

The Recipe for a Winner

If you dream of being a titleholder, there are just a few key ingredients needed to succeed. By Natasha Mahapatro.

Recipe: *Winning & Succeeding*
Ingredients: *Determination, Experience & Practice*

Every variation of a recipe for a winner consists of a huge part of trying. No matter how many recipes you look up, you will always see determination under the ingredients list. Why don't we see that huge loads of experience is needed?

EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICE are two different things. No one ever said that to win something you needed to do it once before to win it. And that is exactly what I learned one afternoon last October in Hartford, CT.

Being raised in a typical Indian family, my parents were shaky when I came to them asking for permission to participate in the Washington Jr. Teen America state pageant. My parents at first didn't know what to say. They knew I loved watching pageants on television since I was a little girl and they agreed to let me participate, knowing that I would have a great experience.

Recipe: *Making a Difference*
Ingredients: *Travel & Appearances*

To everyone's surprise, when I won the state title I was so happy, but I procrastinated on preparation for the national competition. When summer drew in, I finally realized that I had to prepare hard to win nationals. I finally decided that I would try as hard as I could and go to the national competition for fun, and savor the fact that by the end of that weekend, I could boast that I knew one person from every state in the United States!

Nationals were a dream come true. I realized why girls all over the world participate in pageants. Just holding the feeling in your heart of knowing that your entire life can change in the next few minutes is a feeling that you forever want to hold near and never let go.

My year with the crown has been too extraordinary to put into words. From traveling to state pageants, to being in local parades and talking publicly about my platform leaves me with memories that will last a lifetime. Now that my year has come to an end, I have realized and felt that I have made a difference in my community, my state, my country and in my world.

that you will go out and follow your dream, because who knows? It may change your life forever, as it did for me!



NATASHA MAHAPATRO,
MISS JR. TEEN AMERICA 2005

Capturing Your Dream
Believing & Hard Work

I truly believe that if you have a dream, you should go and pursue it. There is no harm from trying even if you do not succeed. And there is just one thing that I would like you to remember... when you try, give it your very best. Every little girl, at least once in her lifetime, dreams to be Miss America. And... every single girl has a right to that dream. You don't need to spend several thousand dollars on an evening gown, or win seven other pageant titles to win one, you just need to be yourself and show the judges that you're the best you that you can be. So all of you future Miss Americas and Miss Universes, I hope