people relate better to each other, and more importantly, to themselves. The informal, 'non-office like' setting, helps draw out an individual's true self. Real-life situations/issues are more effective tools for learning and create analogies that can easily transfer to work situations. And learning best translates into improved knowledge and skills when a person is in a resourceful state of mind. And an adventure activity, in an unfamiliar environment, together with the perceived element of risk, facilitates this mental state. Another added advantage of adventure-based learning is that the naturalistic environment gets the participants to destress, and to recharge and review their perspective and attitude.



Being a facilitator/trainer has been a life transforming experience for me. Imagine I have made goodness, positivity, motivation and self belief my profession and my career. Every day my business is to motivate, to strengthen, to assist in the transformation and unfolding of human potential. How can I not be the beneficiary of my work on a daily basis?

I have a magical life, I have everything that I have desired for, and I desire more. And what a joy it is for me to know that the only way that I can be

successful is to help other people do the same. I feel it's a very karmically noble business, this business of making people's lives better.

I have the ambitious project of expanding my company into an India-wide unit.

At ICTS, we are like a family of like-minded people. All my staff is hand-picked, and having love for people and the attitude of service are the qualities that I seek in anyone who chooses to represent my company. I also aspire to use the media to spread the message of personal, professional and spiritual upliftment through interviews, articles and inspirational shows.

I use a lot of personal breakthrough interventions in my workshops. This is a process which literally speaking, breaks the mental barriers that people put themselves up against on what they can and cannot do. We all know that human beings have the potential to achieve the impossible and yet this knowing somehow leaks out on its way into action. A personal break through intervention allows the individual to touch and experience his own potential and learn how to convert it into performance. After all, in the corporate world, we get paid for our performance and not our potential.

Fire walking is not a seminar, it is a doorway between realities! It is a process of moving from the limited into the limitless.

One is a reality full of complexities and limitations. The other a reality of unbounded potential and possibilities. It is a known fact that human flesh will burn at 200°F. And the coals that people walk on are burning at approximately 2,400°F. So to take the first step on those burning red hot coals is a mental breakthrough for many. When people walk across the bed of coals unharmed, they realise through direct experience, the power of self-belief and self-confidence. Through this action they realise that any target is achievable, no matter how difficult or far-fetched it may seem.

I use the firewalk as an analogy, as a tool to overcome insurmountable obstacles, and it sure is an exhilarating challenge. I see those glowing coals as a way to break through fears, where a person can find it within himself to motivate himself to go for distant goals or challenges. I also perceive these gleaming pathways as leading people toward a reality which speaks of transformation and change. The firewalk is a trail which, if followed, will lead people to an amazing realisation of ever-deepening awareness.

Fire walking is not solely about walking across a bed of hot glowing coals. It is about facing our fears squarely and giving up our old, limiting patterns of belief. It is about freeing ourselves to walk towards our true purpose.

Fire walking



UNWIND

Be a student for life



Priya Kumar is the Director of International Centre for Training Systems

If you have an office related question to ask Priya, feel free to write in to us at specialfeatures@mid-day.com

I have been in the training industry for over a decade now and I have a team of aspirant trainers. They are constantly expressing their desire to learn how to do a fire walk from me, and my wise reply has always been, "When the time is right I will teach you," and it has been three years since. It was not until recently that at a fire walk seminar I was sick - sick enough that I couldn't even stand by the fire. That's when I looked at my ever persistent prodigy, the young aspiring fire walk instructor and told her, "Your time has come, build the fire and lay out the fire bed." She totally panicked at my offer and said, "I don't know how."

The point that I am driving home with this anecdote is this: When one hosts a dream and an ambition, one must be a student of life. Everything cannot be taught in a formally announced fashion. One must take responsibility for one's own learning. My ever so eager assistant has been assisting me for three years in several hundred workshops and she has seen

me build several hundred fire beds. That observation alone should be enough for one to duplicate the action when the time demands it.

Most people walk around waiting for a teacher, a guru, a senior to appear to teach them. Let me tell you this, learning does not require permission. Observation and experience are the greatest teachers, what one must have is the attitude of a learner.

I see so many young professionals working to be promoted and waiting to be recognised. Promotion must first come from within. If you continue to think and work like an executive, the you will continue to be one. To be a manager you need to do what a manager does and think how a manager thinks. When you become a manager in essence, then your promotion is the next natural step.

Think big

► Observe what your manager does, and how he thinks and duplicate that mind-set in your work profile. A business school will surely teach you content in theory on how to upgrade your profes-

PROMOTION MUST FIRST COME FROM WITHIN. IF YOU CONTINUE TO THINK AND WORK LIKE AN EXECUTIVE, THE YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BE ONE. TO BE A MANAGER YOU NEED TO DO WHAT A MANAGER DOES AND THINK HOW A MANAGER THINKS. WHEN YOU BECOME A MANAGER IN ESSENCE, THEN YOUR PROMOTION IS THE NEXT NATURAL STEP

sional status but your sharp observation will teach you lessons beyond what can be compiled and taught in any book or course.

