**15246, Karan Gupta**

A very good evening to everyone and a warm welcome to the **Karan Gupta, Education Foundation and IE Business School’s *I AM WOMAN***.

Diane Mariechile said, “A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.” This quote resonates with what we believe. We have an inspiring evening planned ahead and we have with us 9 power women who will share their inspiration with you. But before we get to that, let me share a story with you about how a mother, Asha, used her power to birth, nurture and transform the life of her son Krish.

Krish felt like his desire to study overseas was not possible for financial reasons but Asha encouraged him to study hard and apply for scholarships. Once he won a scholarship his father agreed to pay his living expenses. Later, when his father’s business failed and Krish was forced to return home, Asha convinced him to start his own business helping other students who wanted to study abroad. With her help he went into business with an Rs.5000 from his father and in the next ten years his business was worth more than Rs.50 crores.

Krish’s uncle Kans was jealous of Asha so he kidnapped Krish, and with help from corrupt police, he falsely imprisoned Krish. Asha had just undergone an emergency surgery and was bedridden. When she discovered what Kans had done to Krish, she scoured the city gathering help so she could get justice for Kish. When Asha finally saw Krish she told him all that had happened and all she had done to bring him justice so she could give him the power to fight. After many weeks of struggling and persevering mother and son were reunited. Asha nurtured and transformed Krish through her teaching and her example. She taught him to never give, to believe in himself and always do the right thing. This, my friends, is the power of a woman.

Tonight you will hear from 9 women who have unique stories of how they have discovered their power as women and learned how to use it to create, nurture and transform, as Diane Mariechile said. Each woman has her own unique strengths, talents and experiences that she has used to help others to overcome life’s challenges and help those around her. It doesn’t matter whether your struggles are financial, physical, personal or business. Women throughout history have shown themselves to be reservoirs of strength no matter what life threw at them. They have fought in wars long before women were allowed to officially serve in the military. They have raised large families even after their husbands either died or left, making sure their children grew up to be strong, intelligent and skilled in the necessities of life. They have overcome loss, lack and attack and still managed to thrive and not just survive and make sure their children had better lives than their own.

It is our hope that after you hear these inspiring stories that you, too, will seek and discover your own unique strengths, talents and experiences and use them to help those around you to overcome their challenges and so you all may strive to reach your full potential. We believe in you and want you to believe in you too.

Now, without any delay, let me introduce my colleague, Amber Wigmore.