



**Exult-ed** was born out of the continuing search to the answer for the perennially flummoxing "Who am I?" It is a question I have been trying to address from various perspectives: emotional, spiritual, psychological, social, philosophical... and yet, the answer is elusive. Thankfully so, for every time I reach what I think is an answer, I evolve, and the question comes back. In that sense, the presence of "Who am I?" has been a testimony to evolution.

Exult-ed is the first edition of the proposed quarterly edition of the newsletter of Exult! Solutions. We operate in the human development space in the personal, social and corporate contexts. When the idea of a newsletter was born, we had to take a call on how to mould it. Would it have a certain standard features? Would it cater to a certain audience? Would it stick to a particular format? Then, as in the most critical moments of life, "Who am I?" popped up. And the answer was clear. Let Exult-ed evolve. Let it be fluid as all of existence is. Let us not bound it by formats, fonts and themes, let it take whatever shape it needs to take to serve its purpose: human development.

The professional in me wants control: as the proprietor of Exult! Solutions I think we need to have a certain sense of predictability about our newsletter so as to maintain a brand identity. The creative in me is gushing with expression, wanting to fill it with my thoughts, dreams and aspirations. The psychologist in me wants to dispense advice on how to deal with the world in a balanced manner. The healer in me wants the newsletter to equip readers with tools and techniques to heal their lives.

But the woman in me rules. It urges me to let go of control and flow; it makes me give space for everyone who is an inspiration to express themselves; it tells me that people know how to balance themselves, just give them the time; it convinces me to trust that healing occurs when you believe it will. And thus, the first edition of Exult-ed is an ode to womanhood: the womb, where it all begins.

Our editor Rumpa Das, a behavioural trainer and a wonderful healer, came up with the name Exult-ed and we loved it. Read as a verb, it represents the feeling we have as we work, and read as a hyphenated term, it indicates our attempt as Exult! Solutions to educate our readers for personal development.

We hope you enjoy reading through this issue. Do send in your feedback and ideas for the forthcoming issues. Every quarter we hope to share with you people, thoughts and ideas that have inspired us. Our attempt is to add to the ever-expansive answer to "Who am I?"



**Rukmini Iyer**

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**Exult-ed** is an expression of life. It signifies our delight in what we do, what we represent and how we want to be known as.

We are a quarterly newsletter and this first issue is a tribute to the Woman of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Exult-ed celebrates the spirit of woman; her strength, her patience, her intelligence, her intellectual prowess and not to mention the beautiful way she balances life in all its glory.

International Women's Day which falls on March 8<sup>th</sup> started as a day to celebrate the political and socio-economic achievements made by women the world over. Over the years, we do see more flavors like those of Valentine's Day and Mother's Day merge with Women's Day's celebrations. It is heartening to see how the world is changing around us; the way more women are playing the key role in making decisions not only for themselves but also for others around them. We say this with a certain sense of pride that today we have numerous examples of men who are shouldering this responsibility quite admirably.

## Editor's Note

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Our deepest wishes are whispers of our authentic selves. We must learn to respect them. We must learn to listen. ~ Sarah Ban Breathnach ~

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And that is pretty much the theme of this issue as we bring to you some of our favorite women entrepreneurs who listened to this "whisper"; join us as they share their journeys, their motivations, their way of life. We also have for you some interesting articles.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed creating it for you. Please join us in wishing the Women a very Happy Women's Day.

**Rumpa Das**  
*Editor*

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## An ode to women

As I started on my article, my mind decided to go on a wander. While navigating through the complex alleyways of my brain, I stumbled on this song "I am Woman" by Helen Reddy. This song was released in 1971 and became an anthem for women's liberation movement. Recently I saw it in "Sex and the City \_ part 2" the movie. The beauty of this song envelops and fills me with this urge to get up on the stage and sing it out loud – mind you it's a big deal to me as I have a huge inclination and no courage whatsoever to do it. The thought of singing in front of an audience

has been my best attempt at Karaoke.

Just a few lines for those of you who haven't heard the song:-

*I am woman, hear me roar  
In numbers too big to ignore  
And I know too much to go back an' pretend  
'cause I've heard it all before  
And I've been down there on the floor  
No one's ever gonna keep me down again*

### CHORUS

*Oh yes I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain  
Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained  
If I have to, I can do anything  
I am strong (strong)  
I am invincible (invincible)  
I am woman.....*

Women's day, a day to pay tribute to the inner beauty and strength of "Woman"; a day that should actually be woven into the very fabric of humanity, as easy and necessary as breathing. It is the woman who is the womb of creation, the cradle to the civilization; who in the past has been the one expected to stay in the shadows and quietly be the "woman" behind the success. Although throughout history we have accounts of women who refuted the patriarchal rule (might I add the misogynistic part of this rule which decreed women to follow. The difference is entirely too big to not be pronounced in detail as even then we had men who honored and respected women) and established themselves as derisive to the society, decisive, courageous and strong however at the time they were shunned and ridiculed by most. The critical difference is that in today's world we see more women who are taking their lives in their hands and are doing so by announcing it to the world. Kudos to the world as well which is actually changing and moving forward by leaps and bounds and by doing so is rekindling the "Balance" of nature.

