

'Learning, Commitment And Passion Leads To Success In Life'

A determined student makes a consistent performance and demonstrates that getting to the top in the merit list is not all that impossible. The same determination puts one on a bright career path too. Qualifying is one accomplishment, but developing the passion as a professional is yet another and more important. As more and more girls are taking up the CA curriculum and women CAs are shining both in industry and practice, it is appropriate to know as to how a topper in the CA exam feels about the profession. Ms. Deepa who stood first in the All India merit list in the Intermediate exam and second in the final exam shares her journey in life to inspire those who find life not so exciting.

THERE are special dreams in each of us—of success, honour, glory, acceptance, recognition, fortune and battles won. At the very core of these varied and vibrant dreams is a single chosen path, a path that we believe will lead us to the realisation of the dreams we cherish. My chosen path was the pursuit of Chartered Accountancy. For three years, I was a member of the fraternity of eager youth fighting to find a place in one of the most exclusive of intellectual clubs.

Success in this course is an uphill struggle, as most good things in life are. Not for nothing has CA been billed as one of the toughest joint examinations in the country. And it is precisely this exactitude and exclusivity which makes the course so hard to resist.

Commitment begets success

Success in this course opens doors to vistas that are very exciting—both in terms of professional challenges and global reach. And more so now in the new flat world, where the only limits are those imposed by our own minds. Traditional areas like statutory auditing and taxation are being strengthened by the addition of the international dimension in terms of US GAAP, IFRS and Transfer Pricing while the past decade has also brought with it completely new areas such as Knowledge Process Outsourcing, ERP implementation, international banking, etc. It has never been so good for the new pass outs, and this boom is clearly evident in the rising average salary in the campus recruitments every year.

While eager school goers have increasingly begun to view the course as an attractive career proposition, it is important that they also

The great thing about getting older is that you don't lose all the other ages you've been.



Ms. S. Deepa receiving an award from Shri Kamal Nath, Union Minister for Commerce & Industry for obtaining Second Rank in Final Exam held in May 2004, by securing 543 marks/67.87%.

understand the commitment they make to a profession which has been strengthened by the untiring efforts of those before them. And while the infusion of young, enthusiastic CAs is what will make the profession thrive, there is also a strong tradition of determination and highest ethical conduct that our generation has to observe to make ourselves truly worthy of the brand we are associated with.

The examination itself is a grinding task. As CA is essentially a course of self-study, it requires a disciplined approach with structured, systematic and detailed study to dissect the syllabus and feel comfortable with it. Stress management, time management and balanced lifestyle are phrases that come alive during those three years. However, with some careful planning and well-oiled execution, the examination itself is not hard to crack.

Training provides exposure

Having talked about the examination, let me now focus on something that is equally important—the period of articleship training. In my view, it is this unique method of full-time training on the job that sets the course apart.

Be it a big firm, medium sized or small firm, being an articled clerk offers the learning experience of a lifetime. It is the medium through which a student is gradually introduced to the contours of the professional world; it provides a platform to interact with clients and make informed professional decisions at a very young age; it helps the students apply practically the very same concepts that will appear in the examination.

Most important, articleship equips you to think on your feet and to remain cool under pressure—attributes which are crucial while writing the examination. And all this is done under the eagle eye of an experienced practitioner: a person who is not only your employer but also your well-wisher. The period of my articleship has helped me grow as an individual and has imbibed in me the willingness to shoulder responsibility. This has been the most crucial intangible factor contributing to my success in both the Intermediate and the Final examinations.

Passion as a Professional

Post qualification, I joined a multinational assurance and advisory firm as a consultant in the Business Solutions division and two years have flown by. The defining element of these years has without doubt been the steep learning curve, necessitated by the sheer variety and high quality of the work on offer. There is a vibrant professional environment, exciting travel opportunities and memorable interactions at the highest levels of the corporate hierarchy but more importantly, I have experienced a genuine human empathy that has become so rare in these fast paced lives we lead.

The last few years have witnessed a remarkable transformation in my life—from a struggling student to a professional whose work is challenging and all consuming. But through all these phases, there have been some common threads of learning, which I feel will stand me in good stead in the years to come:

- Put your heart into it: The passion makes the difference between a mediocre and an outstanding job.
- No work is small work: Whether it is making a list of formulae for revision or clearing up common work space, each small activity can make a big difference, especially in your own attitude.



Ms. S. Deepa receiving an award from Shri N.R. Narayana Murthy, founder of Infosys Technologies, for obtaining First Rank in Intermediate Exam held in November 2002, by securing 463 marks/77.17%.

- Keep up to date with your reading: While your job may not necessarily lead to application of the concepts you learnt in the course, there's no such thing as too much knowledge.
- Be grateful: You will cross the paths of a number of people, many of whom will stop along the way and offer you a kindness that you barely deserve. Most of these people will be stalwarts in their field, having already reached the top in their chosen fields, and will expect nothing from you in return except the assurance that you will pass these kindnesses along. Live up to their expectations.
- Teamwork works: It may be a cliché but is so effective: Always be a team player. Put the team's interest before your own and the results will leave you pleasantly surprised.
- Set harder standards for yourself: Expect more from your own self than from anyone around you.

Conclusion

In sum, the tumultuous journey of the past few years has been a journey unparalleled and has left me looking forward for more. In fact, it has been a slice of life itself. There are difficulties, but there are solutions; there are challenges, but there are opportunities; there is fear, but there is fearlessness; there is despair, but there is enthusiasm; there is self-doubt, but there is commitment.

In the words of John Ruskin, "The highest reward for a man's toil is not what he gets for it but what he becomes by it." This course, and the professional experience after it, has moulded me, given me strength, resilience and courage; commitment, sincerity and passion; a sense of responsibility, ethics and duty towards society... and a means to the realisation of goals which are close to my heart.

Life is a long lesson in humility.