

## Q&amp;A

**Minocher Patel**  
Corporate trainer and  
motivational speaker

*Corporate trainer and motivational speaker Minocher Patel conducts training programmes for the corporate sector and student community in India and abroad. He is the founder-director of Ecole Solitaire, a finishing school and corporate training consultancy in Pune. Patel is also a visiting faculty to many management institutes in India.*

*Patel has received the National Achievement Award in 2007 for excellence in education and the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Award in 2007 for outstanding service, achievement and contribution to the fields of education and training. In a talk with Rajesh Rao, he stresses the importance of developing soft skills among the youth.*

**Q: What inspired you to become a motivational speaker? How did you start off?**

I enjoy speaking and people enjoy listening to me. After participating in the 'Train the Trainer' programme in West Germany and Finland in 1988, I got involved in corporate training and motivating people. I was inspired when my German trainer told me that I had the power to influence people's minds and transform them.

I did not want to be a professor. I always wished to be an independent speaker and trainer.

Though it started off as a hobby at

# 'Our edu system rips our confidence'



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functions, I embarked upon my professional path as a motivational speaker and corporate trainer by planning my career.

**Q: Why does India need motivational speakers today, more than ever?**

As India is progressing economically, we need more trainers who can motivate people and train them in soft skills. There is a huge demand for speakers and presently, we have very few quality trainers. In India, there is a lack of focus on attitude, confidence, self-esteem and looks. Character building is the biggest problem among our people. By this, I am referring to manners and etiquette — be it while talking on the phone, eating at a table, while doing business, at social gatherings or wherever it is required in our daily life.

Indians definitely have a higher IQ compared to an average 21-year-old American, but we score less in

emotional intelligence. The educational system and the way we are trained take away our confidence.

**Q: What role do finishing schools play in grooming students?**

Finishing schools will play a crucial role in training in soft skills, but it is our educational system that must bring a change in our country. At the school level, standards VIII to X are important years in which we can bring about a change in our children. The concept of a finishing school must reach the masses, not classes. Recent research that I did shows that there are no such finishing schools in India.

In a country where financial disparity is high, we need to boost soft skills among the urban and rural youth. The government must earmark a budget to motivate the youth. Corporates should come forward and sponsor soft skill

training programmes, especially for the rural youth. Confidence and character building, along with an attitudinal change among our urban and rural youth, are essential.

**Q: Do soft skills make a fresher more employable?**

It is surprising that our MBA and engineering graduates lack knowledge of basic soft skills and business etiquette. The reputed institutes have high quality training programmes and curriculum, but no guidance in developing soft skills. The focus is on theoretical knowledge, while these skills get hardly 25% of the attention. I would say that 75% of the training should be in soft skills and the rest should be theory oriented.

Why are most of the graduates unemployable nowadays? They do not have a number of soft skills. Confidence, attitude, etiquette, communication skills, time management, listening skills, personal grooming and hygiene, leadership skills are a few qualities that are vital for success.

**Q: How important is it to maintain your image to succeed?**

In the corporate sphere, as you go progress, your image assumes utmost importance. When you are representing a company or organisation, you must follow its dress protocol. Presentation skills, style and attitude analysis and wardrobe planning, among other things, give you an edge over others.