

July 2024 ₹ 100

Woman's era

**UNLOCKING
WAYS TO CHILL**

**THE CULTURAL
QUIRKS**

**AWESOME
DADDITUDES**

**SPOTTING THE
SELFISH GAME**

**CRAFTING YOUR
DIGITAL PERSONA**

**SELF-IMAGE
CHECK**

**SMART AND
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**THE MAGIC OF
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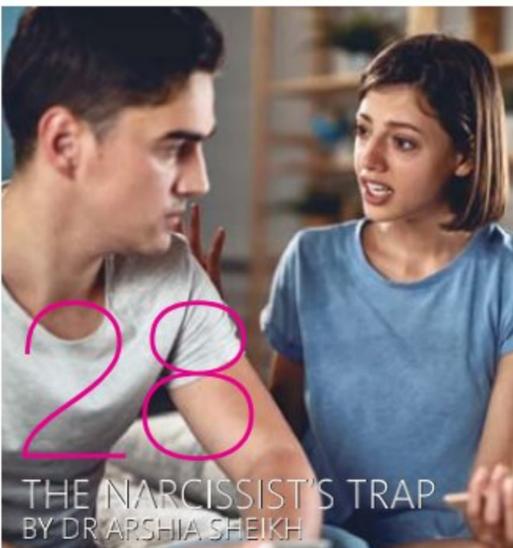
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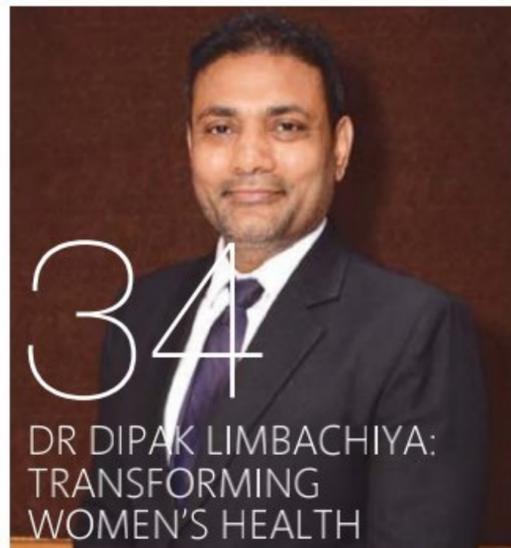
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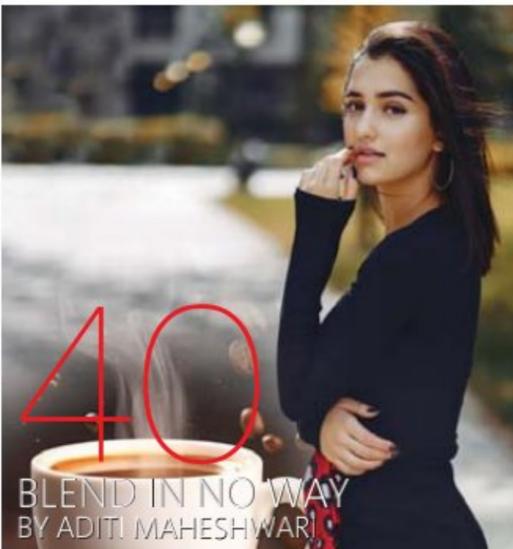
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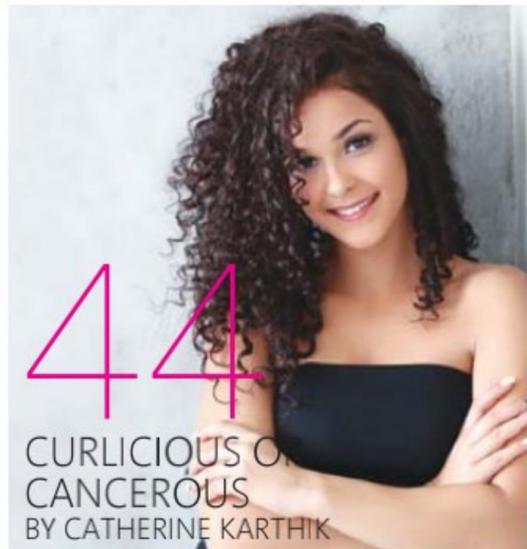
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Since the last editorial on these pages, in the month of May 2024, the entire landscape of politics has changed in India. With a fractured mandate, the Modi government comes in for its third term, and probably its last in this format, carrying now a baggage of a slew of compromises within the NDA (National Democratic Alliance). If the government has to last a full term, it will have to keep bending its back and doing Namaste to various requests, akin to conditions for the NDA to keep going on. So, what are the political alternatives in front of the new Modi government?

One. BJP could try to fracture within alliances parties like it did with the Shiv Sena. Herein majorly the JDU and the TDP could be split, with one faction being rooted with BJP and the other on its own.

Two. For sure the onslaught on the other parties has to continue since it would be within the NDA partners' benefit that the opposition does not start standing strong.

Three. How long will this government stand is a matter of debate and discussion. It could well last the full term, with a strategy to keep the partnerships intact, in the style of the usual carrot and stick policy of BJP functionaries.

But if the things of a political mandate are played out correctly, then the BJP may be going to a real action in the middle of its term, to obtain a greater majority (that is approaching 273 seats from the present 242) and be back in the driving seat, similar to the status of Modi 2.0.

Analysis of the loss of share of the Modi government is different in different parts of the country. Much has been written about it in newspapers and other media, and herein repeating shall not be necessary. But all said and done, it does show that India still remains a completely divided country based on caste, creed, religion, and sex. It has remained so in the last 75 years of independence and shall remain the same.

The most interesting scenario was played out by the Samajwadi Party in UP, wherein it expanded its electorate by adopting a formula of PDA, the *pichre*, meaning backward, *Dalit* and *alpsankhyak*, meaning minority. In major states where BJP conducted major upheavals like Maharashtra and in the South, it did not quite get the formula right. Also, a lot of leaders who defected into BJP did not score too well for its new mothership.

It is being projected as the victory of the Congress, when technically it is the loss of the BJP because of the ambitious plan and its egoistic portrayal by the leader PM Modi to the populace of India. The Indian voter is a

pretty smart person now since it votes for one leader in the centre and another person for its state. Hence, taking them lightly, which Modi did in this campaign, has resulted in his defeat. Still, there is a shining line in the gloomy victory that BJP may be experiencing: it could get back the vote share with good politics. But in most likelihood, that may not happen since anti-incumbency has set in, way bigger and stronger, and that the Indian voters do not glorify or gloat over PM Modi anymore.

Question Papers, Money, And Its Undeserving Ward

In India, as far as academics are concerned, question papers have always been leaked. There is always this beyond all functionary in a school, college, university, or the so-called NTA where for a price a printed paper is available, which happens to be the question paper. 99.9% of the students who appeared for an examination study for it diligently, their parents also put in their hard-earned money, burn midnight oil with their wards so that they become complete persons for the rest of their life. And mostly it works.

The null hypothesis is that the examination system is good and that there is perfect competition within the system and that there is no cheating before the examination has begun. That said, the revelation of NEET and NET exams in India has thrown the confidence of students in the academics of this great nation into a dustbin. It is now evident that the conspiracy starts not at the level of peons and brokers but at the very top. As the booty of leaked examination papers is shared from the top to bottom and it could be collected at any level and then spread from top to bottom, no matter how and who collects it.

There are parents who are willing to pay any amount of money to get wards into colleges undeservingly. Such is not new, and also despite being caught at this juncture, it is not going to stop. India is a corrupt country, where a lot of things can happen for money, if not all. And this is quite an example of that.

However, there will always be students who are always fair to their academics, and do not fret for the questions in the paper or the outcome of the result. They prosper in exams that are beyond the question papers too, and this category of students shall remain in more abundance than the parents who can buy papers and get their kids to become vagabonds right at the start of their careers.

editor@womansera.com

CINEPLEX



Shraddha Kapoor and Rahul Modi made their relationship official on social media. Sharing a goofy picture with Rahul Modi on her Instagram story, she captioned it, “Dil rakh le, Neend toh vaapis de de yaar” (Take away my heart, but at least return my sleep) with a smiley face and red heart emoticons. Her boyfriend, Rahul Modi, is a film writer and assistant director by profession.



Shraddha Kapoor Confirms Relationship with Rahul Modi on Instagram



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Mira Rajput Shares Hilarious Video with Brother-in-Law Ishaan Khatter



Mira Rajput, wife of Shahid Kapoor, posted a hilarious video with her brother-in-law, Ishaan Khatter. In the viral video, Mira animatedly repeats, “I won, brother, I won, and you lost,” while Ishaan stands silently, pretending to be on the verge of tears. Their funny interaction has won the hearts of netizens.



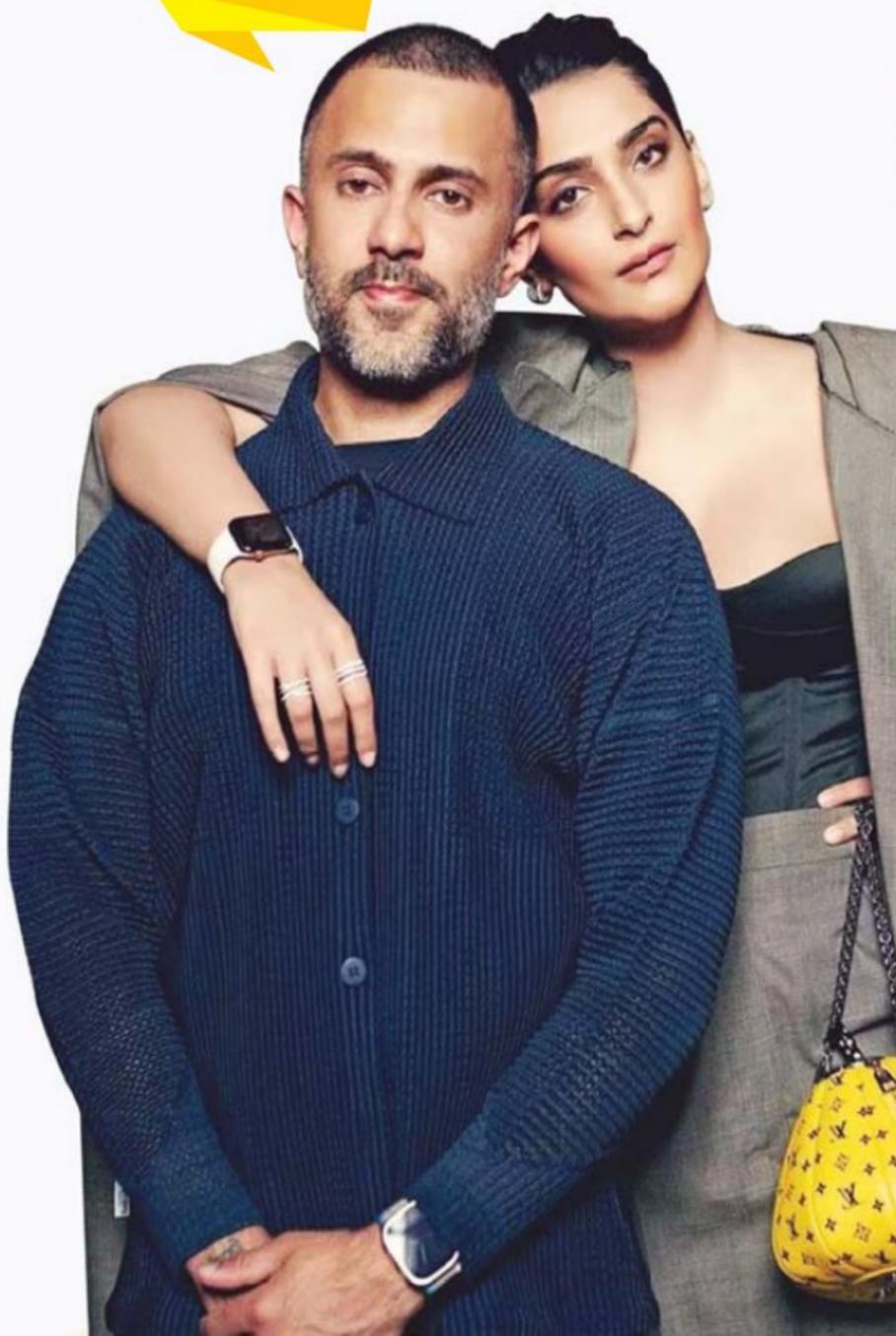
Esha Gupta Brutally
Trolled for Bikini Look

Actress Esha Gupta was seen in a bold avatar, sitting on the beach in a black bikini. While some appreciated her look, others trolled her. One user commented, “Kapde Kisne Chura Liye.” Another user wrote, “Ye To Ram Bhakt Thi Na Phir Kya Hua Sanatan Dharm Me Aisa Hota Hai Why is the actress promoting foreign culture?”



Anand Ahuja's Jacket
Tribute to Sonam Kapoor

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Anand Ahuja, husband of Sonam Kapoor, wore a jacket with Sonam's name emblazoned on it, gaining attention from fans and followers. The couple, who got married in 2018, frequently showcase their deep love and admiration for each other through public appearances and social media posts.



Saba Azad Shares Impact of Dating Hrithik Roshan on Her Career

Saba Azad took to Instagram to share a picture from a recording studio, writing, "Back to work after more than 2 years, recording VO." She explained that she hadn't gotten work for the past two years because a director assumed she wouldn't want to do voice-overs anymore since she was dating a successful actor.



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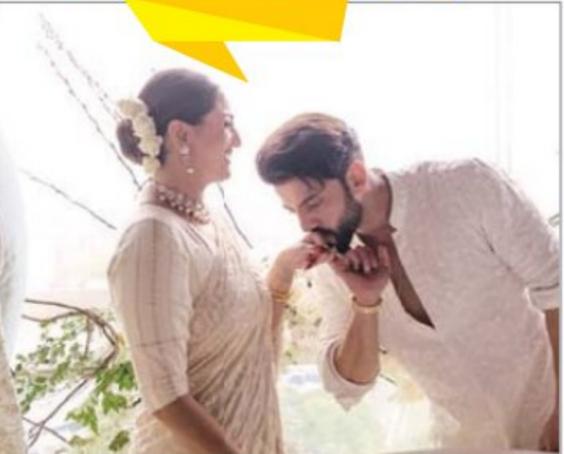
Sonakshi Sinha Celebrates Bachelorette Party with Friends



Sonakshi Sinha celebrated her bachelorette party with her girl squad, including Huma Qureshi. The party photos and videos, featuring black outfits and a venue adorned with golden, white, and silver balloons, went viral. Sonakshi wore stunning black sequins and captioned, "17.06.2024." Meanwhile, Zaheer Iqbal enjoyed a night out with his close friends.

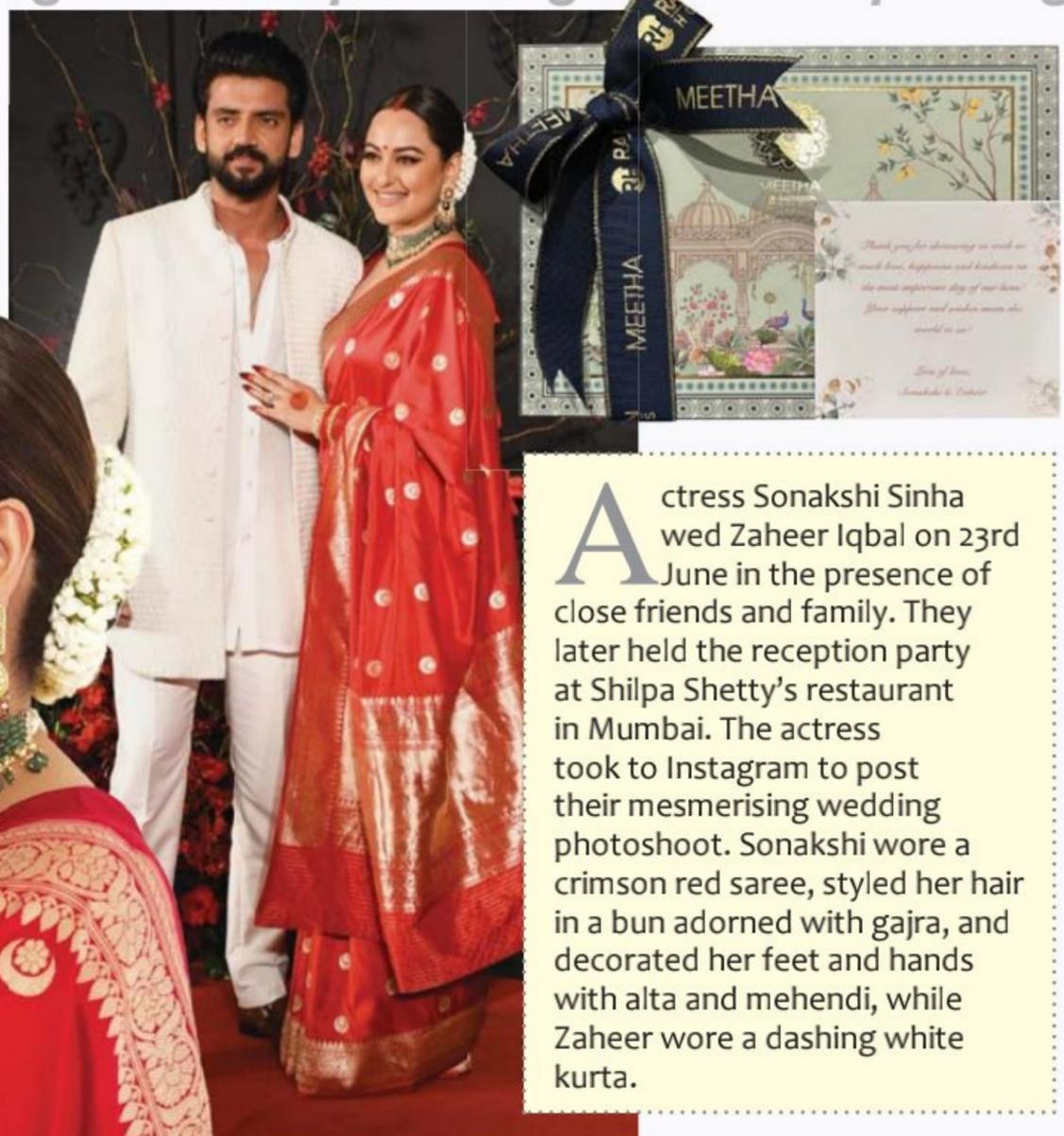
Sonakshi Sinha finally wed her boyfriend Zaheer Iqbal at her new apartment, 81 Aureate in Mumbai. The couple registered their marriage under the Special Marriage Act. Sharing photos of their dreamy wedding, Sonakshi captioned, "From now until forever." The actress wore a pure white embroidered saree with minimal jewelry, while Zaheer donned a white kurta. Celebrities who attended their wedding included Salman Khan, Fardeen Khan, Tabu, Kajol, Rekha, Anil Kapoor, Aditi Rao Hydari and many more.

Sonakshi Weds Long-Time Beau Zaheer Iqbal, Netizens Cutely Tag Them #Sonaheer



Newlyweds Sonakshi Sinha and Zaheer Iqbal's Lovely Photoshoot Goes Viral

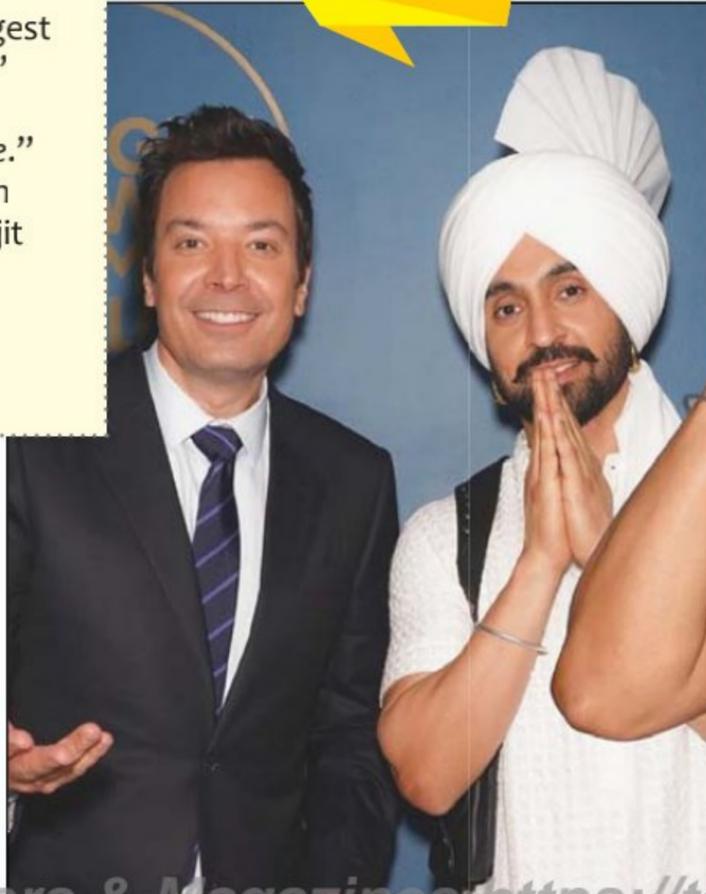
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Actress Sonakshi Sinha wed Zaheer Iqbal on 23rd June in the presence of close friends and family. They later held the reception party at Shilpa Shetty's restaurant in Mumbai. The actress took to Instagram to post their mesmerising wedding photoshoot. Sonakshi wore a crimson red saree, styled her hair in a bun adorned with gajra, and decorated her feet and hands with alta and mehendi, while Zaheer wore a dashing white kurta.

Singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh made history as the first Punjabi artist to perform on "The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon." Fallon introduced Diljit as "the biggest Punjabi artist on the planet." He performed his hit tracks "G.O.A.T" and "Born to Shine." The show's official Instagram handle posted, "Tonight: Diljit Dosanjh is in the building to perform Born to Shine into G.O.A.T! #DiljitOnFallon #FallonTonight."

Diljit Dosanjh and Jimmy Fallon Create Viral Moment on 'The Tonight Show'



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Radhika Merchant Stuns in Balmain Red Dress at Ambani's Bash



Radhika Merchant, the newest member of the Ambani family, dazzled in a red dress by Balmain at the Ambani grand cruise bash. Her outfit included a matching red scarf, a diamond wrist cuff, a diamond pendant on a chain, stud earrings, and rings. She posed for several photos with Anant Ambani, who wore custom Dolce and Gabbana. Stylist Shaleena Nathani shared pictures of the couple from a pre-wedding event on Instagram.

We



STRESS LESS, LIVE MORE

A comprehensive approach
to inner peace and resilience.

By Dr V K nigam

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*Anger, anxiety, depression, fear
and many other feelings are unhealthy
only if they remain buried inside,
unexpressed and not dealt with.*

– Candace Pert

*(American Neuroscientist –
She discovered the opioid receptor)*

Mrs. Ruchika Khandelwal (name changed), a 46-year-old female, was working as a public relations officer in a publishing house. She developed sleeping problems, unable to sleep until 2 or 3 am in the morning. As a result, she woke up around 9 am, feeling sleepy, weak, and irritable. This went on for six months, starting to reflect on her health. She looked weak, pale, and run down. She was also irregular about meals. She consulted a physician, who examined her and investigated her blood tests, ECG, and chest X-ray, all of which were normal.

She was given vitamin supplements and sleeping pills with advice to see a nutritionist. She was advised to follow a balanced diet. She improved but could not be

cured, so she saw a neurophysician, who diagnosed the root cause of her problem – stress. He found that her level of stress was very high, and increased levels of stress hormones were causing havoc in her life, derailing it completely. He made a plan for her which included certain changes in lifestyle, diet, and stress-busting meditation. She was told to plan the day without any hurry and worry and to take everything normally, with no need to get excited, stressed, or anxious if any work was getting delayed.

She was told to cut down sugar and fat from her diet and eat fresh fruits and green leafy vegetables. She was advised to take a glass of warm milk without sugar before going to bed and 4-6 almonds daily with breakfast. She was advised not to skip breakfast and to eat whole grain cereals and fruit yogurt. She was also advised to do yoga and meditation daily. She is now trained by a yoga teacher for yoga and meditation. She has started doing yoga and meditation regularly, 7 days a week along with changes in lifestyle and diet.

After realising the benefits of meditation and yoga, she became hooked on it like an addiction. Now, it is seven months since she started these changes in her life; her energy, happiness, and purpose in life have returned. She feels healthier and is sleeping well for six hours daily.

Stress is the body's response or reaction to any change in the body's environment requiring an adjustment. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. Stress is a normal part of our life and can affect the body physically and psychologically.

In general psychology, the term stress means a feeling of pressure or strain or a threat. Stress can be due to sickness, injury, grief, anger, anxiety, depression, financial problems, death of a loved one, divorce, separation, marriage, etc. Bad or even good experiences are factors that can cause stress. Physical or psychological demand arising from

your environment can trigger stress. Stress affects each of us at a certain time in life.

The father of stress phenomena, Hans Selye, an Austrian endocrinologist, wrote about stress as General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS), which was published in 1936 in the British journal *Nature*. He described three stages of GAS: first, the "initial alarm reaction stage," which occurs for a short time after the stressful event; followed by the second "stage of resistance," which is the resistance by the autonomic nervous system; and finally, the third

STRESS IS A POSITIVE FORCE THAT ENABLES YOU TO SURVIVE. A SMALL AMOUNT OF STRESS MAY BE DESIRED, BENEFICIAL, AND EVEN HEALTHY. POSITIVE STRESS HELPS IMPROVE ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE.

"exhaustion stage," in which the body has depleted its resources in an attempt to repair, so either the body recovers or exhausts if stress persists. Stress can increase the risk of strokes, heart attacks, ulcers, and mental illnesses such as depression.

The Positive Force

Stress is a positive force that enables you to survive. A small amount of stress may be desired, beneficial, and even healthy. Positive stress helps improve athletic performance. When you are waiting to cross a busy road, you need to be temporarily stressed. Because if you are alert, vigilant, and aware of danger, you are more likely to cross safely. Like an electric current, stress increases arousal, gives you energy, and improves your performance.

However, if the current is turned up too high, stress can produce unpleasant effects and cause your performance to deteriorate. Conversely, too little stress can cause you to feel listless and unstimulated, and you are likely to perform slowly and inefficiently. A definition of too much stress might be when you see your environment as taxing or exceeding your ability to cope, endangering your well-being.

Stress is a state of physical, mental, emotional, or other strain. It is the pressure exerted on a person by his environment. It is a shortening of distress, which means extreme anxiety or suffering. Man feels stress when he feels that his ability to cope with the demands is not enough. You have to be stress-free. Try to handle the stress and also try not to increase stress or produce unwanted stress from routine life situations.

Dr. Benson of Mind and Body Medical School of Boston, USA, says that 60 to 80 per cent of visits to healthcare professionals are stress-related. I have observed at the Apollo Clinic, Gurgaon, Haryana, India, that most of the individuals coming for annual health checkups are found suffering from stress-related sicknesses, and I have also observed the increasing level of stress among youngsters nowadays.



Physiology Of Stress

The symptoms of stress are due to certain hormones called stress hormones.

Adrenaline or acute stress hormone: It produces a “fight or flight” response to acute stress, which causes physiological changes in the body to prepare the body to fight with the external stimulus or run away. Our metabolism increases to provide more energy. The heart beats faster, and the rate of breathing increases to provide blood and more oxygen to the body. Digestion diminishes. Muscles of limbs contract to pool blood in vital organs where the requirement goes up in preparation for a fight or flight response.

Cortisol or chronic stress hormone: It is released especially under chronic stress. Chronic stress causes hypertension and coronary arterial blocks. It weakens the immune system, develops osteoporosis and memory disturbances, and may cause infertility.

STRESS IS THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE OF THE BODY AND THE MIND TO THE EXTERNAL STIMULI, SO IF WE CHANGE OUR RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL STIMULI, WE CAN REDUCE THE STRESS OR EVEN CONVERT THE NEGATIVE SITUATION TO A POSITIVE ONE. SCIENTIFIC STUDIES HAVE PROVED THAT MOST HEART ATTACKS ARE CAUSED BY ANGER AND EMOTIONAL STRESS.

A very much overlooked side of stress is its positive adaptation. It gives a feeling of hope and motivation rather than anxiety and depression. Positive stress is also called ‘Eustress.’ Overstress is called hyperstress, and low stress is called hypostress. Our aim should be to have maximum eustress and no hyperstress. Selye advocates balancing these. Stress is extremely useful for a productive lifestyle because it makes working enjoyable instead of distress.

Stress Busting

Stress is the negative response of the body and the mind to the external stimuli, so if we change our response to external stimuli, we can reduce the stress or even convert the negative situation to a positive one. Scientific studies have proved that most heart attacks are caused by anger and emotional stress. It is observed that quite a good percentage of heart attacks

are caused at a time of fit of anger or emotional outburst.

When a patient comes to me and starts describing his complaints, I ask him a few questions about his job, family life, and social life. My talks with him give me an idea about the level of stress he has and whether he belongs to a high-risk group for future heart attacks or not. I advise him to go slow in life, change his attitude towards life, and practise yoga and meditation.

When you feel stressed, leave the job and take 15 minutes off. Go to a good restaurant and sit there, order herbal tea or light mint tea or earl gray tea, and sit silently. Observe people around you, or you can just sit in some place, close your eyes, and do a few deep breathing exercises.

“Relax! Calm down, stop rushing around, and take hold of your life. You must be able to handle tension, not let it manhandle you.”

— George Shinn

What Celebrities Do to Burst The Stress

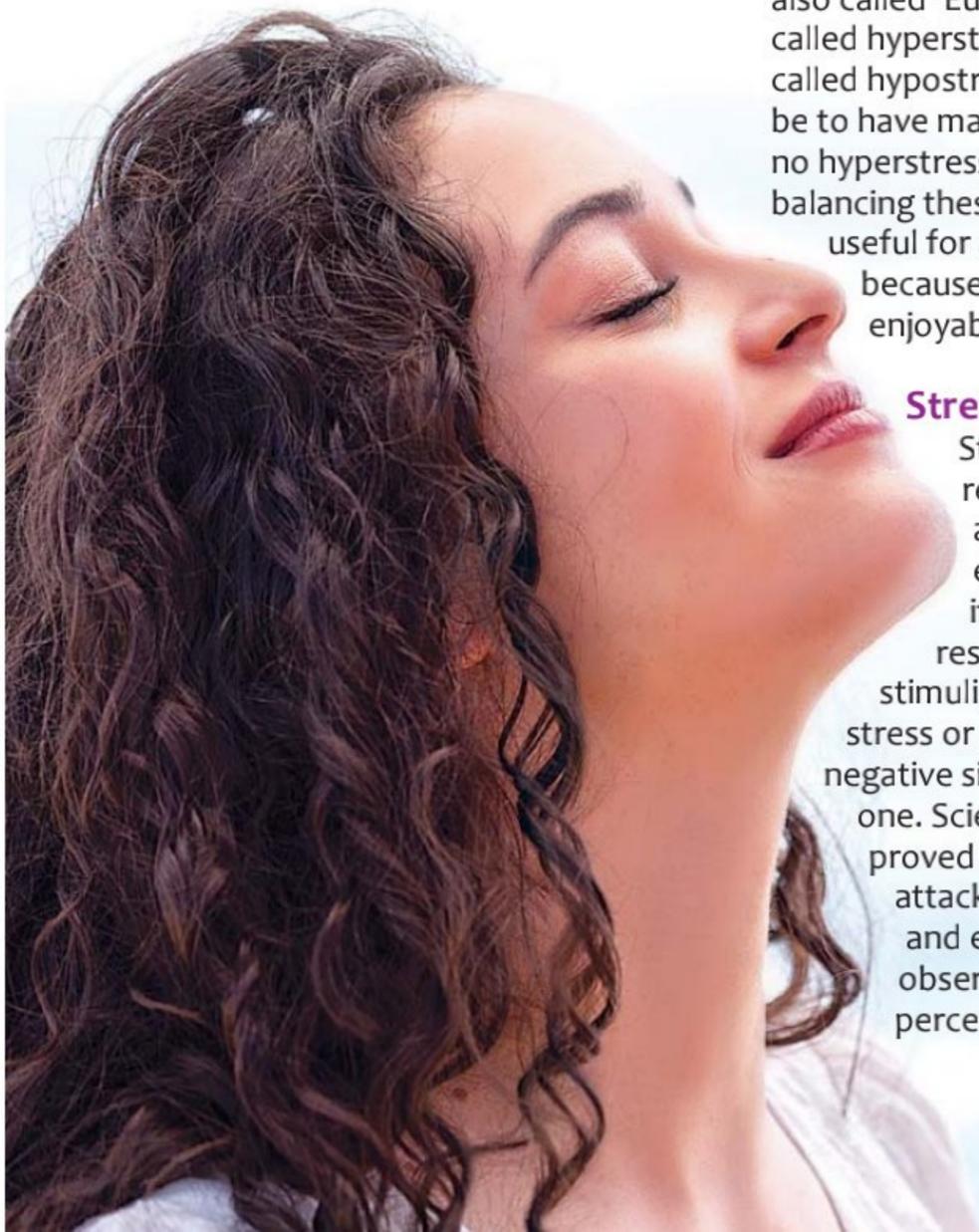
Ricky Martin: When in stress, goes to a crystal therapist, which brings equilibrium in his body.

Jennifer Lopez: Goes to a quiet room and does deep breathing exercises and comes back rejuvenated.

Britney Spears: Takes help of acupuncture.

Robin Williams: An American actor and comedian, committed suicide on 11 August, 2014, at the age of 63. He was suffering from anxiety and depression. After his death, it was revealed that he was suffering from sleeplessness and insomnia, along with stress, anxiety, and fear. He also suffered from alcohol and substance abuse.

Marilyn Monroe: American actress, model, and singer, became one of the most popular sex symbols of the 1950s and 1960s. She died from a drug overdose, i.e., acute barbiturate poisoning, at the young age of 36.



Stress, anxiety, and depression don't differentiate between poor and rich or common individuals and celebrities.

False Stress Busters

Cigarette Smoking: Nicotine acts as a tranquiliser but increases heart rate and blood pressure.

Caffeine: Coffee, tea, cola, etc., stimulate the body and relieve tiredness but also increase heart rate and blood pressure and cause insomnia.

Alcohol: It depresses the brain and causes reduced tension and anxiety. However, regular overuse leads to disturbed sleep and depression and causes problems of the liver and heart.

Why You Have To Avoid Stress Or Handle It

Stress is good for you if it is in small quantities or mild degrees, as then it is a positive factor helping you to accomplish tasks and succeed. It improves your performance. You can't get rid of stress; it is a part of our life. To reduce stress, you have to have a clear idea of your life, what you have to do in life, and what your goal is.

You have to be positive about changes in life and not be negative. Barring these, you have to spend time with your family and friends to relax. Keep some hobbies to keep yourself happy and satisfied. Passing time with family and eating at least once a day with family makes one happy and stress-free.

We have to avoid stress or reduce it so that we do not fall sick due

to its negative effects. Stress, if continuous, may affect you physically as well as psychologically. It can lead to the following problems:

- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Drinking problems
- Chronic fatigue
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Anger
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Panic attack
- Sleep problems
- Addiction to drugs

STRESS IS GOOD FOR YOU IF IT IS IN SMALL QUANTITIES OR MILD DEGREES, AS THEN IT IS A POSITIVE FACTOR HELPING YOU TO ACCOMPLISH TASKS AND SUCCEED. IT IMPROVES YOUR PERFORMANCE. YOU CAN'T GET RID OF STRESS; IT IS A PART OF OUR LIFE.

Mental health problems develop due to stress, which can lead to suicidal tendencies. Famous actors, politicians, scientists, and historical figures have committed suicide.

Ernest Hemingway: An American journalist and writer who was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954, committed suicide, though his writings were an inspiration to generations.

