



MUNIBA MAZARI

THE IRON LADY OF PAKISTAN

<https://youtu.be/TPN-vyGozyM>

Muniba Mazari: Whoa. I'm running short of words right now, but I cannot afford this because I have to speak. Thank you so much for all the love, for all the warmth. Thank you for accepting me. Thank you very much.

Well, I always start my talk with a disclaimer. And that disclaimer is that I've never claimed to be a motivational speaker. Yes, I do speak, but I feel more like a storyteller, because wherever I go, I share a story with everyone. Well, it is the story of a woman whose perfectly imperfect life made her who and what she is today.

It's the story of a woman who, in pursuit of her dreams and aspirations, made other people realize that if you think that your life is hard and you're giving up on that because you think your life is unfair, think again. Because when you think that way, you are being unfair to your own self.

I believe in the power of words. Many people speak before they think that I know the value of words. The words can make you break you. They can heal your soul.

They can damage you forever. So I always try to use the positive words in my life wherever I go. They call it adversity.

I call it opportunity. They call it weakness. I call it strength.

They call me disabled. I call myself differently abled. They see my disability.

They see my disability. I see my ability. There are some incidents that happen in your life, and those incidents are so strong that they change your DNA.

Those incidents, or accidents are so strong that they break you physically. They deform your body, but they transform your soul.

I was 18 years old when I got married. I belonged to a very conservative family, a beloche family, where good daughters never say no to their parents.

My father wanted me to get married, and all I said was, if that makes you happy, I will say yes. And of course, it was never a happy marriage. Just about after two years of getting married, about nine years ago, I had a car accident.

Somehow my husband fell asleep. And the car fell in the ditch. He managed to jump out, saved himself.

I'm happy for him. But I stayed inside the car and I sustained a lot of injuries. List is a bit long.

Don't get scared. I'm perfectly fine now. Radius ulna of my right arm were fractured.

The wrist was fractured. Shoulder, bone and collarbone were fractured. My whole ribcage got fractured.

And because of the ribcage injury, lungs and liver were badly injured. I couldn't breathe. I lost urinal bowel control.

That's why I have to wear the bag wherever I go. But that injury that changed me and my life completely as a person and my perception towards living my life was the spine injury. Three wordtebra off.

My backbone were completely crushed and I got paralyzed for the rest of my life. So this accident took place in a far flung area in the outskirts of a very small province, Balochistan, where there was no first aid, no hospital, no ambulance. I was in the middle of nowhere in that toppled car.

Many people came to rescue. They gave me CPR. They dragged me out of the car. And while they were dragging me out, I got the complete transaction of my spondyl cord.

And now there was this debate going on should we keep it here? She's going to die. Where should we go? There is no ambulance. There was this four wheeler jeep standing in the corner of the street.

They said, put her in the back of the jeep and take her to the hospital, which is 3 hours away from this place. And I still remember that bumpy ride. I was all broken.

They threw me at the back of the jeep and they rushed me to the hospital. That is where I realized that my half body was fractured and half was paralyzed. I finally ended up in a hospital where I stayed for two and a half months.

I underwent multiple surgeries. Doctors have put a lot of titanium in my arm. There's a lot of titanium at my back to fix my back.

That's why people in Pakistan call me the Iron Lady of Pakistan.

There are always turning points in your life. There was a rebirth day that I celebrated after two years and two and a half months when I was able to sit on a wheelchair. That was the day when I had the rebirth.

I was a completely different person. I still remember the day I sat on the wheelchair for the first time, knowing that I'm never going to leave this, knowing that I won't be able to walk for the rest of my life. I saw myself in the mirror and I talked to myself and I still remember what I said.

I cannot wait for a miracle to come and make me walk. I cannot sit in the corner of the room crying, cribbing and begging for mercy because nobody has time. So I have to accept myself the way I am, the sooner the better.

So I applied the lip color for the first time and I erased it and I cried and I said, what am I doing? A person on a wheelchair should not do this. What will people say? Clean it up. I put it again.

This time I put it for myself. Because I wanted to feel perfect from within. And that day I decided that I'm going to live life for myself.

I am not going to be that perfect person for someone. I am just going to take this moment and I will make it perfect for myself. And you know how it all began? That day? I decided that I'm going to fight my fears.

We all have fears. Fear of unknown, fear of known, fear of losing people, fear of losing health, money. We want to excel in career, we want to become famous.

We want to get money. We are scared all the time. So I wrote down, one by one, all those fears and I decided that I'm going to overcome these fears one at a time.

Do you know what was my biggest fear? Divorce. I couldn't stand this word. I was trying to cling onto this person who didn't want me anymore.

But I said no. I have to make it work. But the day I decided that this is nothing but my fear.

I liberated myself by setting him free. And I made myself emotionally so strong that the day I got the news that he is getting married, I sent him a text that I'm so happy for you and I wish you all the best. And he knows that I pray for him today.

You will be surprised to know another bigger fear that I had in me. It was facing people. I used to hide myself from people when I was on bed for two years.

