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'Never give up on your passion'

Updated: March 17, 2016 16:08 IST | Neeraja Murthy



Dancer Ananda Shankar Jayant.

*Renowned dancer Ananda Shankar Jayant shares her experience of her talk at Harvard Business School.*

**HYDERABAD:** Illustrious dancer Ananda Shankar Jayant's eyes glitter with pride. After a memorable talk in Harvard and three-week USA tour, she has returned to Hyderabad and the dancer's joy is boundless. Ananda was invited to talk at the prestigious India Conference at the Harvard Business School as part of its newly-introduced Inspire series. "This invitation came out of the blue," recalls Ananda. She was one of the four speakers, the others being Pramath Sinha, Vikas Khanna and Anita Dongre. The 12-minute talk was on nurturing and the pursuit of an alternate passion. Ananda's talk, she shares, was interspersed with examples from her own life.

Giving a gist of the talk, she says "While treading the path of a full-fledged career and nourishing my passion for dance and engaging in it deeply, I spoke about how I had liberated it from the burden of livelihood and success. Also I had chosen not to tint it with money," points out Ananda.

She also quoted American motivational speaker and writer Dennis Waitley in the talk. "He said: 'Chase your passion – not your pension'. I beg to differ. I say 'Ensure your pension, but don't give up on your passion.' I truly believe that the binaries of chasing one's dreams vs being responsible are but constructs of one's mind. Life means work and passion

and it need not be choosing one or an option! The trick here is to balance between what you love to do and what you need to do,” she explains. She feels when one finds a great job, the first thing one sacrifices is the talent. “It is entirely up to us to channelise that talent as it helps us to step up from the mundane. It embellishes the career and nourishes the core.” At the conference, there were other interesting sessions by Indians like Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, MD and CEO of ICICI bank Chanda Kochhar, MP Sashi Tharoor, Actor Kamal Haasan, director Karan Johar, and writer Devdutt Patnaik. If the Harvard talk was a rare honour, the rest of Ananda’s tour in the US also included lectures, university talks, workshops and performance. “I got an invitation to speak and conduct a workshop at MIT. Then I went to the University of Wyoming and spoke at the Columbia College at Chicago and had extensive sessions at Oberlin College, Ohio. I also performed at the Indian embassy in Washington DC, and also performed at Michigan and Boston. In Boston, I helped Maanavseva, an organisation seeking to deploy a mobile Mammogram vehicle in Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram and do a fundraiser. My talks also included advocacy talks at departments dealing with therapy and arts. The response everywhere was amazing, with invitations to go back,” she smiles.

Ananda is constantly interacting with youngsters and feels empowered at their enthusiasm. “When I see the sheer talent, drive and energy of youth, I always come away inspired. They are highly motivated and determined to make a difference to the world. When you see their commitment, one feels reassured that the future is in good hands.”

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