Today's woman increasingly is taking that proverbial "chance" and not only attempting the impossible but achieving it too. They are opening up to accepting not only their intellectual abilities but also their right to just "Be". More often than not, today's woman will speak her mind and dress her body the way she deems fit. This reality though, is mostly prevalent in the metropolitan cities. I fervently hope that it seeps to the very core of humanity and nourishes the soul of "Woman" in general across the face of this world.

However let's not forget that if one were to go back in time, one would find a fair few accounts of women who have left their mark on the world. Some of their names are: Joan of Arc – Her courage and divine inspiration led to the victory of the French against the English, Mata Hari – Her name is today synonymous to a seductive female spy and has inspired a fair few Blockbusters of our time, Annie Cannon – the American astronomer who specialized in the classification of stellar spectra, and who can forget Princess Diana – She's always been a symbol of independence, philanthropy and style. Her death actually presented to the world unparalleled expressions of public bereavement, attesting her immense hold on the British national psyche. The names in history are too many to be accounted for in this article; I do hope however that I have pointed you in the right direction to explore the stories of women who have bejeweled the fabric of humankind by their presence and courage. It would be unfair to not mention the women of today who continue to create history; women like Indra Nooyi, Angela Merkel, Cynthia Carroll, Ho Ching, Angelina Jolie and many more.

It is great to know that today not only women, but also men - their natural counterparts have taken it upon themselves to pave the path for womens' development and light the torch for the changes which are shaping up our world. Today a woman is opening up to her rights to say "No" or "Yes" as the decision maker of her life and is enlightening others about it. Whether be it protecting the country, educating the country, winning accolades for the country, saving lives, running conglomerates or dressing up for the evening as the "Diva", women's' footprints are firmly ensconced in the landscape of society and the " Awakened She" is here to stay. We only hope that this phenomenon continues to reach out and becomes a movement which touches and revitalizes all the corners of the world, whether be it the small towns of the developing countries or the big business houses of the western world.

How do we say it! "Women have finally arrived and watch out for it is only the beginning"

**Rumpa Das**

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## **I, Me and Myself!!!!**

*You as a woman have an inherent inner beauty within you, a warm and loving nature that is naturally nurturing, caring and giving. The love that you can give is boundless and you can do wonderful things with this love. Laurie Beth Jones of The Path says "If you are parenting, teaching or healing others consider your mission amongst the most important in the world."*



**All you need is to take a look at all those women achievers and you will know how women are able to cut across all boundaries and borders in loving, sharing and giving.**

*Developing women's self-esteem became a crucial part of their personal development since women's place in society has mostly been inferior compare to men's. Feeling good about yourself as a woman means that you*

*have to set realistic standards to overcome the obstacles in our fast changing society. Improving women's self-esteem always begins inside. You have to be clear about yourself who you really are and what direction you would like to go to improve.*

*First you have to be clear about who you really are and what you want to do. You have to analyze and revalue your thinking. Do not rely on other's opinion, make decision to yourself. When you communicate with people listen first, but don't take anything for granted. Use your common sense and be decisive. Women with low self-esteem has no control over their life , they only rely on outside influence either it is coming from society, family or friends. You are the best person to go for advice regarding your own well-being. Utilize your knowledge, experience and turn it into your advantage.*

*Building woman's self-esteem is hard work. But you can make the necessary steps with following three step formulas,*

**1. Ask questions about yourself and write them down including the answers as well.**

*You will be surprised how much "buried" knowledge lies within and you will get a clue what to do or which direction to go forward. You will come up with ideas you have never thought before. This is a very powerful and very simple technique.*

**2. Now think about a moment when you did not feel happy and ask the same questions again: Why did not you feel happy?**

**3. Now, after answering to these questions try to reproduce the feeling when you felt great about yourself. Imagine the situation again or something similar in your recent environment which will remind you to that. Whenever you feel sad or not happy think about those moments and put these positive thoughts into your mind to interrupt the flow of the negative ones and substitute them with an uplifting feeling.**

*These questions and your answers to them will refresh your memory and you might use some of your ideas to make them part of your life again. For example; if you use to like spending time outside - hiking, biking - do that more often even if you feel that "you don't have time for doing it." Make time for it.*

*If you had a passion for painting, drawing or writing consider establishing a business around it or just do it for fun. As long as you enjoy doing it, it is the right direction to go.*

*And don't be afraid of making mistakes. They are always part of the learning process of developing women's self-esteem.*

*As the old saying goes; "Ships are safe in harbor, but that's not what ships are for."*

**Madhura Nene**

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We bring to you **Rupa Chandan** – Owner of Mysticue Directions

A one of its kind stores in Mumbai which deals in Angel and Fairy products. It is an absolute delight to visit this store. You will find yourself in a different realm, a realm of happiness, joy, hope and love. We bring to you, her story in her words.



