

## Strengths and Weaknesses - By Arushi Guddanti

On January 7, in a conference room in India House, a group of aspiring students sat amazed. Eyes open, ears listening, brain processing each word that escaped the lips of Dr. Latha Ramchand. Her love for numbers drew her to the banking industry, where, unknown to her, laid down the foundations of her success as the Dean of University of Houston Bauer School of Business. She jumped through the obstacles of exams, becoming a gold medalist in Economics from Bombay University and furthered her education when she came to the U.S. in finance, receiving a Ph.D. from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management at Northwestern University. Academically, Ramchand was an academic star who would make any Indian parent proud, but that day Dr. Ramchand told to the students that academics, though very necessary, isn't the only thing that leaders strive in. She dived into the discussion of what makes a leader discussing just what is a leader, what motivates a leader, how adversity is not the downfall but rather the turning point of successful leaders and most importantly to constantly learn, constantly build your skill set to increase your value in the market place.

One of the most *powerful* topics Dr. Ramchand covered was a method to developing one's skillset. Here's the process:

### **Step 1: Analyze your strengths and weaknesses**

Make a t-chart of your strengths and weaknesses. Then ask yourself how can you work on your weaknesses? Let's say one of your weaknesses is people skills. Ask yourself, "What can I do to strengthen my people skills?" Which leads us to step 2.

### **Step 2. Find an expert/mentor and learn from them.**

Find someone who is amazing at what you are weak at. Who do you know is an expert in people skills? Who do you know is an expert in having fun? Who do you know is an expert in math? You know over 2,000 people by the time you turn 21, imagine how many people you know, there must be someone you know who is an expert in people skills. Once you find the expert, humble yourself before them and ask them for their guidance. Dr. Ramchand advises that once you find your mentor you need to understand that you are holding yourself accountable to listen to them and not offer any opinions or suggestions, after all they are the ones who are the expert not you.

### **Step 3. Build a personal board of directors.**

Build a community around you who holds you accountable, they can be mentors, teachers, family, friends, people you trust, a board of people where you can be yourself.

Dr. Ramchand left us with one last strong message:

What characteristics do you find in people you *trust*?

If you can be an *expert* in those skills you just made yourself trustworthy.

*Trust* is the difference between a leader who constantly turns behind their back making sure they have followers and a leader who looks straight and knows that they have followers.