I used to keep the door closed. I used to pretend that I'm not going to meet anyone, tell them that I'm sleeping. You know why? Because I couldn't stand that sympathy that they had for me.

They used to treat me like a patient when I used to smile. They used to look at me and say that, "You're smiling. Are you okay?" I was tired of this question being asked, "Are you sick?" Well, a lady yesterday at the airport asked me, "Are you sick?" And I said, well, besides the spinal cord injury, I'm fine, I guess.

But those are really cute questions. They never used to feel cute when I was on the bed. So I used to hide myself from people knowing that, oh, my God, I'm not going to see that sympathy in their eyes, it's all right.

And today I'm here speaking to all these amazing people, because I have overcome the fear.

Last but not least, the woman who made me realize that heroes have no gender.

The woman who believed in me even when I was completely at the words of despair where everybody left, she was there. And every time I looked at her without saying anything, she used to look at me and said, this too shall pass. God has a bigger plan.

And one day you will say that, oh, my God. That is why God has chosen me. She never cried in front of me.

She has always said that there will be haters, there will be naysayers, there will be disbelievers, and then there will be you proving them wrong. My mother... whatever I am today, I'm nothing without her. I'm nothing without her.

Thank you, Mama. I wish you were here. Thank you for making me who I am today.

We have this thing in mind. We call it perfection. We want everything perfect.

We want ourselves to be perfect. There is this image in our head about everything. Perfect life, perfect relationships, perfect career, perfect amount of money that we need to earn no matter what.

Nothing is perfect in this world. We all are perfectly imperfect. And that is perfectly all right.

That's all right. We were sent here not to become the perfect people. Those people who tell you how to look perfect, even those people are imperfect.

Trying to fight this fear of looking imperfect. I used to be perfect. I still remember.

I got this compliment years ago when I used to walk. Oh, my God, look at you. You are fair.

You are tall. You're perfect. Look at me now.

Audience: *You're still perfect.*

Muniba Mazari: Only the perfect eyes can see that. Only the perfect eyes will see that.

Only the perfect eyes will see that. So, yes, in all those imperfections, you have to listen to your heart. You don't have to look good for people.

You don't have to be perfect just because other people want you to be perfect. If your soul is perfect from within, that's all right. This is all what you want.

This is all what you need to be. Our society has made very weird, very weird kind of norms to look perfect and great. For men, it's different.

For women, it's different. We think too much about what people say. We listen to ourselves too little.

You know what makes you perfect? When you make someone smile. You know what makes you perfect? When you try to do something good for the people around you. You know what makes you perfect? When you feel someone's pain.

And how beautiful pain is that it connects you with people. No other medium can connect you with others but pain. That's why I always say that I'm in pain. And that's a blessing in disguise for me.

Every time I go in public, I always smile. It's always a big do. They smile on my face. And people ask me, don't you get tired of smiling all the time? What's the secret? I always say one thing that I have stopped worrying about the things that I have lost, the people that I've lost, things and people who are meant to be with me are with me. And sometimes somebody's absence make you a better person.

Cherish their absence. It's always It's always a blessing in disguise. I always say that people are so lucky, they don't even realize.

You must be thinking, okay, you're lucky. In what sense? Well, the breath that you just took was a blessing. Embrace it.

There are so many people in the world who are dreaming to live a life that you are living right now. You have no idea. Embrace each and every breath that you are taking.

Celebrate your life. Live it. Don't die before your death.

We all die. We live this one routine of a day for 75 years, and we call it life. No, that's not life.

If you are still thinking why you have been sent here, if you're still juggling with the concept of why you are here, you haven't lived yet. You work hard, you make money, you do it for yourself. That's not life.

You go out, you seek for people who need your help. You make their lives better. You become that sponge which can absorb all the negativity.

And you become that person who can emit beautiful, positive vibes. And when you realize that you have changed someone's life and because of you, this person didn't give up. That is the day when you live.

Always. We were talking about gratitude. Why I smile all the time.

I cry all night when nobody sees me, because I'm a human and I have to keep the balance. And I smile all day because I know that if I will smile, I can make people smile. That keeps me going.

Be grateful for what you have, and you will always, always end up having more. But if you'll cry and if you'll cry for the. Little things that you don't have or the things that you have lost, you will never, ever have enough.

Sometimes we are too busy thinking about the things that we don't have, that we forget to cherish the blessings that we have. I'm not saying that I'm not healthy and that makes me unlucky. But yes, it is hard.

It is hard when I say that I cannot walk. It is hard to say when I wear this bag. It hurts.

But I have to keep going. Because never giving up is the way to live. Always.

So I'll end my talk on a very short note. Live your life fully. Accept yourself the way you are.

Be kind to yourself. Be kind to yourself. I'll repeat, be kind to yourself.

And only then you can be kind to others. Love yourself and spread that love. Life will be hard.

There will be turmoils, there will be trials. But that will only make you stronger. Never give up.

The real happiness doesn't lie in money or success or fame. I have this all I never wanted this.

Real happiness lies in gratitude. So be grateful. Be alive and live every moment.

Thank you so much, everyone. Thank you.

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