**Why don't we start by you telling us, who do you see when you look into the mirror. Tell us a bit about her!**

*When I see myself in the mirror, I feel very blessed to see the Divine shining through me! The Divine blessings, His grace, His love and light! I feel very blessed to see, that I have chosen a profession of being the "Carrier" of Divine light.*

**Question: What were you doing before Mysticue Directions (MD) happened**

*Before Mysticue Directions happened, I used to design the Outer Image of a person (make him/her look /feel good in his /her body) I mean, I was a Fashion Designer and had my own beautiful boutique.*

**Question: What changed for you during this time (before MD) and what really led to the birth of MD?**

*I always used to be curious in the Occult Science which is now known as the New Age Science and was always inclined in knowing about "Healing", how the energies travel, what are the Universal laws and truths, an insatiable thirst to know about the relation of "Mind -Body- Soul", eagerness to know "Who Am I, Why Am I Here, What Am I Here For?" All of these questions are what propelled me to learn the following:*

- NLP (understanding the connection of the role that thoughts play in our life )
- Reiki (energy healing)
- Tarot Card Reading (being conscious of the possibilities that had/are happening/and could happen in our life)
- Angels (the beautiful path of knowing/listening/feeling where we are always guided by the divine)
- Graphology (how changes can be made for the betterment in life through changing our letters and signatures)
- Numerology (what is the role of the numbers in our life)
- Color, Language, Mind and Body Therapies (how each aspect plays such a vital role in enhancing our life)
- Meditations and much more..... the learning journey is ongoing...

*During my designing days, I had learned all these as hobbies and while practicing all these on myself, my family and friends; it became a part of me. While practicing these and seeing the changes in my inner circle, the difference that it was making in people's lives, I made the decision to switch from the Fashion World to the Spiritual World. For when I started to see the light and happiness in each person's life that came to me, I found the purpose of "My Existence" and that's how Mysticue Directions was born! It has been a beautiful journey of 12 years now.*

**Question: What were the roadblocks if any and what kept you going**

*What has kept me going on is what I have been able to do for people. The lives I have touched, the difference I have made. When a person enters our Angelic Kingdom (our store) he /she is sad, worried, full of confusion and doubts but when he/she is leaving the shine that I see in the eyes, the genuine smile on the face which*

comes on as they find the way out of their problems and look forward to a great life is immeasurable and that is what has kept me going.

**Question: What was your strategy then and how if at all it has changed for you**

*My strategy then and now is the same, how can I serve the other! How can I support the other to make them see their own "Inner Flame" and most importantly, to make them realize that there is always a solution to everything!*

**Question: What is your vision for MD? What level do you want it to be in the next 5 years?**

*Mysticue Directions is the first store in Mumbai for the Angels and Fairies and their healing products, it is one of ITS KIND! My vision for it is that in the coming five years I would like to see our stores and workshops all over India; I would also like our expertise to be known globally.*

**Question: So being a woman entrepreneur, how has the journey been?**

*The journey so far has been beautiful in exploring myself more and touching the lives of people.*

**Question: Ok, how do you manage to balance your work with your personal life?**

*I do agree that for a Woman, it is challenging to maintain a balance between work and personal life, but when you have an understanding and supportive family and friends, life becomes much better and beautiful.*

**Question: What advice do you have for the budding women entrepreneurs?**

*Well, I believe that every woman can choose to be dependent on herself for fulfilling her own dreams by trusting in herself and the divine within her and as the saying goes, "Where There Is Will, There Is Always A Way" so go ahead and fulfill your true hearts' desires and be true to yourself, for that's when you will be true to your Family, Friends and Your Work!*

**Rupa Chandan is the owner of Mysticue Directions, angel therapist and healer and can be reached at [rupachandan@yahoo.in](mailto:rupachandan@yahoo.in)**



*Next in the line of the fabulous women in this issue is **Ellaean Daruwala**. Ell - as she is lovingly addressed as is an energy worker whose journey has been from ignorance to awareness; awareness of self and the Divine within. Read on to find out about her experience and her journey....*



**Question: Who is Ellaeanah? Please tell us about her, tell us how you see her.**

*I see a smile. A smile of inner contentment; the angry and arrogant teenager and young adult has grown into a person I am proud to see in the mirror. She is a mother, a daughter, a sister, a friend and a teacher. And what's more, she is with me wherever I am, and whatever I face.*

**Question: What were you doing before you connected with Jade Fire?**

*Well I was living in ignorance, oblivious of my spiritual journey and soul purpose; reacting and blaming all whenever the slightest went wrong. **Jade Fire** is the name my Divine Guidance has given to my Spiritual Master, who is the Highest Aspect of my Divine Consciousness.*