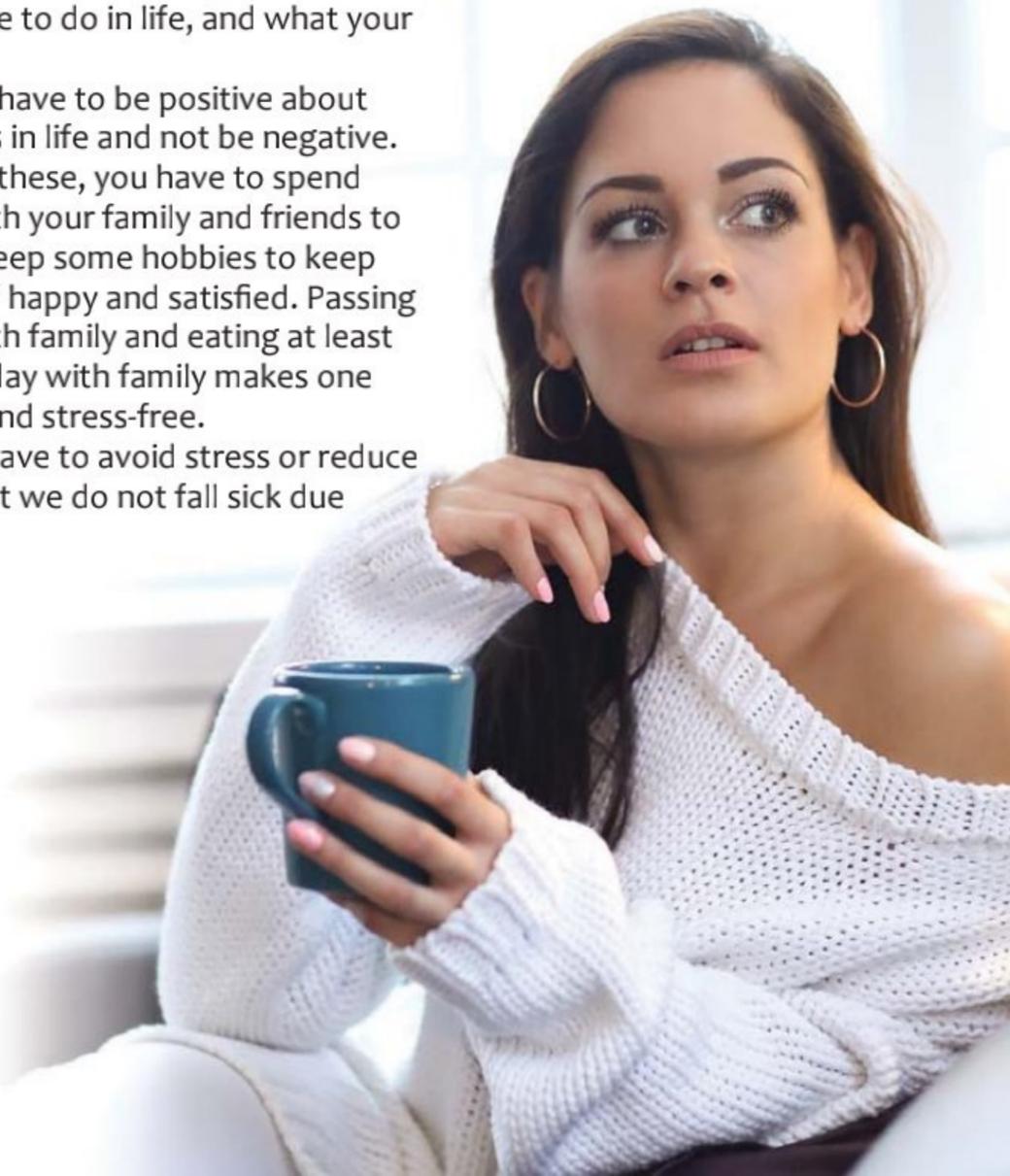
Who can forget his creations such as *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Sun Also Rises*, and *The Old Man and the Sea*? He shot himself in the head. He was a reporter for wars, covering the Spanish Civil War, the Normandy landings, and others.

Continuously reporting wars affected his health both physically and mentally. He developed depression and one day committed suicide.

How to Know That You Are Under Stress

You can diagnose yourself as suffering from stress or at least suspect it by introspection. Everybody reacts to stress differently; some suffer from headaches, nervousness, sleep disturbances, bowel disorders, panic attacks, or anxiety. Others may have worries, diffidence, or low self-esteem. You can suspect the influence of stress by asking yourself the following questions:

- Are you losing interest in sex life or developing early ejaculation or erectile dysfunction?
- Do you get a feeling of fear or panic suddenly?
- Do you have problems getting sleep, or are you sleeping for a short time only?
- Are you becoming irritable and short-tempered? Your family members may also tell you about this change in yourself.
- Are you feeling an inability to concentrate and fading memory?
- Do you feel exhausted or tired despite a night's sleep?
- Do you take deep breaths quite often, as there is a feeling of being short of breath?



- Do you frequently suffer from acidity, burps, upset stomach, indigestion, constipation, or diarrhea?
- Do you sometimes feel very emotional and cry?
- Have you lost interest in life and feel it is not worth living, or do you get suicidal thoughts?
- Do you wish to be left alone and don't wish to meet friends?

The factor which causes stress is called a 'stressor.' Actually, a stressor is a neutral factor contrary to public belief, and it can cause either distress or eustress depending upon our responses to it. A stressor's response from us can lead to psychological or physical problems like high blood pressure, heart disease, or depression. Usually, the recurrent attack of stressors on our health leads to illness.

Recent attacks of stressors may not lead to sickness, but the chronic effect of stressors can lead to sickness as it requires time to cause sickness. Usually, the acute attack of stressors doesn't lead to sickness, but the chronic attack of stressors can only lead to sickness.

Some Startling Facts

- Repeated and frequent episodes of anger increase the chances of a heart attack.
- Discussing problems with one's life partner relieves stress.
- 50 per cent of single middle-aged men have a chance of dying within 15 years, compared to 17 per cent for a married man with many friends.
- Tension stresses and depresses the immune system (bone

THOUGH STRESS IS GOOD FOR THE HUMAN BODY IF IT OCCURS IN SMALL AMOUNTS, RECURRENT HEAVY STRESS CAN LEAD TO PROBLEMS.

MEDITATION, MUSCLE RELAXATION, AND RELAXED BREATHING CAN HELP IN RELAXATION.

marrow, spleen, thymus, and lymph nodes), leading to an increased risk of infection.

- Cancer is commonly seen in patients with depression, but a strong will and desire to survive reduce the risk of relapse.
- Stress diminishes white blood cell formation and function and causes the thymus gland to shrink.

Hans Selye, the "Father of stress," states that it transforms mental suffering into physical illness by involving the nervous system and hormones. New research has demonstrated the importance of genetic factors in our susceptibilities to stress.

Paula Ceccaldi et al. write in their book, *Stress, the Good and Bad*, that stress may also enhance the progress of cancer or reduce the inhibition of resistance to it.

Though cancer is often accompanied by depression, a strong will to live seems to reduce the risk of relapse. Specialists at London Hospital compared survival rates of women treated for breast cancer over five years and found high rates of survival among those who refused to submit to the illness.

The word stress comes from the Latin word "stringer," which means to squeeze, clasp, or wound. It became "estresse" in French, meaning narrowness or oppression, and gave English the word "distress."

Stress is the main troublemaker of today's life. "Stress is a situation that produces a negative body response." Though stress is good for the human body if it occurs in small amounts, recurrent heavy stress can lead to psychological problems as well as physical illness. According to Philip T. Hagan, MD, Mayo Clinic, USA, techniques like guided imagery, meditation, muscle relaxation, and relaxed breathing can help in relaxation. It lowers heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension.

Stress is not what happens to us. It is our response to what happens. And response is something we can choose.

– Maureen Killoran **We**

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Commandments to Beat Stress

- Set a realistic goal for yourself.
- Don't remember failure or disappointments.
- Learn to say "No."
- Exercise regularly and play games of your liking.
- Sleep for a full 6-7 hours.
- Follow a low-fat vegetarian diet. A diet rich in fiber, fruit, and fresh vegetables relaxes the mind and body.
- Be happy and enjoy life.
- Be positive in your thoughts.
- Practise a few minutes of meditation, yoga, and deep abdominal breathing daily.
- Open your heart to your partner – discuss every problem.



I PERSONALLY USE AND RECOMMEND HAMDARD KHAALIS SPICES.



“ I love to explore new recipes. As a chef, I value authenticity and tradition, which is exactly what I found in Hamdard Khaalis Spices. I have created numerous recipes using these spices, and after personally testing them, I can assure you, they deliver the authentic and delicious taste we all crave. Each spice is carefully crafted to preserve its traditional flavour, making every dish truly special.

You can also effortlessly bring this rich, authentic taste into your kitchen by purchasing from Hamdard’s online store, myhamdardstore.com. Trust me, with Hamdard Khaalis Spices, your culinary creations will be nothing short of exceptional.

Recipes curated by | Chef Kunal Kapur



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KHAALIS CHICKEN BIRYANI

Prep time-25mins | Cooking time-45 min | Serves-4

INGREDIENTS

For Marination

- Chicken-1kg
- Hamdard Khaalis Chicken Biryani Masala-1 tbsp
- Hamdard Khaalis Red Chilli Powder-1 tsp
- Hamdard Khaalis Turmeric Powder-½ tsp
- Curd-1 cup
- Ginger garlic paste-1½ tbsp
- Green chilli- 4
- Mint leaves-½ cup

For Cooking

- Oil-1 cup
- Hamdard Khaalis Cardamom-5 to 6
- Hamdard Khaalis Cinnamon1” long
- Bayleaf-2
- Shahi jeera-1tbsp
- Onion, sliced-2 cups

For Rice

- Water-1½ ltr.
- Salt-to taste
- Basmati Rice-1½ cups
- Kewra water-1tbsp
- Rose water-1tbsp
- Javtiri powder-2tsp
- Ghee-2 tbsp
- Wash & soak rice for 30 mins

METHOD

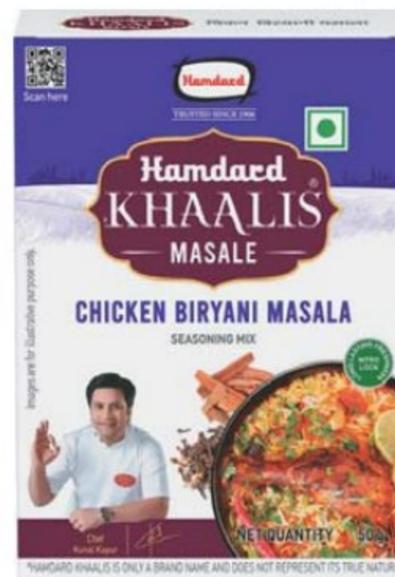
For Marination

Add chicken into a large bowl with all the ingredients mentioned under marination and mix them well. let it rest for 30mins. In a deep handi heat oil and add Hamdard Khaalis Cardamom, bayleaf, Hamdard Khaalis Cinnamon stick, shahi jeera and give a stir. Now add sliced onions and cook till they are evenly light brown. Now add the marinated chicken

and cook till chicken is half cooked. Keep aside. Separately add water to a handi, sprinkle salt and bring to a boil. Add rice to the boiling water and cook till rice is ¾ cooked. Strain the rice through a sieve and retain the water from the boiled rice. Scoop half rice and spread at the bottom of a deep vessel. Carefully add a layer of cooked chicken. Now cover the chicken with the remaining rice.

Now Add 2 cups of previously strained rice water, and sprinkle javitri powder & elachi powder,

kewra water, rose water and ghee. Cover it with a tight lid. Now place this vessel on high heat for 2-3 minutes and then lower the heat to minimum and cook for another 10-12 mins. Turn off the heat & let it sit for another 10 minutes before opening the lid. Serve hot with salan. Enjoy!



Images are for representational purpose only. *HAMDARD KHAALIS IS ONLY A BRAND NAME AND DOES NOT REPRESENT ITS TRUE NATURE



The Chopsticks Test

Skill, etiquette, and embarrassment!

By Deepak Bhatia

Using chopsticks requires considerable practice and skill. Do you have what it takes to become proficient in using the culinary instruments without embarrassing yourself at a table in a restaurant or in a get-together? Read on and find out where you stand on a scale of 1 to 10.

In the Hindi film, *Chopsticks* (2019), Ms. Mithila Palkar played the role of a tourist guide, Nirma. She took a group of Japanese tourists to a restaurant in Mumbai and convinced them to set aside their chopsticks and try to eat with their hands – “When in India, eat as Indians do.” Her boss, Zacharia, played by Ms. Achint Kaur, happened to turn up at the same restaurant and was very impressed to see the joyful smiles on the delighted faces of the visitors.

One of my Spanish friends, Agustin Lavin, had taught me a line—which I could never use—to pick up a girl: “Me gustas más que comer con los dedos,” which loosely translated means, “I like you more than I like eating with my fingers (hands).”

Spaniards, like Indians, use their hands to eat and express their appreciation for a tasty and well-prepared meal by licking their fingers as they finish. Hence the catch-line of KFC for their popular finger food.

Citizens of nations in the so-called Far East are apparently midway between the warm East and the cold West—geographically as well as culturally. Whereas Western people use steel cutlery, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and others commonly use chopsticks, which are typically made from “food-grade” wood, or from ivory (now banned) for the affluent.

CHOPSTICKS ARE KNOWN AS KUAIZI IN CHINA, HASHI IN JAPAN, AND JEOTGARAK IN KOREA. REGULAR USERS AND AFICIONADOS FOLLOW ETIQUETTE WHILE USING CHOPSTICKS.

Wielding chopsticks proficiently requires considerable skill and practice. The uninitiated may find their use rather daunting. One of my Persian friends, Nima Aghevli, asked for a knife in addition to the fork and spoon already provided in a Chinese restaurant in London where we had met for lunch and had ordered fried rice. “You need a knife to eat rice?” enquired our waiter with his eyebrows raised sky-high! I have seldom been so embarrassed.

Chopsticks are known as kuaizi in China, hashi in Japan, and jeotgarak in Korea. Regular users and aficionados follow strict rules of etiquette while using chopsticks. The pair of long, tapering sticks are to be held in a particular way, the lower in one position and the upper in another. Only the upper hashi is moved up and down.

Waving the hashi around (mayoibashi), pulling bowls towards you with your hashi (yosebashi), stabbing food with it/them (sashibashi), holding the hashi in your palm while picking up a bowl (nigiribashi), resting your hashi across the edges of your bowl (watashibashi), standing your hashi upright in your rice (tatebashi), passing food to another with your hashi (hashiwatashi), and licking food stuck to your hashi (neboribashi) are forbidden and are classified as hashi bad manners.

Now you are ready to pass the chopsticks test!



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Bridging Generations

Redefining the father-in-law relationship in modern context.

By Swikriti Swarnkar

The father-in-law is considered the sole planner and responsible being of the home. He is the man who bound the relationships with his power and control. A combination of fear and respect was what the daughter-in-law had for her husband's father. He advised, ordered decisions, and made the rules and regulations. In a joint family setup, the father-in-law was the person to be heard.

But, times changed, society changed, and so did the family's behavioral approach. Family is an essential part of everyone to move ahead with personal life. In a fast-paced world, families underwent various changes in their structure as well as function. The joint family system foresaw changes more in the first half of the twentieth century, thus today it has led to the emergence of the nuclear family system.

But, even where joint families exist now, the daughter-in-law gives much preference to fulfilling her dreams and ambitions in terms of education and career. The belief of confining women under four walls was lately rejected. Modern thinking and changing dynamics redefined the relationship to the level of understanding and giving chance to their lives.

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The Old Thinking – Father-in-law

In the old times, the father-in-law was the one who operated from the age-old belief that women should be responsible for handling household chores and associated tasks. The environment of a male-dominated society did not allow women to pursue their career interests. Instead, they were asked to marry, settle down, and have kids. They didn't have a choice but to duly comply with their duties and responsibilities.

According to orthodox and traditional thinking, males should go out and earn, and take responsibility. At that time, women's literacy rate was low, which could also be the reason for not taking the initiative to go out and earn. The relationship was so conservative that it was difficult to express desire and expression. The expectations of fathers-in-law simply lay in respecting them and listening to them with politeness even if they were wrong. Don't argue ever. You are a kid. Be polite. Include them

ONCE INTO FAMILY LIFE, THE UNDERSTANDING IN TODAY'S ERA REDEFINES NOT ONLY BETWEEN TWO PEOPLE BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY IN-LAWS' SUPPORTIVENESS TOO. WELL, THE FIL RELATIONSHIP IS FAR BETTER TODAY.

in each event of your life, nothing should be private.

Modern Thinking And Breaking Stereotypes

In today's time, relationships are evolving and changing and so is the thinking. India is a developing country and thus, the cost of living is also rising. At present, it is impossible

to depend on the sole breadwinner for financial stability; therefore, women also work to balance it. If she does not get support from home, how can she go out and earn? The relationship of respect, honour, and care is necessary, but the willingness, encouragement, and freedom that every human seeks are also important, whether it's an in-laws relationship or a blood relationship. Career focus for many youngsters is more of a priority. Thus, for many of them, getting married is not a priority. Besides, marriage is more of a personal choice, not an obligation to the toxic mindset-filled society.

But, if the in-laws are supportive, helpful, and cooperative, the girl can achieve anything, whether related to a career or pursuing an interest and hobby. In today's perspective, as per my observation, women in this modern age and time also have their careers/challenges as a priority apart from responsibilities at home and so do men who have their own set of pressures. Once into family life, the understanding in today's era redefines not only between the two people but most importantly in-laws' supportiveness too. Well, the FIL relationship is far better today, like the case of a 25-year-old Disha's father-in-law is a very open-minded and modern-thinking individual. He invited her into their house even before her official engagement with his son. After the wedding, she continued her career and whatever time she returned home, be it as late as 10 pm, her mother-in-law stayed up to ensure that she had had dinner every night.

In another case, Vikas fell in love with Priya, a divorcee, though he knew, she didn't reveal it to his parents as she feared disrespect. But, one night before the wedding, when Vikas's father got to know, he didn't react but understood the difficulties of the one who suffers and goes through this. In our patriarchal society, marrying a divorcee is not beheld as a good ritual, but irrespective of society's thinking, he gave importance to his son's love and did arrange a grand wedding.

THOUGH, LIVING IN A NUCLEAR SETUP OR A JOINT FAMILY, THE FAMILY'S HEAD'S DECISION REGARDING HIS CHILDREN, WHETHER SON OR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, THE ABOVE STATISTICS SHOW THE CHANGE IN SCENARIO RESULTING IN CHANGES IN THOUGHT STRUCTURE.

Collateral Support Of Spouse And Family

According to UN Progress of World's Women 2019-2020, just over half (52.1 per cent) of married women aged 25 to 54 are in the labour force, compared to married men, who show the highest rate of labour force participation, at 96.1 per cent. This shows that marriage does not pose too much constraint and more than half of the women are working professionals. Though, living in a nuclear setup or a joint family, the family's head's decision regarding his children, whether son or daughter-in-law, the above statistics show the change in scenario resulting in changes in thought structure.

Things to Better the Relationship

- The father-in-law should talk to the daughter-in-law about her plan, and how the office work is ongoing if she is working.
- He should praise her efforts, appreciate and celebrate her achievements.
- The daughter-in-law should respect and seek advice from her father-in-law.
- The daughter-in-law's responsibilities lie in taking care of and helping him.
- They both should collectively help each other, like, they should treat her like a daughter and she should care for them like her own parents.

Conclusion

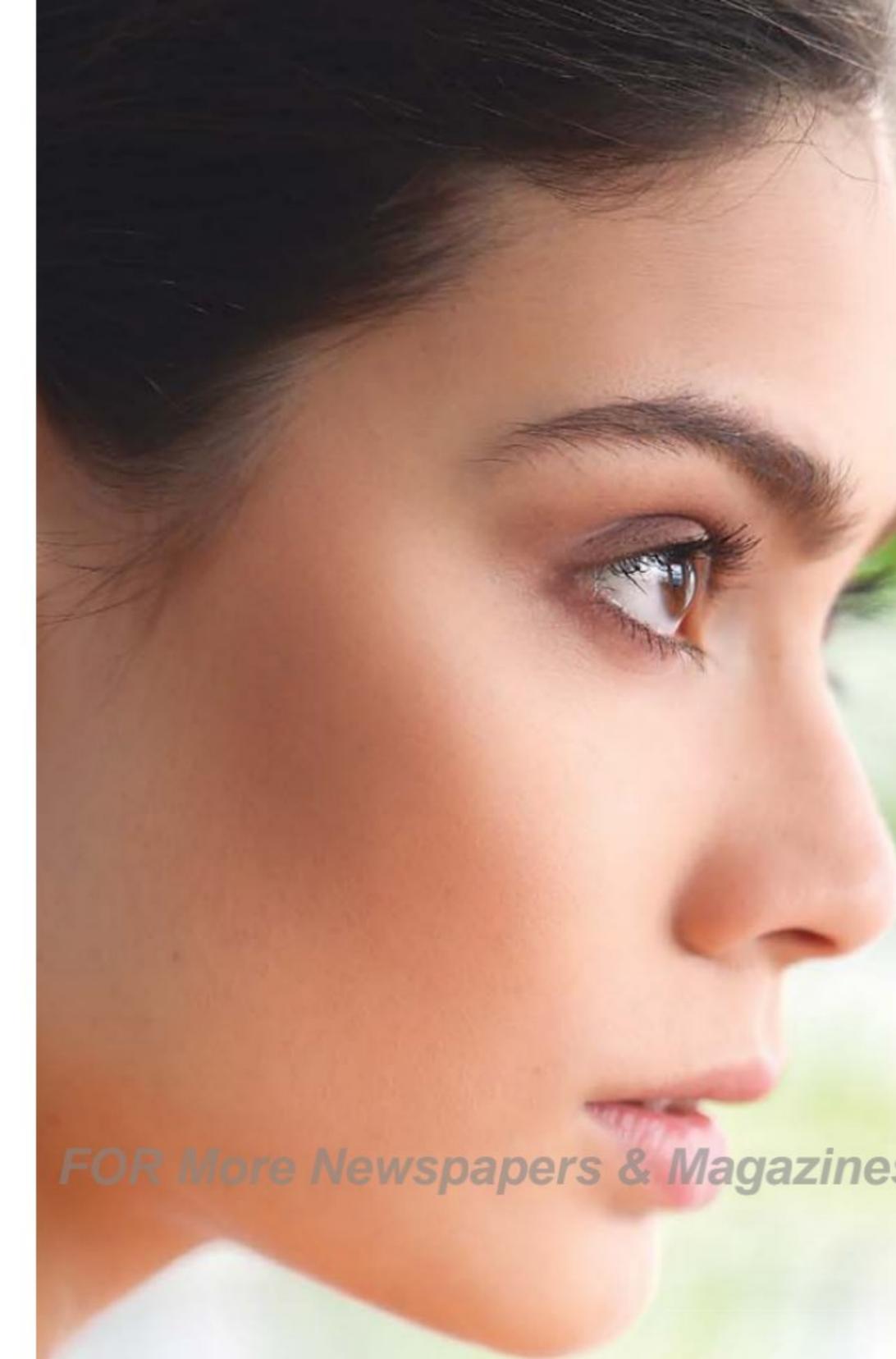
The good mutual relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law helps each other to grow and synchronise, also able to understand the behaviour, values, and ancestral tradition. Wife and husband both may be new or familiar to each other, but marriage brings responsibilities for each of them, i.e., personal, professional, or in terms of families. Having a supportive father-in-law encourages an environment of freedom and respect. This balanced support shall positively encourage the daughter-in-law to bloom in such an environment and the family shall naturally progress on all fronts through the improvisation of the glowing ambiance.

After leaving home, women seek a peaceful and better environment in their husband's home, and the caring and compassionate nature of in-laws will nurture daughters to stand out against pre-defined societal norms. Today, modern ideologies have shaped the relationship between equality and better living, compassion the older generation also understood it well. This life is too short to live with strained and rigid relationships. FIL may not always agree with their married children, but he can offer respect and give the freedom to make their own decisions.

We

Anytime is Playtime with Role Play Sets!





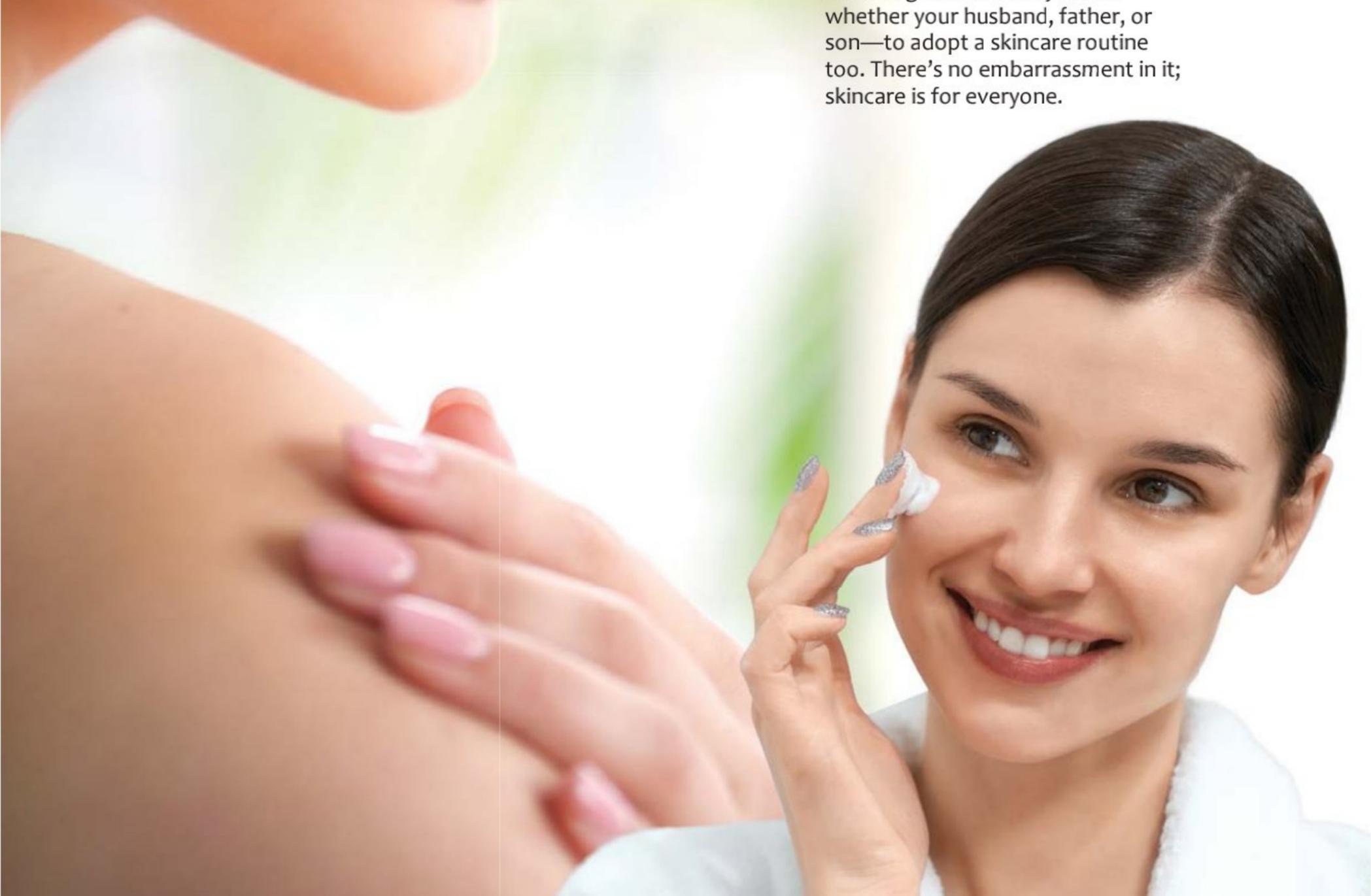
Being Skin Smart

The ultimate beginner's
skincare routine.

By Bhavana Ramakrishnan

Self-care is more important than ever, but when we think of it, we often focus on physical fitness and mental health, thereby neglecting our skin. Our skin is a significant part of us and needs love and care. If you've been taking your skin for granted, change that today! Take action for yourself, and encourage the men in your life—whether your husband, father, or son—to adopt a skincare routine too. There's no embarrassment in it; skincare is for everyone.

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Not taking skincare seriously can lead to various issues such as irritation, premature ageing, dullness, and more issues that can end up compromising your appearance and confidence. So, to get your journey started, here's a beginner's guide to skincare for oily, dry, or combination skin.

Morning Skin Care Routine

- Use a face wash that suits your skin.
- Spray your face with a homemade toner. This can be made very easily by mixing rose water and aloe vera gel. This balances the pH level of the skin while restoring hydration. To make it fancier, you can even add a few drops of Glycerin and Vitamin E Oil especially during winter when your skin feels dryer.
- If you want to fight dark spots and pigmentation, it is a great idea to use a Vitamin C serum at this point. Feel free to skip this step if you don't have such issues.
- Moisturise. This is a crucial step even if you have oily skin because your skin tends to overproduce oil if it is dry leading to eruptions such as pimples and blackheads. Use a gel-type moisturiser in case you have oily skin. If you have combination or normal skin, any lightweight moisturiser works. For dry skin, a full-cream texture moisturiser works well to retain moisture throughout the day.
- SPF! This is of utmost importance no matter what the skin type is. NEVER skip sunscreen and this is even more important if you are using Vitamin C in the morning. In fact, if your body is exposed when you go out during the daytime, use body sunscreen as well.
- A good lip balm (preferably one with SPF too).

Night Skin Care Routine

- Face wash. Remember that you need to be cleansing for 1 whole minute.
- Toner.
- Homemade under-eye cream made with a mix of Almond Oil,

Vitamin E oil, and Aloe Vera Gel.

- Moisturiser for the rest of the face. If your skin is feeling extra dry, you can mix 2-3 drops of Vitamin E Oil to your moisturiser and apply it over your face.
- In case the moisture is not retained throughout the night (mostly in the case of dry skin) use an occlusive (Petroleum Jelly) to lock in the moisture.
- Lip balm.

OUR SKIN IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF US AND NEEDS LOVE AND CARE. IF YOU'VE BEEN TAKING YOUR SKIN FOR GRANTED, CHANGE THAT TODAY! TAKE ACTION FOR YOURSELF, AND ENCOURAGE THE MEN IN YOUR LIFE—WHETHER YOUR HUSBAND, FATHER, OR SON—TO ADOPT A SKINCARE ROUTINE TOO.

Fairly Easy To Follow Right?

There are a couple more mantras to follow to have healthy and glowing skin. Use a face mask once a week depending on what you want to treat. Here are some amazing face pack ideas:

Pack For Dark Circles

- Mix inknut powder with water or rose water and apply it on your under eye region. You can also use it on other areas of hyperpigmentation like around your mouth and forehead. Let it sit until it dries and wash it off. Do this every week or twice a week.
- In case you don't have inknut powder, which is a high possibility, mix one part coffee powder (not readymade instant coffee powder, take pure coffee powder) and mix with 1 part honey. Process the same as (i).

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Same as every other process. Don't add excess lemon juice and turmeric in case you have sensitive skin. Lemon juice and turmeric have whitening properties. Ensure to use this pack only during nighttime as using a lemon juice pack on your face and then being exposed to the sun can cause an inflammatory reaction

ALL THESE TIPS CAN ONLY BE A SUPPLEMENT TO A GOOD DIET. ENSURE YOU ARE EATING HEALTHY FOOD, STAYING HYDRATED, EXERCISING REGULARLY, AND GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP EACH DAY. GOOD SKIN IS AN SIGN OF A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

due to UV rays exposure. This pack reduces excessive oils in the skin and gives instant brightness.

Face Pack For Pimples

- 1 part Multani mitti
 - 1 part milk/ rose water
- Use this mix to remove residual oils and dirt in your skin that is causing pimples. Rose water can be used in case your skin is very oily while milk is a great option for relatively drier skin.

Face Pack For Dry Skin

- 1 part milk skin
 - 1-part besan
 - 2 drops coconut oil
- Mix it together and let it sit on your face for about 15 minutes before washing it off.

LIP SCRUB One portion of honey mixed with one portion of sugar to be scrubbed all over lips. Wash it off after massaging well for chapped lips.

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- 1/3 part pure virgin almond oil, 1/3 part vitamin E oil capsule extracted, 1/3 part aloe vera gel. Refrigerate this mix and apply it on your under-eye region before going to bed. This mix can be stored in the fridge for at least a month.

Face Pack For Exfoliation And De-Tanning

- ½ part rice flour
 - ½ part besan/gram flour
 - 1 part Milk/curd
 - ¼ part coffee powder
- Massage this all over your face in a circular motion. Do this for about 30 to 40 seconds and wash it off. You will be left with smooth and supple skin. Exfoliation removes dead skin cells from the surface of the skin and unclogs pores, enhancing the effectiveness of skincare products by allowing better absorption.

Skin Brightening Pack

- 1 part Multani mitti/ Fuller's earth
- ½ part Curd/milk
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp turmeric

ProTips

- After washing your face, pat dry with a towel and not rub on your face with all your vigour. Your skin will be thankful.
- The night skin routine of applying a layer of moisturiser and a layer of occlusive (petroleum jelly/ Vaseline) helps retain moisture and keep skin glowing when you wake up the next morning. Save this tip for winter. This can also be used for other areas of your skin like dry elbows, knees, etc.
- Use a lip balm every day.
- Use a face wash that suits your skin. Your usual body soap may not be the ideal option. Washing your face with soap can leave it looking wrinkled, haggard, and dull. The harsh chemicals present in it may be useful in cleansing your body but certainly not the face. Your face skin is way more delicate than your body skin.
- Always exfoliate your skin at least once or twice a week.
- Ensure to change your pillowcase often. A lot of times sweat from neck and hair can lead to bacterial growth on your pillowcase which if comes into contact with your skin can cause acne and other skin issues multiple pores and if proper care is not taken, it may be prone to blemishes, acne, and pimples.
- Use every skincare tip not just on your face but also in the neck region.
- Last but not least, all these tips can only be a supplement to a good diet. Ensure you are eating healthy food, staying hydrated, exercising, and getting enough sleep each day. Good skin is an sign of healthy lifestyle.

We

The Narcissist's Trap



Breaking free from love to manipulation. By Dr. Arshia Sheikh

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Love doesn't die a natural death until you are in a relationship with a narcissist. The statement meant a lot. A very depressing feeling ponders when the love in a relationship is over. The relationship, which started as an alluring smell of a flower with blossoms and spring, is no more. This state is very difficult. And in the end, you get to know that you were never loved but were only trapped by a psychologically ill person, a narcissist. You feel devastated and depressed. You really failed to understand why you have been chosen by the Almighty for such a situation.

Love with a narcissist can never happen. At some point in your life, you understand the stress this relationship has brought you. You are being totally emotionally drained by such a partner. You will not feel that you are valuable anymore. If you put your whole life at stake so that people will think good about you, believe me, it's much better that people abuse you, and you will surely try to fix your whole life. Living with a narcissist is next to impossible, but in our societies, many women need to compromise their lives in terms of societal pressure, financial dependence, and for their children.

It's always disappointing when I see people who are judgmental towards others. In your eyes, if she looks like a crazy dramatic creature, she might be a victim of some kind of abuse, maybe a narcissistic abuse. The victim seems to be imbalanced, full of doubt, and unstable. They often become angry and yell out under depression. Sometimes they show overwhelming emotions and want people to see them and empathize with them. On the other hand, the story is different for a narcissist. They show cool, calm, and very much collected. They seem to be stable. Do you know why? I have an answer: because they were never attached to the victim. Using them, abusing them, and then keeping them aside is the only way they deal with their partners. For them, it's nothing because they don't care.

Who Is A Narcissist?

People with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) have an exaggerated sense of their importance. They always look for praise and attention. They are often described as arrogant, self-centered, and demanding. They have a superiority complex and have no empathy for others.

How Will You Identify A Narcissist?

It is not easy to identify a narcissist. A person can be confident, toxic, or a narcissist. Firstly, we need to identify the symptoms which demarcate which way your personality is leading you. So, it is better to understand the traits because you may be one of them. The various symptoms a narcissist possesses are the following:

Grandiosity: Grandiosity is an exaggerated sense of importance. People with NPD believe that they are special, superior, and unique. They want special attention.

Lack of empathy: A narcissist always lacks empathy. They are self-centered people. Even if you cry, they will never have empathy. Instead, they start showing themselves as the victim, making the situation more confusing.

Excessive need for admiration: They always want admiration. They feel that they are unique. They are self-centered.

Gaslighting: Gaslighting is the refusal to acknowledge their mistakes to gain control over

others. A narcissist clearly faults the other person's perception and understanding of the situation.

Use of manipulative tactics to mislead others: They use some tactics to create fuss and make others believe they have been victimised.

Never take responsibility for anything: They never take responsibility for the chaos in their relationship. They feel their partner is wrong.

Love bombing: Love bombing is an excessively romantic courtship to secure a relationship but being indifferent after securing love. Once they get their love, they are really different people. The one who can't be loved.

Relationship With A Narcissist

A narcissist will literally destroy some of the kindest and most genuine people. They may even cause serene people to snap, and then they try to make you seem like an unpleasant person. If you yell back at them after they just got done abusing you, they start to act like a victim.

