

## Meet: Deena Mehta the first lady of Indian Finance



Deena Mehta, the epitome of a contemporary woman

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March 2017 has been a very hot month with summer setting in earlier than usual. I wiped the perspiration off my brow and nervously stepped into her cabin. What struck me first about the room is the temperature, it was neither very cold, nor very warm – just right. Much like the way she has led her life, full of balance.

Little did I know that this day would be a turning point in my life. Read this heart-to-heart conversation with Deena Mehta and #StayInspired.



Deena Mehta, the epitome of a contemporary woman

I was sitting face to face with one of the biggest names in Indian finance. When one enlists names of the top business women in India, Deena Mehta's name appears among the top three.

Ofcourse I was nervous!

I spent a few moments studying her face, the room and her personality. She reminded

me of my mother. No nonsense, extremely sharp, witty and intelligent. What's more, her warmth touched my heart. She is like the person you want to rush to each time life gives you a raw deal.

I guess her experienced eyes understood my nervousness. She broke the ice.

*"I recently purchased a new brand of Green Tea, please take some, I am sure you will like it."*

*"Do you have that much time, ma'am? I mean, you would have a busy day lined up..."*

*"Surely it is a busy day, but a few moments of sipping tea with you would be nice."*



***Ms. Deena Mehta, Chairperson, Capital Market Committee  
with Mr. Navneet Munot, Chief Investment Officer, SBI Mutual  
Fund***

Such simplicity, so much warmth – how can people of such great stature maintain so much calm and spread positivity all the time? It is a question I am still seeking answers to.

I had done my homework, I was speaking to the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Asit C. Mehta Investment Intermediates Ltd. She is one of the first few women members of the Bombay Stock Exchange and eventually went on to become its first woman president.



With her family at her son Aditya's MBA graduation ceremony.

**When I praised her about her achievements and journey, she remarked.**

*"Nowadays, your generation plans everything. In our times we never planned things this way. We just worked hard, very hard to reach our goals. I loved finance and wanted to work in this field so I followed my heart."*

**How was it to work in a role that is traditionally perceived as male dominated? She looked at me briefly and smiled.**

*“Men are okay with a woman working as a colleague and subordinate. The problem arises when she supersedes him with her intellect and climbs the ladders. I did face problems with men who perceived me as a professional threat. But life has its own ways of taking care of itself. Things got sorted as time passed by. I was fortunate to have a partner like Asit who always stood by me.”*



A relationship of mutual respect and equality.

Deena & Asit C Mehta – soulmates.

**Whenever I look at a successful woman like you, I wonder whether you have the similar problems like ordinary women. How do you strike a balance.?**

*“Well, there are some people who break down their problems and treat each bit as a huge hurdle. I am more of a planner and executor, I look at a problem holistically, break it down into goals and create a path to reach each goal. A woman can strike a balance between work and home if she is willing to let go of her power. For me, delegation is the key. I strongly believe that if someone else can do a job, I would rather give it to them. That way, I can do what I have planned to achieve. Time is short, proper delegation of work and a method of checks and balances helps me to maintain balance. I apply this in my personal and professional life as well.”*

**Are you a religious person?**

*“I do believe in God. However, I am not a fanatic. Fortunately, I got married in a family that was more spiritually inclined. Religious study is a hobby and I have procured several qualifications in various religious disciplines. All this has made me spiritual and lent me a balanced view towards life.”*

**What do you have to say about the current Woman Empowerment Movement that is emerging across our country?**

*“Live and Let Live is my motto in life. I believe that each person has been sent on Earth to play a role, it is vital that we continue playing it. Becoming better and better at what we do should be a goal instead of pulling down another person, gender or community.”*



A candid moment with loved ones.

**What is your message to the woman who are reading this interview?**

*“There is nothing that you cannot do – everything is doable if you gather your wits and make it happen. We as women are our own enemies. Don’t wait for a man to arrive to uplift your life. Find your own path.”*



Intellect, warmth, positivity – there is so much in these pictures.

**What is your take on today's society?**

*"We are living in a generation of transition. If our generation supports the girl and nurtures talents she will blossom. As parents and stakeholders of the society, we must encourage her to live a life of balance. The mental blocks that we harbour need to be removed. Co-existence of genders, a life of peace is what will lead to a healthy society."*

**You have achieved so much. When do you think you will take a break?**

*"There is nothing like retirement and break. I love doing what I do and I will continue with that. I use every moment of my life to learn something new. At present, I am learning the nuances of the Bhagwad Gita and also focusing on our Digital Business."*



*Let's see where life takes me next."*

60 enriching minutes had passed. I concluded the interview and left her room feeling inspired.

I really hope that this interview inspires you as well. Do leave your comments and views. If there is a question that you have for Deena ma'am, mention it, I will surely reach it to her.

**– Penned by Mayura Amarkant**

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