**Question: If we were to ask you, how did your journey start; what would you say was the catalyst?**

*What changed me was the fact that I became a mother. My two beautiful master children made me realize that there was more to me than I was aware of, and that till I knew who I really was, I would never be the mother I wished to be for them. Being a mother was the catalyst for me for sure.*

**Question: So when you started your "journey", how was the initial phase?**

*Without a doubt, it was difficult with a capital "D". It peeled away layers of arrogance and rage that I had cleverly used to hide and escape from the well of pain that lay deep within my psyche. For the first time I addressed the darkness that I knew was present within.*

**Question: What were the roadblocks if any and what kept you going?**

*No roadblocks really. I was absolutely sure that I wished to be free and liberated. I knew that I would not stop till I knew what my true power was, till I find my true treasure of inner love.*

**Question: What was your strategy then and how if at all it has changed for you?**

*The only strategy has been and is "FLOW" we need to go with this flow. Of course I put up what I now see as childish attempts to resist and control the flow but flow I did, and still do.*

**Question: What is your vision for JF?**

*No vision. I experience JF within as an incredibly power-filled force of love and wisdom. My constant "CONSTANT".*

**Question: So being a woman entrepreneur / spiritual worker, how has the journey been?**

*When I think of this question, I smile. **Happily.***

**Question: Ok, how do you manage to balance your work with your personal life?**

*I firmly believe and live that belief that I create time, time does not create me. So that balances everything!*

**Question: What advice do you have for the budding women entrepreneurs / people who would like to be more involved in spiritual work?**

*I believe that you cannot be involved in spiritual work. YOU ARE SPIRIT and the work you do is an extension of that. Firstly I don't believe that any one kind of work is spiritual. You may never meditate, or do any of the work that so many erroneously grade as spiritual, and still be a beautiful embodiment of the light of spirit because whatever you do, you commit to it, worship it and use it as a means to serve others. Never believe that your desire to be financially strong is automatically greed. NOT AT ALL. Unless we are full within in every way possible, we have little to help and serve others with. Money is energy like any other energy. Don't scorn it, don't chase it, simply enjoy it and share it like everything else.*

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Third in our list of fabulous women is **Julia Manke** – owner of Fingertips, a recruitment firm. After spending some time with the corporate world, Julia decided to create a world of her own. It's been a fascinating journey that decided to share this wonderful journey with you.





**Question: Why don't we start by you telling us, who do you see when you look into the mirror. Tell us a bit about her!**

*Me J! Just another woman making a living by being on my own and enjoying it. Being on my own makes it a tad easy for me to decide who to work with, what kind of work to accept, what terms to work on and so on.....that aspect of my job, that sense of responsibility makes it exhilarating for me.*

**Question: What were you doing before Fingertips happened?**

*Just prior to fingertips, I worked briefly with ABC Consultants.*

**Question: Tell us about your life before Fingertips and what led to the birth of Fingertips?**

*For a period of 18 months I worked with a venture capital/incubator. As an associate, all the business plans were about businesses with a sound exit option (perhaps as a bait for an investor) and all along I thought to myself no one seems to want to grow a business and that thought stayed with me! Then one day whilst in London on a dull dark dreary rainy day, I was sitting in on a business pitch about decorative hearse and funeral arrangements; it was eerie especially with the way the day looked outside. At the risk of sounding arrogant, I have to say that the person making the pitch did not inspire any confidence in his business acumen to any of us, that was the moment when I felt if I had an idea that I liked well enough, I would not only start a company but also grow it, growth being seminal!. Fingertips happened roughly 3 years later over a glass of wine with 2 friends, one backed out before the start but the other friend went on to become a great business partner; she quit to pursue her own interests about a year ago.*

**Question: Ok so from the corporate world to creating a world of your own; how was the beginning? What was the plan?**

*It was a partnership venture to start with and both me and my then business partner were focused on creating/doing good work so while there were some hiccups, it was not a tough task professionally (we were prepared for a salary cut, for irregular income and so on). What was tough though was to have the faith and the assurance within myself that this is what I want to do. At the risk of sounding clichéd, I would say that the nascent phase was interesting in terms of setting up operations, dealing with people from various walks of life and establishing an entity. Right from the start, we were both clear of not operating from home but setting up an office with proper work timings, team etc. So in a nutshell a great deal of hard work.*

**Question: Great! So after you set up Fingertips, what kind of challenges or roadblocks did you come across; what kept you going?**

*Roadblocks were the usual that any startup would have – no brand name, not an established practice to get work, cash flows, severe competition, building a team to work with, the usual. What kept me going was the belief that even though my service offering was not a lot different from several other players, there was still scope for improvement. I was confident that we could make the rather staid process of recruitment, more personalized, more structured, more process driven for both candidates and the clients. That has been the guiding force.*

