

## SHE

## INDRANI DASGUPTA IS HERE TO TELL YOU HOW TO BE BODY-AND-MIND BEAUTIFUL

**T**his year has been all about doing “new things” for **Indrani Dasgupta**. Like ‘Being Beautiful Inside-Out’, an AddLife Gymnasium & Spa and AddLife Caring Minds initiative that will see her slipping into the shoes of a mentor. **t2** caught up with the former supermodel at the Sarat Bose Road mental wellness clinic.

**So, Indrani, another new thing?** Another new thing! All through my modelling career, I got asked all the time how do you do this and how do you do that? I thought this would be interesting. I feel now that I model less, I get this asked more.

**How can one be like Indrani Dasgupta?**

Only if they knew how hard it is to be Indrani Dasgupta (*laughs out loud*). With AddLife (Caring Minds), it all just fell into place. Minu and Preeyam (Budhia) are really passionate about what they do. They are always looking to do new things in your personal and individual space. I have a personal mission to help adolescent girls because those were my troubling years... having body-image issues. Now, it's tenfold.

How do you find your identity and how not to get lost through the constant exposure to beauty myths about what is acceptable and what is not acceptable? What you think of yourself at 13-14 sets the foundation about what you are going to feel about yourself. So, that's why we want to reach out to younger girls, school kids.

**What will you be talking about?**

It will be about personal wellness and enhancement, and what skills and tools you need to be a better version of yourself. I am going to keep the batch small and intimate... 10 people. There are also one-on-one sessions. The modules are a minimum of four. I would recommend body type, wellness, skincare, haircare, dining etiquette and nutrition.

**Indrani has a wealth of experience. So, there couldn't be a better person to have on board. However beautiful you might be feeling outside, if you are not feeling beautiful inside, it doesn't work. That's where this whole concept came about. We are just starting with women. The reason we chose above-13 as the starting age is because it's the age when a girl transforms from a kid to a teenager and she becomes conscious about herself. And we go right up to 40 or 50 — Preeyam Budhia, head, new initiatives, AddLife Caring Minds**

‘Being Beautiful Inside-Out’ is a two-way process. It is a 360-degree take on what beauty really is. Young girls going to school, college and entering the workforce or getting married. There are modules on social personality... dining etiquettes, hosting. Then there is an individual personality (module), which includes knowing your body type, skintone, undertone, hair texture, hairstyle. How to go from glum to glam. It's all about identifying what works for you.

**Is it a huge pressure for women to look a certain way?**

I think women are under a lot of pressure. A lot of it is self-inflicted and some societal. It's also about the varying roles a woman goes through, having to do what the man is doing



(L-R) Minu Budhia, Indrani Dasgupta and Preeyam Budhia talk beauty and more with **t2**. Picture: Pabitra Das

**You might ask when there is so much emphasis on physical appearance, why is it under the AddLife Caring Minds umbrella? Good health is the foundation of beauty. In India most women neglect themselves. They don't have time for themselves. I once read what Michelle Obama said about her 'aha moment'. Your 'aha moment' should be about discovering yourself. Why Indrani? She has been a supermodel and she has pursued her profession with passion**

— Minu Budhia, founder-director, AddLife Caring Minds

and at the end of the day, fulfilling the beauty myth as well. So, a lot of things need to be ticked for her validation by people around her.

In the glamour business you are exposed to it at a very early age, what a woman's pressure triggers may be. So, you can decide what to do with that experience. The girls that you see are the girls who survived the curve. How do you maximise that one hour that you get for yourself, your me time? Everybody is under pressure but what are your coping mechanisms?

As a woman you have to evolve and adapt as time goes by. You are a different person in your 20s than what you were in your teens. You are experimenting and trying new things. By 30, you have found what you are comfortable in. And you have to reinvent yourself in your 50s.

This is a slight push, nudge or

guidance to help with that. The idea is to provide a holistic solution. We are going to pool in the resources.

**Is social media adding to this pressure?**

I went through a phase when I found myself on Facebook all the time. I decided to do a Facebook detox. I realised I am looking at people's lives who I don't meet and I barely know. Now when I am on Facebook, I am not on it for more than two-three minutes. There are pitfalls to addiction.

**You were saying you had body-image issues...**

I don't think any girl has gone through her puberty without having body-image issues. I was broad, too short, had too much curly hair. Then

your life to understand and put it in perspective. Of course you have moments of breakdown where you ask yourself, why is this happening to me? It's a part of learning and growing and moving on. Getting comfortable in your own shoes is loving and accepting who you are and that is not an easy thing to do but once you are there, nothing really is of much consequence.

**But there is no denying that how you look has a part to play in how you feel...**

A great blow-dry makes you feel wonderful. I'll be the first to tell you that!

**You've also signed up for the basic counselling course at AddLife...**

It was a good time to learn something new and different. That's something I am doing for myself. I am getting to know myself better. I have always been fascinated with psychology. I find it very intriguing.

**Has it changed anything in you?**

I think so. It's been a couple of months that I have been part of this course. It definitely makes you potentially a better person. And just to be back in a classroom of seven-eight people from various walks of life, it's a great experience. In terms of knowledge, I have gained a lot. I think your inclination to be sensitive and empathetic increases. The other thing interestingly one learns is not to give advice! Most people I know, including myself, give it freely and wisely. I just try to restrain, unless you have asked for it. (*Laughs*) Sometimes people just want to be heard. That has been a huge learning. Just be a listener!

**So are you ready to be a good listener?**

I am working on it. I was the youngest in my family. So, I only listened! So, I think I am a decent listener.

**Saione Chakraborty**

**What:** Being Beautiful Inside-Out  
**Sessions to be conducted by:** Indrani Dasgupta in batches and also on a one-on-one basis.  
**Open to:** Women and girls above 13 years.  
**Open house, a teaser session with Indrani:** December 9, 5.30-7pm @ AddLife Caring Minds (54A Sarat Bose Road)  
**One-on-one sessions start:** December 6 (by appointment only)  
**Batches start:** December 16  
 (For registration, module and course duration details, log on to [www.addlifecaringminds.com](http://www.addlifecaringminds.com) or write to [info@addlifecaringminds.com](mailto:info@addlifecaringminds.com) or call @ 24751230/9836403766)

I had this growth spurt and I started hunching. So, yes, I did grow up with body issues. It's difficult to be different and I was different. I always wanted to blend in rather than stand out. And you become more acutely aware during puberty when you are going through all these things. We were discussing in the classroom the other day how that age has shifted down to about five or six. If a baby girl has scanty hair, till about three-four she doesn't know, but at five she'll start reacting if you tell her: 'Oh, you have no hair'.

**When did you start getting comfortable in your skin?**

It's an ongoing process. It takes emotional growth along with what's happening at that point in