LOVE WITH A NARCISSIST CAN NEVER HAPPEN. AT SOME POINT IN YOUR LIFE, YOU UNDERSTAND THE STRESS THIS RELATIONSHIP HAS BROUGHT YOU. YOU ARE BEING TOTALLY EMOTIONALLY DRAINED BY SUCH A PARTNER. YOU WILL NOT FEEL THAT YOU ARE VALUABLE ANYMORE.



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This is the kind of mind game they play. In their world, they have never done wrong, or rather, they feel they are never wrong.

They are the ones who create problems, then they amplify that very problem into a drama and start showing themselves as sufferers. They believe in emotionally hurting their partner, disrespecting them, and pretending that wrong has been done to them, and they need to get attention as they are the real sufferers.

In a relationship, you will find them self-centered and attention-seeking. If you ever confront them, they will never admit it, but they will surely keep the grudges. If you have shown them the mirror, they will never admit that they are wrong.

The narcissist will disrespect you; this gives them a kind of satisfaction. They will make you participate in their conversation. Once you have been trapped, they will catch one of your statements and make sure to hurt your sentiment by disrespecting you. I have noticed one thing: they are not attached to you. For them, you are prey they want to hunt but don't want to eat.

They only want to hunt you for their whole life. It's painful, it's difficult, it's exhausting. The relationship is a mere burden where you want to come out but have been trapped.

Narcissists are good pals to some of their friends. They are kind to

acquaintances. They are thoughtful and can't do enough for their neighbours and are friendly with their colleagues. They are gentle and shy with new people, and they are incredibly generous with strangers. But they are cruel, manipulative, and abusive to their closest ones.

Disconnection From Body Shows Up

The narcissistic abuse survivor deals with a very tough situation and stressed life when they are in a relationship. Not only does their mind get affected, but their body also starts showing some signs.

NARCISSISTS ARE GOOD PALS TO SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS. THEY ARE KIND TO ACQUAINTANCES. THEY ARE THOUGHTFUL AND CAN'T DO ENOUGH FOR THEIR NEIGHBOURS AND ARE FRIENDLY WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES. THEY ARE GENTLE AND SHY WITH NEW PEOPLE, AND THEY ARE INCREDIBLY GENEROUS WITH STRANGERS.

Some of the symptoms are:

- Lack of spatial awareness and disorientation.
- Body temperature dysregulation (chills/hot flashes).
- Not sleeping until exhaustion.
- Delaying last-minute bathroom calls and rushing.
- Difficulty with hunger cues (over/under-eating).

When you come out of such a toxic relationship, you need a psychiatrist to heal your mind. Exercises and yoga can also help in your healing. Concentrate on spirituality; it provides a powerful impact on your inner self. Make sure you move in the best company and with positive people. Make your surroundings very positive.

Dealing With A Narcissist

It is rightly said that distance is the only answer to disrespect. It's better not to react, no argument, and no drama. The only way left is simply removing your presence. It is you who needs to control yourself. By doing that, you protect your emotional well-being. Firstly, try to maintain your inner serenity and avoid being dragged into unnecessary conflict. By maintaining a certain amount of distance, you can set boundaries, and you can expect to be treated with respect and empathy. This sends a clear message that disrespectful behaviour is not acceptable.

The most powerful move is no move at all!: The narcissist always wants to trap you in their conversation. They will say something ugly so that you will react to their statement. Once you have given them a reaction, they know you are trapped, and they will flip the script. What is left is that all about what you did right now; what they did earlier is forgotten. They will always complain about your behaviour towards them to the people who are near, and you will get into an explanatory mode for the reaction you have recently made. They will make you alone in this way.



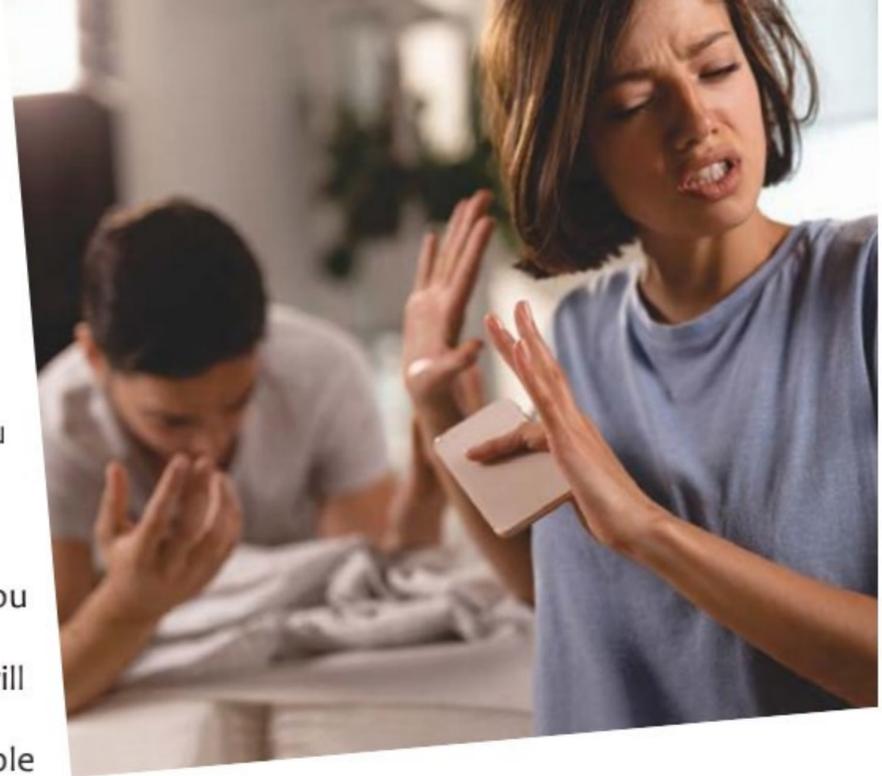
It is advisable that when they give a chance to hurt you, never fall into their trap.

You don't need an apology to validate your feelings!: Don't let them know how they hurt you emotionally; they knew what they were doing. They are aware of their conduct. They might not know 'why' they are hurting, but they knew that they were hurting you. Sad but true: they want to hurt you. They don't have the ability to care. Make sure that you don't need a confession to know that your feeling is true.

Walk Away!: Walking away is the best way to deal with such toxic people. Don't try to fix the perspective of a narcissist. Just pack your bag and leave them because your life will get ruined. Select the space where you can have inner peace. A narcissist is good at ruining your life. They will ruin important occasions. They will treat strangers better than you,

they will lie about you, and they will twist and turn your statements. Narcissists make your life in such a way that you live in survival mode, as you are stressed by the situation which surrounds your whole environment. They will train you in such a way that you will not ask questions to them. They will denigrate you. They will make you alone. You will never be able to show their real face to others. Even if you cry in front of a narcissist, they will never console you. They have no empathy towards you. They get a kind of satisfaction when they hurt your emotional being. The constant stress may lead to a suicidal attempt. Your damage is irrevocable.

So, once you understand them completely, just get out of that toxic relationship. They never change themselves as they firmly believe that they can never be at fault. There is no future with them. It's only disrespect and stress that will ruin your personality.



*When she cries, feel her pain,
Dear father, help! her life is in vain.
She is not crazy, she is abused,
Have you ever seen her soul bruised.
Oh! dear mother, feel her grief,
When she was manipulated and was in disbelief.
The trust in her is what she needs,
She will deal with life and will succeed.
Empathy and trust are what she needs.
Give her comfort and give her peace.
Mental stress is ruining her life.
Give her some space so that she will be on your side.*

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We are not Permanent!!

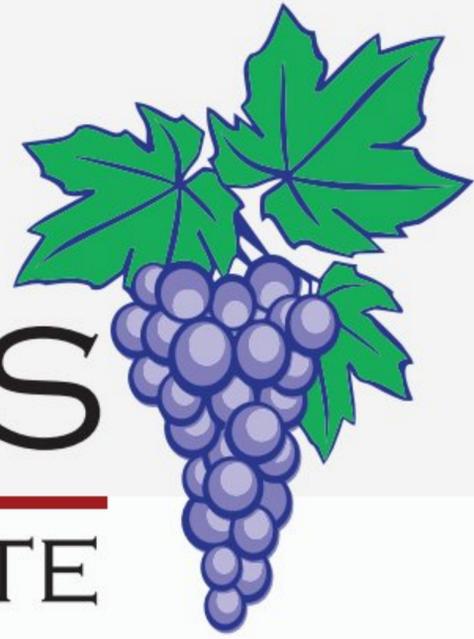
We fight as if we are permanent!
We argue as if we are permanent!
We disagree as if we are permanent!
We impose a bond as if we are permanent!
We slog to save as if we are permanent!
We say next time as if we are permanent!
We live day in day out as if we are permanent!!
We forget to hear the music of our own breath!!!
We ignore the stretching hands of our loved ones!!
We ignore the eye contact of our loved ones!!
We do not give the time to hear the beautiful voice of our loved ones!!
We miss to understand that every passing moment and day passing says we are not permanent!!!
Open your arms to your loved ones!!
Open the two beautiful lips to give a smile!!
Open the mouth to speak kind words!!!
Let you be remembered as a person who was adored , respected and loved by all !!
Life is not Permanent!!!
Keep humming Love You Zindagi...



By Prabha Kumar



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Transforming Women's Health

Dr. Dipak Limbachiya pushing the boundaries in complex gynaecological surgery.



Dr. Dipak Limbachiya
M.D., D.G.O. Endoscopy Specialist
Specialist in Advanced LAP Gynaec
Surgeries & LAP Onco Gynaec Surgeries

Dr. Dipak Limbachiya, an advanced gynae laparoscopy and onco surgeon, has become synonymous with pioneering advancements in onco gynae laparoscopy. Over his illustrious career of more than 24 years, he has significantly impacted the field of gynecological oncology and laparoscopic surgery, establishing an unparalleled track record in handling complicated cases.

Dr. Limbachiya is a strong proponent of enhancing healthcare systems by integrating services and implementing robust technological and operations management optimisation techniques. With innovation and patient care at the core of his practice, he founded Eva Women's Hospital in Ahmedabad. For the last two decades, this premier institution has been dedicated to women's health and wellness, establishing him as a leading figure in this specialized medical domain.

Recognising the transformative potential of laparoscopy in gynaecological surgery early in his career, Dr. Limbachiya pursued an MD and a Diploma in Gynaecology and Obstetrics from GCRI after completing his MBBS. His dedication to mastering and advancing laparoscopic techniques has driven him to continuously push the boundaries of what is possible in gynaecological surgery through laparoscopy. His career is adorned with numerous milestones and achievements, cementing his reputation as a pioneer.

"Our commitment is to provide the highest standard of medical care

using the latest advancements in medical technology. We believe that patients must get the same or even better treatment than they would at any world-class institution when they come to us. The commitment to ensuring better patient outcomes is what has made us a respected and trusted name," says Dr. Limbachiya, adding that the smile on the patient's face after the surgery is their biggest achievement.

Leading The Forefront

Dr. Limbachiya has been at the forefront of introducing and perfecting advanced laparoscopic techniques, ensuring high success rates in treating complex gynaecological conditions such as endometriosis and gynecological cancers. His innovative approach to surgeries has resulted in improved patient outcomes, minimal scarring, reduced pain, and shorter recovery times.

Dr. Limbachiya has received widespread recognition for his pioneering work in gynaecological endoscopy. He was the first to introduce laparoscopic Wertheim's hysterectomy in Ahmedabad and conducted the second-largest series in laparoscopic Wertheim's hysterectomy, significant milestones that transformed gynaecological surgery.

His expertise in performing complex procedures such as the laparoscopic para-aortic lymphadenectomy has set new benchmarks. He developed this surgery and has trained many doctors in it. He has also worked

very hard to develop some surgeries that are not possible to perform in the open method, ensuring a host of benefits for patients.

Vision For The Future

Dr. Limbachiya's dedication to medicine extends beyond his surgical practice. His vision for the future of gynecological surgery is centered on the integration of advanced technology and comprehensive training. He believes in the transformative power of minimally invasive surgery and is committed to promoting its adoption through continuous education and mentorship.

From 2012, Dr. Limbachiya has trained over 1,200 doctors through comprehensive training programmes, significantly contributing to the education and training of the next generation of laparoscopic surgeons.

Says Dr. Limbachiya, "Education and innovation are the pillars of progress in medicine. By sharing our knowledge and expertise, we can ensure that advanced surgical techniques benefit patients everywhere, not just within our own practice. We are committed to building on the success of our training programme and expanding it to ensure more patients can benefit from it."

The training programmes, attended by doctors from prestigious hospitals across India and many other countries such as Kuwait, UAE, Siberia, Africa, Malaysia, the UK, Spain, and Bangladesh, focus on the latest advancements in laparoscopic surgery, including the use of high-tech equipment, enabling doctors

to deliver superior care to their patients. By sharing his expertise, Dr. Limbachiya ensures that the benefits of advanced surgical techniques reach a wider patient base, ultimately enhancing the standard of care in gynecological surgery nationwide.

Dr. Limbachiya has also authored several groundbreaking research papers published in prestigious national and international medical journals. His innovative techniques in the treatment of gynecological malignancies and bowel endometriosis have received recognition worldwide.

Trendsetting Achievement

Notably, his study titled "Vaginal closure before colpotomy with an endo-stapler to prevent tumour spillage in laparoscopic surgery for gynaecological malignancy" and "Bowel Endometriosis Management by Colorectal Resection: Laparoscopic Surgical Technique & Outcome" published in the *Journal of the Society of Laparoscopic & Robotic Surgeons*, have been hailed as pioneering works in the field.

One of his notable achievements is the development of a technique to prevent tumour spillage during surgeries for endometrial and early-stage cervical cancer using endo-staplers. This method has



significantly improved surgical outcomes and patient safety, setting new standards in the management of gynaecological malignancies. His study "Surgico-pathological outcomes and survival in carcinoma body uterus: A retrospective analysis of cases managed by laparoscopic staging surgery in Indian Women," was the first such study from India and only the third from Asia, reaffirming his position as a trendsetter.

His pioneering techniques in the treatment of gynaecological cancers and bowel endometriosis have not only saved lives but also improved the quality of life for many women.

Exceptional Contribution

His exceptional contributions to gynecological surgery have been recognised with numerous awards and accolades. His research has been published in esteemed journals, and his innovative surgical techniques have been widely adopted by the medical community. These recognitions reflect his expertise, dedication, and impact on the field.

His pioneering work, coupled with his dedication to training and mentorship, has significantly advanced the practice of gynaecological surgery. As a leader in this specialised field, Dr. Limbachiya continues to inspire and guide the next generation of surgeons, ensuring that the benefits of advanced laparoscopic techniques reach patients across the globe. His vision and contributions have made a lasting impact on women's health.

Dr. Limbachiya has significantly impacted the field of gynecological oncology and laparoscopic surgery, establishing an unparalleled track record in handling complicated cases.



DISPLAY PICTURE

An open window to your personality.

By Snigdha Jauhari

In this digital age, social media platforms are our virtual canvases on which we paint what we want, acting as windows to the self. A peek through this window can give a fairly good view of a part of our personality.

One such 'open window' is our profile picture. It is to us what whiskers are to a cat! We preen, polish, and publish our virtual existence for the world to see. Our profile pictures thus become the face we present to the world.

A research team at the University of Pennsylvania found that certain personality traits determine what images we use in our DP.

The scientists analysed several thousand Twitter profile photos and ascertained the users' personalities based on the content of their tweets. Such studies have yielded interesting and insightful data. Here, we discuss a different but related aspect of imagery use in DPs.



You would have noticed that many of us change our DP frequently, while some do so only once in a while; and some do not even put up a DP.

There is also a world of difference between the type and nature of pictures people use as DPs. The variety is both interesting and astounding.

Why are there such variations? Of course, as you already know, it has to do with the person – their nature, tendencies, and beliefs. In other words – personality traits.

Glimpse And Gain

Let us have a glimpse and gain some insight into people's personality characteristics.

People Who Change Their DP Frequently: The act of frequently changing one's DP indicates a fair level of adaptability. These people are willing to embrace change, reflecting a flexible approach to life. They are also prone to attention-seeking and validation, craving social approval and engagement, using their profile pictures as a means to achieve likes and comments.

Creativity is yet another indicative trait of people who change their DPs frequently. They enjoy exploring different aesthetics, moods, and themes, showcasing their creative flair and imaginative streak.

On the flip side, insecurity is also associated with frequently changing DPs, indicating underlying insecurities or diffidence. These individuals may struggle with their self-image, hence seeking reassurance through external stimuli. Rapid changing of DPs may also reflect impulsivity, prone to acting on whims and impulsive decision-making.

It's important to note that these personality traits are indicative. Some may have all the traits, while

others may have a few. Regarding how often a DP should be changed; while there are no hard and fast rules, it is generally believed that changing it once every three to four months is reasonable.

People Who Do Not Change Their DP at All (or Very Infrequently):

For them, updating their profile picture is simply not a significant aspect. They are likely to be fully comfortable and confident about who they are, including their appearance in their profile picture. Change may not come easily to them. They value consistency and stability above other things. Privacy concerns are also an important factor – they

ON THE FLIP SIDE, INSECURITY IS ALSO ASSOCIATED WITH FREQUENTLY CHANGING DPS, INDICATING UNDERLYING INSECURITIES OR DIFFIDENCE. RAPID CHANGING OF DPS MAY ALSO REFLECT IMPULSIVITY, PRONE TO ACTING ON WHIMS AND IMPULSIVE DECISION-MAKING.

are cautious about sharing personal information online, including images of themselves. Keeping the same display photo could be a way to maintain a level of anonymity or control over their online presence. These people also have low engagement with social media, not seeing it as a priority.

People Who Do Not Put Up Any Photos on Social Media Platforms:

These people have high privacy concerns. They could be very cautious about sharing any personal information online, possibly due to concerns about privacy, identity theft, and a deep desire to maintain a certain level of anonymity or separation between their personal/offline and professional/online lives. This may also indicate a desire to avoid being judged based on their appearance. These people are normally introverts and feel more comfortable expressing themselves through text rather than images.

Digital Age Trend Setter

Among those who do have a DP, the variety and nature of images used vary tremendously. Here are some slices to munch on:



Nature Lovers: Individuals who set nature scenes or landscapes as their DPs possess an appreciation for beauty, tranquility, and the outdoors. It suggests their environmental awareness. They deeply value harmony and seek serenity. Nature or landscape pictures indicate that they find solace and inspiration in nature. However, excessive use of nature photos may indicate a sense of escapism or detachment from reality. Such individuals are likely to appear disconnected or aloof, preferring and connecting more with things than



people. An overuse of natural imagery also indicates a tendency to escape from reality or social interactions, preferring the solace of nature or fantasy worlds.



Animal Lovers: People who use images of pets or animals as their DPs tend to be nurturing, compassionate, and empathetic. They cherish the bond with their furry, feathery, hoofy, pawy, and whiskery companions. They view animals as companions and sources of joy in their lives. The choice of animal could convey symbolic meanings, such as strength (lion), freedom (bird), and cuteness (squirrel or groundhog), reflecting the individual's values, needs, or aspirations. However, excessive use of these images as DP may indicate escapism or an inability to build relationships with people. Such people may be impatient with humans and their flaws and may be stereotyped as lacking depth or seriousness.

They need to be aware that their DP, if overly focused on animals, may make them appear as 'cutesy' or trivial.



Selfie Lovers: Those who frequently post selfies as their DPs are high on self-expression and confidence. They are comfortable in their own skin and enjoy sharing glimpses of their daily lives. On the positive side, people who use personal photos are likely to be authentic and transparent, preferring to present themselves in different moods and states. They

are more likely to seek and establish ongoing connections with the online community. However, the flip side is that excessive use of selfies or overly curated personal photos may indicate narcissistic or self-absorbed traits. Individuals who predominantly use these images as their DP tend to be vain or focused on their own image.



Group Lovers: Choosing group photos as DPs may indicate a strong emphasis on social connections and belongingness. These individuals value community and enjoy being part of a close-knit group of friends or family. They are extroverts and value their relationships with others. They tend to prioritize inclusivity and teamwork and have a need to be with people. These people are friendly and approachable. However, excessive use of group settings indicates a tendency to subsume personal identity within group identity, possibly indicating issues with asserting individuality and a reliance on external validation. Constantly featuring group photos may indicate a discomfort with individuality or a desire to avoid being alone, potentially reflecting underlying insecurities or dependency issues.

THOSE WHO FREQUENTLY POST SELFIES AS THEIR DPS ARE HIGH ON SELF-EXPRESSION AND CONFIDENCE. THEY ARE COMFORTABLE IN THEIR OWN SKIN AND ENJOY SHARING GLIMPSES OF THEIR DAILY LIVES.



Abstract or Art Lovers: Those who opt for abstract or artistic images as their DPs may have a penchant for creativity and an appreciation for unconventional forms of expression. They enjoy exploring unconventional aesthetics and are drawn to visual symbols and metaphors. They are likely to be abstract thinkers, imaginative, and comfortable with open-ended situations. They most likely have a streak of non-conformity, valuing unique individuality over conformity to societal norms. However, excessive and exclusive use of abstracts may indicate emotional detachment from reality, as abstract art can sometimes be interpreted as disconnected from tangible things. An over-preference for abstract art could suggest a tendency to escape from reality or avoid confronting concrete issues. There's a possibility that some may have an issue with communication or expressing themselves clearly and coherently, and tend to get distracted easily and quickly when focusing on concrete tasks.



Religious-symbol Lovers: Displaying religious imagery as a DP indicates a strong sense of faith and belief. They tend to be guided by moral and ethical principles inherent in their religious teachings. Those who use religious symbols as DPs often prioritise community involvement and feel comfortable actively participating in religious gatherings. They may be resilient enough to cope with life's challenges and setbacks, as they believe in the presence of a higher power guiding

them. However, overuse of religious identity in DPs indicates possible dogmatism, rigidity of beliefs, and intolerance towards differing viewpoints. Such people could be prone to being judgmental and feeling superior.

In certain cases, individuals may use religious symbols as DPs out of fear or anxiety about divine punishment or consequences, which can result in a restrictive or guilt-ridden mindset, hindering personal growth and well-being.



Celebrity Lovers: People who use photos of famous people as their DP show their sense of connection or belonging to a cause or are starry-eyed, aligning themselves with the values and glamour represented by the celebrity.

However, using photos of famous people as one's DP indicates a proclivity for hero-worship and a willingness to accept a 'herd' mindset, overshadowing their own identity or personality. Excessive idolisation of famous people may contribute to unrealistic expectations, lack of authenticity, and questions about self-worth. There could be some underlying insecurity and lack of originality in thinking.



Comic Lovers: People who use comic photos as their DP may have a playful and humorous personality. They enjoy sharing laughter and light-heartedness with their online community. Comic pictures also imply an imaginative and creative element in the individual. These

USING PHOTOS OF FAMOUS PEOPLE AS ONE'S DP INDICATES A PROCLIVITY FOR HERO-WORSHIP AND A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT A 'HERD' MINDSET, OVERSHADOWING THEIR OWN IDENTITY OR PERSONALITY. THERE COULD BE SOME UNDERLYING INSECURITY AND LACK OF ORIGINALITY IN THINKING.

people are likely to have a vivid imagination and enjoy exploring unconventional ideas and concepts. However, excessive use of comic photos may be perceived as immature or frivolous. These people may risk being seen as lacking in seriousness or maturity, potentially undermining their credibility in certain contexts. Those who heavily rely on comic photos as their DP may struggle to express more nuanced or complex aspects of their life.

A study done at Harvard University and the University of Vermont shows that putting up dark, monochromatic images can be a sign of underlying depression. A study of Instagram data revealed that depressed individuals tend to post deeper shades of blue, grey, and dark-coloured pictures on their social platforms. These studies also indicate that each personality type prefers a specific type of profile picture. For example, extroverts put up colourful photos and more group photos. People inclined to neuroticism have a strong tendency not to show faces in photos; even when a face is present, it is often obscured or partially hidden with glasses.

The personality traits mentioned here are indicative. This serves as a guideline and not a personality diagnosis. Once we get to know something about ourselves, it makes good sense to self-reflect and introspect. This involves contemplation and analysis of our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. By engaging in self-reflection and asking probing questions about our values, priorities, and aspirations, we not only understand our DP preference but, more importantly, ourselves, our goals, and our motivations.

We

Empowering SHASIGHT and SHAMUTE

An Initiative by Shahnaz Husain to Support the Underprivileged

Shahnaz Husain has launched the SHASIGHT and SHAMUTE initiative with a steadfast commitment to empowering underprivileged individuals through training and opportunities. This dynamic initiative has been transforming lives for decades.

Upon completion of the courses, Shahnaz Husain personally felicitated the students, presenting them with hampers and goodies to boost their motivation and willpower.



"I hope to kindle a long-term revolution in these skilled and young minds so they can enhance their well-being," said Shahnaz Husain.

Blend In No Way!

Be the boldest bean on the block!

By Aditi Maheshwari

Ah, the human condition. We yearn to be understood, to be loved for who we are, even if “who we are” sometimes involves humming show tunes in public or having a deep and abiding love for interpretive dance with household appliances. But the world, that sly temptress, keeps whispering sweet nothings about fitting in, blending in, and generally becoming a lukewarm cup of instant coffee.

Well, my friend, I say nay! You, with your quirks and eccentricities, are a single-origin, shade-grown, small-batch roast of fabulousness. Don't you dare let the world turn you into a flavourless, mass-produced blend!

**EMBRACE YOUR
INNER BARISTA,
BECAUSE YOU,
MY FRIEND,
ARE BREWING
SOMETHING
SPECIAL.**

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Here's the thing: the world needs your unique flavour. Just imagine a coffee shop where every cup tasted exactly the same. Yawn City, population: Snooze Fest. But walk into a place with a good selection, and suddenly you have options! You can go for the bold, in-your-face espresso, the smooth and comforting latte, or maybe even a quirky seasonal cold brew with lavender and honey.

Just like that coffee shop, the world needs its variety. Be the person who orders the lavender honey cold brew, even if some people raise an eyebrow. Embrace your inner barista, because you, my friend, are brewing something special.

Sure, there will be times when you feel like a lukewarm office pot of burnt grounds. Maybe you're having a bad week, or your boss just gave you a project that sounds about as exciting as watching paint dry (unless, of course, you're secretly passionate about the drying properties of acrylics on different surfaces. No judgement here!).

But even then, don't let the pressure to conform drown out your inner bean. Seek out your recharge station! Find your people, the ones who appreciate your robust personality, even when it's a bit bitter. Maybe it's a friend who laughs at your interpretive dance routine with the toaster (because, honestly, that's pretty impressive). Maybe it's a hobby group that shares your unusual passion for, well, anything! The point is, surround yourself with the people who make you feel like a perfectly brewed cup of joy.

So, the next time you feel the world trying to turn you into a flavourless cup of joe, remember this: You are the barista of your own life. Choose your beans, choose your roast, and brew your own unique blend of awesome. The world needs

your flavour, even if it takes a little getting used to. Besides, who wants to be bored anyway? Now go forth and caffeinate your dreams!

Do Not Negotiate Who You Are!

In the grand café of life, we all start as raw beans—unroasted, unfiltered, and sometimes a little bitter. Yet, as we journey through the steamy processes of existence, we become the finely brewed individuals we were always meant to be. But

ACCEPT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM LIKE A FRESH GRIND—FINE ENOUGH TO BRING OUT YOUR BEST, BUT NOT SO FINE THAT YOU LOSE YOUR ESSENCE. IF SOMEONE'S CRITICISM FEELS MORE LIKE A BURR GRINDER SET TO "OBLITERATE," IT'S PROBABLY TIME TO STEP AWAY FROM THAT PARTICULAR COFFEE CRITIC.

beware, my caffeinated comrades, for there are those who will try to dilute your essence. Let's dive into why you should never negotiate who you are, all through the lens of our beloved beverage, coffee.

Espresso Yourself!

Picture this: you're a bold, unapologetic espresso shot. You're not everyone's cup of tea (or should I say, mug of coffee), but that's okay. Some folks may want to add sugar, cream, or even dilute you with water. But remember, an espresso that's trying to be a latte just ends up being a confused cappuccino with identity issues.

You're robust and concentrated, and your flavour is intense. Embrace it! Don't let anyone make you feel like you need to be more palatable. If someone wants decaf, they can go find it elsewhere. You're here to be espresso, not a half-caff caramel macchiato with extra whip.

The Filtered Friend!

We all have that one friend who is the human equivalent of a French press—deliberate, complex, and sometimes a bit high-maintenance. But that's what makes them unique. If they tried to make instant coffee for the sake of convenience, they'd lose their rich depth and intricate layers. Being your authentic self might mean a little extra effort or a longer brewing time, but it's worth it.

Your richness, your complexity, that's what makes you, you. Don't filter out your quirks just because someone else prefers their coffee (and their people) instant and uncomplicated.

Grounds for Growth!

Even the best coffee beans need a bit of grinding to become the perfect cup. Personal growth can feel like being put through a grinder, but it's essential. However, there's a difference between grinding for growth and being ground down by others. The former makes



you stronger and more flavourful; the latter just leaves you feeling like someone's leftover grounds.

Accept constructive criticism like a fresh grind—fine enough to bring out your best, but not so fine that you lose your essence. If someone's criticism feels more like a burr grinder set to "obliterate," it's probably time to step away from that particular coffee critic.

Latte Love Yourself!

A latte without coffee is just hot milk—comforting, perhaps, but lacking the kick that makes it memorable. Likewise, if you strip away your unique qualities to fit in, you end up bland and forgettable. The froth and foam of life are delightful, but it's the coffee that gives it substance.

Don't be afraid to love yourself as you are. Add a little syrup if you like, top yourself with some whipped cream if that's your style, but never lose sight of the coffee at your core. You're the essential ingredient in



your own life story, so brew yourself up proudly.

Cold Brew And Cool Attitude!

In the world of hot coffee, the cold brew stands out. It's smooth, strong, and refreshingly different. It takes longer to make and requires patience, but the result is worth it. Being true to yourself can sometimes

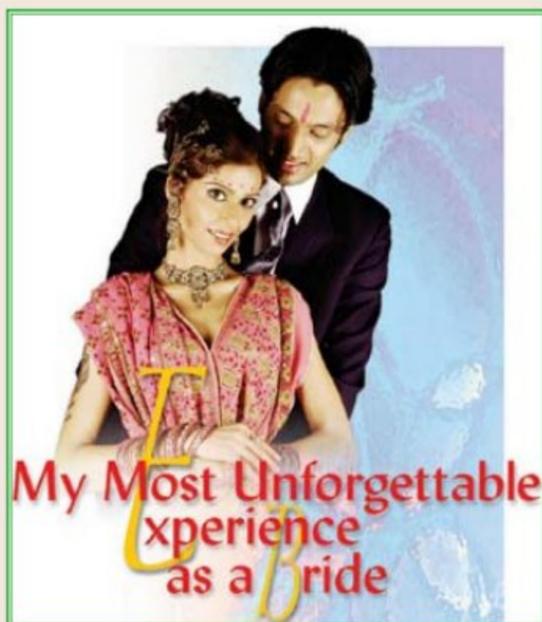
feel like you're out of sync with the rapid-fire espresso shots around you, but that's okay. Your slow-brewed charm will attract the right aficionados. Stay cool, and don't rush your process. Just because others are heating things up doesn't mean you have to. Your laid-back, chilled approach can be just as effective, if not more so.

The Final Sip!

Life's too short to be a lukewarm cup of joe. Be bold, be robust, and don't water yourself down for anyone. Whether you're a strong espresso, a complex French press, or a cool cold brew, remember: the world needs all kinds of coffee to keep it interesting. So, brew yourself to perfection and savour every drop of your unique flavour.

Remember, my fellow beans, you're the coffee, not the cup. Don't let anyone try to change your blend. Espresso yourself, love your latte and always stay true to your brew. Cheers!

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MOMZILLA

I was so excited for my wedding. My husband and I were in love so I wanted the wedding to be perfect. But despite all the planning and everything down to the minute, it's hard to control the people. We had invited close friends and family so it wouldn't be a chaotic event. Both of our mothers didn't get along with each other. It wasn't even like they hated their child's

future spouses, but just hated each other. So, throughout the wedding prep, my mother would be more concerned with her saree than helping me find mine because she wanted to upstage my mother-in-law. Then, the day before the wedding, my mother-in-law invited me out for lunch to ease my nerves and have a little chat before the big day. At the wedding, both of them did not speak to each other and the guests picked up on the weird tension. They even ruined our family pictures with their grumpy faces. I just wish they had prioritised their children's happiness on their big day and put their quibble aside for one day.

-Kanchan Mhatre

BURGER AND FRIES

When I got married to my husband, we were still in the awkward phase. It was an arranged marriage a few years ago. On the first night after the wedding, we were escorted to our room and

people were giggling. It was so awkward as we sat there, with people outside. Instead of any formality, we talked all night and became friends. We hadn't gotten any quality time. So, we were eager to talk to each other and be intimate.

To break the ice, my husband asked about my favourite food. Then we talked about all our favourite restaurants and foods in the city. It was exciting to step into a marriage with someone who shares similar interests. Then we decided to watch a movie together and cuddle in bed. We realised that all the food talk had made us hungry. We craved some burgers and fries and wanted to have good junk food. So we ordered online. Since family members were right outside, we went to our room's balcony and the delivery guy put the order in a bucket as we pulled it up with a rope. It was funny and we bonded so well.

-Ranjana Srivastava



Airport Adventures

Near misses and lessons learned. By Rama Kashyap

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After the security check at the airport, while I was waiting to pick up my handbag and mobile from the tray, my phone kept ringing incessantly. Without even looking at the screen, I knew the caller was none other than my husband. That was the time when I had started travelling solo by air after the birth of my grandchild. I can't say I have become a frequent flyer now, but yes, over the past one-and-a-half years, I must have made a dozen solo trips between Delhi and Chandigarh.

My husband is more relaxed now, but earlier he used to be quite anxious whenever I had to travel singly. He would drop me at the Chandigarh airport and wait till I entered the gate. He would call me at least four times till I finally boarded the aeroplane. Coming back to my story, I was rushing towards the boarding gate at IGI Airport when my phone rang yet again. As expected, my concerned husband was on the line. I rummaged through my handbag to retrieve my phone. In the hurry and flurry, I didn't realise something had slipped out until a passerby pointed it out. Guess

what! It was my boarding pass. Thank God, I was saved from the harassment and embarrassment. Yet again, I was lucky to have escaped huge botheration when I messed up at the airport at another time. However, this time I was not alone but travelling with my husband.

After collecting the check-in baggage from the carousel, the baggage conveyor belt at the Delhi airport, my hubby was in no mood to immediately rush out of the airport. The Delhi-Chandigarh flight time is barely thirty-five minutes, but it takes more than an hour in maddening traffic to reach the destination from the airport. Thus, as luck would have it, we decided to have a cup of tea in the baggage reclaim area before leaving. While we were merely sipping tea, my husband got a call from an unknown number. Immediately, he got up, checked the suitcase, and started towing it towards the conveyor belt, just opposite the café. Within two minutes, he was back after exchanging the baggage with an elderly couple who was waiting for their suitcase.

He had to apologise for my stupidity, for I was the one responsible for the faux pas. Too engrossed chatting on my mobile to check the ribbon tied on its handle to mark our baggage, I picked up someone else's suitcase of the same make, size, and colour. Of course, I felt embarrassed, but I shudder to think of the scenario if we had left the airport immediately after collecting the luggage.

Imagine discovering the blunder at the venue before getting ready for the function! It was sheer luck that the old couple was vigilant and we were still around so that the bags could be exchanged without much of a hassle within no time. A crisis averted!

I can merrily end with a cheerful note: 'All's well that ends well.' However, this doesn't undermine the need to be careful and alert. In Hindi, they say 'Savdhani hati, durghatna ghati', implying the moment you stop being careful and alert, you are likely to meet with an accident. Becoming wiser after two near misses, I resolved to never let my guard down at the airport.

We

Curlicious Or Cancerous

Hidden threats in your waves
of beauty. By Catherine Karthik

“WHEN YOUR SOFT
WELCOMING WERE
SAID, THIS CURL WAS
WAVING ON YOUR

FOR HEAD.” Newspapers & Magazines <http://telegram.me/PaperMagazine>
- THOMAS HARDY.

India, known for its diversity, boasts many unique cultures and traditions. Ancient Indian beauty standards for hair celebrate long, thick, black hair that is straight, wavy, or curly. Hair is considered one of the greatest beauty assets and is regarded as a symbol of spirituality and purity in our culture. Our ancient paintings and sculptures embody curly-haired images, and Greece celebrated and embraced the beauty of curls. The Greek gods and goddesses are often portrayed with curly hair.