**Question: Being always part of various business solutions in your earlier work days, when you decided on Fingertips, how did you strategize? Now that you have come a long way, what has changed in your business plan?**

*Strategy then was to work with companies willing to work with us so that we can stay afloat, make money, be profitable, manage cash-flows etc. That worked for us brilliantly. Now that we have created a niche for ourselves, strategy now is to work with a select set of clients across industries and a cross section of businesses (large, mid to small sized organizations) with a specific buy-in from the senior management to deliver recruitment solutions. Luckily for Fingertips, we have managed it well so far.*

**Question: Clearly, Fingertips has come a long way, how do you want to lead the growth now?**

*There are certain milestones in place in terms of revenues and team size and perhaps a few new locations however what I would really like for Fingertips is to be known as a company focused on delivering quality recruitment solutions; within a specified timeline irrespective of the size, scale and complexity of the assignment. To some extent we have already demonstrated this to our existing clients' and if we can build on that consistently, my job would be done! Another achievement that I am particularly fond of is that while everyone asks us about our specialty/focus areas as such, Fingertips has always accepted a variety of assignments and delivered successfully; so to my mind the key is in understanding the assignment, the client and the demands of the client. In a world of specialty, I have taken the stand to not specialize and it has so far worked for me.*

**Question: So being a woman entrepreneur, how has the journey been?**

*Toughest question really! To me there are neither perks nor disadvantages. Being a woman and loving it, I wouldn't have it any other way, suffice to say, it has never mattered! The journey's been as normal as it would be for a man I would say.*

**Question: So Julia, running your own business venture requires effort and time and a lot of it, do you find time for yourself? How do you manage your personal and professional lives?**

*Firstly I have varied interests and I do indulge in them. Secondly we work fixed hours and most times the office closes at 6:30 pm. Thirdly fingertips taught me to manager time like none of my previous jobs. Lastly, I don't have to report to anyone and so far as my clients' interests are not hampered, am free to manage my work and personal life.*

**Question: What advice do you have for the budding women entrepreneurs?**

*Don't focus on the gender -bias, believe in your work, strive to be very good at what you do, don't compare with what your peers are doing or how much revenue are they generating (no comparison is ever accurate), stay focused on your vision, have a plan and go about executing it bit by bit. Needless to say be honest about your work and be disciplined.*

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**Aparna P** owner and director of Bodhivriksh™ is yet another beautiful person whose resolve and inner strength is absolutely admirable. We assure you that her story is that of a survivor who turned her life around to something which can only be defined as an unquestionable success.



**Question: Who is the Aparna who peeks out of the mirror?**

*When I look into the mirror, I see a confident person. I see someone who is happy being a woman and yet feels she is stronger than any man. I see a woman who never wanted to work and yet circumstances forced her into it however today she is every bit proud of who she is and where she is.*

**Question: How different was life before *Bodhivriksh*™ happened? How did you decide on the name and what does it signify?**

*I was working with an MNC. Bodhivriksh™ was God's way of opening a window when he shut a door. Bodhivriksh™ is the knowledge tree where knowledge is the 'root' that helps a person with a strong foundation and helps one to reach for the sky; at the same time it is the 'route' which will lead one to success.*

**Question: What changed for you during this time (before *Bodhivriksh™*) and how did *Bodhivriksh™* come about?**

*I quit since I was not cut out for corporate politics. Too much of time is spent on doing things you don't like to do. I was a trainer at heart and wanted to do just that. I quit and had no job in hand (had very limited work ex to fall back on either). Freelanced for a couple of months and then fate brought me my first client 'Infosys'. They asked if I had a company of my own. I said yes. Registration and all other formalities had to be rushed into. I have a Sanskrit base and wanted an 'Indian' name for my firm. I wanted to spread knowledge and share learning. The name of the firm could not have been anything else but *Bodhivriksh™*.*

**Question: Wow! Indeed it seems like God led you right out of where you did not belong and guided you to create something beautiful. Everything beautiful has a beginning, how was your's?**

*The initial phase was a lot of hard work. The main challenge was delayed payments while the companies put the systems of payment in order. It was scary since I was going through a very bad financial patch and needed every penny just to be able to put one square meal on the table. Traveling 50 km everyday on a rickety moped and conducting 8-hour sessions. Yet every minute I felt alive.*

**Question: That is brilliant. Let me ask you, were there any roadblocks? To do what you are doing, requires inner strength, where did you get your's from?**

*I guess professionally I have not had too many roadblocks. But what kept me going was my family. I had to be there for them. In this initial phase, under the pressure of financial burdens my husband passed away and I almost wanted to give up but then wanting to give my daughter the best made me go on.*

**Question: That's an amazing spirit you have Aparna. My next question is while it all started out in a rush, when you did decide on it, what was your strategy? And today when you have established *Bodhivriksh™*, how if at all it has changed for you?**

