

'Call Me Q' Campus Conversation

By Amanda Florian

09.02.15

Tuesday afternoon, Milligan's Campus Conversation speaker arrived in Johnson City with a suitcase of stories. Qurrat Ann Kadwani, an Indian-American actress and philanthropist, shared her culture with students and faculty members in the Gregory Center through a self-written solo performance.

Kadwani said the show is "semi-autobiographical."

"I've performed this show all over the country. It's my story, but what's so magical is everyone comes out feeling like it's their story," she said. "My mother is your mother."

Curtains opened at 7 p.m. for the Goah-sponsored event. Kadwani said this type of theatre can not only "mirror society," but "provoke audience members."

"It's theatrical, but it has a broader scope. The themes I talk about reflect on things going on in our society," she said. "We are in an ever-changing society. There's a world beyond the world we know and we have to make an effort to embrace our differences and similarities."

In a Q&A session that followed the event, Kadwani said it took 4 years to script the play because she was "nervous" to reveal her "art."

"Don't always believe the naysayers. As individuals we have to speak up," she said. "We have to come to a place and be happy with ourselves. I know who I am."

Jeff Smith, director of the office of diversity services, said he enjoyed the speaker because of her transparency.

"I like that (Kadwani) is putting her explosion of cultural identity on display," he said. "(Intentional living) is a journey we all take as we explore who we are in light of Christ and who we are called to be."

Jalen Glass, a freshman studying occupational therapy, said he appreciated what Kadwani brought to the stage.

"I thought it was really in-depth for cultural purposes. It gives you deep insight on cultural awareness and how to be socially mindful. We are all people and we are all equal with different background and societal structures."

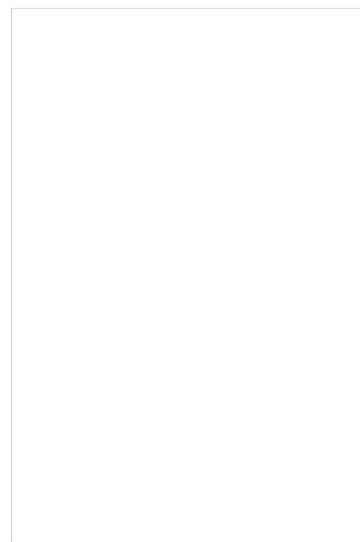
Kadwani said the issues people go through are "universal." She also talked about current matters like race, politics and immigration.

"As an immigrant, I always think what if my parents hadn't come to America. That concept fascinates me, especially since immigration is all over the news today. Where you live can impact who you are."

Keila Treviño, another Goah scholar studying Chemistry, said it was "quite refreshing."

"In Brownsville, (Texas), we're all hispanics. But when I came here to Milligan I thought 'oh, I am a minority,'" she said.

"I saw parallels. It's encouraging to see how (Kadwani) found herself. If she's comfortable with who she is, being Indian, then I can totally be more comfortable being hispanic and sharing my diversity here."



Jalen Glass snaps a photo with Kadwani at the Campus Conversation.

Photo by Amanda Florian