In the 16th century, curly wigs were a fancy accessory for the elite in France. However, during the British era in India, straight hair became associated with elegance and sophistication. Despite 60 per cent of the world's population having curly hair, many Indians are obsessed with straight hair. From famous cricketers and celebrities to working women, homemakers, and students, the desire for straight hair is perpetual.



The Curly Hair Traits

India is not devoid of curly-haired celebrities and models who embrace and flaunt their natural curls. Natural curly locks and waves are currently trending in India. Our hair type and texture are determined by our genetics, with curly hair being a dominant gene inherited from one of the parents. If you have curly hair, you are likely to have a Carpe Diem attitude, and you are courageous, outspoken, spontaneous, fun-loving, dynamic, expressive, bubbly, intuitive, and warm.

Straightened Hair Comes with A Cost

Most of us dream of having straight and silky hair because it is easy to maintain and gives a prim and proper appearance. If you are naturally gifted with straight hair, you may be fortunate. However, trying to straighten hair with harsh chemicals, while providing instant results, can cause irreparable damage. Besides causing dryness, hair loss, split ends, and an itchy scalp, it can also lead to cancer. A study published in the International Journal of Cancer revealed that regular use of hair straighteners increases the likelihood of developing breast cancer by 30 per cent, although it wasn't the sole factor contributing to the increased risk. Formaldehyde, a known carcinogen present in hair straightening treatments, poses

health hazards such as respiratory difficulties, irritation of the nose, eyes, and scalp, and ultimately cancer.

Hair straightening in the long run can lead to hair extensions due to its side effects of brittle hair and hair loss. Chemical relaxers used for straightening hair can increase the risk of cicatricial alopecia. The hair straighteners market has witnessed significant progress and is expected to continue growing, driven by global demand. Many YouTube influencers who post vlogs on their chemically treated straightened hair flaunt them for a short duration before posting vlogs about hair extensions, their costs, and procedures. The shocking part is the amount of hair loss incurred after chemical straightening. Any middle-aged woman who fears

HAIRSTYLES BOOST CONFIDENCE AND ENHANCE ONE'S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE. THEY ARE PART OF OUR IDENTITY AND BEAUTY QUOTIENT. IF YOU PREFER TO STRAIGHTEN YOUR HAIR, CONSIDER LESS DAMAGING, SAFE OPTIONS LIKE BLOWOUTS, KERATIN TREATMENTS, STRAIGHTENING BRUSHES, HOT COMBS, AND STRAIGHTENING IRONS.

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experimenting with her hair would be satisfied to have dense, natural hair rather than straightened, thin, and brittle hair. Curly-haired people may have been nicknamed many times, but anything that stands out is attractive and catches many eyes.

The Proud Curly-Haired Beauties

Natural curly locks and waves are trending in India. Let's hear from some chic and curlicious celebrities of India about their curly locks:

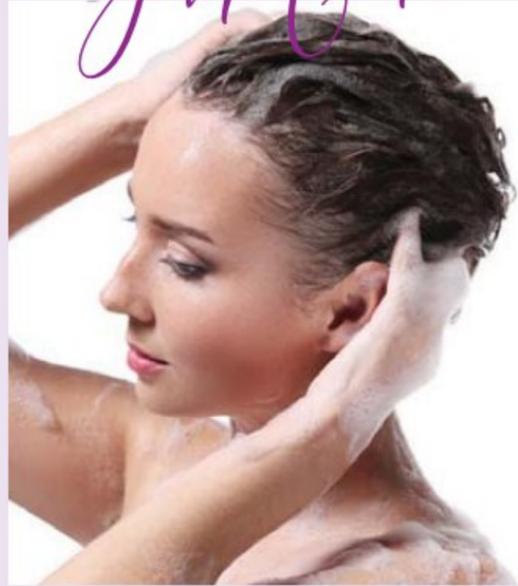
Sanya Malhotra: "I wholeheartedly accept the way I am. I love my curly hair and that's what I promote."

Anupama Parameswaran: "I am proud of my curly hair but have to find extra time for it."

Seerat Kapoor: "Curly, wavy, or straight hair—embrace what you are blessed with."

Taapsee Pannu: "Curly hair demands a lot of love, care, and attention." Her curly hair mantra is

Prep Your Curl



- Wash your hair only when needed.
- Moisturise your hair and maintain a healthy scalp.
- Shield your hair from the sun and avoid heat styling.
- Detangle your hair and trim split ends.
- Maintain a protein-rich diet.

to oil the hair at least twice a week, use regular hair masks, and let hair air dry.

Sai Pallavi, Kangana Ranaut, Malavika Nair, and Nithya Menen are a few other natural beauties who celebrate the uniqueness of their curly hair.

Is Hair Straightening a Complete No-No?

Hairstyles boost confidence and enhance one's physical appearance. They are part of our identity and beauty quotient. We all like to try new hairstyles. If you prefer to straighten your hair, consider less damaging, safe options like blowouts, keratin treatments, rollers, straightening brushes, hot combs, and straightening irons. Whatever method you choose, be sure to use heat-protectant products to reduce the damage.

Let's embrace our natural beauty and stay healthy and happy. Whatever your hair type, it's essential to maintain and groom it well.

After all, "The hair is the richest ornament of a woman."

- Martin Luther King. **We**

Skyborne *Symphonies*

Watching the monsoon clouds. By Renuka Krishnaraja

It is that time of the year again when the skies are overcast with fifty shades of grey. Whether they bring in rains or not is a different matter all in all, but apparently the boundless vault has turned out to be cloudy and dramatic for the most part these days.

The unusual and chaotic cloud formations are spectacular to witness and add an element of

mystery, and also induce diverse feelings. Since the dawn of time, such compelling monsoon landscapes have inspired several artists, poets, nature enthusiasts, and various other creative individuals.

Well, I am the kind of person who stares up at the sky with awe to look at the clouds drifting along with the winds and let the mind wander while completely losing track of time. The vast sky seems like an ever-evolving canvas of floating shapes that filters the light and switches colours. How phenomenal!

Watching the clouds in the sky can be done in a 'dreamy' or in a 'mindful' way. To me, a combination of both works best. Observing the contrast and distinct shapes

WELL, I AM THE KIND OF PERSON WHO STARES UP AT THE SKY WITH AWE TO LOOK AT THE CLOUDS DRIFTING ALONG WITH THE WINDS AND LET THE MIND WANDER WHILE COMPLETELY LOSING TRACK OF TIME. THE VAST SKY SEEMS LIKE AN EVER-EVOLVING CANVAS.

of clouds is believed to promote relaxation, education, imagination, and creativity. Clouds are like magic shows in the sky. They are endlessly rolling, moving, appearing, and disappearing. At times, they are buttery white and wispy, but can also turn gloomy, dark, brooding, threatening, and ominous every now and then, especially during the monsoon season. Yet, they are endlessly fascinating to say the least.

Although there is no proper known approach for cloud watching, one has to dedicate some time for it. First of all, you need to sit back and make yourself comfortable somewhere, either by a window or on the rooftop, or even better, just lie down flat on a lawn and relax. Then you can see and engage in the sheer beauty of Mother Nature for a moment before letting it all go.

On overcast days, low-level Stratus clouds form a continuous grey layer over the sky which is excellent for cloud watching. Since clouds are made up of condensed water droplets, the fragments within them can move at different speeds and directions, so their shapes are constantly changing. Monsoon clouds are harbingers of hope in the form of rains. They are powerful and can transform the surrounding atmosphere as well as the inner mood all at once. Indulging in them can be much more than a pastime of watching the fluffy grey and white floating masses in the sky.

What is needed this season is a first-hand experience in watching the monsoon clouds, which can become a gratifying leisure activity.

Interestingly, the other day during a lazy afternoon, various Facebook characters came to mind – the various kinds of Facebook users, from photo factories to incognitos.

As the name suggests, photo factories are those who share an endless stream of pictures, with hardly any pause – not just during the day but also at night. This may include monotonous selfies, images from travels, social functions, and more, with the list never-ending. They soon begin to irk too, and yes, I have been one of them, though luckily not anymore.

Ceaseless Opinions

Then there are philosopher friends, who always share their thoughts for the day or some of the most inspiring quotes or proverbs that often win our hearts. For them, it's a ritual. I admire one of my New Zealand-based friends for playing this character every single day, and like me, many encourage him to keep sharing more, as who doesn't look forward to words of motivation?

But if there are those who try to roll out motivation, there are also those who invite controversies with their blunt comments on topics like religion and politics. Take a look at any such post; the chain of responses from other users will never end.

Personal concerns, feelings, and emotions are also brought out by many. While some indirectly express their thoughts, some are candid enough – not sparing their colleague or even neighbour – though it must surely let the angry steam fly out of their heads.

Not to forget, the meteorologists – our weather reporters, who never forget to report, “it's raining,” “it's so hot,” “it's too cold” – some with pictures and videos, some also with what food and drinks they are enjoying along. Most interesting, however, are the incognitos – they may be on your friend list for ages, but you will never realise it until you meet them somewhere – who remind you of almost every picture and status you've shared, as if they maintain a record. I have come across



WHAT AN IRONY: THE MAJORITY OF US ARE LEAST INTERESTED IN TALKING TO THE PERSON SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO US, BUT ALWAYS MORE KEEN TO CHAT WITH SOMEONE THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY. EVEN IF WE ARE TOGETHER WE ARE NOT TOGETHER.

many of them, mostly my uncles and aunts – most of whose accounts are even without a picture of their own. They are truly the ones who keep their eyes on others' profiles without passing any comments or giving likes. This is why I often compare them to those very neighbours who are always there to catch a glimpse of guests arriving at the door next door, though secretly through their windows or doors.

Though it's fun to be on various social media platforms, and they may have connected us electronically despite being oceans away from each other, they have also disconnected us in reality. Even if we are together, we are not together – talk of a family within the same home, or friends

out for dinner, for instance. What an irony: the majority of us are least interested in talking to the person sitting right next to us, but always more keen to chat with someone thousands of miles away. The story is no different for the individual sitting thousands of miles away. Imagine the scene where most of us stay glued to our phones; it says it all. Does it not also keep us detached from our present?

Making Face-to-Face Connections

And isn't this breaking our real bonding with each other, especially with those with whom we live? And hasn't this planted loneliness among us, despite many people around? Until our real bonds are strong with those around us, how can we expect to open up about the stress we may be going through? How can someone electronically ever offer us a real shoulder to rely on when sincerely needed? No wonder it has paved the way for anxiety, depression, and even suicides across the globe. But those who cultivate real-life bonds are, of course, better able to cope and help themselves.

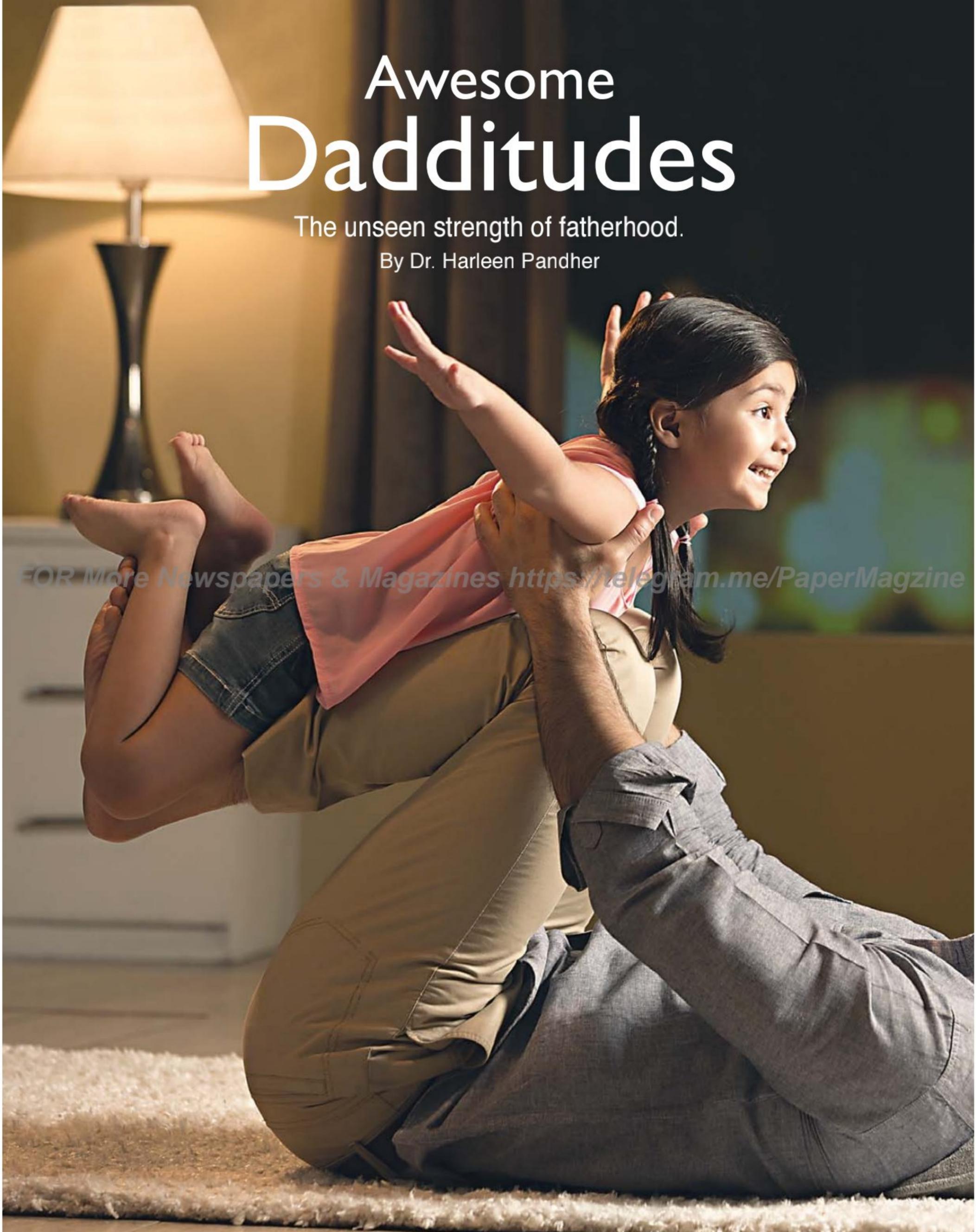
Thankfully, as there's light at the end of the tunnel, why not give up our addiction and realise the power of face-to-face communication? There's a reason why it has been said: “Excess of everything is bad!” **We**

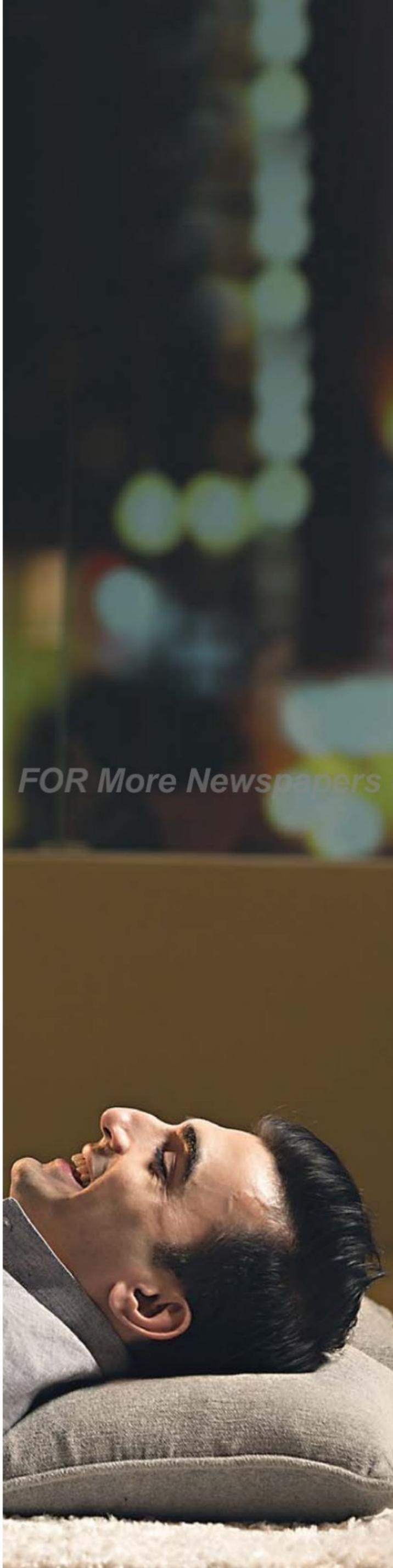
Awesome Dadditudes

The unseen strength of fatherhood.

By Dr. Harleen Pandher

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I was passing by a shop. A teenaged daughter was insisting her father on buying something for her. Her father was attending to the whole situation patiently. At that moment, when the girl was throwing tantrums, a passerby commented... "PAPA KI PARI."

I looked back and he was gone. I kept thinking about it for a long time. Are only the girls favourable to their fathers and not the boys? But, one thing is sure: a daddy or a papa plays a vital role in shaping one's personality. There are instances where there was a dearth of this relationship, maybe due to divorce or death, and the children suffered. Their confidence got a dent. Their self-esteem became low.

It is not that mothers do not have importance, but both the genders have their own roles, which are irreplaceable for the child's development.

The part becomes all the more pivotal when a father tells his child, when he is ready to plunge into the journey of life, that he's always present on his side. A young boy of class 10th was learning to drive, and his father, sitting by his side, tells him while he was in a dilemma of crossing the road as somebody was incessantly honking from behind. His father said at that time, "Don't worry... Your father is sitting by you... *Main baitha...parvah naa kar*. Drive confidently." (It means I'm sitting by your side. You need not worry; instead, keep your spirits high.) These words cast a magic spell upon the child. His confidence elevates. And these words hold all the more importance when they come from a father's side.

Abhinav Bindra, a renowned name in shooting. One day, when his father came to his house, Abhinav had kept an apple on the head of his servant and was hitting really nice shots. From there, his father picked up the career of his son and created a massive replica of a shooting range for his son's sake so that he could practise right and make a mark for himself. By God's grace, he actually excelled in the field. It was a father's

A DADDY OR A PAPA PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN SHAPING ONE'S PERSONALITY. THE PART BECOMES ALL THE MORE PIVOTAL WHEN A FATHER TELLS HIS CHILD, WHEN HE IS READY TO PLUNGE INTO THE JOURNEY OF LIFE, THAT HE'S ALWAYS PRESENT ON HIS SIDE.

perception that made him a star. We are talking about just one example. There may be numerous instances like this.

Incomparable Asset

Mothers are also loving and sensible, but the feeling of security a child gets from his father is incomparable. Besides this, a father is the head of the family. Usually, a question is asked in the subject of Social Studies: who is the head of the family? And, instantly comes the reply... A Father is the head of the family. That important place has been his position since the time from the traditional mindset to modern times. But, the status is the same. The only difference is that fathers are more friendly now compared to earlier times. But, in the majority of the houses, and especially in rural settings, there remains a communication gap between sons and fathers. The sons are a little hesitant to converse with their parents freely.

When a person reaches heights in one's life, there is surely someone behind the person, and the things become all the more meaningful when that special man is your "father." As a (former) Missouri governor re-elected by the highest margin since the Civil War, and a former United States senator, John Ashcroft has confronted some of the most complex and difficult issues



facing families, communities, and churches. He's found that the simple, yet profound, advice from his father has prepared him for the challenges he has encountered each day—not just as a United States senator, but as a husband, father, friend, and citizen. Nothing passed from a father to his son is as significant as the life lessons he conveys with his words and with his actions. Senator John Ashcroft received a rich legacy of lessons—essential and eternal lessons—from his father. A wise, gentle, and generous man, Robert Ashcroft knew the importance of character, honesty, integrity, and faith and was creative and diligent in instilling these traits in his children. The track that these letters provided was impeccable.

The same happened with Deepika Padukone. There are letters written by her father for his beloved daughters. The letters are really motivating and are a true insight into the variegated aspects of life. Following her father's footsteps, she is a renowned personality today. One name among them is Michelle Obama. Her lineage was not from a very influential background. But it was her father's vision that he wanted to send her to high school. With meagre resources, he managed her high schooling and eventually she carved a niche for herself.



A FATHER IS THE HEAD OF THE FAMILY. THAT IMPORTANT PLACE HAS BEEN POSITION SINCE THE TIME FROM THE TRADITIONAL MINDSET TO MODERN TIMES. BUT, THE STATUS IS THE SAME. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT FATHERS ARE MORE FRIENDLY NOW COMPARED TO EARLIER TIMES.

Studies have shown that when fathers are affectionate and supportive, it greatly affects a child's cognitive and social development. It also instils an overall sense of well-being and self-confidence. In another study by Peter G. Gray, he concluded that fathers are acknowledged as important influencers on children in every society. What fathers do varies with respect to social context, which in turn shapes the variable impacts that fathers have on their children.

Fortunate are those children, and grownups too, who get their father's love and affection because that is immensely vital for the growth of children.

The papas and daddies who are far off from their kiddos for any reason should strive to develop a connection, especially throughout their life, but prominently when they are adolescents. That is the time when teenagers are struggling with their new physical and mental needs and demand the support of their family a lot, particularly of father.

It is very important, even if there are any kind of differences between the partners, to shoo them away and at least put in an effort to be together. If the tunings are pathetic, pretend for the children's sake. Still, a father is a father, and his role is incomparable. Life is awesome with the best dadditudes. **We**

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JOURNEY OF CHOICES

A new dimension in live-in relationships. By K Ram Mohan Rao

“What? Did you tell your daddy about our ‘living together thing’?” Mrudula was astonished. The coffee cup in her hand fell and made a loud noise, showing how disturbed she was. The noise caused everyone around to turn and stare at them. The office boy came running.

“It’s okay, ma’am. I will clean. Another cup of coffee...?”

Mrudula ignored him and pulled Pradeep by the hand, saying, “Come. Let’s go out and talk.” He drew back his hand and said, “Let me finish this coffee.”

Her anger reached its peak. She pulled the cup from his hand hard and was about to throw it down, but changed her mind and handed it to the boy. Pradeep followed her

with a confused look as everyone glared at him, much to his dismay. The same was the case with Mrudula.

After both of them went into the corridor and ensured no one was around, Mrudula asked angrily, “Tell me now. Did you really tell your daddy about our plans to live together?”

“Yes. Dad is my best friend. That’s why I tell him everything.”

“No matter how good a friend he is, is it wise to discuss such matters with your father?” She held her head in grief.

“There is nothing like that between us. My dad used to tell me about his foolish acts, like giving love letters to beautiful girls in his class and about the teachers who punished him in his school days. Not only this, he shares many secrets with me. That’s why I don’t hide anything from my father.”

“So you and your father have no secrets? You might have told him about our love affair. When did you tell him?”

“Three years ago. That’s... the day you expressed your love.”

“Your father didn’t say anything?”

“Why not? Let me tell you in his own words.

“You did a good job. In those days when I was not mentally mature, I used to pretend to be a love bug. But you took the right decision at the right time and at the right age. Go ahead.’ Not only that, he used to inquire about our love occasionally.”

“Oh...! Really?” Mrudula said excitedly.

Then she raised another question.

“What did he say about our ‘live-in relationship’?”

“Listen to his own words...”

“What...? Living together...? I came to know about it recently. It is known that it started in

the big cities of our country. But I did not expect that it would enter our house. Since both of you are well-educated and intelligent, I hope you have made the right decision. For me,

“What? Did you tell your daddy about our ‘living together thing’?” Mrudula was astonished.



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it's okay. But don't reveal this matter to your mother. I will convey it to her slowly.' This was the reply," said Pradeep.

"Your father is not educated much. How is his thinking so forward? I don't understand."

"It is true that he has not even completed the tenth standard. But when he grew up, he realised the value of education. That's when he changed a lot. TV changed him completely. He doesn't sit and watch movies and serials on TV. He always watches BBC News, NDTV Channel, Discovery Channel, National Geographic, etc. He has mastered English because of years of watching. During the election, he used to listen to the analysis of people like Pranay Roy with interest."

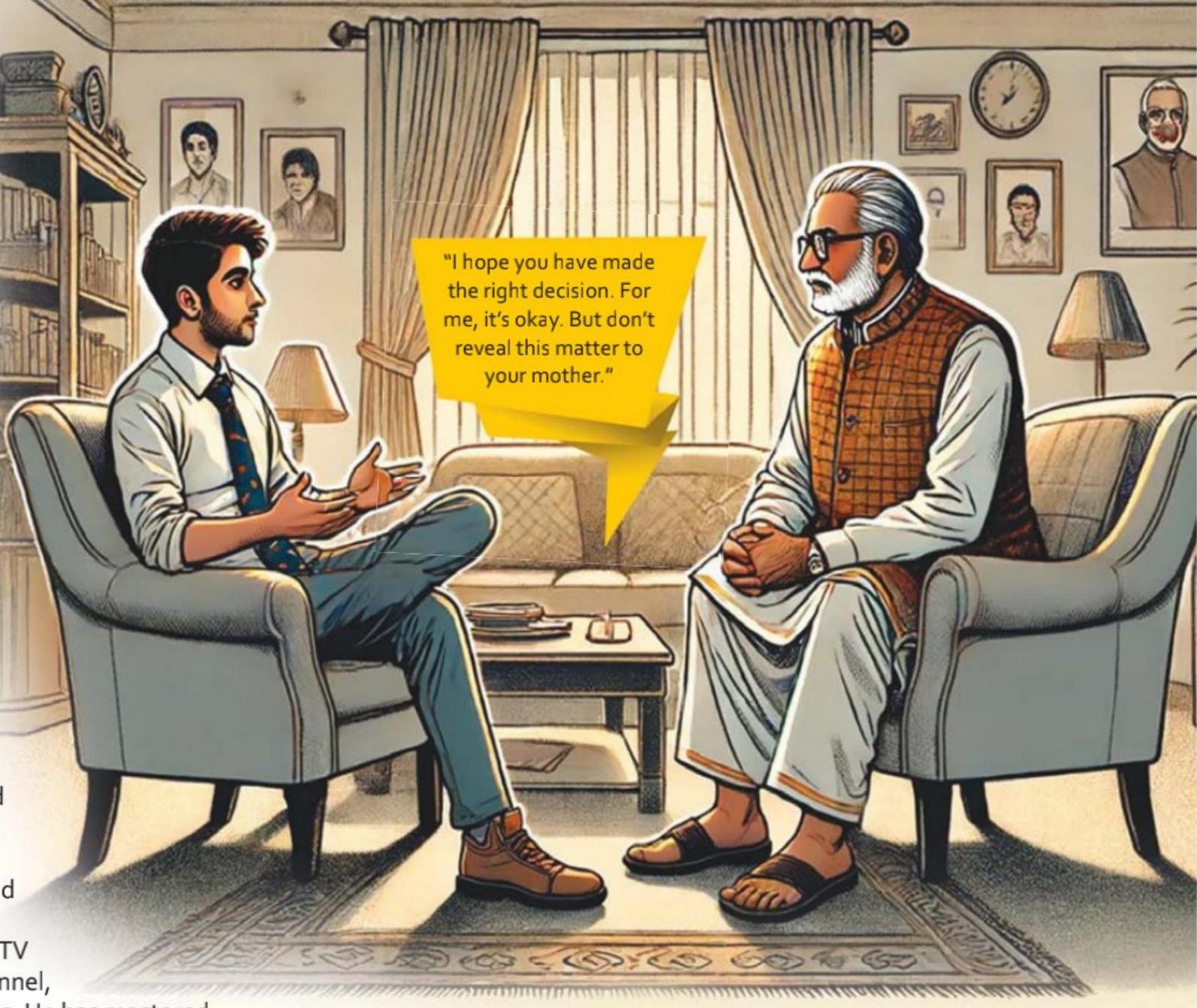
She congratulated him, saying, "Wow, that's great."

*** **

Pradeep was born and brought up in a village in Andhra Pradesh, and Mrudula was raised in Mumbai. They met each other five years ago when they both joined the same office in Bangalore. Pradeep fell in love with her at first sight but was disappointed, thinking his love would not bear fruit. Mrudula was very fast-paced, while Pradeep was the opposite.

Colleagues of Pradeep saw his innocence and made fun of him. Ragging, which he avoided while studying engineering, was not missed here. Even the girls used to crack jokes and laugh at him. But he used to smile and walk away. Gradually, everyone stopped making fun of him. Only then, his extraordinary intelligence and unique skills were revealed. Within a year of his entry into the office, everyone started recognising him. Although he was not smart at first, he gradually became smart in every way. Until then, Mrudula's attention did not fall on him. She started admiring him and fell in love with him within a short period. While Pradeep was hoping that the day of their marriage was nearing, Mrudula dropped the bomb, suggesting 'living together'.

"I know a little about this concept. But do tell me in detail," he asked in a dull tone. She started saying excitedly, "Nowadays we see many love marriages. Couples love each other deeply and get married. After



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some time, they break up within a short period. Ego clashes, lack of mutual understanding, etc., may be some of the reasons. Many problems arise in family life. Isn't it difficult when those problems come after marriage?

They can't lead a family life with such problems. That's why this Western concept of 'living together' lures many people in our country. The concept is to stay together for some years and then get married. If they feel that they are not compatible, they simply break up. I think this method is the best," said Mrudula.

"Do we need it, actually? We both have a good understanding, right? Even if you don't adjust, I will. Then there will be no problems. Think about it. Leave this idea," he tried to persuade. But she did not back down.

"It's not as easy as you think. Everything does not go smoothly. Many unexpected problems may arise. For example, even in the bedroom..." she stopped.

"So, everything without marriage...? Sex...?" He was surprised.

"Yes," she replied, a little shy.

"I'm confused. It's better to drop the idea," said Pradeep. But Mrudula stood by her decision and started convincing him. Finally, Pradeep had to agree.

*** **

After ten days... "Good news. I found a single-bedroom apartment in a gorgeous gated community. We are very lucky. I can't tell you how good it is!" said Mrudula excitedly. Pradeep's face did not lit up when he heard the news.

"A single-bedroom flat? How would it fit?" he said openly.

"Why not? My dear Buddoo... a single-bedroom flat is not just a room. There is also a hall and kitchen," she said with a smile on her lips.

"I know that. But my mom and dad need a bedroom too, right? So search for a two-bedroom flat."

"Mom and dad? What? Why would they be with us?" Her face turned white.

"Why not? I told you before. Didn't I? After marriage, we have to keep my mother and father with us."

"But... that's after marriage, isn't it?" She said, exasperated.

"You should have thought of this already. How come you just ignored it? Family means simply husband and wife? 'Compatibility', which you mentioned, should be with my parents and your parents too, right?"

"Okay. Leave your parents as they are not going to stay with us. But you have to think of my parents as they stay with us. You should check the compatibility with them too. You may have problems with them or they may have problems with you. Why does everyone think that marriage is just a relationship between husband and wife? Why don't



The average Indian woman in Mrudula woke up in the process of thinking.

After that, she came to Pradeep and said, "I didn't expect this thing to be so complicated until you explained it. Let's get married," she said slowly. Pradeep felt it was like a shower of flowers on his head. Thinking 'this good news should be conveyed to my father immediately', he took Mrudula close and kissed her forehead affectionately.

they understand that marriage is a union of two families?" said Pradeep convincingly. Mrudula couldn't utter a single word. She was speechless for some time.

He told himself with a smile on his face, 'It seems that the plan of my father is working well.' Without expressing his feelings, he said, "Okay. Think about this and let me know your decision," and left.

Mrudula was lost in thought. She realised how awkward it would be to lead a family life without marriage in the presence of her would-be in-laws. 'Shit ... how is this possible? Without getting married, how can we walk into the bedroom and shut the doors in front of them?' The average Indian woman in Mrudula woke up in the process of thinking. Even though she was influenced by the Western trend, orthodox feelings were overflowing in her. She started thinking from Pradeep's point of view.

She also felt that all the things he said were worth considering. She thought that there was no point in insisting on 'living together'. After much deliberation, even after an hour, no decision could be reached in favour of living together. After that, she came to Pradeep and said, "I didn't expect this thing to be so complicated until you explained it. Let's get married," she said slowly.

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We



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Unmute Yourself

Find Your Authentic Voice!

By Aditi Maheshwari

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In a world where noise often drowns out meaning, finding your authentic voice is like discovering a hidden symphony within—a melody uniquely yours, waiting to be heard. This journey is more than a quest for personal truth; it's a profound adventure of self-discovery and fearless expression. Here's how to tune into your inner music and let your genuine voice resonate.

Imagine standing in front of a grand piano, each key representing a facet of your identity. Authenticity is the harmonious blend of these notes, creating a sound that is unmistakably you. It's not about perfection or conforming to an external standard but embracing the raw, unfiltered essence of who you are.

Setting the Stage

Dance with Self-Reflection:

Picture yourself in a tranquil garden, journaling beneath a wise old tree. This garden is your mind, and the tree, your soul. As you write, let the words flow without judgment. Allow your thoughts and emotions to pour onto the pages, revealing patterns and truths that lie beneath the surface. This is where the seeds of your authentic voice are sown.

The Courage to Be Vulnerable:

Vulnerability is like standing on a cliff, ready to leap into the unknown. It's terrifying but exhilarating. When you open up about your fears, failures, and dreams, you invite others into your world, forging connections that are deep and genuine. Your authentic voice thrives in this space of raw honesty.

Mindfulness: The Silent Conductor:

Imagine a serene beach, waves gently lapping at your feet. Practicing mindfulness is like tuning into the rhythm of these waves, staying present and aware. Techniques such as meditation and deep breathing keep you grounded, allowing your true self to emerge from the depths of your being.

Echoes of Feedback:

Engage with those who know you well—friends, mentors, or trusted colleagues. Their feedback is like echoes in a canyon, reflecting aspects of your voice you might not fully hear. This constructive feedback helps refine your melody, ensuring it's not only true but also harmonious.

Breaking Free from Conformity:

Visualise yourself in a bustling market, where everyone's voice blends into a cacophony. To find your authentic voice, you must step away from the crowd and embrace your unique tune. Celebrate your individuality, for it's this distinctiveness that adds richness to the symphony of life.

The Dance of Experimentation:

Your authentic voice is not a static

note but a dynamic, evolving melody. Don't be afraid to experiment with different forms of expression—writing, art, speaking. Like a musician improvising, let your creativity flow and adapt, discovering new depths and dimensions of your voice.

Harmonising Actions with Words:

Authenticity is a duet between what you say and what you do. Ensure your actions reflect your inner beliefs and values. This alignment creates a resonance that others can feel, fostering trust and reinforcing your integrity.

Overcoming Dissonance

The journey to authenticity is often met with internal and external challenges. Internally, the fear of judgment and self-doubt can muffle your voice. Embrace self-compassion

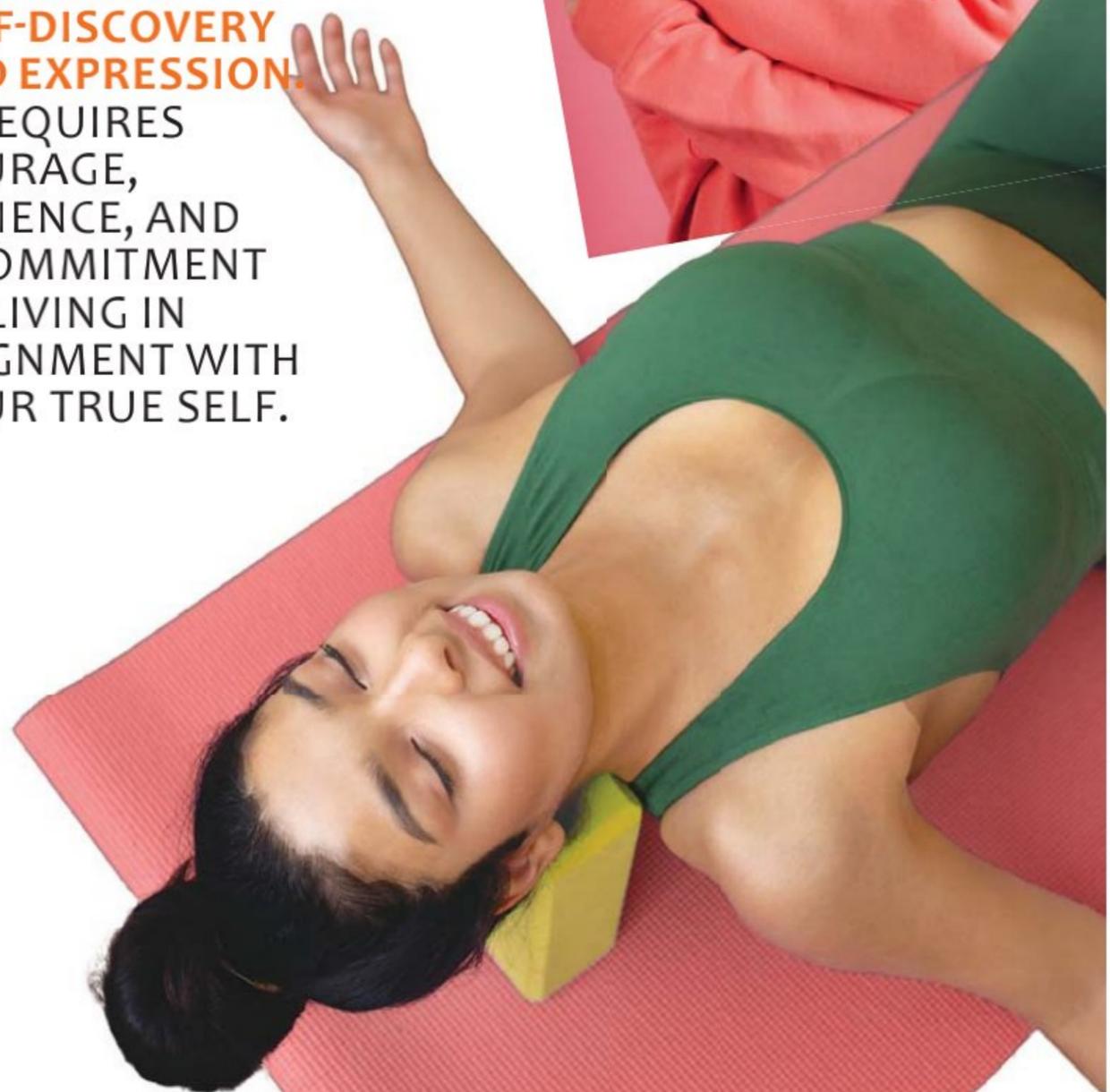
and the courage to speak your truth despite these fears. Externally, societal norms and expectations can pressure you to conform. Stand firm and seek environments that nurture and celebrate your uniqueness.