*I never wanted to do business development. I believe in the fact that my good work will bring in more work. The strategy has always been to give the client more than what they expect. The way my client list has grown is a fantastic example of my strategy being successful. From Infosys came Tata Communications, from there another Tata Company and then the TACO corporate. From them Mercedes Benz and post that most of the Auto Giants. The journey continues....*

**Question: A very inspiring journey I must say. Where do you see *Bodhivriksh™* in the next 5 years?**

*In the next 5 years I want to see *Bodhivriksh™* expand its presence across 5 countries at least. (At present I train on behalf on my clients in Europe and the Gulf). I also want to see that *Bodhivriksh™* Learning Academy, an arm focusing on English for every Indian, starts off.*

**Question: Your start into this journey was speckled with challenges however has being a woman ever been one of these challenges?**

*The journey has been wonderful and being a woman has only empowered me. I have a team of 12 consultant trainers and 2 full time language coaches with me now. These are women who in turn are supporting their families on their incomes and it feels good to be able to empower someone else.*

**Question: Ok, how do you manage to balance your work with your personal life?**

*It is a juggling act sometimes, since I am out of town at least one day every single week. It is about prioritizing. I plan for every day the previous night. I do all my housework and hence don't have to depend on anyone else's schedule to upset mine. My parents and my daughter are my priority. I do not have a TV at home hence time is spent just physically being at home even though it may not mean always chatting or doing things together. It does mean very limited or almost no social life but I don't miss it. I call my parents up every single day no matter which part of the world I am in.*

**Question: What advice do you have for the budding women entrepreneurs?**

*Believe in yourself. You are the eternal **Adimaya** the **Adishakti**. You don't need anyone to tell you that you can. Do whatever you do with complete honesty and money will follow. Take your enterprise to a new level, the way you would nurture a child; guide it, mould it, pour your heart into it but never give up on the firmness. Most important don't lose the woman in you. It's a man's world out there they say and that makes it that much more important for you to remain a woman and not try to become a man.*

**Aparna Prabhudesai is the owner of Bodhivriksh, a corporate training firm and can be reached at [aparna@bodhivriksh.com](mailto:aparna@bodhivriksh.com)**



Now we bring you **Prachi Pande**, proprietor at Chamber of Corporate Attorneys (CCA). Having very little knowledge about how the "Attorney's World" really functions, I found myself quite interested to know Prachi's story of creating the CCA. An astute and hardworking professional, Prachi has created a name for herself today in the Corporate Legal space.



**Question: Tell us about the Prachi you see as a reflection when you stand in front of the mirror.**

*The mirror reflects a corporate and capital market lawyer who aspires to achieve professional and personal excellence through continuous learning. I am a strong believer of the Greek philosophy of 'arete'; which in its basic sense means excellence of any kind or reaching your highest human potential.*

**Question: What were you doing before you started Chamber of Corporate Attorneys**

*I graduated law from Government Law College, Mumbai in 2004. While studying and for a year thereafter, I worked in the intellectual property and corporate department at Crawford Bayley & Co. Subsequently, I worked as an associate with another law firm Thakker & Thakker (2005 – 2007) where I worked in international transactions.*

**Question: How did you come about starting your own venture?**

*I come from a family of entrepreneurs. So some where entrepreneurship was in my DNA. Sooner or later I would have eventually taken the plunge, as I have grown up seeing the impact and contribution a venture can do to a society. One of the biggest contributions is generating employment. Once I believed that I had enough experience and knowledge, CCA was conceived in 2008.*

**Question: How was the nascent phase when you started CCA?**

*When I started, a senior mentioned to me that a lawyer has three phases in his career. First, All work and no money. Second, work and money in equal proportion. Third less work and pot full of money. I am glad and humble about the fact that I never had to face the first phase.*

**Question: While working to create a name for CCA, what kind of challenges did you have to face?**

*As lawyers we are not trained entrepreneurs. Skills such as business development, client relation, team building, etc. is not taught to us in school. To overcome these impediments and develop these soft skills I interacted with many professionals, attended seminars and read a lot of management books. Well the learning continues.....*

**Question: No entrepreneur works without a plan; what was your strategy when you started and having spent some time now has it changed?**

Firstly, the code of legal professional ethics does not permit me to market and advertise. I had to and have to be mindful of that. My strategy was to precisely define my area of practice (which is dealing with corporate and capital markets). I made sure that when I meet people and prospective clients, my scope of work comes across as clearly as possible so that henceforth whenever they are faced with any legal query pertaining to my scope of practice they think of me. My endeavor is that CCA's name becomes akin to the corporate and capital market legal practice like Sachin is for cricket and Schumacher is for F1 racing. I have been able to achieve it some extent. However there still remains a great deal of work to be done.

