

MY BELIEFS

By: Vineetha Athrey

1. I believe in **Absolute Excellence**: Whatever you do try to be the very best in the whole world, among the crème-de-la-crème, not just better than your friends/peers/team-mates. I hate ideas such as - *being one among the many, part of the rat race, taking everybody's consensus, doing 'what you can' rather than doing whatever it takes*. My strongest belief is that no matter what you do if you assume 100% responsibility and give it your all (*not just 'what you can'*), you can change your life completely. As a Speaker I aim to inject the same enthusiasm and excellence-mindset in the people I work with. So if you LOVE being part of the herd, genuinely have no desire to rise above what's normal, if the idea of being sensationally awesome and the 'Talk-of-the-Town' in whatever you take up (or at least *try* to be so) turns you off, then do not even contact me as I might not be the right Speaker/Trainer for you. I am turned off by people who are absolutely unwilling to change something even when they know that maintaining the status quo is hurting their growth!
2. I believe in **Absolute Rebellion: It's better to live for only one day as a lion, than for a thousand years as a lamb**. Popular opinion is the best shortcut to kill your originality and creativity. When you seek the please absolutely everybody, you end up being just like everybody. **Why fit in when you can stand out!?** I have always garnered both ardent haters and fans in whatever I do and I like it that way. I would rather have a surefire hit than something that gets surely fired. It is no surprise then that my first book is titled - Sexy Successful Spiritual™.
3. Three words that define me are: **Passion, Rebellion, Excellence**

4. My biggest thrill comes from doing something in which I have no natural advantage (of past experience etc) and that involves some risk. There should not even be one thing in common between any two things I do. I believe that life is too short to not challenge yourself to learn absolutely new things and master them. I cannot imagine doing something that's been done before, either by me or by someone else. I have to do it in a way that allows me to connect some new dots and aligns with my quirks and imperfections, the way I see the world. Taking on an unknown is the ultimate thrill. The minute it becomes a 'known' I lose interest.

5. My definition of slavery is to do something I am no longer passionate about. I need to wake up every morning with a blood rush in my brain, as if I am about to bungee jump! Call me crazy, but I have taken all of my career decisions this way – moving out of TCS/Software Engg to become a Business & Financial Journalist; giving up a high-powered, glamorous job at CNBC-TV18 to become an Author, Speaker and Entrepreneur. **The last 10months have been SHEER TORTURE and PURE BLISS** – *learning Professional Speaking, Positioning, Personal Branding, Marketing and then combining all this knowledge to Design my products. I create tools for people who are passionate, driven and rebellious.*

6. My fundamental aim as a Speaker/ Author/Trainer is NOT to be soothing and agreeable. It is to IMPACT your life, no matter what it takes! And *I am willing to do anything* – even if it means saying things that you might not like, challenging you, knocking off some long-held perspectives that might be holding you back. **I believe that if you wanted someone who just agrees with you and laughs a lot, you would've gone to a Professional Listener, not a Professional Speaker.** I firmly believe that ANY means is justified if the cause is worthy. And mine is to ensure that you get life-and-business changing tools that will empower you to **come out at the top**. No less.

7. I've always craved the company of people who are street smart, and who think out-of-the-box, challenge themselves, see much more than what meets the eye, and come up with fresh perspectives. Whenever I talk to someone like that, the conversation becomes so elevating that I completely lose track of time. I have had 12-hour long conversations over the phone with people I've barely known and they are now my closest friends!
8. Watching my mother die so suddenly taught me my greatest lesson: Life will be over before you blink. You got to find something that you really, passionately care about, your love, your mojo, whatever that is. And you got to do your best work every day. **You will be exceptional at something only if you do what you truly care about.** The power that comes from that is so incredible, it's the best aphrodisiac. So ask yourself - What pisses you off about life, work, society, anything? What rattles you? What is it about your life, your world or your existence that you wish were different? And then go change that. Be the change you wish to see. Stop being the sheep. When you LEAD, a thousand others will follow.
9. I believe that true power lies with the decision-maker. *Who is the decision-maker of your life?* Do your decisions come from a place in **your** heart/mind that **you** own, control and influence? In my case, I take all the decisions in my life - career, relationships, fitness, money, etc - based on my instincts. Opinions/suggestions/'well-meaning' advice of family, self-appointed well-wishers/advisors, babas, gurus, religions, customs, social norms, rules, market forces, etc don't fundamentally reverse the decision that comes from my gut. The only exception is that of my lawyer. LOL! Others might have a say on the process/execution-side but not on the decision-side. I do what feels right to me. So if you are the type who says that you have a supportive family/friends/network

that 'lets you do' what you want to, I would find that ludicrous. Seriously, it's not up to someone else to 'let you do something'.