The Crescendo

Living authentically is like conducting a symphony where every note and instrument is in perfect harmony. It brings profound benefits:

FINDING YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE IS A CONTINUOUS JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND EXPRESSION.

IT REQUIRES COURAGE, PATIENCE, AND A COMMITMENT TO LIVING IN ALIGNMENT WITH YOUR TRUE SELF.



Genuine Connections: Authenticity fosters relationships based on trust and mutual respect. It helps build strong relationships, whether personal or professional, celebrating your individuality and that of others.

Personal Fulfillment: Engaging in activities that resonate with your true self enhances your sense of satisfaction. It brings joy and creativity to all your endeavors.

Emotional Well-being: Reducing the dissonance between your inner self and outer actions promotes mental and emotional health.

Finding your authentic voice is a continuous journey of self-discovery and expression. It requires courage, patience, and a commitment to living in alignment with your true self. As you navigate this path, remember that authenticity is not a destination but a way of being. Embrace your uniqueness, honour your values, and let your true voice shine through every aspect of your life. Don't succumb to societal expectations. With time, either the truth gets accepted, or we become flexible to live it courageously.

Finding Your Authentic Voice

Have you ever felt like your words were someone else's script? Like your opinions were borrowed clothes, ill-fitting and uncomfortable? If so, you're on the quest to find your authentic voice. This isn't a singular sound but a symphony of your experiences, values, and passions.

It's about expressing yourself with clarity, confidence, and a touch of your unique spark.

Here's a roadmap to help you unmute your authentic voice:

Dig Deep: Unearth Your Core: Imagine yourself as an archaeologist. Your first mission is to unearth the buried treasures within—your values, beliefs, and passions. Ask yourself:

- What makes me angry? What fills me with joy?
- What principles are non-negotiable for me?
- What activities make me lose track of time?
- Journaling is a great tool for introspection. Write freely, without judgment, and see what emerges.

Explore the World (and Yourself): Go beyond your comfort zone. Take that pottery class, write that poem, or strike up a conversation with someone new. Each experience adds a note to your internal melody. Pay attention to what resonates with

FINDING YOUR AUTHENTIC VOICE IS A LIFELONG JOURNEY. EMBRACE THE EXPLORATION, CELEBRATE YOUR INDIVIDUALITY, AND UNMUTE THE UNIQUE SONG THAT RESIDES WITHIN YOU.

you, what sparks curiosity, and what leaves you feeling drained.

Embrace the Imperfect Symphony: Your voice won't be a perfectly polished area. It will have moments of dissonance, stumbles, and unexpected notes. That's okay! Authenticity thrives on imperfection. Don't be afraid to experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them.

Silence the Inner Critic: Self-doubt is a constant threat. It whispers insecurities and tells you to blend in. Challenge those voices. Remind yourself of your worth and your right to be heard.

Find Your Tribe: Surround yourself with people who celebrate your individuality. Seek out mentors who inspire you and friends who appreciate your unique perspective. Their support will amplify your authentic voice.

Practice Makes Progress: The more you use your voice, the stronger it becomes. Start small conversations, write for an online forum, or participate in discussions you find interesting. Every time you speak your truth, you chip away at the fear of being heard.

Be a Listener, Too: Authentic communication is a two-way street. Listen actively to others, understand their perspectives, and respond with empathy. This not only fosters connections but also helps you refine your own voice.

Communication is a powerful tool. It can either build or destroy even the strongest bonds. Never take people for granted. Communication brings clarity. Spend time with people who not only engage in small talk but are genuinely interested in healthy conversations. Find those who want to share their thoughts and views and also value your opinions and perspectives. Embrace the exploration, celebrate your individuality, and unmute the unique song that resides within you. The world needs to hear it!



My Family, My Friends and Me...



Q & A

MY PARTNER AND I HAD ALWAYS been close, but recent months had put a strain on our relationship. We had a major argument over a trivial matter, and neither of us was willing to back down. It was a wake-up call for both of us, and we realised that we needed to work on our communication and understanding. How could we overcome our differences and strengthen our relationship?

Strengthening your relationship with your partner requires effort and commitment from both sides. Practise active listening and communicate openly about your feelings and needs. Find ways to reconnect and spend quality time together. Seek support from a therapist or counsellor if needed. Remember to prioritise your relationship and show appreciation for each other regularly.

LIVING WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS had its ups and downs, but some incidents were particularly challenging. When I had a flare-up that left me bedridden for days, unable to do even the simplest tasks. It was during these times that I felt the weight of my illness the most, both physically and emotionally.

Despite these challenges, I tried to stay positive and focused on managing my health. How could I continue to take care of my mental well-being while dealing with the daily struggles of my illness?

Prioritise self-care and seek support from healthcare professionals and support groups. Focus on what you can control and find ways to adapt to your illness. Stay connected with loved ones and maintain a positive outlook. Remember to ask for help when you need it, and prioritise activities that bring you joy and fulfillment.

IAM A 25-YEAR-OLD WOMAN WHO has been working for the past two years. I was very ambitious in life and was very clear on what I wanted to do in life. I moved out of my parents' house when I got my first job and have been financially independent ever since. I have an older brother who is almost 28 now. He never liked studying or working and spent his time being lazy. He says he's working on some startup but I never see him take it up seriously.

He still lives with my parents and they are still paying for his expenses at times. I feel bad because my parents are old now and need to save for their retirement. At times, I have lent him money too. He comes over sometimes and stays over for days, eating my food for free and never helping me with my house chores. It has become very annoying. If he wants to waste his life, why should I enable it? I want to confront him about it but I am unsure how to?

It seems like your brother is being a freeloader, but he should understand that he can't do this for long. He needs to be responsible for his life. You being the younger sibling should not be made to carry his responsibility. Confronting him about these issues is a valid step but it should be done with sensitivity and empathy. Find a suitable time to have this conversation and do not delay it more than it has to. Express your concerns about his current lifestyle.

Don't sound accusatory and say that you are concerned or worried about the financial situation. Share specific incidents or behaviours that have been bothering you and mention how his extended stays have been weighing on you financially. Tell him that you have his best interest in mind. Your brother will come up with many reasons for

his current situation and might even blame you for not being supportive, it is important that you don't take it too seriously. Encourage him to speak and you should listen, he might have some struggles that you might be unaware of. Encourage him to take his startup idea seriously and find a job that will help him get on his feet.

It is important that you set your boundaries for your own peace of mind. Let him know what you can tolerate and what you consider unacceptable. Be assertive about your needs as well, but be respectful. Consider talking to your parents too about the financial strain they might be facing, encourage them to talk to your brother. Your concerns might come across as selfish to your brother, but you need to take action so your brother doesn't take advantage of you.

WITH BILLS PILING UP AND financial responsibilities mounting, I found myself constantly stressed about money. I'm stressed out when an unexpected expense came up, and I realised that I didn't have enough savings to cover it. It made me question my financial decisions and left me feeling anxious about the future. How could I manage my finances better and reduce this constant stress?

To manage financial stress, understand your financial situation and create a realistic budget. Identify areas where you can cut expenses and prioritise saving. Seek advice from a financial advisor to make informed decisions.

Focus on what you can control and take proactive steps to improve your financial situation. Remember that financial stress is temporary, and with careful planning, you can achieve financial stability.

This column will tackle queries related to family, social environment and personality development.

Please address your queries to:

Woman's Era E-3, Jhandewala Estate,
New Delhi-110 055.
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Chaya MAGIC

A Glimpse into Kerala's Chaayakadas.

By Padmaja Menon

We have a chaiwallah Prime Minister who does not hide his meagre background. We have *chai pe charcha* where the same PM holds fort, and we have tea shops everywhere, especially in Kerala where the tea is a gymnastic one with all its tossing and pouring and Kulukkal. We have teashops that have graduated to snacks and chai or the oh-so-soul-filling Chaya in tattukadas in Kerala. God's own country!

We in India are so fond of drinking tea and spending time doing it that companies and offices have tea breaks. Spending a while drinking that essence from the magical leaf and chit-chatting over it has become a national pastime. For that very reason, we have hordes of tea boys in the national workforce and thousands of tea shops across the country. We also love the sweeeeet tea in trains from the vendors who wake us early in the morning with their call of chaaya... chaaya. And the station tea stalls are also crowded.

Tea stalls are very common and have become a meeting point of sorts, where people come to discuss politics, national and international news, movies, gossip, and even the economic situation. Especially in Kolkata and Kerala, where politics is HEAVY and POLI respectively! I am sure every Malayali has sat in one of those wooden makeshift benches in a chaayakada.

Take any *mallu* movie and you can't miss the chaayakada with the hero or villain or some character sipping tea and discussing from the newspaper or just *Vainokkaling*



(staring) at the local girls. And don't miss the characteristic 'glasses'. Sometimes these places are even called Nair shops by non-Mallus.

The Breeding Ground

A tea stall is never empty; it's the breeding ground for noisy debates and even fisticuffs if one does not agree with the other's political view or the state of life or, for that matter, the state of the nation, which you must be prepared to answer aggressively. Some places are a frequent haunt for the *Vazhakali* types, who normally end up reading the newspaper aloud for the benefit of the others, who nod wisely. And if anyone dares to disagree...

The tea stall owner, the referee, meant to ensure fairness in the surroundings, in addition to preparing the magic brew, is usually hunched over the boiler and would come up with loud comments and vigorous head shaking. Teashops are places where a Malayali vents

himself. The chhayakada can also be called watering holes or *vachakam* holes where all and sundry locals congregate to discuss and fight. And you can find them on the map also like '*kuttettan de chaya kada*' "*chaaya and kadi*" etc. Now *kadi* means finger food which has also taken off big time in these tea shops. For here is where the idle mind sits, reading the newspaper, and where brainwaves and brainstorming happen aggressively, arguments settled, and curiosity satiated.

The Malayali tea shop entrepreneur has cornered about 80 per cent of the tea business in all places. They can be found everywhere, announcing their heritage proudly - 'Kerala tea stall'. Some branch out into other businesses like the *Ambika appalam wala*, who is now a big shot.

The Malayali's affinity for tea and tea stalls is legendary. So many jokes abound, for example, of Neil Armstrong landing on the Moon and

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being asked if he wanted tea by a Mallu who already had his tea shop there (another variation – Hillary reaching the Everest summit). This holds true because many years ago, while visiting Gulmarg in Kashmir, we were delighted to see a mallu selling tea and vadas. So high up and after a breathless uphill climb, his ‘chaya saaarreeee’ was very welcoming. And as we sipped the addictive brew, he told us how he had landed in Gulmarg.

While in Kerala and stopping at these chaaykadas, the bare-bodied (usually so in the summer) teaman was given sidelong looks by my daughters, who couldn’t understand why he was naked but who were soon fascinated by those nice big rows of bottles with all kinds of colourful stuff.

The Chaaya Kadas

Mallu favourites like plantain ‘kulas’ hanging on a rope (different varieties from the Poovan, to Palaynkodan to the Eatha or Nendra pazham), the pazhampori and the suhiyan in the window, a variety of cigarettes, though the common man always smoked *beedies*. The must in all those places was the slowly smoldering rope to light the cigarette or the electric version where you pressed a button and the coil burnt

A TEA STALL IS NEVER EMPTY; IT’S THE BREEDING GROUND FOR NOISY DEBATES AND EVEN FISTICUFFS IF ONE DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE OTHER’S POLITICAL VIEW.

red. The rope really was the highlight of the chaaya kada.

When you place an order for your tea, the strength (strong, medium, light), with or without milk (Kattan), and the amount of sugar has to be clearly mentioned. Once that is done, you have to state how hot you want it (most Mallus want it scalding hot), and that is when you sit or stand back and watch the teaman exhibit his brilliance. Standing next to his brass boiler, he pours the concoction of tea brew, sugar, milk, and boiling water from glass to mug and back with unmatched flourish. The tea stays stretched out almost horizontally and then vertically as the glass, liquid, and mug flash past your darting eyes.

Nowadays people buy tea just to watch the acrobatics! You will notice that not a drop is spilled, and the drink gathers a nice and impressive

half to 3/4th inch of froth. ‘Chaya ready’ he shouts out, for you to pick it up. Now he will not give it to you in your car or bus, you have to send your driver or yourself to collect. That way, a mallu is egoistic, teawala or not!

And the day starts for the Malayali. Kerala does not segregate by caste in tea shops. If the tea is not up to standard, then the chai fellow gets a mouthful too of choice *gaalis*. ‘Theris’ in Malayalam.

Washing up is easy – he has two basins full of water, one for the pre-wash and one for the final rinse. The setup, in general, is efficient and environment-friendly. Fresh milk is supplied by a local family. In fact, from our tharavad, the first bucket of milk used to be sold to the tea shop.

The ambiance of a nadan chaaya kada can never be found in any Starbucks or Café Coffee Day or Chayos or anywhere in the world. The glorious tea ceremonies in Japan, China, or Taiwan pale in comparison to the royal tea kadas of the Kerala countryside. The Irani teas added hafim to it to attract customers; the chaaya in Kerala doesn’t need that. There are green teas, oolong teas, lemon teas, and chamomile teas but nothing to beat our Kerala chaaya. Today we also have a cyber Chayakada!!

We

BROKEN REFLECTIONS

Behind closed doors, the real storms brew. By Rajni Gupta

After paying the auto rickshaw driver, Siya grabs her office bag and groceries, and, in the unpredictable Bangalore rain, rushes past the gate and up the stairs to her flat on the first floor. She rings the doorbell and waits. Her husband, Vikas, opens the door, but only enough to show a tight disapproving face.

"Is this any time to come home?" he says, the eight

o'clock nightly news playing in the background.

Siya darts an embarrassed glance at the neighbour's door across the staircase landing and tries to squeeze past Vikas. Vikas blocks her off with his stocky albeit short frame. For a moment Siya imagines her block heels busting open the door. Revenge fantasies help her externalise her anger, keep pain out.

Her husband, Vikas, opens the door, but only enough to show a tight disapproving face.

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"Can we talk inside?" she says, shivering from a wet chill.

"Did you pick up dinner at least?" he asks.

"Just let her in," calls Siya's father from the living room, his voice slurred and slow. He's been staying with the couple since his stroke last year.

Vikas turns to Siya's father, opens his mouth to say something, and then thinking the better of it, closes it in a hard line. The men stare at each other, establishing dominance. Finally, Vikas yields, bitterness creeping in his eyes.

Leaving the groceries on the dining table, Siya hurries to the kitchen to set the daal and rice to boil before changing into dry clothes.

At dinner, Vikas scoops up a spoonful of daal and pours it slowly back, deliberately. "You might as well serve water."

Siya knows Vikas is spoiling for a fight and won't relent until he's had a clear victory. She's tired and has no energy to engage. She wants only to finish her food and sleep.

"You could have at least thrown in some vegetables," he says, nodding at the grocery bag on the table.

Siya looks at the ridged gourd sticking out and imagines ramming it down Vikas's throat. "You were so eager for dinner, there wasn't enough time."

The chair screeches as he stands abruptly to hover over her. She hears his loud breathing, her own breath held. Slowly she reaches for her phone in case she needed to dial the 100 police line. This time she will not hesitate.

"Don't talk back with your husband." Vikas smacks the bowl, contents sloshing, and stomps off to the bedroom.

A gasp escapes Siya.

"Why do you put up with him?" her father asks.

She glares. "The same reason Ma put up with you."

His mouth falls open.

"At least he didn't fling the food on the floor." Siya was seven when her father sent his plate flying in rage because of a lemon seed in the daal. Siya still remembers the deep furrows between her mother's brows as she hunkered to clean the mess.

Father stares at the table as though the memory has projected there. His mouth quivers—daal dribbling down the stroke-hit side of his mouth. He gives Siya a look of hurt, and then grunting, stumbles for his out-of-reach walker. Siya rises to help but he waves her away. She finishes her meal, stretches herself on the living room sofa, and tries to sleep. Only she cannot. Her mind replays in



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a loop the evening's drama. Her head hurts. She takes an anti-inflammatory, one that helps with sleep, but her mind remains agitated. Her stomach feels it too. Why does she put up with Vikas? She was financially independent. She did try leaving Vikas once, but he managed to persuade her back with apologies and promises. She believed him, disregarding warnings by her father, who should know.

*** **

The next morning, as Siya irons her clothes for work, Vikas watches her from the bed. Ignoring him, she finishes her ironing and heads to the shower. Her eyes sting from not enough sleep. Afterward, as she is putting on her clothes, Vikas comes up behind her and pivots her toward the mirror, staring at their reflection. Paying him no heed, she buttons her shirt. He undoes the buttons and grazes her neck, his stubble chafing. Her body tenses.

"Angry?" His breath is stale.

She notices in the mirror how the light has gone from her face. Red veins scribble her eyes. "I couldn't sleep, last night," she says, voice catching.

He smiles. She wonders if he enjoys this—her anguish over him. It must make him feel big, give him a twisted sense of power.

"I work too, you know," she says, sternly, "and still take care of things at home. But it's never enough."

"Listen, I had a bad day at work. I got passed over for an opportunity. Can we let it go?" he says, prodding the corners of her mouth to smile.

She bats away his hands, disappointed that there is never an apology.

"Let's make up," he says, guiding her to bed. The need to make up is so treacherous she goes right along; lies down even though her body closes up, easing only to protect her.

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At work that afternoon, Siya receives a call from Vikas and learns that his company is sending him to Canada for a year. "The opportunity I was denied yesterday. I finally got it. Isn't that great!" he says.

"When do you leave?" she asks.

"In two weeks."

"Is your decision final?"

"Yes."

That he didn't discuss with her, that she has no say in the matter sparks a hurt so deep, she feels it all the way down to her core. After everything she does for him. Was this a kind of separation?

Vikas has threatened her with divorce twice already, the second time over her father's arrival. What was she supposed to do? Leave father to his own devices the way her sister did?

Vikas took to working late hours. And now this. Siya's headache returns. She takes a painkiller and tries to distract herself with work.

When she reaches home, her father avoids eye contact, doesn't say a word, probably still sulking over Siya's comment the previous evening.

Noticing that he hasn't touched the food or the blood thinner she set aside for him, she marches to his room. He's hunched on the edge of his bed looking out at the bougainvillea in the balcony.

"You need to take your medicine," Siya says, with as much calm as she can manage.

Father doesn't respond.

She doesn't need his passive aggression. Not after all the sacrifices she makes for him! In a moment of rage,

Paying him no heed, she buttons her shirt. He undoes the buttons and grazes her neck, his stubble chafing.



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she imagines forcing the medicine down his throat. The meanness of the thought scares her, floods her with shame. Who has she become?

She rushes to her room and flings herself on the bed. Maybe Vikas's going away wasn't so bad after all. She might become herself again. A little distance and perspective might bring them closer. Despite the attempt to see the silver lining, Siya can't help feeling rejected.

Suddenly she understands her mother's devastation when Siya's father left home to live in the holy city of Benaras. Siya had expected her mother to enjoy the peace and freedom after years of marital discord and malaise, but Father's departure only increased Mother's griping.

"You know he was abused and abandoned by his own father," Siya said during their last phone conversation. "He's just afraid to trust or love."

"He loves you," Siya's mother said, betraying an unmistakable hint of jealousy.

Siya was her father's favourite the way her sister, Riya, was her mother's.

"He should have gone long ago, before hurting so many lives," Mother said.

"He supported us financially."

"If you didn't idolise him so, you wouldn't have married the guy you married."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Siya asked, coldness creeping in her voice.

"He will now see my dead face."

"Stop aggrandising death," Siya snapped. She was sick of her mother fishing for sympathy. Why should Siya be burdened with her mother's grievances? Wasn't Riya enough for that? Siya disconnected.

Two days later, Siya's mother passed away. It was from dengue. Rid of its worry lines, her mother's face looked peaceful, like she'd welcomed death.

"She would've fought it if not for father," Siya's sister, Riya said at the funeral. Her bitterness toward father was personal. Ever since Riya's marriage to a non-Hindu, father barely spoke to Riya.

"Father is a product of his circumstance," Siya said, ever his advocate.

"We always have choice, whether to perpetuate a vicious cycle or change it. He chose to abandon mother," Riya said.

"Didn't we all?" Siya snapped. Why should her sister be exempt from guilt—her sister living on the other side of the world, with a doting husband? Siya remembered how tenderly brother-in-law looked at Riya across a roomful of mourners, how he defended Riya when father criticised Riya for lacking ambition and wasting away her expensive education to be a housewife. Vikas would've jumped at a chance to ridicule Siya.

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Since the news of Vikas's impending departure, Siya feels a detached coldness toward him. Vikas counteracts by love-bombing at first, and then, over the weekend,

Despite the attempt to see the silver lining, Siya can't help feeling rejected. She understands her mother's devastation when Siya's father left home to live in the holy city of Benaras. Siya had expected her mother to enjoy the peace and freedom after years of marital discord but father's departure only increased mother's griping.

exploding. It happens after he returns from the gym and finds Siya cleaning. Siya's father is away visiting his sister, something he does every weekend to give the couple space.

"I told you to get rid of that sack of a nightgown," Vikas says.

"I can wear what I want." Siya whacks the sofa with a hand towel, sending a cloud of dust flying. Vikas steps back, waving the dust away.

"Even maids dress better," he says.

Hurt, Siya searches his face for the man she fell in love with, the man who once admired her appearance, her independence and strong willpower. Now she wonders if it was so he could derive greater pleasure from reducing her.

"You know what, I'm glad you are leaving," she says, turning to clean the entry table.

He strides over and she finds herself grabbing the bronze Buddha statue on the entry table. He goes past her, and snatches open the front door. "If I'm so unbearable, then get out."

A chill runs down Siya's spine. She knows that tone, that manic look. Her hand tightens around the brass Buddha. "Please don't create a scene," she says, afraid of neighbours witnessing this.

"Out," he says, pushing her.

"Hey!" She elbows him in the chest.

He touches his chest, an ugly grimace forming. The next instant he grabs her hand and drags her out to the landing. He's going to push me down the stairs, she thinks, and swings the brass statue at him with all her might. He ducks. The statue clangs to the floor. Vikas looks at the statue and then at Siya, his eyes ablaze, and begins swearing. The couple from across the flat comes out.

"What's going on?" the lady demands, looking at Vikas. "Do we need to call the police?"

"Sure. If you want her going to jail. She attacked me."

"This is a respectable neighbourhood. You both need to stop this fighting." The man says and leads the woman back in.

Something hardens inside Siya as she watches them leave, like she's the only one who can help herself. She returns to her flat, locks herself in the bathroom, and gets ready. Then she locks herself in the bedroom and begins packing, tears rolling. It wasn't supposed to be like this. She had come to this flat as a bride. He had carried her over the threshold.

When she steps out of the bedroom, she finds Vikas cutting her nightgown to shreds. He must have found it in the bathroom. At first, she's angry and then she feels sorry for him, and finally relief. Any doubts she harboured earlier, now dissolve, and she walks out. Hailing an auto rickshaw, she goes to her bua's house.

When she steps out of the bedroom, she finds Vikas cutting her nightgown to shreds. He must have found it in the bathroom. At first, she's angry and then she feels sorry for him, and finally relief. Any doubts she harboured earlier, now dissolve, and she walks out.

Hailing an auto rickshaw, she goes to her bua's house. She doesn't tell bua or father anything. Bua considers marriage a life sentence, and father would be smug.

The following day Vikas shows up at the door. "I come with a peace offering," he says, extending a gift bag.

Siya glances at what looks like a lace and satin nightie but refuses to take it.

"Come on, don't be mad," he says, reaching for her hand. She wiggles her hand free.

He looks around as though embarrassed someone might have witnessed the affront. "You are the one who hit me. Okay? So don't pretend I'm at fault."

"Come on, don't be mad," he says, reaching for her hand. She wiggles her hand free.

For a moment she believes him, and then remembers that it was self-defence.

"Despite that, I'm here to take you home."

"Why? So you can feel valued and loved? What about what I want? You didn't even ask me about Canada."

"Come on. I get to make money. And you get to use the car while I'm away," he says.

She opens the door for him. "We're done."

"Are you serious? You can't do this."

"I can and I will. I have choice." As she says this, she feels her inner power.

His face colours and contorts as he reins in a storm. And then he leaves. It satisfies her, having had the last word.

*** **

In bed that night, she feels the full impact of her decision. Loneliness gnaws at her. She has no friends. Vikas made sure of that, either flirting with them or guilt-tripping Siya for spending time with them. She could make new friends, but it seemed like a lot of work. How about a decent guy? Does one even exist?

Why not begin with loving herself first? Then an old song about despairing love floats in from a neighbour's and

sparks an ache so deep she's struck with the emptiness of her life and the days ahead. What if, like her mother, she ends up dead alone?

In the dark, she sneaks into the living room and tiptoes toward the alcohol cabinet, taking a big swig of what tastes like whiskey. It burns her stomach, which is already raw from painkillers. Bottle in hand, she retraces her steps, accidentally banging her knee against the coffee table. The tears she's been holding back suddenly spring uncontrollably. Setting the bottle on the coffee table, she drops on the couch and grabs a cushion to muffle the sobs surging from deep within. Her father comes over, his walker clattering fast. He plops next to her and wraps her into a hug.

She buries her head in his shoulder and begins bawling.

"Shh. Shh," he says, rocking her. When her body stops quaking, he adds, "I know it hurts now. But it will pass."

Siya makes out the familiar smell of her father's sweat mixed with pain-relief balm. There's something comforting about it. She remembers it from when he tended to her childhood falls. It makes her weep afresh, this loss of a time, the yearning to go back and start over. With his coarse hands, he wipes her tears—precious pearls, he called them when she was a child, urging her not to waste them. **We**



Nani's Quest for Natural Solutions

Introducing BioMuni Hardwater Damage Repair Shampoo.

In today's urban hustle, hard water has become a significant challenge, impacting daily routines and noticeably affecting hair and skin health. Adults, teenagers, and children alike are battling brittle, dry hair, itchy scalps, and dull skin. Neelam Rathee, a concerned 65-year-old grandmother, observed these harsh effects on her family and was driven to seek natural, non-toxic solutions. Her quest led to the creation of BioMuni, an Ayurveda-inspired clean beauty brand offering skin, makeup, and hair care products.

Neelam's journey began after trying various methods to combat hard water effects, including using RO drinking water and installing water softeners, but nothing provided a lasting solution. "We tried almost all products and treatments available, but the results were either nonexistent or temporary," Neelam explains. This experience motivated her to turn towards Ayurvedic and natural solutions, leading to the development of the BioMuni Hardwater Damage Repair Shampoo.

Revolutionary Product

BioMuni's shampoo has made significant strides in cities like Gurgaon, Delhi, Noida, Pune, and Bangalore, where hard water issues



Neelam Rathee, Founder, BioMuni

are prevalent. The product contains a blend of natural ingredients such as Rosemary, Onion, Bhringraj, Hibiscus, Beetroot, Aloe Vera, and Vitamin E, along with peppermint oil. This mix revitalises hair from root to tip, strengthens follicles, promotes growth, and restores vitality to lifeless strands.

"What sets our shampoo apart is its blend of meticulously chosen natural ingredients and its unique

formulation," Neelam states. The shampoo not only addresses the visible signs of damage but also offers a long-term solution for healthier, more resilient hair. Neelam adds, "It's humbling to receive calls and messages from many happy customers, especially moms, telling us how this shampoo has been a game-changer in their hard water struggles."

All ingredients are fully disclosed on every label, ensuring no doubts or deception. This transparency allows customers to make informed choices about what they apply to their hair and skin.

Expanding The Clean-Beauty Range

Beyond shampoo, BioMuni offers a comprehensive range of personal care products, including Ayurveda-inspired lipsticks and a Hard Water

Defence Face Wash. Each product is crafted to uphold the brand's commitment to purity, efficacy, and holistic wellness, continually redefining the standards of clean beauty. These products are available on the company's website and other platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and Smytten.

Website: www.biomuni.com
Instagram: @biomuninaturals
Facebook: @Biomuni

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Stupid

With a few do's and don'ts, and a little presence of mind, one can overcome stupidity.

By Snigdha Jauhari

In response to something I said, my friend said, "Oh! C'on... don't be stupid."

Simple, everyday statement which I did not mind, till I got to know the real meaning and implication of stupidity!

In 1995, McArthur Wheeler decided to rob 2 banks in Pennsylvania, USA. And, how did he disguise himself for this task?

He wore lemon juice.

Yes, you read right. He just smeared his face with lemon juice.

Then he went ahead and robbed the banks in broad daylight – around 2:30 pm in the afternoon.

He looked straight into the CCTVs, smiled and smirked, and walked out of the bank.

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Within 2 hours he was caught. On being caught so quickly and easily, Wheeler infamously exclaimed, "But I wore the juice!"

His bewildered expression has since become the stuff of legend.

You will wonder what was Wheeler's rationale? Well, you see, he had read an article claiming that lemon juice could be used as invisible ink, visible only when exposed to heat. Wheeler's mammoth stupidity did not allow him to realise that the article referred to using lemon juice only to write secret messages on paper, and not to make the human face invisible!!

So he 'wore juice' and went to rob a bank !!



IT ALLOWS PEOPLE TO SWITCH OFF THEIR BRAINS, RELAX AND INDULGE, WITHOUT THE PRESSURE TO KNOW AND THINK. IT OFFERS US THE COMFORTING EMBRACE OF IGNORANCE I.E., "IT IS OKAY TO NOT KNOW. DO NOT TAX YOUR BRAINS."

Albert Einstein had famously quipped, "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; though I'm not sure about the universe."

So let us understand a bit about Stupidity and how not to fall into the ditch of lemon juice of ignorance.

What is Stupidity? Stupidity is not merely a lack of knowledge or intellect, but rather a fundamental inability to be rational, reasonable, and coherent. It is the art of making decisions that defy logic, the knack for walking right into disaster without a second thought, and justifying it to self and others with (over)confidence.

Inspired by Wheeler's "I wore juice", two psychologists – Dunning

and Kruger, did research and studied the tendency of individuals with low ability and knowledge.

They noted that stupid people overestimate their competence. In other words, the more incompetent someone is, the less s/he will recognise and accept her incompetence.

This creates a dangerous loop.

The individual unaware of their shortcomings, believes that they are performing well, and so, carries on with the wrong behaviour.

A fair question could be : Why on earth would anyone willingly embrace stupidity?

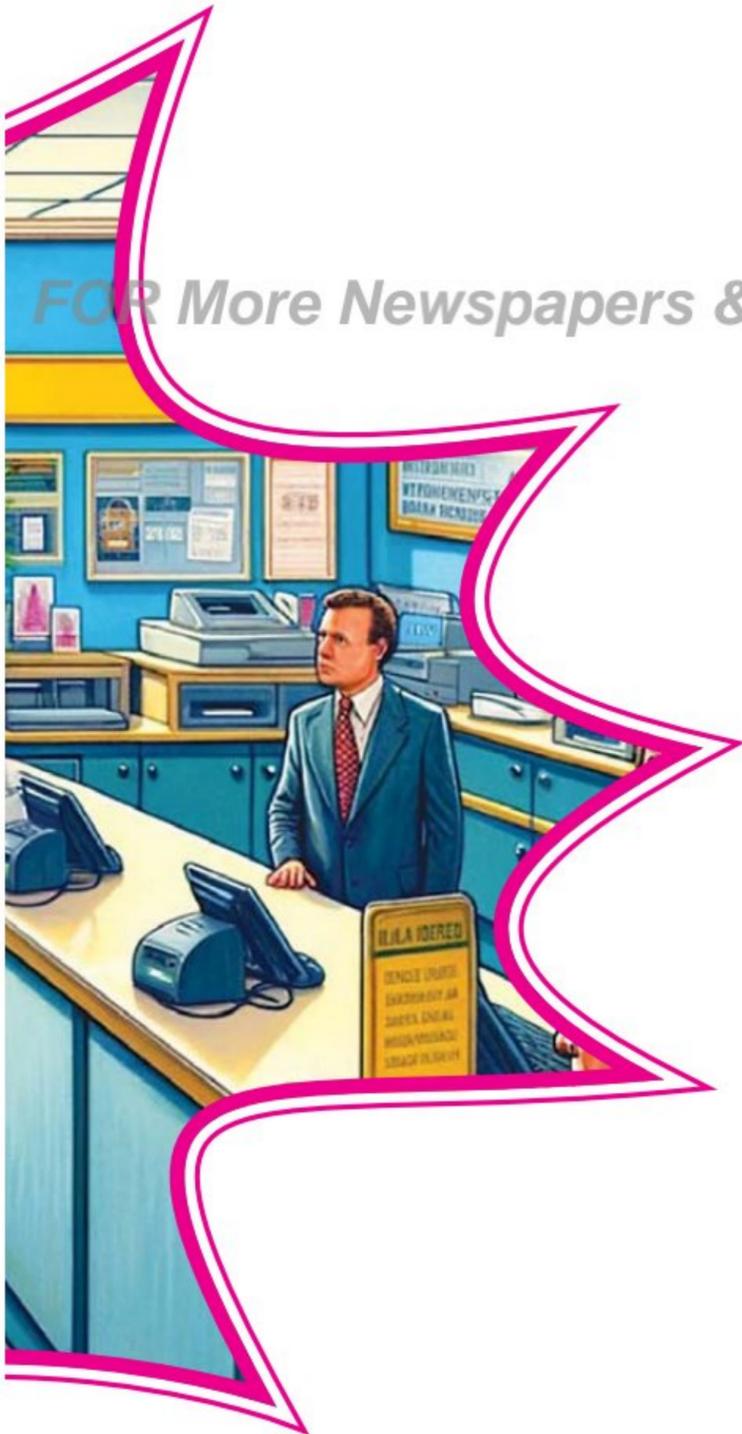
The answer lies in its seductive appeal, in its ease of doing, and in its mirage of charm.

You see, stupidity often appears as interesting and charming. For eg, think of all the slapstick humour we watch and how lovable we find the characters who play the fool.

They appear to be hilarious, relatable, and amusing. We don't mind (even want) being like them!

Its seductive appeal lies in the fact that the world we live in, often demands intelligence, competence, and rationality. These are intellectually taxing; they put a responsibility on our heads; stupidity offers an escape.

It allows people to switch off their brains, relax and indulge, without the pressure to know and think.



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It offers us the comforting embrace of ignorance i.e., “It is OKAY to not know. Do not tax your brains. There are many easy ways out.” So, it’s very easy to just follow someone (who is doing the thinking – mostly wicked)

Stupidity also offers us the sweetness of simplicity i.e., Don’t need to do anything complex or difficult. You don’t have to sweat by digging deep. Why bother with difficult, often confusing facts when you can simply rely on blind faith and gut instinct and a plate of biryani to do all the thinking for you?

Thus, stupidity thrives in an environment of ignorance, where individuals remain happily unaware of facts, information, and context.

Such people, by nature, rely on superficial reasoning to guide their behaviour. Therefore, it’s not easy to show them the errors of their ways because, by nature, stupid people are stubborn.