**Question: What is your growth plan?**

*We are very much focused on the growth of our business within India. In the next 5 years it is CCA's endeavor that it is known in cities beyond Mumbai. There is a lot going on in the capital market in India so we have the need to further strengthen and grow our practice. CCA will carry on innovating and growing its practice everywhere we believe we can deliver quality and value to our clients.*

**Question: So being a woman entrepreneur, how has the journey been?**

*The journey so far has been satisfying, enriching and rewarding. Being a woman never hampered or hindered the entrepreneurship journey in any manner. I would like to also like to mention that I take absolute credit for the same. The journey however would have been tough, if not impossible, without an encouraging family.*

**Question: Now a question which bothers a lot of women when they decide to start working. How do you find that forever elusive work-life balance?**

*Firstly I have never felt my profession to be a chore or daunting in anyway. Truly, at the nascent stage there was no balance at all. Work would always take precedence over everything. Literally everything! I am thankful to my family who supported me through everything, without them the journey would have been impossible.*

*Well now when the Firm has acquired some momentum, I make sure that I spend some hours a week doing 'my 5 favorite things'; which include reading biographies, working out, writing and reading on non legal topics, cleaning (find it very therapeutic) and playing Sudoku.*

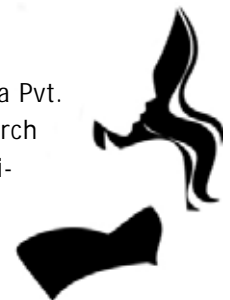
**Question: Oh! That is absolutely great. Now we know what you do to unwind. My last question is what advice do you have for the budding women entrepreneurs?**

*I firmly believe that Impossible is nothing! Then most importantly, you have to like your work, work hard and maintain the discipline. Though not in the same order but certainly in an equal proportion. It may sound very clichéd, but believe me it takes one to the desired destination.*

**Prachi Pande is the proprietor of Chamber of Corporate Attorneys, a law firm and can be reached at [prachi@ccalex.com](mailto:prachi@ccalex.com)**



Now we bring you **Smriti Gulwady**, Director at Sanmour Pharma Pvt. Ltd. Sanmour Pharma P Ltd is a "stand-alone" contract research organization (formulations R&D) catering to regulated & semi-regulated markets. Smriti handles the MarCom activities of the company. Read on to learn about the story of this amazing woman.



**Question: Smriti, please tell us a little about you.**

*At the outset, I take this opportunity to thank Exult team for having considered me worthwhile to feature in*



*your women's day special.*

*I am Smriti Gulwady working in the capacity of Director, Sanmour Pharma for the past 6 years. Married to Ram for the past 25 years, I am a mother of two; son Amogh is working while daughter Anagha is in final year of Comp. Engg. at Somaiya College, Vidyavihar.*

*My hobbies include travelling, connecting to people of all ages; music & of course working for the community at large thru the Rotary Club.*

**Question: What were you doing before Sanmour happened?**

*After graduating in Sociology from Elphinstone College, I started my ad career in the mid 80's after completing my PG Dip. in Advt & PR from KC College of Mgmt Studies. Since my school days, I always wanted to do something different. I didn't want to be in a "run-of-the-mill" kind of career, though I was advised to take up a "cushy" job in the public sector.*

*During my college days, I happened to visit the Jehangir Art Gallery once which was right opp. my college & got to see the CAG Awards which were awarded to the best creative ads in the field. Its then that I decided to join advertising as the creativity appealed to me. I joined the evening college at KC (as in those days, we didn't have the BMM type of degree courses) & I was working with ORG at Cooperage in the field of market research.*

*On completion of my one year course, I was selected to join as a Copy writer in an ad agency but was soon asked to switch over to client servicing. Advertising is not only about glamour as mostly people think; there is a lot of hard work that goes into creating the ad which does not get the required attention. But when you see your creation in print or film, the high it gives you completely overrides all the troubled times you had to undergo.*

*And this was the turning point in my life because meeting people from all walks of life & interacting with the various corporates gave me the confidence to start on my own. Infact, my clients urged to start on my own & promised to give me business. It's then when the entrepreneurial bug bit me & Amogh advertising was born in Jan. 1988*

**Question: What changed for you during this time (before Sanmour) and what really led to you becoming a part of it?**

*Ram was working as Research Head in Cipla which he quit in '97. He started consulting to pharma companies in India & worldwide & operating from home, I took charge of assisting him by attending to the clients' tel. calls/ scheduling his meetings/travel plans etc. (along with my duties as a mother & Proprietor of Amogh Advtg)*

*One of his client's gave him an assignment which had to be outsourced in a lab .What we realized was that while doing this, he had to share his technology with the company free of cost & that led us to setting up of our own lab. Since, he is a technically qualified person; I decided to jump in full time to help him with non technical activities like day to day administration/ finance/ business development etc. Hence, I decided to close down Amogh Advtg in Dec. 2005 & plunged into the business by becoming a Director in Sanmour Pharma where the nature of business was catering to outsourcing needs of generic pharma companies' world over.*

