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News

Unleashing Your Infinite Potential with Deepak Chopra

By Penny Thieme

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On his 73rd birthday, acclaimed New York Times best-selling and new age author, Deepak Chopra shared his new book *METAHUMAN* and the gift of presence with the college.

Deepak Chopra is an Indian-born American author known around the globe, particularly in the new age community, as an author, teacher and alternative medicine advocate. Chopra has written over 85 books (both fiction and nonfiction), which have been translated into more than 43 languages. He became a household name in 1993, after being interviewed by Oprah Winfrey and People magazine for his book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind: The Quantum Alternative to Growing Old*.



On the evening of Tuesday, Oct. 22, Chopra introduced the Yardley Hall audience to his new book *METAHUMAN: Unleashing Your Infinite Potential* which launched Oct. 2 of this year. The ticket price of the event included a copy of *METAHUMAN* and Chopra signed books in Polsky Theatre. His novel details the ways in which people can “unlock the secrets to moving beyond our present limitations to access a field of infinite possibilities,” according to the book’s front cover introduction.



Photo courtesy of Penny Thieme.

Emily Behrmann, general manager of the performing arts program in the Carlsen Center, booked Chopra for the event as part of the college's 50th Anniversary celebration. The event was funded by the Nell Mitchell Wellness Fund in the JCCC Foundation.

"Deepak was a success," Behrmann said. "We attracted a good sized crowd and the attendees left the event feeling very uplifted. From a financial standpoint, the ticket sales offset the expense of the event, so [we reached] a breakeven scenario."

Denise Brown, who works in the accounting department for the bookstore, and three other bookstore staff members (Zanah Maggio, textbook buyer, Ashley Hunter, floor supervisor, Joshua Graham, order receiver) volunteered to organize and distribute the 1,000 books that were vital to the event's success. Behrmann said, "At the end of the evening, [Chopra] told me he was grateful to have been with us, and said we were very efficient and organized."

Though Brown and her colleagues did not attend the presentation itself, they worked behind the scenes. Brown found Chopra to be gracious and welcoming.

"Myself and my co-workers were there to support the event," Brown said. "During the book signing, however, I was very much impressed with his calm and loving demeanor toward our patrons [who] attended."

It was the author's 73rd birthday, but it was the audience in Yardley Hall who received the gift of presence when Chopra guided them through a meditation. The event gave student Angela Hadel a transformative experience and bonding time with her mother Tracy Hadel.

"I was originally there for my mom, but the whole experience changed my views on everything," Angela Hadel. "The whole meditation, the healing and thinking about what we eat and what we put in our body, it's crazy to see, I didn't even think about that before attending. I didn't really think of myself in any way before. He very much made me think



Attendees taking a selfie with Chopra. Photo courtesy of Penny Thieme.

how I am a Metahuman in a sense. I think Metahuman means being genuinely yourself, really becoming yourself and taking time for yourself and discovering who you really are.”

Hadel said she has meditated before but never in a group setting and was happy to be part of the collective meditation.

“It is cool to see so many people passionate about what he teaches because I didn’t know how something so spiritual would be received in this area, honestly, because it’s a very spiritual thing,” Hadel. “I think it is really good for our community to have a person like Deepak Chopra come here and teach us.”

“I have, in a sense, always taken life for granted and going to this has made me very aware. I mean, death has always been a fear of mine and after going to that, I’ve kind of accepted that it’s going to happen. I just need to make the most of my human consciousness as I exist.

Hadel and her mother are both writers who want to collaborate and publish a book together one day. Hadel expressed gratitude for being able to attend the event with her mom and plans to read Chopra’s book and continue raising her consciousness and discovering herself. She hopes they can do the month of awakening challenge from the book together.

Sumya Anani, adjunct professor of physical education, has been a fan of Chopra’s for over a decade.



(Left to right) Sumya Anani, Denise Brown, Deepak Chopra, Ashley Hunter. Photo courtesy of Penny Thieme.

“His life work inspires me to look within, practice presence and grace and be mindful of how I am engaging in the world,” Anani said. “It was a reminder to take nothing for

how I am engaging in the world," Anani said. "It was a reminder to take nothing for granted, to pursue excellence in every endeavor and to be kind. Our thoughts, words and actions impact others around us, as well as our own bodies. The evening was very inspiring. He talked about the vastness of the universe we live in, and the vastness of our own body, mind, spirit complex. We really are miracles, each and every one of us. I think we all need reminders of that every day... His teachings on meditation are for everyone. A lot of his work teaches us the powerful force of our own thought forms."

Brown said she has not read many of Chopra's books, but read *You Are the Universe* and found questions and answers are there, if you open your mind.

"I think he has been a great teacher in our times, and he's explained the value of meditation in laymen's terms," Brown said. "It is something so undervalued by most people, but his teachings are bringing it to the forefront."

Brown said the joy that is generated through events like this is contagious.

According to Behrmann, this is Chopra's third time visiting the college and she describes him as kind, calm and patient.

"Events like this one, and others we present as part of 'Carlsen Center Presents,' represent an important role in the college's community engagement," Behrmann said. "Many of our patrons interact with JCCC only at performances. If they don't have a student attending classes here, the shows are a way they receive value as taxpayers if they're Johnson County residents and if they live out of county, they also enjoy interacting with a professional venue, friendly staff and volunteers, and a well-known artist or speaker. I truly believe there is no other venue like ours in Johnson County, bringing a wide variety of professional artists and performers from all over the world."