They cling stubbornly to their own preconceived notions regardless of evidence to the contrary. Mistakes do not matter to them. Why? Because one of the hallmarks of stupidity is the repeated failure to learn from past mistakes.

This attitude insulates the individual from feedback or criticism and discourages learning and self-improvement. After all, if you

believe yourself to be an ‘expert’, why would you bother listening to others?

Just like some people are naturally good at drawing and some are naturally good at Maths, the same way, some people are good at being stupid. There are certain factors that predispose individuals and groups to a higher likelihood of stupid-ism. Here are some:

- Individuals, who, by nature are prone to emotional volatility or impulsivity may be more susceptible to making rash / foolish decisions without considering the consequences. In fact, acting on whims or emotions, without considering the long-term consequences, is a major part of the mental makeup of a stupid person.

STUPIDITY THRIVES IN AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE MISINFORMATION AND IGNORANCE FLOURISH. AN EVIL PERSON MAY IGNITE A SMALL FLAME, BUT IT’S THE STUPID PEOPLE WHO TURN IT INTO A WILDFIRE.

- People who, by nature, are closed-minded or resistant to new experiences are more likely to succumb to stupidity.
- Overconfidence: Stupidity favours arrogant people. Because of their arrogance, they see only themselves, not others, or the pitfalls.
- Those with limited or no access to education or opportunities for intellectual development are also more susceptible to stupidity.
- Those who receive factually incorrect, biased teachings and, are not encouraged to analyse, explore, and question, also fall prey to stupidity.
- Stupidity is often fuelled by emotional attachments, as individuals may cling to certain beliefs or ideas out of a sense of loyalty, nostalgia, or identity. This becomes more tenacious if community/ peer pressure is exerted upon the individual. And...all these make stupidity dangerous.

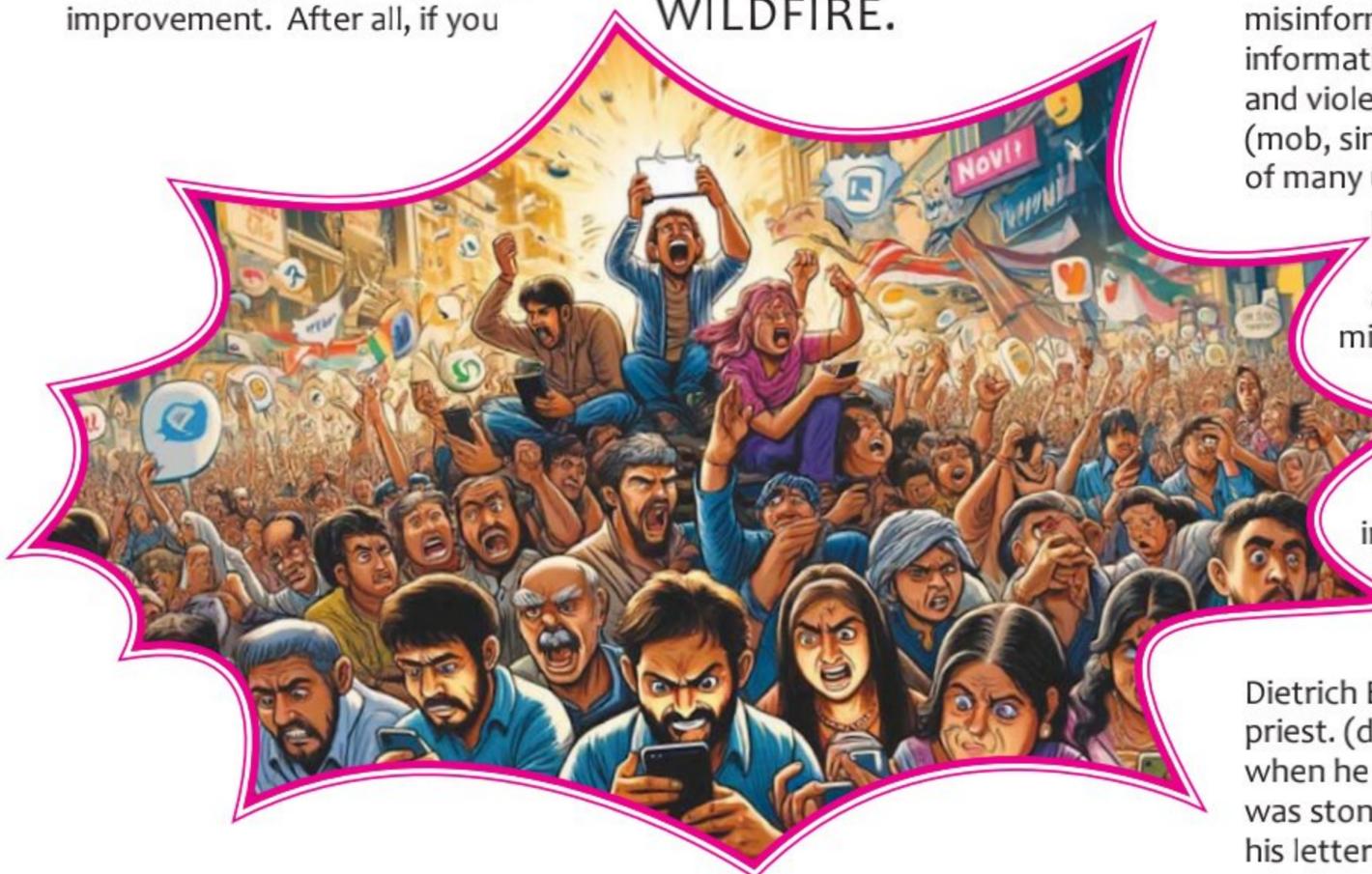
Dangerous!? Now, you may think that stupidity can be irritating, even amusing, but how is it dangerous?

Well, see for yourself... Do the following scenes look familiar to you?!

- **Social media outrage:** Widespread outrage on misinformation or misconstrued information, leading to harassment, and violent behaviours by mob. (mob, simply defined, is the presence of many unthinking people in one place)

Stupidity thrives in an environment where misinformation and ignorance flourish. An evil person may ignite a small flame, but it’s the stupid people who turn it into a wildfire.

No one can summarise the dangers of stupidity better than Dietrich Bonhoeffer– a German priest. (during Hitler’s regime when he criticised Hitler, his house was stoned and he was jailed) In his letters from prison, he wrote,





“Stupidity is more dangerous than evil because stupidity can be manipulated and used by evil to cause much more harm. “Therefore”, he said, “one powerful idiot can do more harm than a group of schemers.”

While cunning and wickedness can be fought directly and are easily justifiable, stupidity cannot be. No one knows when and where stupidity will raise its brainless hydra head and create mayhem under the seemingly innocent banner of “Oh! just stupidity. Let it be”!

- **Rioting/looting:** In situations of protests, mobs resort to looting and destruction of property. Spurred by emotions rather than rationality or purposeful activism.

“Do not think. Just act.” A perfect recipe to make stupidity bloom.

- **Witch hunts:** Throughout history, Stupidity has been used as a weapon. Mobs have been incited by fear, superstition, or hysteria to accuse and persecute individuals unjustly, leading to wrongful imprisonment, torture, and even execution.

EMBRACE UNCERTAINTY. WE NEED TO REMEMBER AND RECOGNISE THE FACT THAT ALL QUESTIONS DO NOT HAVE CLEAR ANSWERS. SO BE COMFORTABLE WITH AMBIGUITY.

Now look at the dangers of stupidity at the individual level.

- **Financial scams:** Falling for fraudulent schemes due to greed or gullibility.

- **Ignoring health precautions:** Disregarding health guidelines. Risking one’s health and jeopardising others through unthinking behaviour and irrational beliefs.

- **Reckless driving:** speeding/ breaking rules, distracted driving/ Racing and challenging another driver due to unmanaged ego issues with one’s own self.

All this may sound like a dismal case to you, and you will be justified

in asking whether there is a cure for stupidity.

Happy to say there is. Here are some.....

As the great writer Mark Twain has said, “It’s better to keep your mouth shut and appear stupid than open it and remove all doubts.”

Therefore, the first cure is to Listen.

Listen to as many people and opinions as we can, so that we gather many perspectives. This opens our minds and stops the onslaught of just one particular (dogmatic) belief.

How to listen? This is how:

- **Focus.** Just focus on what the speaker is saying without thinking about what our response will be.

- **Do not interrupt:** Allow the speaker to finish. Completely.

- **Ask questions:** Gently. (not threateningly) Asking questions will ensure that we understand what the speaker is saying.

- A sure way to understand is to summarise what the speaker has said. So, please summarise.

The second method to break the

thread of stupidity is to embrace critical thinking.

This is how we do it:

- **Question assumptions:** Don't take things at face value. Analyse the underlying assumptions.

- **Seek evidence:** Look for credible sources and evidence to support our views or to challenge claims made by others. Look for credible evidence. Not hearsay.

- **Consider multiple perspectives:** Try to understand different viewpoints before forming your own opinion.

- **Embrace uncertainty:** We need to remember and recognise the fact that all questions do not have clear answers. So be comfortable with ambiguity.

The third method to beat stupidity is to be discerning.

- Double check facts before accepting them or rejecting them. (Especially so, because this is the age

of misinformation.)

- **Trust our intuition:** Pay attention to our gut feelings, but also back them up with evidence and reasoning.

- **Be mindful of our emotions:** Emotions can hijack judgment, so strive to maintain objectivity.

- **Take time:** Don't rush to judgment; take the time to gather information and reflect before making decisions.

The fourth method is to become open to ideas and new thoughts:

- **Cultivate curiosity:** Stay curious and open-minded about perspectives and ideas.

- **Challenge our beliefs:** Examine beliefs and be willing to reconsider them in light of new information.

- **Engage with diverse perspectives:** Seek out viewpoints that differ from our own and try to understand them.

- **Practise empathy:** Put ourselves in others' shoes to better understand their perspectives and experiences.

The icing on the cake is this: Embrace intellectual humility: Acknowledge that we don't have all the answers and be open to learning from others. Open to learning anytime, anywhere.

Escaping the clutches of stupidity is not easy. It has been with us for a long time and offers us the comfort of an old friend; breaking up from it requires prolonged and concerted effort.....

So, here's wishing you an adventurous trip – from the deep valley of stupidity to the high summit of awareness.

PS: also, sharing with you a decision that I have made, which is this: now, if my friend ever calls me stupid, I will do a rightful 'gherao' of her house, and I will fill social media with compelling slogans and throw a stone or two at her house, till she confirms that I am not stupid!

Ah, See! beating stupidity is so easy.

We

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LUNAR ANNIVERSARY

Rajiv had been acting mysteriously all day on our anniversary, which had me eagerly anticipating his surprise. When he finally revealed that he had booked a cab to the moon for our special dinner, I was initially speechless.

I couldn't believe he thought we could actually dine on the moon! His earnest expression and genuine excitement were so endearing that I burst into laughter. Through my giggles, I explained the difference between a space tourism ad and a restaurant reservation.

Despite the mix-up, we ended up having a wonderful time, enjoying a candlelit dinner at our

favourite restaurant. Rajiv's quirky idea may not have taken us to the moon, but it definitely brought us closer together. The evening turned into a memorable celebration of our love, filled with laughter and heartfelt moments.

-Radhika Sri

FAT-FREE AIR

When I asked Alok to pick up 'low-fat' yoghurt, I never expected him to return with a carton labelled 'fat-free air.' His innocent mistake was so unexpected and hilarious that I couldn't help but laugh. It was a lighthearted moment that reminded me of Alok's unique way of seeing the world. We shared a good laugh,

and I appreciated his effort to make me smile, even if it was with a carton of imaginary yoghurt. It was a simple yet heartwarming gesture that highlighted the humour and love in our relationship.

-Varsha Gehlot

PICASSO HAIRCUT

Walking into the bathroom, I was greeted by the sight of Ankit standing in front of the mirror, sporting a haircut that can only be described as a work of modern art. His expression of concentration quickly turned into a sheepish grin as he explained that he had tried to give himself a haircut.

Despite my initial shock, I couldn't help but laugh at the sight. I lovingly teased him, calling him 'Picasso,' and insisted on taking him to a professional stylist to fix the mishap. It was a moment that highlighted Ankit's adventurous spirit and our ability to find humour.

-Neha Tyagi



THE PULL

Navigating the delicate balance. By Sapna Devanathan

As Ramya stepped out of the Waikiki Airport in Hawaii, a familiar tropical scent hit her senses. It was the smell of India, which she hadn't perceived in any other American state. It had been nearly ten years since she moved to the USA, but a part of her still fiercely clung to a lingering nostalgia for her homeland. India had been on her mind a lot recently, especially after the conversation with her aunty last night—the call that completely shattered her peace of mind.

Lost in her thoughts, Ramya was startled when her boss, Phil, caught up with her. "Why do you look so miserable, Ramya? All good?" he asked.

"It's nothing, Phil," Ramya replied, not wanting to share her grief with her boss, at least not yet.

Phil continued, "It's gorgeous here, isn't it? A part of me wants to give it all up, move here with my family, and be a beach bum for the rest of my life."

Ramya smiled and said, "Knowing you, being a beach bum for a day would drive you crazy, Phil."

"The same can be said for you, Ramya, the very same," replied Phil with a chuckle.

Both Ramya and Phil were part of the sales team for one of the top real estate firms based out of New York. Ramya had been with the firm for the past seven years, closing several high-profile deals. She was deeply driven to excel in her career, having invested a lot of time and effort into it. The thrill of a potential deal, chasing clients, presenting her point of view, and finally closing the transaction—all these gave her immense satisfaction. With each significant deal, she received more financial incentives, accolades, and yet more challenging work.

Ramya was in her mid-thirties and single. She had tried dating a few people, but she could never find the energy or time that a serious relationship entailed. Eventually, after a few meetings, even the genuinely interested men started to drift away. "I need to fix this," thought Ramya. "I am going to slow down after this deal." But in her heart of hearts, she knew she wasn't going to slow down, not anytime soon. After her meeting, Ramya walked along the famous Waikiki beach. Memories of Chennai's Marina Beach came flooding back. An image

As Ramya stepped out of the Waikiki Airport in Hawaii, a familiar tropical scent hit her senses.



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of her ten-year-old self being chased by her mother on the beach filled her mind. As always, the memory of her mother, Panchagam, filled her with joy. Ramya had lost her father to a heart ailment when she was barely five and had been brought up solely by her mother and grandparents.

With lovely long hair perpetually plaited, dimples, and a huge bindi always adorning the centre of her forehead, Panchagam was a traditional beauty. Beneath her beauty was a strength that manifested in the long years of bringing up Ramya all by herself. Her husband's savings and her own salary as a schoolteacher ensured that they were comfortable, if not very well off. When Ramya gained admission to a top college in the USA, Panchagam did everything necessary to facilitate the process, from procuring a bank loan to producing all the required documentation.

Ramya still remembered the day her mother saw her off at the airport nearly ten years ago—a small, diminutive figure trying hard to be brave and not cry. Ramya was scared and apprehensive too, but beyond this, there was a palpable excitement about embarking on a brand-new adventure in an alien country.

Since her graduation, Ramya had returned to India thrice. Each occasion was marked by much pampering and love from her beloved Panchagam. She had tried to entice Panchagam to visit her, but she always held back. "You don't know what you are missing, Amma," she told her. "America is a land of plenty. Everything is in abundance—be it food, clothing, or shelter—as evidenced by my very thriving career in real estate," she quipped. But Panchagam always held back. "You settle down first, sweetheart. I am not going anywhere."

Her thoughts drifted back to the previous day when her aunt had called, weeping silently. Ramya was scared. "What happened, *attai*?" she asked gently.

"Panchagam is suffering from esophageal cancer. The doctor says she is in the initial stages and has a good chance of recovering."

Ramya gripped the receiver in terror, thinking, "My Panchagam and cancer? How could this be? How could this happen to one of the sweetest people I know?" With a shaky voice, she asked to talk to Panchagam. "Amma, I am flying down right now," said Ramya, barely able to get the words out.

Panchagam replied, "Ramya, hold on. Let's see how this proceeds, and then you can visit me. I know you have an important review coming up. Don't worry about me, Kanna." "There she was, being diagnosed with cancer, and all she

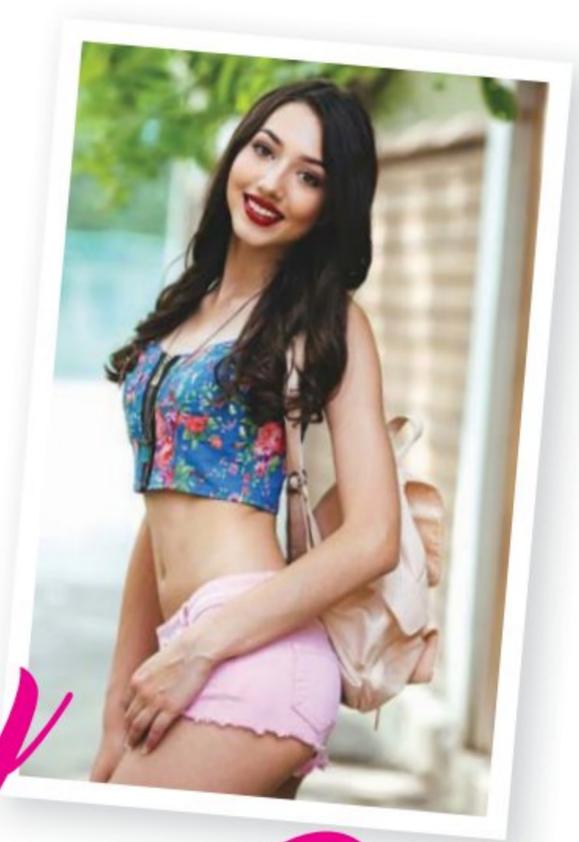


Ramya still remembered the day her mother saw her off at the airport nearly ten years ago

After her meeting, Ramya walked along the famous Waikiki beach. Memories of Chennai's Marina Beach came flooding back. An image of her ten-year-old self being chased by her mother on the beach filled her mind. As always, the memory of her mother, Panchagam, filled her with joy.

could think about was my review," thought Ramya. She knew she had to make a big decision. She could choose to continue her job in the US and visit her on and off when necessary.

But she knew that she would just be doing the bare minimum. Ramya wanted to go all out. Her Panchagam was suffering, and she wanted to be there for every chemotherapy session, every news of progress, and through all the periods of despair and depression that she was bound to go through. She had been debating this ever since she received the call with the devastating news, but the answer had now come to her with searing clarity. She had to pack up and leave for good. There was no possibility of working out of India in her current role, where location was critical. She was definitely going to face several challenges—finding a new job in India and perhaps taking a salary cut, moving from deriving purpose from a career to becoming a caregiver, and giving up on the American dream. Strangely, she felt totally calm thinking about all the upcoming challenges, and her heart leapt with the joy of a decision well taken.



How Sexy Am I?

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Let the World See Your Magic.
By Purnima Atul Goyal

We prefer to be unique rather than part of the crowd. The desire to remain in the spotlight is a common human trait. Famous American feminist and journalist Gloria Steinem defines it as the desire in women to look sexy. Your personality, clothing, charm, fragrance, and gestures are the elements that determine your sexiness.

It's a misconception that considering yourself sexy can make you arrogant and rude, while not considering yourself sexy can lead to depression and ruin your career. It's clear that not considering yourself sexy does more harm than considering yourself sexy. Worrying about dry hair, feeling fat, and thinking "I have nothing to wear" are initial symptoms that indicate you have stopped feeling sexy.

In the realm of sex and intimate relationships, it is all about the mind. We have to train our minds for positive thinking. According to a survey conducted at Bundelkhand University, women up to the age of 30 have the highest desire to look sexy because their bodies, personalities, careers, and families are growing. They need all kinds of supplementary measures to enhance their family and career prospects.

From the age of 30 to 40, almost all women are very sexy and they feel it too. Their married life is the happiest at this time. In the in-laws' house, the sister-in-law and brother-in-law roam around, and in the office, women of this age are the talk of everyone, from the boss to the peon. Men of almost every age and class are automatically attracted to them. During this time, women believe in their sexy nature and do not even think about this subject. After the age of 40, all problems end. You have achieved a position in your career and family.

Now, it is only up to your thinking; when your mind says you are sexy, everything will start falling into place automatically. Being sexy has nothing to do with having an attractive figure or smart attire because you can feel sexy even if you wear comfortable pajamas, wear your glasses, and make a ponytail. How sexy are you and what should you do to feel sexy? Here are some tips to help you feel sexy in different situations.

Sexy Gestures

A study conducted by Bombay University showed that people's perceptions of sexiness can change with different expressions. Some pictures of models considered very sexy were shown to people, but they did not find them sexy. Later, when the same models were shown with different expressions, people considered them sexy. You can adopt this method too.

Twenty-six-year-old dentist Saloni has a simple philosophy: "If I act sexy, I look sexy." When she goes to a party, she stares at rich and smart boys with a side glance.



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MEN OF ALMOST EVERY AGE AND CLASS ARE AUTOMATICALLY ATTRACTED TO THEM. DURING THIS TIME, WOMEN BELIEVE IN THEIR SEXY NATURE AND DO NOT EVEN THINK ABOUT THIS SUBJECT. AFTER THE AGE OF 40, ALL PROBLEMS END.

Its magic works, albeit slowly. She fixes her stole or hemline, knowing that by doing so, people's attention will be drawn towards her. Saloni also adopts old techniques, like spreading her legs and arms instead of keeping them crossed, giving an open invitation to men. If you do not dare to show this boldness, it would be better to hold a glass of drink. Life coach Ankita says, "If you feel sexy, then show it through your behaviour and image, because this will make you feel more sexy."

During Love Or Flirting

Twenty-eight-year-old bank manager Shruti believes that she always feels sexy. She gives full credit to her husband Shiva, who keeps making her feel sexy all the time. The truth is that hormones like dopamine and serotonin play an active role in maintaining the desire for love and sexual attraction toward the partner.



The wives of men in whom these hormones are working well do not have any problem in feeling sexy. Ankita also tells her life-coaching students, "The feeling that someone loves us helps us feel sexy, and that is why it is important that we first learn to love ourselves."

Your Figure

Dr. Mukesh Singh says that body shape and weight matter a lot while attracting men. If the waist size is 30 percent less than the hip size, it is a sign of high fertility as well as sexuality, and such a figure attracts men. Most models and film actresses have such a figure. Sexual health consultant Dr. Vidyottama believes that women's liveliness and agility are the centres of attraction for men. Social science professor Dr. Shanu, citing the example of actress Angelina Jolie, explains how sexy your thinking can make you. Psychologist Dr. Ahuja says that in many cultures, obesity is still associated with health and prosperity. Similarly, Sonal believes, "Men like women with a full body because often the sex appeal of women who are overly conscious about their weight decreases."

During Ovulation

Women feel very good just before ovulation. They like to wear good clothes and accessories. Their gestures and even the way they walk change. This is a sign from nature that they are fully ready to enjoy intimate moments. A study by the Biochemistry Department of the University has shown that during ovulation, the voice of women becomes sweet, and their smell becomes aphrodisiac. During the study, some women were given cotton pads to keep on their armpits and were forbidden to use perfume, deodorant, spicy food, smoke, alcohol, hormonal and contraceptive pills, etc. Later, these pads were given to men, and the pads on the first day of ovulation got the highest rating. These pads had increased the libido of men the most.

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7 Instant Proofs of You Being Sexy

- Whenever you look around, you find someone staring at you.
- You have a lot of fans and are praised without even working hard.
- You are given good marks in internal assessments, and teachers solve your problems immediately.
- Peons and clerks are always ready to help you.
- Often, strangers are eager to get acquainted with you.
- Everyone in the office wants to include you in their team.
- The boss remembers you repeatedly and includes you in important company meetings. If you notice any of these situations around you, understand that your magic is at its peak among people. Take full advantage of this opportunity by playing on the front foot.

We



THE CRYING SCHOOLGIRL

Curiosity leads into a chilling encounter. By Gouri

It was a hot, sweaty summer day when Rohith entered his 10th standard classroom, feeling a mix of nervousness and excitement. Streaks of sweat slowly trickled down his supple neck, staining his white collar a brownish colour. His heart was beating fast; it was his first day at this new school. The door opened with a creaking sound, revealing a broad, empty, dimly lit classroom. Rohith loved to be the first, so he walked to the very first chair in the classroom and sat down. He let out a deep sigh, overwhelmed by the tension and excitement of the moment.

Rohith felt increasingly awkward as he remained the only occupant of the classroom. When he dashed into the staff room, his heart sank—there was no one there. Slowly, he realised the whole school was deserted. Suddenly, he heard the sound of a girl crying. The high-pitched wailing led him back to his classroom.

Two Hours Later

Rohith felt increasingly awkward as he remained the only occupant of the classroom. When he dashed into the staff room, his heart sank—there was no one there. Slowly, he realised the whole school was deserted. Suddenly, he heard the sound of a girl crying. The high-pitched wailing led him back to his classroom. He was amazed to find that, despite the class being empty, the crying persisted.

He discovered a crack in the wall and realised the sound was coming from inside it. Curiosity peaked as he uncovered a wooden, dusty door about shoulder height, hidden behind a covering on the wall. The door led to a dark, unknown hole with steps descending into it. Part of him wanted to run out of the school, but another part pushed him to go inside and discover the source of the crying.

Standing at the edge of the door, confused, the crying suddenly ceased. Surprised, Rohith slowly opened the door. He could see nothing but pitch darkness.

As he strained his eyes to look inside, a grey, long-nailed hand popped out of the hole and grabbed his hand. Before he could make a sound, he was forcefully yanked into the darkness.

Trying to calm himself after the grip faded, Rohith reached for his phone to shed some light into the abyss. But instead of hope, he saw a terrifying pair of white, glistening teeth, blood dripping from the lipstick-covered corners of a mouth, hair hanging on both sides of the cheeks, whispering: "PREY..."

But instead of hope, he saw a terrifying pair of white, hair hanging on both sides of the cheeks, whispering: "PREY..."



One Step Out



Questioning what has been laid down.

By Mansi Chaturvedi

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I seem to be different, and so are my ways and thoughts. Today, I speak and am an answer to all that was questioned. Yet, somewhere you seem to never leave me alone because I want to live among you. You never seem satisfied with what I did, though you envy and admire what I am today. You left me alone when I thought I would have you beside me, not realising that one day you would crowd around me to be close one more time.

Harsh, you may find the expression that I shared. Boastful and arrogant, you may think of me. You never understood that I wanted to have you with me on my journey. You thought I wanted to break free, and today you want me to be with you. What has never changed is you still questioning me on whatever I do.

A little step outside and the flash of light just wanted me to step in. The cameras were clicking every corner of my existence. I stepped back into where I could be myself. A place within closed doors, where the curtains would just be there to hide my true self.



TODAY, I AM HERE WITH THE LIGHTS AROUND ME, EVEN BRIGHTER THAN I EXPECTED. STRANGE IT WAS, BUT TRUE, THAT I WANTED TO STAY IN AND BE JUST ME. I NEEDED TO WAIT OR MOVE ON IN THIS BRIGHTNESS, TOO BRIGHT TO SEE. WASN'T THIS THE HAPPINESS I WANTED WHERE MY DREAMS BECAME A STORY AND MY PRESENCE THE SPOTLIGHT?

I knew success would come with so much baggage. Yet, to reach this height, I carried a baggage of hard work, dreams, desires, expectations, adjustments, failures, criticism, and a lot more. It was quite a heavy baggage that I carried up with me. In fact, at times it seemed not worth it, and I had serious doubts about myself. There were days when the sunlight felt like a hindrance to where I wanted to be. In this journey, there were times when I just sat in a dark, lonely corner, crying my heart out.

There were times when I was left alone as my dreams did not match those who had some for me. At times, what I did or how I dressed or behaved was regarded as inappropriate and disrespectful. It led me to question myself. Was I going to live this one life I had, in a way pleasing to others while I shut down everything that knocked in me? At times, I wanted just that one hand on my shoulder to tell me, "You dream, and I will be there to fulfill." In this journey, I did have a few hands that held me and some shoulders to lean and cry on. But it seemed a struggle that I had to go through if I wanted to move up the ladder to make a living to satisfy myself and not others.

Today, I am here with the lights around me, even brighter than I expected. Strange it was, but true, that I wanted to stay in and be just me. I needed to wait or move on in this brightness, too bright to see. Wasn't this the happiness I wanted where my dreams became a story and my presence the spotlight?

I had worked hard and escaped from the clutches of society's norms and its unfair and illogical explanations for everything. Well, I still am just one of you. The difference is that I took that step that, unfortunately, you never did for any reason, which I am not here to judge.

I DESIRED AND ACHIEVED A PLACE THAT ALL THE EYES LOOKED UP TO. I COULD GET HEADS TURNED WITH MY ARRIVAL OR PRESENCE. I GOT MYSELF A LIFE THAT WAS AN ACHIEVEMENT OF MY ASPIRATIONS.

I desired and achieved a place that all the eyes looked up to. I could get heads turned with my arrival or presence. I got myself a life that was an achievement of my aspirations. I adorned the shimmer and glitter of being the star amidst the millions that now attracted so many. A complete makeover it was; my life was now a story to read, and my steps made the headlines. My looks were now the cover page, and my style was iconic. Strange it was, but true, that whatever I did or wherever I went, I had followers. People watched me every second, every day. They heard and read everything that I spoke, even if it was irrelevant or casual. My words, once spoken in accordance or judged by society's rule book, were now the talk of the town. My style and behaviour became a trend now, which was once questionable. I always wanted to break the chain and step out to make a mark. It's been some years now, but what never seems to change is me asking for more and something different than what I had. It was not that I was unhappy, but at times, I felt caged. I felt claustrophobic in a crowd. The step that I very happily took now made me hesitate to come out. I had made a mark, and I was now a name to be reckoned with.





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Blazing Desires

There was something that was still with me. I still had the person who was with me since the days I was struggling to break free. The person who wanted to make her dreams come true. The person who was putting in all the effort to open the gates to step out. The person who wanted an identity of her own. The person who still wanted the warm, cosy nest called home. A place where she could just relax, be herself, and have no prying eyes around. The person who was being scolded for her indifference to things and her zeal to change what had long been established. This person was no other but a person who had the courage to dream, despite the eyes that looked at her making her seem strange in the place she belonged. Today, I have successfully gotten

what I wanted, but what changed was that it was no longer my life but a life that belonged to the people around me. I had a new struggle every day; I had to keep my identity and have my own life. I wanted to walk casually, however I wanted. I wanted to be with my dear ones, enjoying every moment in privacy. I wanted to burst into laughter, scream, or shout. I wanted to jump around, dance freely, and sing my heart out. This is what I lost, and now I had to request and be harsh at times to live my life. Every word I spoke was now analyzed and mostly criticised, which was normal a few years back. I guess what people fail to understand is that the ones who have reached heights and made a name are humans just like them. They have their emotions and feelings; they too have their good

times and bad. They do feel and get hurt, and they do feel loved. What people never realise is that we too live and are not objects or products that need to satisfy or meet the demands of consumers. We need our moments; we need to live free and be left alone when we are living our daily lives.

We love being admired and given importance because we worked hard for it. We love being clicked and spoken to. We love the fact that we have set examples for others and give hope that dreams do come true. But somewhere, we need a boundary, our own space, because apart from our work, nothing belongs to you. We have our private moments, and our lives are just for us. I guess that is something that is never understood, and a little awkwardness from our side changes so much about us. A little gesture wins hearts, and a little aloofness gives way to criticism. We are humans and are not perfect, just like any other human being. Everything comes with its highs and lows, its advantages and disadvantages. I love the spotlight on me; I love the appreciation, and I welcome criticism, but only if it is related to my work and not to what I do personally in my life. If you look up to the star, let it shine; do not be the cloud that makes it difficult for someone to look up to me to make a wish, which you never know might come true. Let me be the silver lining for someone who feels low and broken.

Let me be the bird who knows the sky is there for me to fly free, not to be hunted down and trapped in a cage for you to see. Do click, do make me stand out not for what goes on in my life but for what I bring out of the situation I am in to put a smile on your face. To give you moments to entertain yourself in this busy life. Let me step out of my nest not to be questioned on how I behaved or what I said. I have answered questions that were raised when I struggled to reach here, not to be questioned again for something that simply belongs to me, and that is my space, my life. **We**

Beauty Queries



Q & A

I FREQUENTLY STRUGGLE WITH under-eye bags and dark circles. What effective methods can I use to combat them and brighten my under-eye area?

Under-eye bags and dark circles can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetics, lack of sleep, allergies, and ageing. While getting enough sleep and managing allergies are important, topical treatments can also help diminish their appearance. Look for eye creams containing ingredients like vitamin C, retinol, or caffeine, which can help reduce puffiness and brighten dark circles. Additionally, applying cold compresses or chilled cucumber slices can temporarily constrict blood vessels and reduce swelling around the eyes.

WHAT TECHNIQUES CAN I use to achieve a natural-looking makeup base? I prefer a makeup look that enhances my features without looking too heavy or overdone.

The key to a natural-looking makeup base is to focus on enhancing your skin's natural beauty rather than masking imperfections. Start with a hydrating primer to smooth the skin's texture and create a seamless canvas for makeup application. Choose a lightweight foundation or tinted moisturiser matched to your skin tone and blend it well using a damp makeup sponge or brush. Conceal any blemishes or discoloration with a creamy concealer, focusing on areas that need extra coverage. Finish with a sheer setting powder to mattify the skin and prolong the wear of your makeup without looking cakey.

AS SOMEONE WHO LOVES wearing lipstick but dislikes dealing with smudging and feathering, what can I do to prevent my lipstick from smudging throughout the day?

Feathering and smudging are common issues, especially with creamy or bold lip colours. To prevent this, start by prepping your lips with a gentle exfoliating scrub to remove any dry, flaky skin. Follow up with a hydrating lip balm to moisturise and smooth the lips. Use a lip liner in a shade similar to your lipstick to outline your lips and fill them in completely, creating a base for your lipstick to adhere to. Choose long-wearing, matte formulas or layers with a translucent setting powder to lock in colour and prevent transfer. Finally, blot any excess product with a tissue and reapply a thin layer of lipstick for a clean, polished finish.

AS SOMEONE WHO BATTLES frizzy hair, especially in humid weather, what's the best way to tame my locks and keep them smooth and sleek?

Humidity can wreak havoc on hair, causing it to become frizzy and unruly. To combat frizz in humid weather, start with a smoothing shampoo and conditioner formulated to tame frizz and hydrate the hair. After washing, apply a leave-in conditioner or anti-frizz serum to damp hair, focusing on the mid-lengths and ends to seal the cuticle and prevent moisture from penetrating. When styling, avoid heat styling whenever possible, as this can exacerbate frizz. Instead, opt for hairstyles that minimise manipulation, such as braids or buns, to reduce friction and keep hair smooth and sleek.

DURING THE MONSOON SEASON, the high humidity causes my hair to frizz uncontrollably. What steps can I take to effectively manage and reduce frizz during these months?

Frizz during the monsoon season is a common challenge due to the high levels of humidity, which causes hair to swell and become unruly. To manage frizz effectively, start with the foundation of your hair care routine—washing. Use a sulfate-free shampoo, which is gentler on the hair and scalp and less likely to strip natural oils that help manage frizz. After shampooing, apply a hydrating conditioner that's formulated to seal the hair cuticles and lock in moisture. This helps to smooth the hair shaft and reduce the appearance of frizz.

For added frizz control, apply a leave-in conditioner or an anti-frizz serum to damp hair.

Readers are invited to send their problems of child care and child rearing. Woman's Era will provide the answers, solutions to problems usually encountered by mothers, young and old. Address your letters (neatly written on white paper) to:

Woman's Era E-3, Jhandewala Estate, New Delhi-110 055.

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Vegetarian Delicacies

A seven-course exploration designed with small, flavourful bites, creating a memorable dining experience.

Sangria with Tea and Seasonal Fruits



Course 1

Refreshing Beginnings

Sangria with Tea and Seasonal Fruits with Posto Bora with Green Lonka Paste (Poppy Seed Roundels)

SANGRIA WITH TEA AND SEASONAL FRUITS

INGREDIENTS

140 ml pomegranate juice
20 ml litchi juice
100 ml orange juice
1 tea bag
1 inch cinnamon stick
2-3 bird's eye chilies (optional)
2-3 pinches chaat masala

2 tsp brown sugar
Fresh seasonal fruits, chopped

METHOD

In a large pitcher, combine all liquids except the chopped fruits. Add the tea bag and cinnamon stick. Refrigerate overnight. Remove the tea bag and cinnamon stick.

Before serving, add the chopped fruits to the sangria and pour into chilled glasses.

