

TEDx is a mega global platform that invites motivational speakers from different walks of life. Here, each of the speakers narrate their personal accounts, which enable the audience to see the bigger picture of life, and make them realise that the glass is always half full and not the other way around. Every year, **Amity International School, Gurugram 46**, also organise their very own version of TEDx, all in an endeavour to encourage and prepare its young minds for all the challenges that they might encounter in their life ahead. Here are some noteworthy expressions from entrepreneurs and influencers on the theme 'Illuminovation', highlighting the role of innovation and creativity in leading a fulfilling life.

Dastangoi needs



Fouzia Dastango, India's first female Dastangoi artist

"Dastangoi as an artform started in Purani Dilli on the steps of Jama Masjid when a dastango would narrate a tale full of drama and mystery for days on end. There was no mass media like radio or television and the storyteller had to really feel connected with his audience while telling a tale. This art form was revived in 2005, but to make it popular, it required innovation in plotline as we could no longer tell tales of princess and palaces. So we had to come up with refreshing stories. I was told that dastangos needed a deep, masculine voice and looming personalities, but I

took this as a challenge and had both the *zid* (stubbornness) and the *junoon* (passion) to succeed as a dastango. I draw my stories from contemporary times, so that people can connect with them. I have performed on tales of Kabir, Amir Khusrow, and even yesterday's actors like Meena Kumari and Madhubala. We also deal with social causes like safe motherhood, mental health etc., in our stories. Dastangoi is now a tool of social change not just story-telling. We are soon going to adapt children's stories from Bengali literature as well as Malgudi Days, in the dastangoi format." 🇮🇳

Of innovation and creativity



Vaibhav Kumar, founder & CEO, Clapbox

Find the gap, win the market

"As a teenager, I was passionate about drumming. In fact, music and entrepreneurship have always been my calling in life. During my second year of college, I was to participate in a music competition in Kanpur, and I was asked to carry my drum kit along. It was a nightmare because the kit was extremely heavy and bulky. When someone suggested that I should buy a cajon since it was a great substitute for drums, I searched for it in every music shop possible. Either

no one had heard of such an instrument, or it was totally unaffordable, being priced at around 25,000 INR. This was when I decided to build one for myself. After several trials, I had a self-made cajon. It was such a hit at the competition that I started getting queries from musicians all around to build a customised cajon for them. I knew then that this was a huge business opportunity. But, it had its own set of challenges as well. I had to make a cajon at an affordable price and at the same time

get it endorsed by professional musicians to find a place in the market. After working on around sixty prototypes for six months, I came up with the final product ie a cajon for 3500 INR. There was another roadblock as shopkeepers never took me seriously because of my young age. But I knew I had to be patient. Soon, I found a mentor who was a 50-year-old entrepreneur in e-commerce. He assisted me to sell cajons on various online platforms and the rest, as they say, is history." 🇮🇳



Aisha Ayub, founder & CEO TheQuoteShip, HER and Mukhaatib Foundation

Digital marketing is the new norm

"During Covid, there were some major changes in my life, and it became important that I took stock of what I really wanted to do. I started learning digital marketing and that was a game changer for me. I started my digital marketing agency The QuoteShip, which began with a small team but now has clients from all over the world. Even before this, I had already founded HER (Huddle, Empower, Rise) that is a community of

women working towards financial empowerment of women. I want to emphasise that there is no age to restart one's life. Digital marketing is a combination of innovation and clarity. And Artificial Intelligence can now be used to support this innovation. More importantly, we must not fear AI, we should learn how to use it correctly. It is necessary to create good content using all these elements. In fact, so many women during Covid became entrepreneurs while sitting at home through the benefit of digital marketing." 🇮🇳



Savvy Rai, Femina Miss India Haryana 2022

Discipline is key

"Back in 2019 when I was still in college, I got the opportunity to intern at a company in a completely different city - Mumbai. I learnt a lot while navigating through life in a new place. I had always been interested in participating in a beauty contest, but it was only during the pandemic when I finally found the courage to apply. I learnt how to present myself effectively, and I learnt how to walk on a ramp. I had to prepare myself to face several rejections along the way, while being under the spot-

light. I give the credit for my win at the pageant to the values of discipline, perseverance, and hard work instilled in me at the school. My background in sports as a national level basketball player, has also helped me immensely. All of us must know that whatever career we choose for ourselves, we must learn to never give up and always face every challenge with dignity, discipline and patience. Moreover, illuminnovation, according to me, is to find a creative solution for an existing problem." 🇮🇳