10. **"No matter who you are, no matter what you did, no matter where you've come from, you can always become a better version of yourself"** - this quote by Madonna is my all-time favorite. I have been in the absolute pits and I have had my highs, I have excelled at some things and I have totally sucked at a few, I have had my victories and some hollow defeats, but I know that the only thing that keeps you going in all situations is: **What do you see when you imagine your future.** Forget the past, do you wish to have a better FUTURE for yourself? Are you willing to take some RISKS to make that wish a reality? Are you willing to upset the STATUS QUO in your life/work in order to become 'a better version of yourself'?
11. I believe that: **Success is the best comeback line.** If you want exceptional success you got to have an exceptional attitude and take exceptional action, and not worry about what the society thinks of you in the interim. I have had people call me a freak because of my unconventional career choices (three vastly different careers - Software Engineer/Business Analyst at TCS, Financial Journalist at CNBC-TV18, and now - Author, Speaker, Entrepreneur), but then, the same people came back crawling with flowers every time I got an award! So don't tweak your ambition for other people; let your success tweak other people's silly and limited ideas about ambition.
12. I don't seek stable, 5%-a-year type of growth. I seek crazy, dizzy, jaw-dropping, awe-inducing, bamboo shoots of growth. And in order to achieve that I invest in projects, careers and people that force me to stretch the limits of my ability, intelligence and creativity - conditions that force me to become better constantly. I actively look out for great books, enriching conversations and experiences that challenge me to expand my perspectives and thinking.

13.If you wait to become 100% confident before you take the plunge into whatever you want to do, you will end up spending a good part of your life WAITING!! My work gave me the privilege of interviewing the who's who of India Inc, and some of the most respected economists, entrepreneurs, top business executives, Nobel Laureates, investors from around the world, even top sportsmen and movie stars. Do you know the one common thing among *all* of them? After shooting the interview *every single one* of them asked me the *same* question – “Was I OK?” No body, mind you, not even the most successful person was free of this niggling doubt that maybe he was not OK. Discovering this early on in my career taught me a priceless lesson: *You don't have to be absolutely perfect to knock the ball right off the park!*

14.What drives me in everything I do is this question – **What kind of IMPACT am I making?** Impact, in my book, is not real or complete unless I have dented some existing norm or convention. Not through slogans, tweets or FB posts but through results so spectacular that they automatically silence all Doubting Toms. Here are some of my favorites that I have beaten to dust –

- *“You're way too young and under-qualified (not an MBA) to be a Business Analyst”*
- *“Engineers can't be Financial Journalists”*
- *“Women can't track hard beats like iron ore mining”*
- *“You will upset some really powerful people if you report that story”*
- *“Finding a publisher is going to be awfully hard... will take years!!”*

There is a great kick in beating the odds and winning when *they* don't expect you to, in a way that *they* can't foresee! The sense of hope this creates for those around you is more fulfilling than any other feeling. It's the best state to be in. This, according to me, is true impact, when you achieve spectacular results while shattering crotchety old myths along the way!

15. I believe that the success or money you get is directly proportional to the amount of impact you make. **If you are not earning enough, then you are not serving enough.** In a corporate set-up the oldest employee doesn't automatically make the most money, but the one whose work makes the most impact does. For eg - compare the salary of a house-keeping staff member who has been working in the company for 20 yrs with that of its CEO who has been around for just a year. Even in entrepreneurship you can charge as much money as you wish and get away with it if your solution impacts the most. **There is no dearth of money in the world; only a dearth of ideas that have sheer impact-prowess.**
16. Every year I have striven to change at least one thing about myself. It could be adding a brand new skill or overcoming a limitation. This has made the greatest difference to my life and career. And I believe that it can to yours too.
17. I am not a feminist. I am an EQUALIST. I believe that what we need is not a society that's skewed towards women but one that is skewed towards merit *regardless* of whether it comes from a man or a woman. Think about the greatest inventions that changed the world - the wheel, the telephone, satellite communication, railroads, medical breakthroughs, etc. Imagine this - *what if their creators were told that there is a 40% reservation to some special group?* I shudder at the thought! You and I wouldn't even exist the way we do today! Any society that doesn't support and encourage merit by default and place that above everything else is a scary place to live in! I have nothing against women empowerment so long as its demand does not hamper the voice and pursuit of *true merit and an individual's ability to create*. What a joy it would be to contribute to the creation of such a society!
18. Plain motivational gyan that you are a shining gem within and all you need is to just polish it is a boring yawn-inducing lie!

Every day I face situations that expose my own inadequacies. So never mind that you are a shining gem, you still need to continuously acquire new knowledge, perspectives and the right tools if you want to continue to matter. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have had the access and the resources necessary to decode the success principles of top achievers and design a unique model that combines the best of brain science, psychology, spirituality and high performance techniques to do super cool, high impact work. It is my greatest joy to share all of this in my first book Sexy Successful Spiritual™.