POSTO BORA WITH GREEN LONKA PASTE (POPPY SEED ROUNDELS)

INGREDIENTS

200 gm poppy seeds
6-7 green chilies
Salt, to taste
2 tsp rice flour

Posto Bora with Green Lonka Paste (Poppy Seed Roundels)



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For Coating

2 tbsp makki atta, 1 tbsp cornflour,
pinch of salt
Mustard oil, for frying

METHOD

Soak poppy seeds for 10 minutes, drain, and grind with green chilies to a fine paste on a grinding stone.

Mix in rice flour and salt (optionally add mustard oil). Shape into flat roundels. Optionally, coat with a mix of makki atta and cornflour for firmness. Pan-fry in mustard oil until crisp and browned on both sides.



Lemongrass Flavoured Corn and Mushroom Pops

Course 2

Diverse Textures

Rasgolla Chaat with Lemongrass-Scented Mushroom Corn Pops

RASGOLLA CHAAT

INGREDIENTS

2 large rasgollas
100 gm sweetened curd, blended
2 tsp imli dates chutney
3 tsp coriander amla chutney
60-70 gm bhujia
30-40 gm peanuts
Mint leaves, for garnishing
Base
4-5 salted papdis or hard toasts

METHOD

Assemble by placing a papdi as the base, top with squeezed rasgolla, bhujia, and drizzle with

chutneys. Garnish with mint leaves and optionally pomegranate seeds.

LEMONGRASS FLAVOURED CORN AND MUSHROOM POPS

INGREDIENTS

1 cup corn niblets
1 cup mushrooms, chopped
½ tsp crushed lemongrass
Salt and pepper
2 tsp each of cornflour and rice flour
Oil for deep frying
Bread crumbs (optional)

METHOD

Mix all ingredients, form into small balls or pops. Optionally roll in breadcrumbs. Deep fry until golden and crispy.



Rasgolla Chaat

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Course 3

Hearty and Wholesome

Broccoli Schnitzel with
Hasselback Potatoes and Tomaten
Salat

BROCCOLI SCHNITZEL

1 medium broccoli head, cut into
2cm thick slices

For Seasonings

Salt

Pepper

3 tsp garlic paste

1 tsp green chilies paste

2 tbsp curd

For Slurry

3 tbsp each of rice flour
and cornflour

Salt,

Pepper,

Water

Bread crumbs for coating

Oil for pan frying

METHOD

Marinate broccoli slices in curd
mixture. Dip in slurry, coat with
breadcrumbs, and chill for an hour.
Pan fry in oil until golden on both
sides.

HASSELBACK POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

2 large potatoes, unpeeled

Olive oil, for brushing

For Seasoning

½ tsp each of turmeric

Red chili powder

Salt

METHOD

Make vertical cuts in each potato,
rub with seasoning, and bake at
180°C until crispy.

TOMATEN SALAT

INGREDIENTS

3 tomatoes, quartered

3 tsp spring onions or chives

For Dressing

2 tsp olive oil

1 tsp vinegar

1 tsp sugar syrup or honey

Salt

Pepper

METHOD

Combine tomatoes and onions.
Toss with dressing and serve
chilled.

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Tomaten Salat



Hasselback Potatoes

Broccoli Schnitzel

Colocasia Tuk

Musk Melon, Apple, and Crunchy Papad Salad

Brinjal Chutney

Course 4

Exotic Tastes

Colocasia Tuk with Okra Chutney and Musk Melon, Apple, and Crunchy Papad Salad

Sprinkle with mixed spices and serve hot.

COLOCASIA TUK

INGREDIENTS

250 gms Colocasia (Arvi or Kacha Alu)
 Oil for deep frying
 Salt
 Spice powder
 Portions of chili powder
 Turmeric powder
 Amchur powder

METHOD

Boil the colocasia with the skin until tender but not overcooked. Peel and cut into quarter-inch roundels or use whole if small. Sprinkle salt on the pieces and deep fry in hot oil until brown. Remove and flatten each piece with your palm and fry again to enhance crispiness.

BRINJAL CHUTNEY

INGREDIENTS

1 brinjal (approx. 200 gms), cubed
 1 tsp turmeric powder
 Salt
 Mustard oil for frying
 1 inch piece cinnamon
 3 cardamoms
 1 bay leaf
 2 dried red chilies
 ½ tsp red chili powder
 2 tsp vinegar
 3 tbsp jaggery powder

METHOD

Sprinkle salt and turmeric on cubed brinjal and deep fry until golden. In the same pan, leave about 2 tsp of oil and add whole spices. Once spluttering, add fried brinjal, water, and other spices. Simmer until the desired consistency is reached, add jaggery and poppy seed paste, cool, and store for use.

MUSK MELON, APPLE, AND CRUNCHY PAPAD SALAD

INGREDIENTS

1 bowl of musk melon pieces
 ½ bowl apple pieces
 ½ bowl papaya pieces

For Dressing

2 tsp salad oil
 2 tsp jaggery powder
 ½ tsp mustard paste
 2 tsp lemon juice

For Crunch

2 roasted papads
 Optional garnish: crumbled cheddar cheese

METHOD

Mix dressing ingredients in a bottle and shake well. Combine fruits in a bowl, pour dressing over, and mix.

Garnish with crushed roasted papad and serve immediately to maintain crunchiness. Optionally add roasted peanuts or cheddar cheese.

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Course 5

Mediterranean Fusion

Feta Cheese Bruschetta Topped with Bharwa Baingan and Served with Kokum Mojito

FETA CHEESE BRUSCHETTA

INGREDIENTS

2-3 pieces of Bruschetta or garlic toast
160 gms feta cheese, crumbled
1 chopped green chili
½ tsp oregano powder

METHOD

Toast bread and spread crumbled feta cheese mixture on top. Top with Bharave Baingan and serve at room temperature.

BHARWA BAINGAN (STUFFED BRINJALS)

INGREDIENTS

250 gms small brinjals
3-4 tbsp oil
2 tsp cumin seeds
3 tbsp tomato purée
2 tsp ginger-garlic paste
Spices
Pinches of turmeric
Coriander powder
Cumin powder
Hing
Red chili powder
Amchur
Salt



Bharwa Baingan (Stuffed Brinjals)

METHOD

Make slits in brinjals to form pockets and stuff with spice mix.

In a pan, heat oil, add cumin seeds, then add stuffed brinjals, tomato purée, and ginger-garlic paste. Cover and cook on low heat until tender.

KOKUM MOJITO

INGREDIENTS

1 cup kokum juice
1 tbsp honey
1 green chili, finely chopped
200 ml lemon-based aerated drink
12-15 mint leaves
2-3 quartered lemon pieces
Chaat masala for garnishing

METHOD

In a pitcher, muddle mint, lemon, and green chili. Add kokum juice, aerated drink, and honey. Mix well. Serve chilled, garnished with chaat masala.

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Kokum Mojito



Feta Cheese Bruschetta



Kale, Leek Salad

Baked Cheesy Aubergine

Hing Flavoured Potatoes

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Course 6

Hearty Comfort

Baked Cheesy Aubergine Served with Kale, Leek Salad, and Hing Flavoured Potatoes

KALE, LEEK SALAD

INGREDIENTS

100 gms kale leaves
60 gms leek
100 gms green or red apples
50 gms pears (optional)
Dried cranberries
Blueberries
Walnuts and pine nuts to taste
2 tsp balsamic dressing

METHOD

Combine Kale leaves, leek, apples, pears, berries and nuts

dress with balsamic dressing, and serve chilled.

BAKED CHEESY AUBERGINE

INGREDIENTS

1 large aubergine, sliced into half-inch circles
For Topping
300 gms boiled mashed potatoes
200 gms blanched grated broccoli
1 tbsp butter
2 tsp mixed herbs
2 tsp chili flakes
2 cups Parmesan or mozzarella cheese

METHOD

Place aubergine slices on a lined baking tray. Mix topping ingredients, place a portion on each aubergine slice.

Top with cheese, and bake at 180°C for 20-25 minutes until cheese is melted and browned.

HING FLAVOURED POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

250 gms baby potatoes
1 tbsp mustard oil
3-4 pinches hing (asafoetida)
Salt
½ tsp red chili powder
½ tsp amchur powder

METHOD

Boil potatoes until half-cooked, peel, season, and set aside. Heat mustard oil, add hing and spiced potatoes, and cook until golden and tender.



Marmalade Flavoured Gujiya

Pears Stewed in Pomegranate Juice

Mango Chutney

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Course 7

Decadent Finale

Pears Stewed in Pomegranate Juice and Orange Zest, Marmalade Flavoured Gujiyas with Green Mango Relish

PEARS STEWED IN POMEGRANATE JUICE

INGREDIENTS

1 pear, halved and seeded
300 ml pomegranate juice
100 ml optional red wine
2 tbsp brown sugar
1 tsp orange zest

METHOD

In a saucepan, bring juice, wine, water, sugar, and zest to a boil.

Add pear halves and simmer until tender. Serve chilled with syrup.

MARMALADE FLAVOURED GUJIYA

INGREDIENTS

For Covering

1 cup flour
1 pinch salt
2 pinches baking soda
3 tsp sugar

For Filling

3 tbsp ghee
150 gms desiccated coconut
100 gms khoya
250 ml marmalade
2 tbsp sugar (if required)
2 tbsp ghee

METHOD

Prepare filling by frying coconut in ghee, then mixing

with marmalade and khoya. Cool. Prepare dough, fill with marmalade mixture, shape into gujiyas, and deep fry until golden.

MANGO CHUTNEY

INGREDIENTS

200 gms green mangoes
1 bay leaf
2 dried red chillies
1 inch piece cinnamon
2 cardamoms
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp red chili powder
150 gms sugar
1 tbsp mustard oil and salt

METHOD

Peel and chop mangoes. Heat oil, add spices, then mangoes. Add water and simmer until mangoes are tender. Add sugar and cook to desired consistency.

We

Cope & Hope

Balancing love and duty in elder care.

By S. Radha Prathi

Yes! Ours is a venerable culture that reveres its elderly. We never seem to tire of taking their blessings and seeking their moral support from time to time. Yet, when it is time for us to care for them or nurse them back to health, we often find it a Herculean task. This piece is dedicated to those wonderful people in the family and outside of it who have taken it upon themselves to make life meaningful, healthy, and cherishable for their loved ones sailing through the sunset years of their lives.

Sometimes, the best of our intentions take a beating, not because we are not doing our bit well, but because the recipient at the other end does not seem to respond well to the caretaker's agenda.

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Nine times out of ten, it is a strong sense of self-respect that comes in the way of accepting help of any sort – be it financial, medical, mental, or physical. People who have been independent in every way for four or five decades of their lives will definitely find it unsettling to seek help, sometimes even for their basic needs. While we salute their sense of dignity and self-esteem, caretakers also find these qualities a hindrance in carrying out their duties towards their seniors and help them leading a normal life. A discussion on the subject with a cross-section of people revealed that senior citizens unknowingly impose subtle pressures on their loved ones, who serve them with dedication.

They Seek Love And Support

If you have to go out on a holiday or a party with your family and cannot take the elderly along because of their health condition, you could arrange for their stay with another child of theirs or a family friend. While this is the most practical and economical solution, most of the times, the elderly feel sidelined when asked to stay away from what they consider to be their headquarters, even if they perfectly understand the need to do so. For example, Raji (name changed), a septuagenarian, was asked to spend a fortnight with her second son, whose wife she did not get along with, while her first son's family went on a tour availing LTC. The old lady, who had just had differences with her teenage grandchildren, thought the arrangement had been made to get rid of her. The following day, she left home as usual for the temple and did not return.

Her insecurity made her family run from pillar to post, and when they found her, they cancelled their programme to avoid further conflict. Sometimes, caretakers, mostly women, find it frustrating to cook different types of food to cater to ailing elders. Life can become monotonous in such circumstances. However, adding spice to this situation by involving other adults in

Tips for Caregivers

- Reserve a portion of your income to meet sudden medical expenses that may occur unexpectedly. Getting health insurance for the family is also a good idea.
- Do not isolate the elders in the house. They will be happy to carry out tasks that do not tire them out. Allow them to speak or give advice; they may have a point that could help solve a problem.
- Whenever a festival, function, party, or wedding is scheduled in the family, keep the seniors informed and give them a sense of importance by having them invite the main guests, even if only over the telephone. It is also a good idea to include their close friends or colleagues in the event.
- Educate and encourage elders to use the latest technology to keep in touch with their loved ones living abroad. If teenagers or older children are involved as tutors, the arrangement will keep both parties usefully engaged and strengthen family bonds. Once the aged become tech-savvy, they can be kept occupied by teaching them to scan piles of family albums into e-copies, savouring



old memories and sharing them fondly.

- Keep them updated about aspects of modern life like using the internet, e-banking, paying bills online, and consulting doctors and lawyers online. This can make them feel independent despite being wheelchair-bound at times. However, if they are reluctant to learn, take over the additional responsibility without pressuring them.
- Maintain copies of their medical records, prescriptions, contact numbers and addresses, personal and property documents, passbooks, and passport details so that they are always available when the need arises.

TRUE, WE LIVE IN A RUSHED WORLD WHERE WE HAVE TO DO SO MUCH IN VERY LITTLE TIME. YET, IF WE CHART OUT OUR PRIORITIES, WE CAN KEEP OUR ELDERS HAPPY WITHOUT COMPROMISING OUR PERSONAL LIVES, FUN, AND GAMES.

the house to take turns cooking can help. Young mothers often find it very annoying when elders interfere in support of the children whenever she is trying to discipline them. Understanding that all grandparents

adore their grandchildren and cannot bear to see them being scolded or punished can help. One could work out a way to whisk the kids away from the presence of the elders before disciplining them. A little tact can save the situation.

It is difficult for an old oak tree to bend, and the same goes for people who are used to living and being treated in a certain way. Instead of fretting about the limitations of life, we could make the best of a bad bargain and set an example for posterity by carrying out our duties cheerfully.

True, we live in a rushed world where we have to do so much in very little time. Yet, if we chart out our priorities, we can keep our elders happy without compromising our personal lives, fun, and games.

We

Personal Problems



IHAVE DREAMED OF A CAREER AS a singer since childhood. I am a 22-year-old girl. In college, I joined a band that used to play at open mics and small events. We were actually loved by the audience and I always believed that this band could help me gain the recognition I wanted. But I made a mistake. The bassist, who is also the one who started the band, proposed to me. I rejected him as I didn't want to be in a relationship with anyone I'm working with. Then at a party, he got mad when I started making out with someone. He has been trying to sideline me since then. He hired another vocalist saying we

need more voices for the songs, but the new vocalist gets to sing more than I do. Should I have just accepted his proposal? It would have helped me get more space in the band and even meet new people in the industry. But I don't love him.

It's essential to prioritise your own feelings and boundaries. Accepting a proposal solely for professional gain may not have been the best choice for your emotional well-being and long-term happiness. Your decision to reject a romantic relationship within the band because it didn't align with your personal values is entirely valid. It's crucial to maintain professional boundaries, especially in a collaborative and creative space like a band. The bassist's reaction to your rejection and subsequent attempts to sideline you are concerning behaviours. In a healthy and supportive band dynamic, members should communicate openly about personal and professional matters.

If you feel comfortable, talk to the bassist about your concerns and how it's affecting your role in the band. Communication can sometimes lead to resolution and a better understanding of each other's perspectives. As for the new vocalist singing more than you do, it's important to assert your role in the band. Communicate with the other members and express your desire to contribute more vocally. Share your passion for the music and your commitment to the band's success. If the imbalance persists, you may need to check whether this band is the right fit for your career goals and artistic fulfilment. Ultimately, your success in the music industry should be built on your talent, passion, and authentic connections. While the bassist's proposal may have seemed like a shortcut to gaining recognition,

compromising your emotions and integrity for professional gain can have negative consequences in the long run.

Continue pursuing your dream of a singing career, whether within this band or exploring other opportunities. Seek out collaborations with people who share your artistic vision and respect your personal boundaries. Remember, your talent and dedication will shine through, and the right opportunities will come your way without compromising your values.

IAM A 42-YEAR-OLD MARRIED WOMAN with two kids who are teenagers. Two years ago, I was taken to a psychologist due to some concerns raised by my kids. I was not eating well, sleeping well, nor was I ever in a good mood. My elder son was concerned that I might be depressed. After a lot of insisting from his end, I agreed to start therapy. Then, I was diagnosed with depression and was prescribed some medicines that helped me feel better. Now, a few weeks ago, I was told that I have bipolar disorder. I do not understand it and it sounds serious. My doctor tried to explain it to me but I don't think I have it. My children and husband are concerned and I hate seeing them like this. What can I do to change?

Being diagnosed with bipolar disorder can indeed be a lot to process, but understanding the condition and taking steps toward managing it can make a significant difference. If you are concerned that it is not true, sit with your doctor and ask in detail as to the reason behind this diagnosis. It's crucial to acknowledge that a diagnosis doesn't define you, but it's a tool to better understand and manage your mental health.

Your family is concerned for you because they love you. The best way you can put their minds at ease is by taking care of yourself. Be open to your doctor's treatment options and learn how you can move forward. If you have concerns or doubts about the diagnosis, it's essential to discuss them. A second opinion or seeking clarification from another mental health professional might also provide more clarity. Consistent therapy is

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crucial. Continue attending therapy sessions to explore your feelings, thoughts, and coping mechanisms. Therapy can be a safe space to discuss your concerns, fears, and strategies for managing bipolar disorder. Adhere to your medication to help stabilise mood swings and manage symptoms effectively. If you experience side effects or have concerns about the medication, communicate with your doctor.

Involve your family in the process and encourage open conversations about how they can support you. Family therapy can also be beneficial in fostering understanding and effective communication. Establish healthy lifestyle habits. Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and sufficient sleep can contribute to overall mental well-being.

Be patient with yourself. Mental health is a journey, and it's okay to experience ups and downs. Celebrate small victories and progress, and ask for support when needed. You have a support system in your family, and working together can make a positive impact on your mental health. Remember, seeking help and actively participating in your mental health care is a courageous and positive step. With the right support and strategies, you can navigate bipolar disorder and lead a fulfilling life.

●
MY PARENTS HATE MY BOYFRIEND because he is from a different caste and class. I am a 25-year-old woman and I have had a good relationship with my parents until now. They used to control me and were overbearing but all in all, I understood that they had my best interests at heart. When they found out about my boyfriend, they were okay with him until they figured out his class and caste. My boyfriend is of my age and we met in college. We have been together for two years now and I am pretty sure that I want to marry him. But we won't marry until both of us are in a successful position in life. He comes from a middle-class family in a small town and right now, he wants to help improve his family's financial condition. I respect that about him.

But my parents cannot accept him despite his good nature and virtues. I keep receiving text messages and calls demanding that I reconsider my option. They also say that I have disappointed them with this decision and that I will come back on my own when I realise that I won't live as comfortably with him. I want to stand up for both of us and I want to choose him, but I am sad that my parents will not accept him. I just wanted them to partake in my happiness. What should I do?

This is an issue faced by many in this country due to its rigid ideas about marriage. According to your parents, they might still have your best interests in mind but it is misplaced. Try and educate them about how times have changed; caste and class are not a basis of marriage anymore. Tell them that your boyfriend is capable and takes care of his family, which is a sign of his virtue.

His background does not matter since both of you will be equals in marriage. In case they do not understand, you need to make a decision. Check your priorities. Do you want to continue your relationship and exercise your free will? Or do you want to maintain a close relationship with your parents and lose your boyfriend?

Ultimately, it depends on you. If you think you can gather the courage to go against your parents' wishes and get married to a boy of your choice, then be careful. Your parents might cause you trouble even after you marry and you also need to be prepared for handling your new family's financial needs with your boyfriend.

Without the support of elders, venturing into newly married life can be daunting. But you can reach out to your friends and other family members for support. On the bright side, if your parents have had a good relationship with you so far, they will eventually come around when they see you happy and thriving. Be patient with them, it will take some time for them to come out of their old mindset.

I'M A 27-YEAR-OLD STUDENT, AND I struggle to juggle my coursework with part-time work. I often find myself procrastinating and leaving things until the last minute, which causes me stress and anxiety. For example, last semester, I had to pull an all-nighter to finish a paper because I had procrastinated for weeks.

I know that I need to improve my time management skills to reduce my stress and improve my academic performance, but I'm not sure how to do so. How can I improve my time management skills and stay on top of my responsibilities as a student?

Improving your time management skills is essential for staying on top of your responsibilities as a student. Start by creating a study schedule and breaking down tasks into manageable chunks. Use tools like calendars or planners to organise your time effectively and prioritise tasks based on deadlines and importance. Identify and eliminate distractions to stay focused, and seek support from a mentor or academic advisor for guidance on improving your time management skills. Remember that effective time management can reduce stress and improve your academic performance.

Have you a personal problem of any nature, which you hesitate to discuss with your family or friends? Share it with us. We will try to help you.

Address your letters to:
Woman's Era E-3, Jhandewala Estate,
New Delhi-110 055.





Naval

AVIATION MUSEUM

Why must you visit? By Bindu Saxena

Flying over the sea is not for the fainthearted. Taking off and landing on a small, moving, rolling, and pitching deck, often during the night, requires extreme skill, precision, and nerves of steel. The complexities of flying over the sea include the absence of visual references, having to learn to fly predominantly by instruments, and a lack of diversionary airfields or decks where one may need to land in an emergency.

I have been visiting different places of interest in Goa over the past decade. The beaches, shacks, and seafood always fascinate me. In short, I love the overall feel of Goa as it is one of my favourite places to relax. A realisation struck me that I had not seen everything Goa has to offer, so on this visit, I decided to venture off my beaten path and witness one of the top five places here that have monumental educational significance for the kids

who accompanied us. Let me share my experiences of visiting this iconic and one of the two naval museums in India – the Naval Aviation Museum. It is a military museum established in 1998 to showcase the importance, functioning, and evolution of the Indian Naval Air Arm through models, exhibits, and photographs that substantiate the evolution of the Indian Naval Air Arm throughout its history. This fully refurbished museum was dedicated to aviation



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enthusiasts on 4 April 2022 by Rear Admiral Philipose G. Pynumootil, Flag Officer Commanding the Goa Area.

The museum is beautifully organised, superbly designed, fully air-conditioned, and exudes a stunning ambiance. It is worth visiting as it offers excellent information for all ages, making it an enjoyable, inspirational, and enthusiastic experience, especially if one is interested in aviation or history. Spread over nearly three lakh square feet on about 40 acres of ground, the museum has a few decommissioned aircraft on display in its vast open expanse.

The enclosed area of the premises is a double-storey building with several attractive galleries displaying naval equipment used in prominent battles and a simulation room with exhibits such as weapons, arms,

THE WALL NAMED “THE FIRST, THE LEGENDS” CELEBRATES TREND-SETTERS, AND DRISHTI IS A PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF AIR OPERATIONS IN THE 1971 INDO-PAK WAR. IT HAS AN EXTENSIVE GRANITE PLAQUE PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE BRAVE SOULS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN SERVICE TO THEIR COUNTRY.

uniforms, vintage documents, photographs, a world-class library with about 200 aircraft and spacecraft, thousands of artifacts, and millions of rare photographs. It is a colossal presentation delightfully laid out!

There are no guided tours, but one is not required either because every exhibit is self-explanatory with details printed below it. You can start from any corner and end your journey as per your choice. There is no specific path one has to follow. However, the people who work and guard it lead visitors through a magnificent journey of naval aviation amicably.

One can spend as much time as one wishes. People typically spend up to 1.5 hours, but a cursory glance can take 30 minutes or so, depending on the level of interest one shows. The good thing is that photography is allowed, so one can easily store the memory album on their device.

Careful Curation

Reflecting the impressive transformation of naval aviation over the years, its carefully curated facilities include Adhvan - a timeline history of naval aviation, Advitiya - a glimpse of air stations and squadrons of the Indian Navy, Sashakt - a peek into aviation support units, and Vimaan - an elegant collection of contemporary and vintage aircraft models. A dedicated engine bay displays the rarest of aviation engines. The wall named “The First, The Legends” celebrates trend-setters, and Drishti is a pictorial





representation of air operations in the 1971 Indo-Pak war. It has an extensive granite plaque paying tribute to the brave souls who gave their lives in service to their country. There is a wall dedicated to the visit of the former President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, as well. Vyuha is the selfie corner where visitors can record their memories. The museum is a great place to visit for aviation enthusiasts and curious tourists alike. As soon as I arrived, I was impressed with the attractive entry and the big, bold signboard in navy blue and white. I felt like a child, eager to enter because just a few steps after we entered, I saw the first sentinel, a dark blue bulking form of the Super Constellation, an aircraft initially used as a passenger plane by Indian Airlines.

THERE IS A SONOBUOY ROOM WITH A COLLECTION OF SONOBUOYS, SENSORS USED BY AIRCRAFT FOR THE DETECTION OF UNDERWATER ENEMY TARGETS. THE SURAKSHA ROOM HAS VARIOUS GEAR AND GADGETS USED FOR PROTECTION, INCLUDING THE FLOATING DINGHY, PARACHUTE, EJECTOR SEAT, AND PILOT OVERALLS.

It was handed over to the Air Force as a transport vehicle and, in due course, was passed on to the Indian Navy. It was eventually decommissioned but has remained within the Naval purview. Currently, it is positioned in this museum as one of the thirteen eye candies in the open area interspersed by trees, shrubs, and paths. It felt like an aviation garden. The entire view of 13 aircraft presents an impressive display. It has planes, helicopters, aircraft engines, and their parts. To name a few, there are Short Sealand, Fairey Firefly, HAL HT-2, de Havilland Vampire, Sea Hawk, Breguet Alizé, and others. The entire view in the open area looked so impressive! I felt like a lost child, eager to run to the next exhibit. I got myself clicked as if this was the first time I had been closer to an aircraft.

Earliest Memories

Since childhood, these winged, engine-driven vehicles, capable of moving through the air and transporting us quickly, won my affection. I resonated with the crazy dimension of a child I saw in the film *Mili*. I was in a trance and rejoiced every moment of my presence among these metal birds, taking positions even though the weather was a bit sultry. There is more to this joy that I would unravel.

Other than the aircraft fleet in the open, amenities include a Glass Cockpit Café. The museum also boasts a gift shop that sells several souvenirs fashioned along the lines of the exhibits in the museum and a dedicated ample parking space. There is a Sonobuoy Room with a collection of sonobuoys, sensors used by aircraft for the detection of underwater enemy targets. The Suraksha room has various gear and gadgets used for protection at sea and in the air, including the floating dinghy, parachute, ejector seat, and pilot overalls.

Perhaps the most interesting room is the Multimedia room, which houses the Jet Cockpit simulator a programme that allows visitors to simulate the experience of being in



the cockpit of a fighter jet. A granite slab adorns one of the museum walls known as 'Shradhanjali,' with the names of all those who have given their lives in the service of their country. These are the Naval Pilots from the year 1958 to 1997. Adjacent to this plaque is the Meditation room – STUTI. I would say it is the heart of this place. Its entrance is beautifully carved in graceful wood art and exudes peace and serenity.

The museum also houses a photo gallery that commemorates all the major naval battles that took place since the formation of the Indian Navy. Different walls have detailed information on various activities. Located near Bogmala, on the Vasco-



THE INDIAN NAVY HOLDS THE PROUD DISTINCTION OF HAVING DEVELOPED A FORMIDABLE NAVAL AIR ARM WITH DAREDEVIL PILOTS, AS WELL AS AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, UNMATCHED IN THE REGION.

This mighty place of tourist interest has a rubber-necking factor and inspires people to appreciate and respect the protectors of the seas and skies.

I am sure and recommend that a day spent here would always be a pleasant outing at any time of the year. It filled my day with enthusiasm. I was more appreciative of the Naval Aviation Arm of our country. Signing off with the motto of the museum, *Sham No Varunah*, meaning "May the Lord of Water be auspicious unto us." The Indian Navy holds the proud distinction of having developed a formidable Naval Air Arm with daredevil pilots, savvy tacticians, highly qualified technicians, and support crew, as well as Aircraft Carriers and Air Stations, unmatched in the region. And the saga continues...

We

Bogmalo Road, the Naval Aviation Museum is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm and remains closed on Mondays and National Holidays. In earlier years, a visitor needed to show their identity card to obtain permission to enter the main gate. But today, admission is free, and one is not required to carry any identity card either. Back in 2019, it was closed to the public for security reasons after a terrorist attack that left many injured. This military museum is one of its kind in Asia. A dedicated "Engine Bay" displaying the rarest of the engines

from the World War era is a must-see for any aviation enthusiast.

Impressions

The Naval Aviation Museum is a marvel worth visiting. It showcases the rich history and legacy of Indian Naval Aviation. It serves as an immensely educative experience for all, especially older kids, not only for its uniqueness in subject matter but also for an in-depth look at the glorious military history of the country. They would gain immense knowledge from the photos, miniature models, and memorabilia.

The day I ran like Milkha Singh!

Punctuality is the foundation for leadership. By Colonel R D Singh (Retd)

Today, the alarm clock did not ring and I was in for a big surprise. As I got up in a huff on an early winter morning, and read the time, it was five minutes to six. As second-in-command (2IC) of my unit, I had to march off the PT parade at 6 am sharp. So, I had only five minutes to get ready, reach the unit one km away, and take the parade from the adjutant. "I had it today," I muttered to myself, without disturbing my wife, sleeping blissfully. Here I was, back to my academy style as a cadet. Everything was fast forward. In the next one minute, I was in my PT dress, and on the road (not even going to the loo, what to talk of shaving). I had to cover one km to my unit in the next three and half minutes, leaving 30 seconds for taking the report from the Adjutant. So, I ran like Milkha Singh, from a totally cold start. I was sprinting in the dark, hoping to make it in seconds. Bladder full, eyes unwashed, teeth unbrushed, but these were all unimportant at this stage. What was critical was that as 2IC of the Regiment, I should not be late and the unit should not have to wait even for a second.

Thank Goodness, heart pounding, I reached the unit in time, and straight away headed for the reporting platform in the PT field. Wasting no time, I took the report and marched off the parade at 6 am. I was so relieved not to have faltered on my cherished principle of punctuality.

That was in 1992 at Jodhpur in the 48 Armoured Regiment. We used to make it a point to strictly adhere to the laid down time, be it for a professional event or a social

function. They say time is money. In war, being on time is victory. Even today, being punctual is my habit. I hate to be late and make anyone wait. But it is sad to see that the trait of punctuality is fast disappearing, totally in the civilian world. If we

are invited to a function or calling on another officer, my wife and I always plan our time and get ready accordingly. Catering for the traffic on the way, we leave five minutes early. In case we reach the venue before time, we prefer to wait, but enter the host's house or the given venue, at the specified time. But alas! These days, when going to civil functions, we are one of the first couples to reach. At times, we have to apologise to the host for coming 'early.' Most other guests will keep dropping in at will and maybe half an hour late.

I find it very odd. By being late, you not only make others late but the entire sequence of events gets delayed. Imagine the colossal wastage of individual and national time. If there is a gathering of 1000 people, and the chief guest arrives half an hour late, you have wasted 500 man-hours. Accumulate the national wastage, taking into account the length and breadth of our country. But who cares? This 'chalta hai' attitude galores. Maybe, the latecomers feel important, derive a false sense of power, or sadistic pleasure in finding others at their mercy. If one is a habitual latecomer, then I feel, his discipline will be weak in other areas also. Most likely, he will jump the queue, take shortcuts, break traffic rules, and give bribes to get away.

As a soldier, I strongly feel that punctuality is the bedrock of good discipline and discipline is the bedrock of efficiency and output. Relating it to the election manifestos of the political parties for 2024, I feel punctuality by its leaders should be added as a promise to be fulfilled. **We**



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Emotional Armour

How to protect yourself from emotional manipulation.

By Dr. Sanjay Teotia

How do you know that you are being emotionally manipulated? Emotional manipulators will try to force or project their insecurities onto you, do many things to make you insecure and doubt yourself, and blame you for their emotions. They make you believe that you want the same things or want what they want. When someone uses your emotions to get what they want, steer your behaviour, or influence your ideals, that's known as emotional manipulation. Manipulation is the act of trying to control something or someone. We are most vulnerable when we allow our emotions to be manipulated. Do you realise how often in a day you get manipulated?

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Our families and friends often try to control us through our emotions, either deliberately or instinctively, but we are also manipulated in many hidden ways that we may or may not recognise.

Humans, as creatures with their own thought processes, are not easy to control. You have your own set of wants, needs, and interests that guide you through life. When someone else wants to control your journey and can't do so physically, they might turn to tactics of emotional manipulation. As malicious as it sounds, emotional manipulation is not always the product of conscious thought. It can be an ingrained habit or second nature as a result of trauma or adverse experiences during childhood.

Some people who experience abuse develop manipulative behaviours because their abusers punished them for trying to express their needs in healthy ways. Others act manipulatively because they grew up in households where that was routine behaviour and didn't get a chance to learn other ways to communicate.

Emotional Manipulation In Relationships

In a relationship, a partner might try to manipulate your emotions to change your mind about having sex or doing anything else. When people use their emotions deliberately to try and convince you to do what they want, that's coercion. Sexual trauma can happen in many ways and doesn't always involve physical force. Sexual coercion, for example, happens when someone pressures or manipulates you to have sexual contact when you don't want to. It can be confusing and deeply distressing.

You might know that what happened was not right but might not fully understand how or why. You might even believe they could not have assaulted you since you said 'yes' in the end. True consent is given voluntarily. If you only gave consent because you wanted the other person to stop pressuring or

threatening you, you didn't really consent.

If you think your office is not exploiting your fears or other emotions, think again. Bosses, colleagues, and competitors are all at it. Those closest to us have the maximum power to hurt us because we have handed them the most potent weapons to use against us by willingly confessing our emotional weaknesses to them.

When relationships break, panic and grief overtake rational, loving behaviour. Only extremely mature, intelligent people can hold themselves back from exploiting vulnerabilities they have been privy to in closer times.

How do you protect yourself from emotional manipulation? Identify the signs, and set boundaries. Stay calm and rational, assert yourself, heal yourself, and learn from it. Your boundaries are personal limits. Pay attention to ways that your boundaries are violated, ignored, or shamed. Pay attention to the ways that your body might be alerting you to danger through increased anxiety or feelings of helplessness.

We must understand that emotions are as critical to our well-being as they are dangerous if allowed to be exploited. After all, it is said that one of the deepest forms of love is to allow yourself to be emotionally vulnerable with the one you adore. Emotional intelligence is

a skill whose importance has been much extolled in recent times. But the focus in this context remains on self-awareness, regulation of emotions, and empathy. What is just as important, however, is to be aware of the triggers of your own emotions in order to guard against exploitation by undesired people and elements.

Manipulators are everywhere – in homes, schools, workplaces, you name it. Manipulators can be found wherever people are. What are the tactics manipulators use? Some are blatant, others are less obvious like bullying, creating a sense of obligation, sarcasm or cutting humor, playing the victim, sighing, slamming,

TRUE CONSENT IS GIVEN VOLUNTARILY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY. IF YOU ONLY GAVE CONSENT BECAUSE YOU WANTED THE OTHER PERSON TO STOP PRESSURING OR THREATENING YOU, YOU DIDN'T REALLY CONSENT.



banging, driving erratically, guilt trips, showering sentiments, and intentionally stalling.

Setting Boundaries

There are some interventions to use on yourself to help mitigate the manipulator's power over you. See the manipulative ploys for what they are, stop needing the other person to change, stop defending yourself, and if you start noticing that you feel defensive, stop talking and walk away. Nullify the manipulator's control over you, resolve to stop being a people pleaser, and stand firm. Emotions have a powerful impact on us and lead to straightforward responses. We want to laugh out loud, cry in pain, submerge in a wonderful experience, shout in anger, back off in fear, or fight back.

Simple enough and yet so deadly. In highly emotional states, we are more likely to be controlled or manipulated by others. The closer we are to our primary emotions – fear, anger, happiness, and sadness – the more vulnerable we are to being influenced or controlled by another. Emotional manipulators can make us feel guilty, sad, evil, unhappy,

powerless, or worse. They know all their victims' buttons and push them relentlessly.

Spotting emotional manipulation is vital. Unfortunately, deceptive behaviours are all too common in many relationships. Whether you are struggling with manipulative communications, actions, or experiences, it's crucial to safeguard your emotional health, protect your relationships, and yourself.

THE CLOSER WE ARE TO OUR PRIMARY EMOTIONS – FEAR, ANGER, HAPPINESS, AND SADNESS – THE MORE VULNERABLE WE ARE TO BEING INFLUENCED OR CONTROLLED BY ANOTHER. EMOTIONAL MANIPULATORS CAN MAKE US FEEL GUILTY, SAD, EVIL, UNHAPPY, POWERLESS, OR WORSE.

