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## Naaree Interviews Jillian Haslam, Motivational Speaker And Author

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*Never forget the past and the future will never forget you! – Jillian Haslam*

Jillian Haslam is a qualified speaking coach with distinction and has had a 20-year career in banking, including working with executives at board level. Barclays, Bank of America, and the Royal Bank of Scotland are some of the names on her impressive list of clients.

Born and raised in abject poverty in Calcutta – Jillian is a truly inspirational and professional keynote speaker. She uses her experience and motivational stories to inspire others to face their fears.

With her motivational words and her warmth, she engages and empaches with you helping you to wake up, inspire you to do better and be more confident. **Naaree.com caught up with motivational speaker and author, Jillian Haslam, to find out her inspiring story and her goals for the future.**

### Tell us about your dream job as a child.

Since I was a little girl, I wanted nothing more than to be able to reach out to hundreds of people in order to eliminate the sadness and the despair that is caused by abject poverty. I grew up facing it and I lived by the Eli Khamarov quote that "Poverty is like punishment for a crime that you didn't commit."

I grew up not being able to smile and was asked many a time, even by my bosses if I ever did smile but I had an impossible dream (coming from an extremely deprived background) and not knowing how I was going to accomplish that dream was a worry that never ever left me.

It was impossible to smile but today, I do nothing but smile all the time, only because I now have six teams of people who work to change lives every single day (three huge food banks for the poor and the disabled, six study centres for street children, a team that work for women in need, the youth, the disabled and for people with serious illnesses.

I also speak at very many schools and universities talking to people on the power of developing as "The Irrepressible Mind" and asking them not to forget that there are people who need them.

I deliver training and speeches to corporates as well, sharing the drive and the ambition I had and what it took to get through a 20 odd year career in banking, never losing sight of the goal and the objective I had in mind ever since I was a child.

### Why did you go into business in the first place?

Dreams are not fulfilled through magic and people who have money are certainly not going to be there to fulfill them for you. Luck does not exist as Henry Ford said the harder you work, the luckier you get!

So, if I was to fulfill my own dreams, I had to become my own creator and to

(a) work very hard and

(b) I had to generate enough income to be able to support my cause and my dreams without having to ask anyone for monetary help.

As Oprah Winfrey says "The only way to find true happiness is to find out what you are good at and to then turn that into a service for others." I didn't know that she had said this at the time but I certainly believe in it 100% today. It's exactly what I did!!

### What or who has been your greatest influence in business and why?

Oprah Winfrey and Estee Lauder only because they had the same vision, the same goal, and the same objectives in mind, to start a business with one purpose only and that is to give back to humanity!



### What is the best and worst decision you have ever made?

The best decision I have ever made is to empower people with confidence and recognition. I have had people who couldn't speak a word of English with a desire to succeed but without the ability. Empowering them has been my greatest asset. As Jack Welch said, "Give them confidence and they will act."

The worst decision I have ever made is to trust people unconditionally. You can care and you can help but to trust someone needs time and I have paid a very heavy price on many occasions by deciding to trust someone based on words, sweet talk and on face value. I have now learned from my mistakes but the hard way, unfortunately.

### What do you think is the most significant barrier to women in business?

Skills. I mentor a dozen women to help them start up their own businesses. I have also delivered a speech titled "A dose of reality" and I did this because many seem to have a belief and believe that they can roll out of bed and start a business without the required skill set. That is one of the reasons why 93% of new businesses fail.

They get so involved in social media, trying to make a name for themselves, doing the admin side of things but losing focus of what truly needs to be done i.e. to learn how to deliver or sell their products/services effectively, marketing a product or service or understanding how to build a brand (and I don't mean logos, websites, and letterheads) it takes much more than that but sadly our comfort zones and Facebook likes keep us complacent and hence totally in denial sometimes.

### What's the best advice you have received in business?

To train and to get mentored by well-established people in business. To get educated before you venture out and to understand that your talent may get you a step through the front door but it's only hard work, relentless commitment, and knowledge that can keep you there.

My next book is titled "The Irrepressible Mind." It will help many, but mainly entrepreneurs to understand these facts and to understand the true meaning of what it takes never to give up in business.

### What do you do for fun?

Spend time with the people I love (those in desperate need since they need people like us the most)! That is what I see as fun and it's with these people that I really and truly come to life.

I always use this quote that came from Bill Gates, "I believe I was a beggar by the person whom no one gave a dime but today, I read and write and speak because someone took the time."

I want to be able to show them that I made the time to be there for them, just as someone made the time to be there for me. In my case these people were my parents, my matrons in boarding school, my Principal, people who were poorer than poor who came to our aid and mainly a Teacher named Mrs. Barbara Raha who taught me that everything on the outside meant nothing i.e. torn shoes, torn uniforms, scruffy hair, no make-up etc., etc.

What mattered was what was going on, on the inside and how we could look for ways and means to develop that side of us. It worked like magic for me at least!

### What did you most fear in the early days of your business?

That I would have to let thousands of people down and that I wouldn't be able to find a way to help them. It was more than just a fear; it was heartbreaking to have to think of not being able to reach them.

They say when you desire something to an extent where your very being is affected, you accomplish it but you have to start with wanting something more for others than you want for yourself.

### What's next for you and your business?

To expand into other parts of the world, to reach people far and wide in order to demonstrate to them the power being public speaking and finding your voice, to get the movie made (that is based on my memoir, Indian English).

Hollywood has already picked it up and I have managed to reach thousands of children by way of the story itself. It is now a personal goal to get the movie made and to try and work towards creating a world without poverty.

In the words of Muhammad Yunus, "We need to strive to eliminate poverty because once it is gone, we all need to build museums to display its horrors to future generations. They will wonder why poverty continued so long in human society – how a few people could live in luxury while billions dwelt in misery, deprivation and despair."

This is my wildest dream and my greatest ambition and it is always the next step in everything I do. Nothing means more to me than giving back in thought, word or deed.

### If you could tell your younger self something what would you say?

Never forget the past and the future will never forget you!

Connect with Jillian Haslam at @JillianHaslam

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