

VIEW POINT

INTERFACE WITH KIRAN BEDI: LEADERSHIP CONCEPTS



DR. KIRAN BEDI needs almost no introduction to the people of India for many of whom she has been a role model and an inspiration. Kiran Bedi, Ph. D, is India's first and highest ranking (retired in 2007) woman officer who joined the Indian Police Service in 1972. Her experience and expertise include more than 35 years of tough, innovative and welfare policing.

She has worked with the United Nations as the Police Advisor to the Secretary General, in the Department of Peace Keeping Operations. She has represented India at the United Nations, in International forums on crime prevention, drug abuse, police and prison reforms as well as women's issues. Recipient of the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award (also called the Asian Nobel Prize), and several other decorations, she is a sought after speaker on social, professional and leadership issues. Kiran Bedi has been voted as India's most admired woman and fifth amongst all Indians.

The same held true at IIM Indore, when, as she walked into the seminar hall, the entire audience stood as one to applaud her and just as quickly quietened down when she stepped up to speak.

Kiran Bedi:

It's good to be here at IIM Indore. This is the first time I've been invited to the IIM Indore, which only makes it more special. I do not plan to lecture you or bore you with long-winded speeches. I am glad to see so many of you are continuing your education, in spite of the jobs you hold. It is encouraging to know that the young professionals of today are eager to increase and enhance their knowledge. That would be my first piece of advice to all of you present here - Continue to grow educationally.

In all my years on the force, I have continued to learn and study. I chose not to be content with the level of education I held when I entered the police force, but instead I chose to study and increase my store of knowledge. I chose not to fall into the age-old trap of telling myself that I was satisfied with what I knew and that I didn't really need to learn new things. Believing that is a convenient lie which all of us tell ourselves at one time or the other. Unfortunately, what we don't realize is that none of us know how much time we have left. And if we do not use what time we have to its fullest potential, then we are guilty of indifference. Indifference to the greatest and the most deadly gift we have been given - Time. Which is why my second piece of advice to all of you is that you would continue to add value to time. Use it while you still have it. Squeeze every last

bit of time you have in a day and use it to enrich and empower yourselves with knowledge that education provides.

In connection with this line of thought, I would like to leave you with five concepts that I came up with on my way here.

The first of which is:

Learning to do as opposed to Learning to be:

From the time we take our first steps, we set out to learn how to do. We learn new things and put them into practice almost immediately. But how many of us, I wonder, have learnt how to be? How many of us know how to or even what it means just to simply be? We've all heard the phrase "Be Yourself", at one time or the other in our lives. Oversimplified, that is exactly what learning to be means. When you learn who you are truly meant to be and when your foundations are laid in solid rock, "who you are", will stand the test of time, unlike sand castles built on the seashore.

The second point I would like you to reflect on is:

Physiological Fear versus psychological fear:

In the days of the early man, life was pretty simple. All he had to do was walk out of his cave and bash the first sabre tooth tiger or woolly mammoth he came across, over its head so he could take it home to his family. The only thing he would have worried about, would have been the little problem of how on earth he was going to bash some gigantic or ferocious creature's head in, without ending up as the said creature's evening meal. In my opinion the fears people face today are just as real as the fear the early man felt while facing a tiger. While the fears we face today might not be visible, they still have vicious razor sharp claws that more often than not, rip us emotionally to shreds. It is much easier to fight what we fear if it has a shape, a name or a face. But to fight things we can't see, like rejection, or condemnation or even emotional abuse, is to fight blind. These dangers are in some ways far more violent than having a knife at your throat. Psychological fears stunt your emotions, destroy your confidence and self-esteem and scar you for life. So, as we face our physical fears, let us meet our psychological fears with weapons such as, the courage of conviction and the power of knowledge.

The third point I would like to put before you is:

Physical nutrition, Vis a Vis Mental nutrition:

I never cease to be astonished at the plethora of ads that promote food in all its glorious variety. You have ads that tell you how fast and strong you'll grow if you only make a certain health drink your choice, or how easy it is to cook noodles in two minutes etcetera. I do wonder, however, at how many of us make an effort to feed the mind of a child - and not with junk. Why don't we nurture a child's mind the same way we do his body? Why don't we take the time to introduce new avenues of thought, give the child new

horizons to pursue, instead of leaving the mental development to teachers in school and then demanding that the child perform excellently? When you nurture the mind of a child, you develop his ability to ask questions, to dream big and above all, you give him the power of imagination. You give him something; no one and no circumstance can ever take away.

The fourth concept is:

The power of the sword versus the power of love:

During my stint as the Inspector General of Prisons, Tihar jail (Delhi) I instituted a number of reforms in the management of the prison, and initiated a number of measures such as detoxification programs, yoga, vipassana meditation, redressing of complaints by prisoners and literacy programs. I did this because I believed the power of compassion would be more effective in bringing about change - for the better - in the lives of the prisoners. It certainly seemed a better idea than throwing my weight around and showing everybody I was the boss just because I could. Had I done something like that, I would shortly have lost all sense of integrity and humanity. Does this mean I was soft on them? No. I chose to show them tough love. Tough love is just that. Tough. But at the same time it is compassionate and forgiving. To punish and use brute force is an easier option, but tough love extracts a price and can only be practised when one is willing to believe in it.

The last concept I would like to leave with you is,

The need for a new world:

This generation is the generation of change. The one that will stride off into the unknown, armed with knowledge, with truth and the ability to apply it. Altering behaviour - the world's and their own. It is from this kind of generation that a new world will arise. A generation of 'change makers', who aren't afraid to self, audit themselves and who won't compromise with the essentials of life, but will meet each challenge head on. New human beings for a new world.

I believe that the people present here at IIM Indore, will be part of this new world. As I leave you with these thoughts or concepts, call it what you will, I hope it settles into your sub consciousness and that you will be able to pull it out of yourselves when you stand in need of it.

Once again, may I say what a joy and an honour it is to have been invited here to speak to all of you, and to know that perhaps in some small way, my efforts here have contributed to that change.