We have assembled a streamlined guide to understanding and dealing with emotional manipulation. Learn how to recognise and respond to different forms of manipulation and how to protect yourself when needed. Outsmarting emotional manipulation means protecting yourself from being taken advantage of. You can accomplish this by educating yourself, trusting your instincts, staying composed, leaning on trusted allies, practising assertive communication, seeking clarification, avoiding isolation and loneliness, staying informed, and considering professional guidance.

Breaking Patterns

Recognising manipulative phrases is vital for healthy relationships and self-protection. They include excessive flattery or charm, guilt-inducing language, gaslighting, playing the victim, emotional blackmail, defensiveness and avoidance, projection, shifting responsibilities, love bombing, and silent treatment.

We also feel emotional when we feel rejected or fear loss of love or when our value system is challenged. This often results in irrational responses that are beyond the understanding of others. Most often, our emotions emanate from previous experiences or memories and don't have much to do with the exact present situation. Once we understand that, we are able to take a more rational view of a situation and manage our emotional responses better.

This is why it is said that though we might not be able to control external circumstances, we can learn to control our own response to them. If we work on strengthening our emotional defences, we would be able to live in the present with a far more positive spirit than imaginable. Emotional intelligence in the true sense would surely belong to those evolved people who are not just mindful of the feelings and sensitivities of others but are also able to guard their own emotions from being manipulated and used. **We**



Child Challenges



Q & A

WHENEVER IT'S TIME TO LEAVE the playground, my four-year-old daughter digs in her heels and refuses to budge. I feel torn between giving in to her demands and enforcing the rules, unsure of the best approach.

Consistency is key when it comes to setting boundaries. Remind her of the rules before you even get to the playground and establish clear consequences for not following them. If she refuses to leave when it's time, calmly but firmly follow through with the consequences, showing her that you mean what you say. Additionally, consider using 'positive reinforcement' to encourage her to follow the rules willingly. This could involve praising her when she complies with instructions or offering small rewards for good behaviour. By emphasising the benefits of following rules, you motivate her to cooperate and reduce the likelihood of boundary testing in the future.

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO POTTY TRAIN MY three-year-old son for what feels like an eternity. Despite countless trips to the bathroom and enthusiastic encouragement, he refuses to use the potty, leaving me feeling frustrated and defeated.

Potty training can be a challenging milestone, but patience is key. Try making it a fun and positive experience for him by rewarding him for every successful trip to the potty with stickers or small treats. Remember to praise his efforts, even if there are setbacks, and avoid pressuring him, as this can lead to resistance. Additionally, consider using 'potty training games' to make learning more engaging for him. This could involve setting up targets in the toilet bowl for him to aim at or using a chart to track his

progress and celebrate achievements. By making potty training a playful and rewarding experience, you encourage him to embrace this new skill with enthusiasm.

DURING A PLAYDATE, MY SIX-year-old daughter struggled to share her toys with her friend. Her refusal to cooperate led to tears and frustration, leaving me feeling embarrassed and unsure of how to handle the situation.

Encourage her to take turns and share with her friend by modelling these behaviours yourself and praising her efforts when she does cooperate. Role-play different social scenarios at home to help her develop empathy and perspective-taking skills, and arrange regular playdates to provide her with opportunities to practise these skills in a supportive environment. Additionally, consider enrolling her in extracurricular activities or group settings where she can interact with peers and learn social skills in a structured environment. This allows her to broaden her social experiences and build confidence in her ability to navigate social interactions.

EVERY DAY FEELS LIKE A RACE against the clock as I try to balance work, household chores, and quality time with my kids. Despite my best efforts, I always feel like I'm falling short, leaving me feeling stressed and overwhelmed.

Finding a balance between work and family responsibilities is challenging, but prioritising self-care and seeking support when needed is crucial. Consider delegating tasks to family members or hiring help with household chores to lighten your load. Establishing routines and schedules can also help create a sense

of structure and reduce feelings of overwhelm. Remember to make time for yourself and engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, as taking care of your own well-being is crucial for your ability to be there for your family. Additionally, consider using 'time management techniques' to maximise productivity and minimise stress. This could include setting priorities, breaking tasks into smaller, manageable steps, and using tools like calendars or to-do lists to stay organised and focused. By adopting effective time management strategies, you can make the most of your time and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

MY 5-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER HAS recently become very clingy and doesn't want to be away from me, even for short periods. This is affecting her ability to attend school and socialise with friends. What can I do to help her feel more secure and independent?

Separation anxiety is common in young children, but it's important to help them build confidence and independence.

Start by creating a consistent goodbye routine that is calm and reassuring. Practise short separations at home, gradually increasing the duration as she becomes more comfortable. Praise her for her bravery when she manages to stay without you. Keep your departures and returns low-key to avoid reinforcing the idea that separation is a big deal. Encourage social interactions with peers in familiar settings, and gradually introduce new environments. If her clinginess persists or impacts her daily functioning, consider seeking advice from a child psychologist or counsellor.

Readers are invited to send their problems of child care and child rearing. Woman's Era will provide the answers, solutions to problems usually encountered by mothers, young and old. Address your letters (neatly written on white paper) to:

Woman's Era E-3, Jhandewala Estate, New Delhi-110 055.

EL DORADO

An Unexpected Revenge. By Moorthi Swami

While girls explode, we sow mines in fields,
With joy we reap wrath and death and grief,
My land a little drop of tear in the blue sea,
Below the great continent so huge.

—JEEVA

*** **

The Big Ben chimed for nine. It was a sweltering midsummer night in London. Even the wind that blew over the waves of the Thames had no chill to spill. After a hectic day, the hospital looked weary with an eerie calm.

Dr. Sheela was completing her evening rounds. With three surgeries, one going bloody, she was quite exhausted. Dog tired, she felt!

So it was with some relief that she walked toward Colonel Jonathan Whitcomb's room, which one wit among the staff had jokingly named the War Office.

He was ninety-nine years old and terminally ill. He used to thrill the staff with his battle stories. Also, he had some cinema experience to brag about. When *The Bridge on the*

River Kwai was filmed in Sri Lanka, he had worked as a consultant, being one who had really toiled for that bridge as one of the Prisoners of War.

Sheela liked him. He had a kind of fatherly affection for her.

When she stepped into his room, the TV was on, and the moment she saw what was up, a wild shiver shot across her spine, and she just froze. Her land. Her people. Her grief. It was a macabre scene on the screen. An explosion shook the earth and sky. People were blown up in the air, sliced, shredded, and mutilated.

Fire, smoke, and dust filled the air. In the gruesome garbage of death, there stood like a Sphinx the severed head of a girl, the human bomb that had just exploded. With eyes in an awesome stare and flowers on her hair soaked in blood!

Some tourist had dared to look death in the eye, shot all that in his digital camera, and died with the blast. Someone had salvaged it. The TV channel had it named the footage "The Moments of Terror" and was now airing it as their exclusive scoop!

The moment she saw what was up, a wild shiver shot across her spine, and she just froze.



"What a lovely face! Beautiful fool!" the Colonel exclaimed in anger.

Sheela wanted to cry. But she was afraid to cry. She was afraid even to heave a sigh. No one should know that the human bomb was her elder sister, Dhaya, who was very gentle by nature and friendly with everyone. A simple girl who loved flowers, colors, and film songs.

Now the TV was covering the tragedy in detail. It was in the front yard of the Devi Karumariamman Temple that terror had struck. Twenty-one people were killed and eleven severely injured. The terrorist too had died without accomplishing her mission. J.D. Samarvira, one of the deputy naval chiefs, had miraculously escaped the blast. He was not in the parked truck when the deadly girl rode her motorbike recklessly over it.

"Doctor, it's horrible!" said the Colonel, and switched off the TV. He looked at her deeply as if probing the depth of her mind.

"Fate! What can we do, Colonel?" she quipped while attending to the old man.

"My dear doctor, don't blame fate. These wretched people worship death, that's it!" he continued while she checked his pulse and chest.

A sob escaped her chest...

All of a sudden, the Colonel had a stroke, and his body writhed in pain. Sheela called for help. It was twelve past twelve when she could leave the hospital.

Lying in the lap of loneliness in her paying guest room, lights off and pitch dark standing guard, Sheela felt safe to weep...

She wept for her land. She wept for her people. She wept for her family. She wept again and again for her sister Dhaya until no tears were left in the wells of her eyes.

Weary and weak, body and soul going numb, she lay still, and sleep slipped into her eyes, giving her the bliss of oblivion.

But in no time, the day just broke in with a reddish dawn. The house was coming alive and busy with the morning routine.

There was a sharp rap on the door, and Sheela had to wake up. As if in some daze, she slowly got out of bed, limped forward, and opened the door. It was Ranjitha, the teenage housemaid.

The girl stepped into the room with the morning coffee and placed the tray on the table.

Sheela looked at the girl with compassion. From the day she came to the house of Menons as a paying guest, she had felt sympathy and affection for Ranjitha. With wide blue eyes and features of a temple idol, she was a dark beauty, talkative, and very friendly.

She, too, was from

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the little island nation. She was orphaned by the war when she was a little child of six. Now eighteen, destined to suffer in a foreign land.

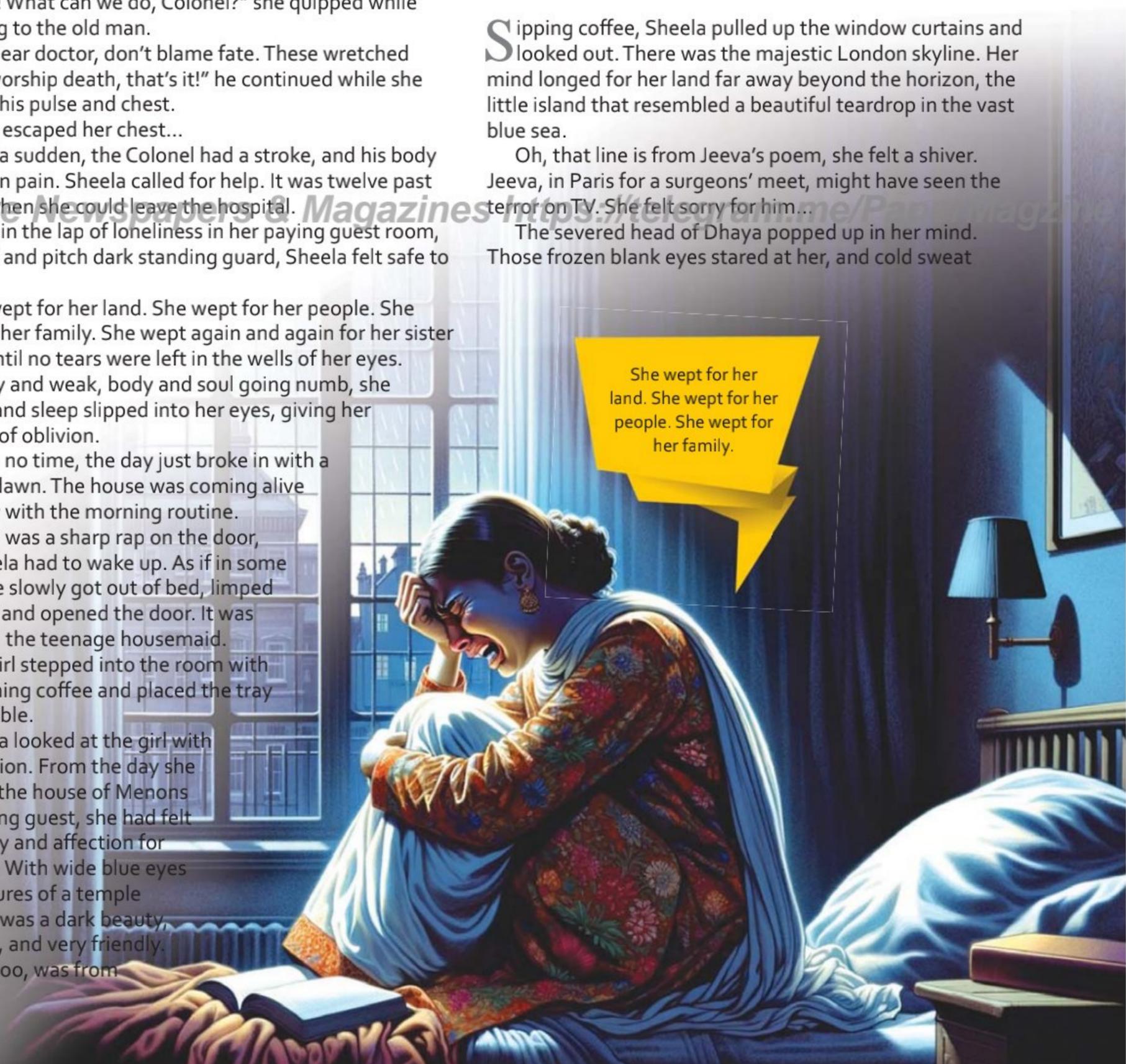
"Akka, did you see that horror on TV? Near our Devi Karumariamman Temple, a human bomb, a beautiful girl," she asked, voice choking.

"Hey, Ranjitha!" Saraswathy Menon called from downstairs, and the girl ran out of the room.

Sipping coffee, Sheela pulled up the window curtains and looked out. There was the majestic London skyline. Her mind longed for her land far away beyond the horizon, the little island that resembled a beautiful teardrop in the vast blue sea.

Oh, that line is from Jeeva's poem, she felt a shiver. Jeeva, in Paris for a surgeons' meet, might have seen the terror on TV. She felt sorry for him...

The severed head of Dhaya popped up in her mind. Those frozen blank eyes stared at her, and cold sweat



She wept for her land. She wept for her people. She wept for her family.

sputtered all over her body. She knew what those blank eyes yearned for. Revenge!

From that moment, nothing else mattered to her. Not even a happy married life with the man she loved. Her Jeeva! Surgeon of repute. Poet. Painter! Above everything, a fine human being.

The coffee in her throat tasted like blood. "I am Kaali! Maha Kaali! The goddess of death!" she heard herself say, and she laughed. In an hour, she was busy in the hospital.

Senior Nurse Amala informed her that Colonel John Whitcomb had died that night.

'See you soon, my wicked old hawk,' she thought!

*** **

It was drizzling in Paris. With sedatives taking care of his disturbed body, Jeeva had slept for long hours.

The loneliness had made him restless, and memories paraded before him, memories of another time and place.

Dhaya, the girl of his dreams, right from childhood! They didn't want to marry in haste. First, they wanted to establish themselves in their chosen professions.

Dhaya set up a clinic at her home to serve the poor and needy, while he left for MS in London.

All of a sudden, everything went wrong for them and the country. It was war in the region again after a few years of peace and happiness.

The battle between the Tigers and the navy set the sea ablaze.

Jeeva suffered his worst personal blow. Dhaya, who was treating Commander Karna secretly in her clinic, eloped with him. Jeeva was sad and shaken, but he never thought ill of her. Such was his love for her.

Long ago, his parents and sister were killed in a blast. Now he was an orphan in London. No home to return to

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and no family to belong to. Years rolled by, and one day the never-expected happened, the miracle!

It was a pleasant evening while having a stroll in Hyde Park when he heard someone calling "Jeeva!" and turned in surprise.

There stood a young lady, tall, slim, and beautiful. It took a moment for him to recognise Sheela, Dhaya's younger sister.

He took her to the Indian restaurant, Kolam. It was admirable, he told her, that she had stood the test of time. It was great she was pursuing her MS and working as a physician.

They found solace in each other's company.

They met often. Dined together. Went to movies.

Prayed at the Manor Park Murugan Temple...

It took a fortnight for a thorn to prick his conscience. He realised he was in love with Sheela! Oh God, she's thirteen years younger than him. "No!" he said to himself. But it was not to end just like that...

Last Sunday, when they were at Madam Tussaud's, in the midst of the great in wax, Sheela held his hands and looked into his eyes.

"You are in love with me, Jeeva!" she quipped.

"What?" he was aghast.

"I can see your soul through your eyes!" she smiled.

"You need not be nervous. I love you. Let us marry!" she told him and smiled again.

Suddenly, life became beautiful and meaningful for him!

But now, lonely in the hotel room, in melancholy, he was feeling afraid and desperately nervous.

A mild knock on the door interrupted his thoughts.

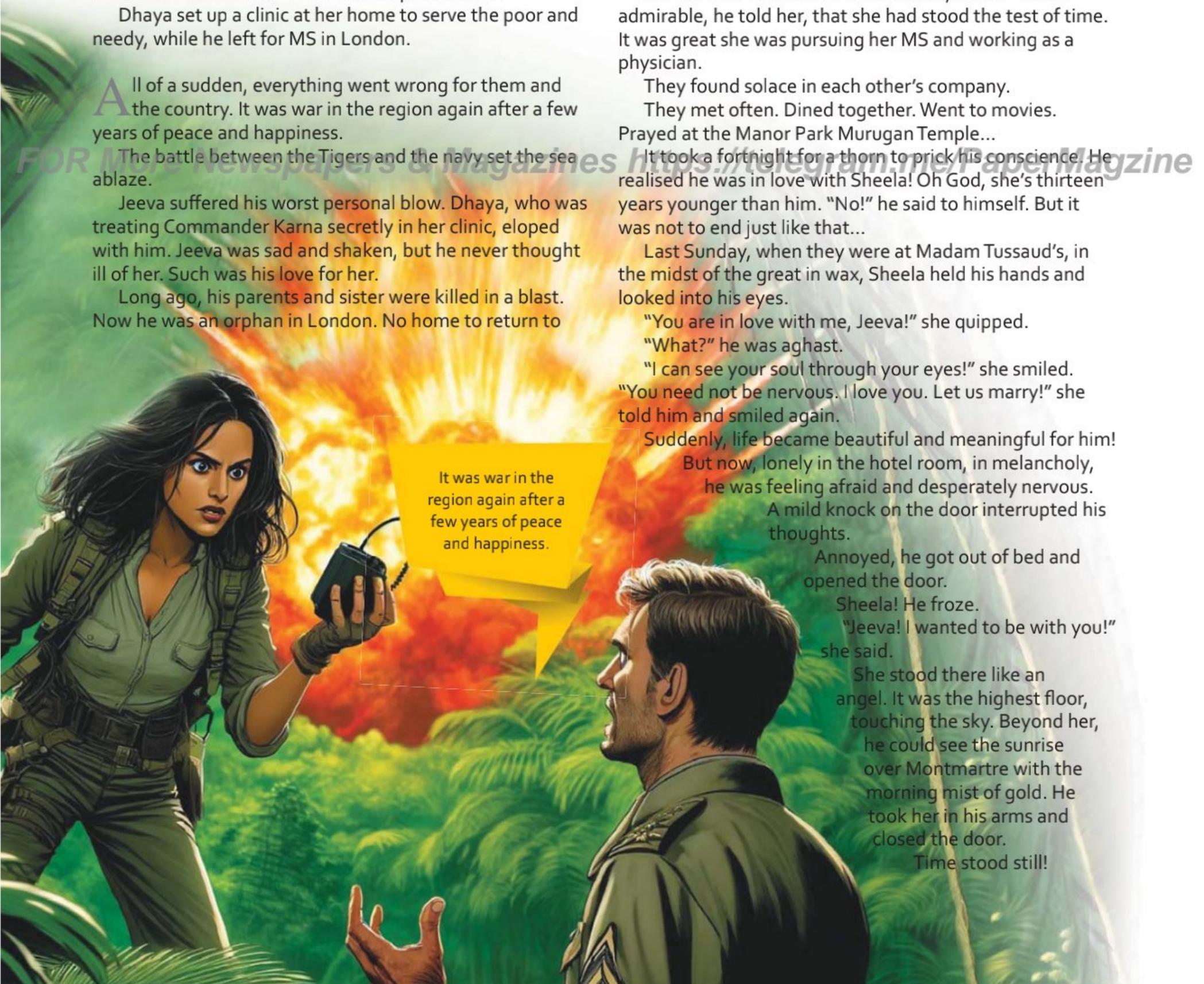
Annoyed, he got out of bed and opened the door.

Sheela! He froze.

"Jeeva! I wanted to be with you!" she said.

She stood there like an angel. It was the highest floor, touching the sky. Beyond her, he could see the sunrise over Montmartre with the morning mist of gold. He took her in his arms and closed the door.

Time stood still!



It was war in the region again after a few years of peace and happiness.

The sky trembled with heavy lightning and thunder. Jeeva woke up. Sheela was not there. Was everything and all those luscious moments a wild dream? No! There lingered in the air a faint trace of her perfume. Then he saw the note she had left under a pillow. Jeeva, I am leaving. Meet you in El Dorado! Sheela The sky was falling before him. What was she up to? He cried like an orphaned little child.

*** **

The moment the flight touched the ground, Sheela felt her spirits soaring high. It was great to be in one's own land and among one's people.

She wandered everywhere. Breathed the smell of the soil. Fondled the mild warmth of the leaves of grass. Relished the native food cooked like in the old times. Enjoyed popular masala movies in theatres.

And it took Sheela more than a week to learn about and reach the hideout of Commander Karna in the thick of the jungle.

Karna was excited beyond belief!

Thank goodness! Dhaya's kid sister had arrived to finish her mission.

It was sunset in the forest, and everything was getting sinister, and dark shadows were growing darker and longer.

He was meeting Sheela after so many years. The cute little girl had become a beautiful young lady. A stubborn persona!

"Sheela, you're sure you want to do the job?" he asked.

She heaved a deep sigh and said, "Sure, sure, sure! I want to do what Dhaya missed! Every Friday, our prey visits the Naval Hospital.

I'll sneak in like a nurse and do the job! Give me the bomb!" her voice was commanding.

He took out a one-foot paper mache "Laughing Buddha" from his briefcase and said:

"Here it is, Sheela! The super device of death!"

"Buddha? The idol of love and peace!" she exclaimed.

"See the digital mechanism at the base? Zero to nine! The moment you double-click the digit nine, a thousand square feet area around goes up in a blast!" Karna laughed with pride.

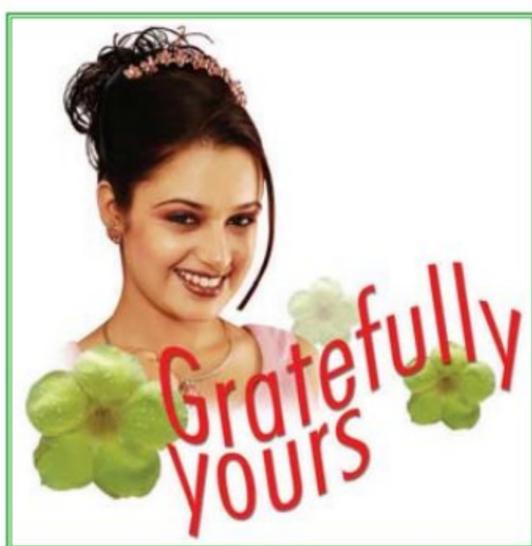
The next moment, she snatched the device from his hands. She felt like holding a volcano in her hands, and she was shivering.

Karna sensed something bizarre in her laugh. It was intriguing...

"Karna. I came to kill you. I came to kill you and your ilk. Your struggle brings only grief and misery to our people. For our liberation, we need a nonviolent movement! We need a Gandhi!" she was shouting while she double-clicked the digit nine!

A VIOLENT EXPLOSION SHOOK THE WORLD

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UNEXPECTED ALLIES

During a solo trip to a remote village, I befriended a local boy named Raju, who offered to show me around. One evening, while exploring the outskirts, we stumbled upon an old, abandoned mansion. Curiosity got the better of us, and we decided to take a peek inside. However, as we ventured deeper, we got hopelessly lost in its labyrinthine corridors. Just when all seemed bleak, we heard a soft, melodious humming. Following the sound,

we found an elderly woman, the mansion's caretaker, who had been living in solitude. She guided us out and shared stories of the mansion's history over a warm meal. Our unexpected detour turned into a night of enchanting tales and laughter. I was grateful to Raju for his companionship and to the kind caretaker who turned my trip into a cherished memory.

-Rakshanda Menon

LOST WALLET

It was a chaotic day in the bustling city, and in my haste, I left my wallet in a taxi. The realisation hit me like a ton of bricks – my wallet was not just a holder for cash, but a keeper of my identity, with important documents and irreplaceable photos of loved ones. The thought of it being gone forever sent me into a spiral of despair. I rushed to the nearest police station to file a report, clinging onto a sliver of hope, but deep down, I feared the worst.

The following day, as I was trying to come to terms with my loss, my phone rang with an unknown number flashing on the screen. On the other end was a kind man who had found my wallet on the back seat of the taxi. He had gone through the trouble of finding my contact information and reached out to return it. I was dumbfounded by his honesty and generosity.

We arranged to meet at a nearby café, and true to his word, he was there, holding my wallet with a reassuring smile. Not only had he safeguarded my belongings, but he also refused any reward, saying that he was just happy to help. His selfless act was a beacon of light in my moment of darkness, restoring my faith in humanity.

In a world where we often hear about the bad, it was a heartwarming reminder that good people still exist, and sometimes, they come into our lives when we least expect it.

-Radhamohan Iyer



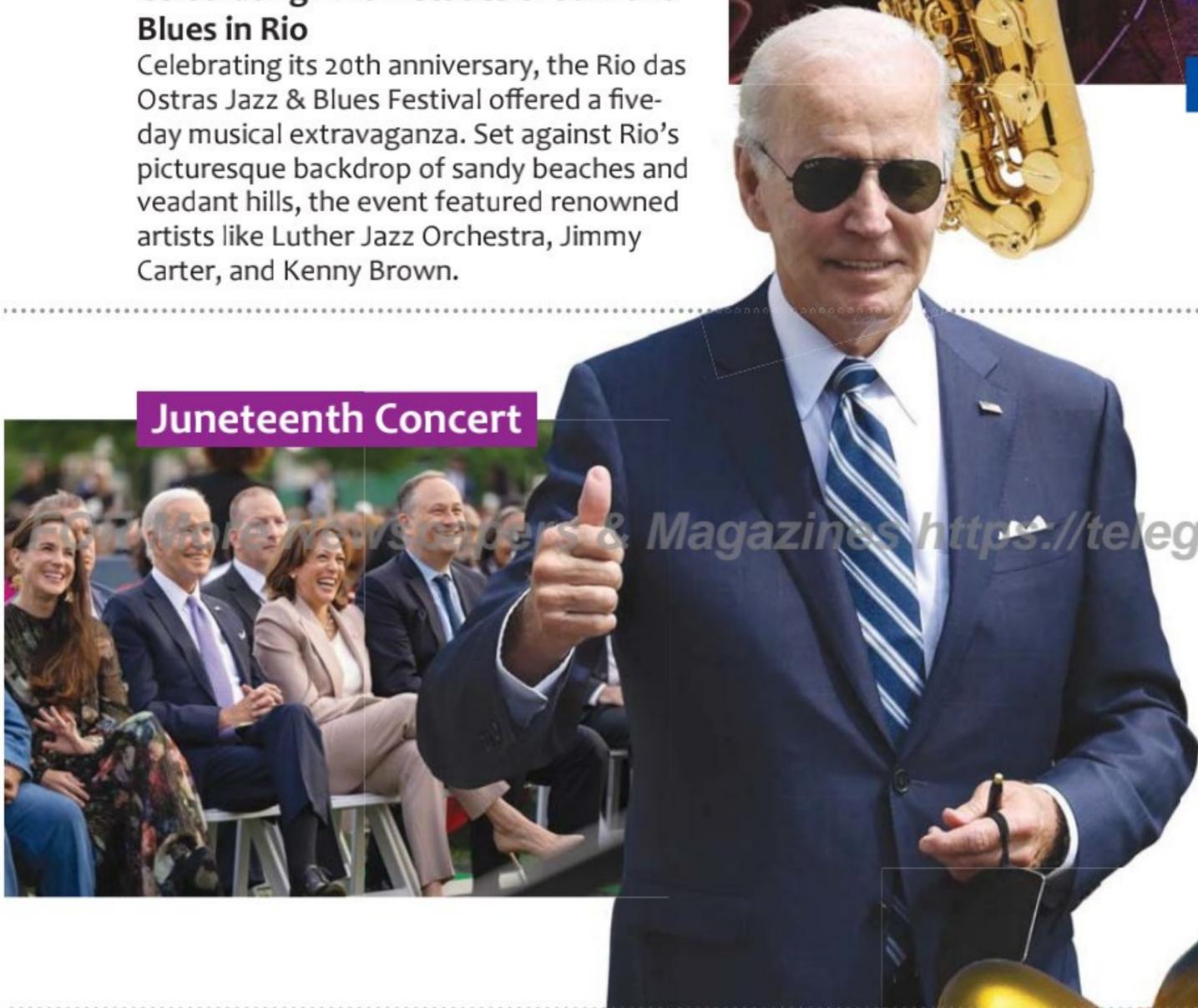
NEWS IN PICTURES

Celebrating Two Decades of Jazz and Blues in Rio

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, the Rio das Ostras Jazz & Blues Festival offered a five-day musical extravaganza. Set against Rio's picturesque backdrop of sandy beaches and verdant hills, the event featured renowned artists like Luther Jazz Orchestra, Jimmy Carter, and Kenny Brown.



Jazz & Blues Festival



Juneteenth Concert

President Biden Celebrates Juneteenth with White House Concert

President Joe Biden hosted a Juneteenth concert at the White House, celebrating the federal holiday with performances from artists like Raheem DeVaughn and Kirk Franklin. The South Lawn came alive with music genres ranging from gospel to rap, with Vice President Kamala Harris joining in the festivities. This event highlighted historical importance of Juneteenth in America.

Traditional Dragon Boat Festival Entralls Millions in China

China's Dragon Boat Festival, or Duanwu Festival, is a vibrant celebration involving boat races and spectacular drone shows. During this three-day event, people engaged in traditional activities like making Zongzi—sticky rice dumplings. 110 million domestic trips recorded in the festival.



Dragon Boat festival



British Royalty Commemorates D-Day at Normandy Memorial

King Charles and Queen Camilla marked the 80th anniversary of D-Day at the British Normandy Memorial. Dressed in formal attire, they joined French President Emmanuel Macron, emphasizing the enduring legacy of WWII's heroes. King Charles' speech highlighted the courage and resilience of the wartime generation, reminding attendees of the deep historical bonds shared between the nations involved.



Normandy Veterans Tribute

Hermes Showcases Vibrant Fall-Winter Collection in New York

Hermes introduced the second chapter of its Women's Ready-to-Wear collection in New York, featuring vibrant "Ginger yellow" hues and Manhattan-inspired designs. Expanding its presence in Los Angeles and Brooklyn, Hermes continues to blend traditional luxury with contemporary styles, appealing to a broad audience including fans of popular media like "Emily in Paris."



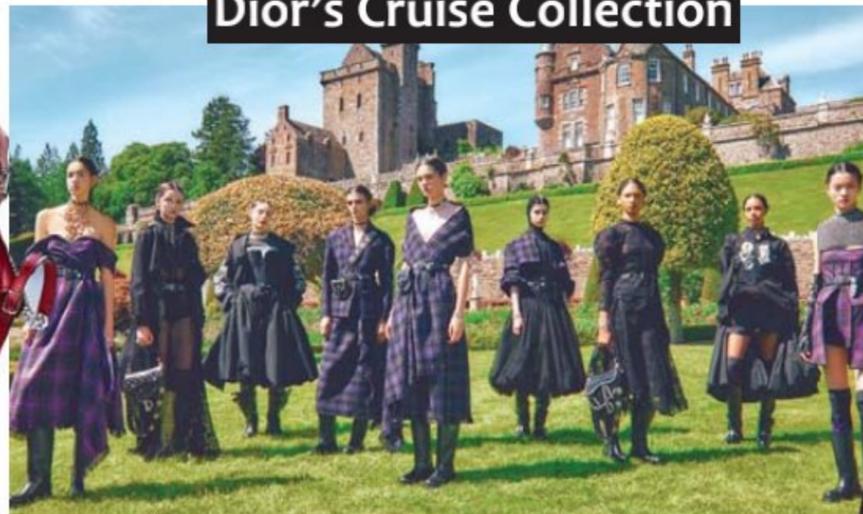
Fall-Winter Collection

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Dior's Cruise Collection



Christian Dior Unveils Equestrian-Inspired 2025 Cruise Collection

Christian Dior's 2025 Cruise Collection, designed by Maria Grazia Chiuri, combined Scottish tartan with luxurious velvet and lace, creating an equestrian-themed ensemble. Set against a lush green castle, the presentation resembled a cinematic montage.



Carlos Alcaraz Triumphs in Epic French Open Final

The French Open men's singles final was a dramatic showdown between Alcaraz, only 21, who displayed remarkable resilience, overcoming a two-set deficit to claim his title in a five-set thriller. Celebrated by tennis legends, his victory at Roland Garros solidifies his status as a versatile and formidable player on all surfaces.



French Open Women's



Iga Swiatek and Coco Gauff Shine at French Open

Iga Swiatek and Coco Gauff highlighted the French Open with their remarkable performances. Swiatek secured her third consecutive title, while Gauff, alongside Katerina Siniakova, triumphed in women's doubles. These victories not only underscore their skill and determination but also signify their rising prominence in women's tennis.



Primoz Roglic Wins Critérium du Dauphiné with Fierce Finish

Primoz Roglic clinched the title at the 76th Critérium du Dauphiné, showcasing his enduring athletic ability despite physical limitations. His victory after close competition with Matteo Jorgenson exemplifies the intense and competitive nature of professional cycling, marking a significant milestone in Roglic's career.



AS YOU SAY

THE IMPACT OF AFFIRMING WORDS

Referring to the article *The Rippling Effect* by Saranya Iyer, May 2024, it is true that affirming words spoken to children by their parents during their formative years boost their confidence.



Positive words spoken to children during their low times help them deal positively with failure in life. Affirming words have a rippling effect on the minds of children and motivate them for further excellence in performance.

Negative words like “worthless,” “lazy,” and “disobedient,” which are uttered by parents while comparing them with other intelligent children, have a negative impact on the impressionable minds of their children. Parents should refrain from comparing their own children with one another, as it gives rise to sibling rivalry.

They must practice what they say to their children, as children always behave and act like their own parents. In a nutshell, affirming words help a lot in shaping children as responsible adults who naturally learn to deal with any kind of negativity in life.

– Harinder Kaur

NURTURING FUTURE CITIZENS

Referring to the article *Instilling Core Values* by Saranya Iyer, April 2024. A very good article. I liked it very much. Children are our future.

A MONTHLY DELIGHT

Woman’s Era, a monthly delight
A treat we wait for, with eager sight



The library busy with readers in line
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A magazine that empowers, educates, and sets free
Woman’s era, a true friend to you and me

Every month, a new surprise to see
A tribute to women in every way
Woman’s Era, a shining star indeed
A magazine that makes our hearts proceed.

– R. K. Soni

They are the future of our nation. We should give them the right direction and teach them moral values in their childhood. We should teach them respect for elders, and to speak in a polite manner.

We should also teach them to always keep control of their anger, think positively, and do good deeds. Also, teach them discipline. Discipline is very important in our life.



Kindness, empathy, persistence, and courage play very important roles in our life. All moral values taught in their childhood contribute to making them good citizens and great personalities.

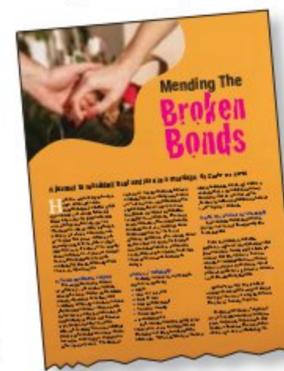
I also liked the article *Embrace Yourself* by Ravleen Kaur Kohli. I totally agree with it. Women are the center of the household. The whole day, she is busy with domestic chores. She does not have enough time for herself. There is nothing wrong with taking care of oneself; she should keep some time to groom herself. Staying healthy and physically fit is very important. She should spend some time fulfilling her dreams,

hobbies. Reading books is often done in my free time. Books could enrich your mind, body, and soul. Stay strong, never give up, respect yourself.

– Dr. Anjana Shukla

REPAIRING RELATIONSHIP

I read *Mending Broken Bonds* by Catherine Kartik May 24 issue, which personally resonates with me a lot. Many times we have tumultuous relationships that end up in disastrous ways. Rather than thinking of fixing it and communicating, we all tend to live separately. My husband and I were



also facing the same issue; he has anger issues over little things, and we end up not speaking to each other for weeks. This article brings awareness to understanding

our behavioural complexities and how to deal with them better. In a few weeks, the tips helped us refrain from frustration, and instead, we started acknowledging each other on an intellectual, emotional, and mental level. In the end, it concludes perfectly that marriage is all about living with each other sincerely. Whatever the situation, it has to be reconciled from both sides.

– Sweekriti Swarnkar

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