**Question: Ok, that is interesting. So how was the switch for you initially?**

*The initial period was a period of struggle as it happens in every business; suffice to say it was not a cakewalk for us. We had our share of difficulties but managed to keep afloat with the hope that things will change for better.*

**Question: What were the roadblocks if any and what kept you going?**

*Finance was a major roadblock as we didn't have a financier or investor funding so to speak. Whatever savings we had, we put into this business. Our positive attitude of coming out of the "red zone" kept us going. It was easy to throw in the towel but our persistence paid off.*



**Question: How has the strategy changed from when you started to now?**

*Since we are in the business of pharma research, Indian companies did not recognize the value of engaging the services we had to offer. Poaching an experienced person from a top company works out more cheaper as he brings in the technology from his earlier company whereas, they have to shell out more money to engage us for our services.*

*For us, looking at pharma companies in the western hemisphere made sense as they look at India for more economical solutions. R&D activity there costs a bomb & they get more mileage for their dollars in India. This strategy coupled with a good website & giving face time to the prospective clients definitely paid off.*

**Question: What is your vision for Sanmour? What level do you want it to be in the next 5 years?**

*The vision for Sanmour is to be a globally recognized company where customer delight is our prime focus. Giving each customer value for money irrespective of their size is what we believe in. In the next 5 years, Sanmour should have offices in different parts of the world, each being a profit centre headed by young minds. Biotechnology is the need of the hour & pharma will morph into it sooner rather than later. We have taken cognizance of this fact & are working in this direction.*

**Question: Has being a woman ever interfered with your journey as an entrepreneur?**

*The journey has not been an easy one because you are a woman first & an entrepreneur thereafter. Though career is important, I believe family comes first. However, if you are good at multi-tasking it's a lot easier. Time, people & money management should be your forte. Your family plays a very critical role in your success because at times they chip-in in small ways which seem trivial at times however can be very important. But at the end of the day, it is a satisfying experience when you are your own boss!*

**Question: You are quite actively involved with various NGO ventures, how is that experience? Would you like to give a message to promote NGO's in India?**

*I have been into Jaycees during my college days; hence working for the community was not new for me. So I joined Rotary in 2002 because both my children were grown up & didn't require much of my time. To do good for the society was always my passion.*

*There are lots of NGOs working in India because we have so much to do. If you look around, you can do a lot for the have-nots. But people should join any NGO with caution, because people judge you by the credentials of that NGO. There may be chances of your name getting tarnished by joining a fly-by-night NGO. So, tread with caution!*

**Question: Ok, how do you manage to balance your work with your personal life?**

*Multi tasking, positive attitude, always staying cheerful, is my mantra to create balance.*

**Question: What advice do you have for the budding women entrepreneurs?**

*Determination, grit, sincerity, passion towards your business & multi tasking abilities, being a team player will help you in the long run. Difficult times will come but the satisfaction of overcoming those gives out a new high. However small your business is, make a start & be your own boss. Good luck to all the budding entrepreneurs.*

***Smriti Gulwady is the Director of Sanmour Pharma Pvt Ltd and an active Rotarian. She can be reached at [smriti.rotary@sanmour.com](mailto:smriti.rotary@sanmour.com)***



## About Us...

**Exult! Solutions** was founded in April 2008 in Mumbai, India.

We work in the human development space. Our work includes organization development consulting, corporate training as well as coaching.

What differentiates us is our belief in the unbound potential of the energy that manifests in the human form. Based on extensive study of metaphysics, contemporary spiritual practices and psychology, our interventions, particularly workshops and coaching sessions, are unorthodox and impactful.

### Our Consulting Services...

- ◆ Recruitment systems
- ◆ Performance systems
- ◆ Psychometric testing
- ◆ Assessment centres
- ◆ Coaching and mentoring systems
- ◆ Organization development initiatives

### We facilitate workshops in areas including...

- ◆ Leadership
- ◆ Stress management
- ◆ Assertiveness
- ◆ Team building and management
- ◆ Business and social etiquette
- ◆ Business communication
- ◆ Presentation Skills
- ◆ Sales and service
- ◆ Culture
- ◆ Business English
- ◆ Spirituality at work
- ◆ Coaching and mentoring
- ◆ Managerial skills

### Coaching...

We provide coaching services for executives/individuals who wish to transform their lives and work and overcome long-held patterns of behavior and belief systems that are no longer serving them. We do not use a rigid coaching model, but customize the sessions according to each person's need and response. The combination of behavioral science and metaphysics in this area has given us excellent results in this area. We coach face to face in Mumbai, India and on Skype with clients in other parts of the world.

### Your feedback is precious...

Do let us know your views and suggestions on Exult-ed at [info@exult-solutions.com](mailto:info@exult-solutions.com). You may also wish to suggest themes for the forthcoming issues. Feel free to recommend any people/organizations that you would like us to feature on our issues.