Keeping peace needs effort

"I've spent 40 years of my life with the Indian Air Force, and I'm here to talk about the Indian Military. As we all know, the world is in distress, with conflicts everywhere like the Russia - Ukraine war, Israel - Hamas war etc. And there are just three states a nation can be in, peaceful with its neighbours, at war with them, or the third state, the 'No war, no peace' situation, like the one we share with Pakistan and China. The armed forces have to be prepared for all three situations, all at the same time.

In India, we have the National Security Apparatus that strategises national security objectives and how to achieve them. We have around 14.55 lakh active soldiers and 1.55 lakh reserves. And we invest about 1.5% of our GDP to build our ships, aircraft carriers, planes, missiles, etc. We even have a 60,000-kilometer fiber optic network to stay connected. We are the largest enterprise in India! And all of this is to achieve one goal: preventing war through deterrence, by showing we're strong and prepared." 🇮🇳



Air Marshal (Dr) Rajiv Sachdeva Retd. deputy chief, Integrated Defence Staff

Give birds a safe haven

"When I was a child, we used to live in Chandni Chowk, where the roof of our house was full of birds' nests. When we moved to Ashok Vihar, I noticed new construction was taking place, and as a result trees were being cut down to make way for buildings. There were hardly any nests or birds around. Even if trees were being planted, they were not of the local variety but ornamental ones, where birds rarely build their homes. This was the impetus

for me to create nests for birds. I believe that even the smallest of innovations can make a huge difference. Many of my initial innovations failed when birds did not adopt the nests made by us. I was almost on the verge of giving up when I happened to meet an elderly gardener whose words of reassurance gave me the courage to continue. Finally, it was in 2008 when the real groundbreaking moment happened. We had put up around 20 nests in one of the grain markets in Delhi. Once again, people commented on the futility of our efforts with remarks such as "Why would birds adopt man-made nests?" After waiting for three days, we saw a male sparrow take one of the nests with his female. And within



Rakesh Khatri Nest Man of India

days, every nest we made had been adopted by birds. Since then, we are successfully building nest for the avian population." 🇮🇳

See every threat as an opportunity



Anurag Jain, ex co-founder, MilkBasket & head of operations, LocoNav

"As an entrepreneur, you must think how can you illuminate everyone's life by using innovation. When we founded MilkBasket in 2015, there were other delivery apps as well, but they were not delivering groceries till midnight. We wanted to solve this problem and this defined the USP of our service. To achieve the same, we worked hard to overcome the potential challenges in areas like supply, operations, stocking etc. We ensured that the supply side was managed well, and this set us apart from others. In fact, online shopping

had just begun in 2014-15 and the digital revolution had not yet taken off in India, so people were still skeptical about using credit cards online. So, we started the concept of e-wallets which ensured customer safety. Also, there was no delivery charge on our platform. Since we were delivering early in the morning, we ensured our warehouses were within 15 kms from each and every place we wanted to cater to and hence, we were able to deliver on time. All of these aspects made MilkBasket the success it stands as today." 🇮🇳



Anupama Pandey author & former State Nodal Officer

Break the set frames

"A common perception is that innovation is what only the super-intelligent can achieve. But, innovation, for me, is a leap of faith. We discover ourselves in the process, as innovation first happens in our minds. I recall how I broke the frame myself: after a complicated surgery in 2010, my first wish was to find the strength to open my eyes. But then, I told myself that this was only 10 per cent of what I could really do. I promised

myself to run a marathon in two years. And I did. I believe that if you seek to innovate for ten per cent, it's change; but when you make it ten times ten, that's innovation. It's about pushing your boundaries. When you look for meaning in your life, you find the strength to live every moment of life. So, never listen to others' opinions while making decisions. Follow your passion and never fear failure. Know that you are limitless." 🇮🇳