► Be a student of life, be a student of success and to be that you will be required to work more, deliver more and bear additional responsibility. But believe me every promotion and upgraded status in reality comes with increased responsibility and pressures. The responsibility and pressure of a manager is greater than an executive, the responsibility and pressure of a CEO is greater than that of a manager and so on. Train yourself for it, welcome that extra work.

► Know this. Everything cannot be taught to you, and at the same time no one can stop you from learning everything. Keep your eyes and ears open and you will find a learning in every situation.

► Know your dream, your goal and your destination and even if you are just confined to your desk, Google can bring you the right lesson if you would just care enough to click!!!

HT

Café

IT'S ALL TH



Monday,
April 30, 2007
Hindustan Times, Mumbai

www.hindustantimes.com

She did start the fire

SATISH DATE/HT



HOTSTEPPERS: participants try out the coal bed

■ **Lorraine Rodrigues**

Life is not tried / it is merely survived / if you're standing outside the fire.' Priya Kumar took these words of Garth Brook's country classic quite literally, as participants of her fire-walking workshop, held over the weekend at Juhu, walked over coals heated to 1300 C.

"Walking across fire is a metaphor for whatever people consider impossible. The aim is for participants to realise that by focusing they can achieve what may seem impossible, physically or otherwise in their daily lives," explains Kumar, who came across fire-walking on a trip to Europe eight years ago.

Turning up the heat

The fire-walks were initially part of corporate workshops, but are now attended by anyone interested. "The concept has caught on really well in Bollywood too," says Kumar, who conducts workshops for several people in the film industry but refuses to name any.

"I was apprehensive at the start," admitted Manoj Lekhrajani, who attended the workshop with his daughter Gunjan, "But after the initial sensation of a pinprick, I didn't feel any pain."

Kumar's next fire-walking workshop, *Science of Achievement*, will be conducted in the city at the end of May.

— Walk the line of fire

Fire walk expert and healer Priya Kumar shares her experiences through workshops conducted frequently in the city



[Agnipareeksha:
Priya (right) puts her
students through
their paces

Shridevi Keshavan

SHE hauls people over the coals — literally. Referred to as the 'fire goddess', Priya Kumar has been conducting 'fire walk' workshops for

the past six years with zero casualties! "I got severely blistered the first time I walked on fire in Malaysia. That incident got me thinking as to why a lot of others did not get burnt. Within

twenty days I walked once again, this time without burning myself. Eventually I studied the art under several teachers," says Priya who runs personality development and confidence

building workshops.

Her popular workshops are called 'Go Beyond', and attempt to help people overcome their fears and inhibitions. "These workshops include walking on broken glass and steel bending which involves a couple of effort. These 'radical' techniques helped heal my sinus condition and there has been a drastic reduction in my migraine attacks," she explains, adding that singses or blisters incurred during the workshops point to larger physical maladies.

Conducting 15 to 20 workshops a month, Priya's treasured memories are of children's experiences at her workshops. "They have no element of fear," she

**f My life has
been
miraculously
transformed**

TIMES OF INDIA

PRICE RS 4 ALONG WITH MUMBAI MIRROR OR THE ECONOMIC TIMES OR MAHARASHTRA TIMES



DOWNTOWN PLUS

www.downtownplus.com

SOUTH MUMBAI

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 26, 2007
SOUTH MUMBAI

5:

Rajabai Clock
Tower

BSE



Trial by Fire

GEM PAUL

Facing your fears and inhibitions can be quite daunting even for the most qualified people in the city and nobody knows this better than Priya Kumar who has literally hauled corporate employees and individuals onto red-hot coals.

Fret not! Kumar's endeavour doesn't merit a jail-term. She simply conducts workshops that enable people to confront their own fears. "A lot runs through your mind when you are coaxed to walk on fire. You feel anxious, helpless and are overwhelmed by fear. It makes you ques-

tion your judgement and some of the entrenched beliefs that have so far dictated your existence and what you could achieve in life. When you walk on fire, it is the confrontation between your established beliefs and stark reality that frees you from your rigid mindset," explains Kumar.

Kumar first witnessed people walking on coal fire in Switzerland. She liked the idea and tried it herself at home but was severely blistered. But her determination paid off and she managed to walk on fire unscathed. Soon, people pushed her to organise workshops that they believed would serve to raise the morale of their

employees and change their outlook towards life. Kumar packaged her workshops to make it more appealing to corporate clients.

Today, many south Mumbai-based financial institutions such as HSBC and Standard Chartered Bank are Kumar's satisfied clients and spend up to Rs 1.5 lakh per workshop. Vishal Khanna, head, human resources CEAT says, "We wanted our employees to get some experiential learning that would bring conviction in themselves and boost their confidence. There's nothing better than a fire-walk to enable this."

gem.paul@timesgroup.com