SHINE GLOBAL
Denisa

ART & CULTURE
Runjhun Noopur

#SHELEADS
Taramati

CELEBS
Richa Sinha

RELATIONSHIPS
Sexual disorders, Father-Daughter relationships

SHORT STORY
DURGA
& many more

CHEF AMRITA RAICHAND

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I am extremely thrilled to launch my dream in the form of a wonderful collection of various themes weaved together as ‘Women Shine’.

This global e-magazine salutes all women across the globe for the amazing work they have been doing in their respective fields.

We will present to you every month, a lovely platter donning a celebrity, yummy recipes, travel tales, home remedies and interesting write-ups on beauty, fashion, entrepreneurship and many much more.

#SHELEADS is the main segment of the e-magazine; we will feature a personality who is famous, humble and passionate about impacting lives Woman. This month, read about Ms. Taramati, Indian Yachtswoman.

‘Shine Global’ segment will feature a personality from around the world who is doing amazing work in their genre. This month, read about Denisa from Albania.

‘Celeb’ of the month is Richa Sinha, a young girl with big dreams.

With a plethora of articles to read, subscribe and be a part of my beautiful Initiative. I look forward to seeing you all every month.

You are most welcome to share your suggestions on womenshinemag@gmail.com. This will help us to design this e-magazine in a better way.

Let’s impact the lives of women, their families and their communities.
Till then take care & shine always!

Shine Aways
Aparna Mishra

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Well, the title itself is an oxymoron and sometimes so is life. It surprises you well especially when you are sloshed in the glory of your impeccable planning. One such incident has shaped my life and gave it an all-new meaning. Two years back, like any other ambitious, career-oriented couple, my husband and I, were torn between the decision of whether to expand our family or not; our son is 10 years old and we had come a long way from ‘happy changing’ and ‘sleepless nights’. Amidst many discussions and anxieties, one fine morning, I was standing with a pregnancy test strip showing positive, fate had its way!

Since that day, each day was occupied with regular work and meticulous planning for our child due in May 2020. From nursery to clothes, bottles to lotions, a crib to a pram, the list was endless. All the shopping was done and the tickets were booked. Bua and Mausi, both wanted to be the part of the ‘hospital squad’ to witness the birth of the youngest one of the generation.

Came March and the most deadly news of the decade. ‘COVID-19’ had started unleashing its tentacles all over the world and was declared the deadliest pandemic of the century. Lockdown became the new word, social distancing the new norm and masks were the new accessory. Doctors were not running OPDs and were scared at the sight of any unplanned patient.

I was in my 7th month, entering the most crucial phase of the pregnancy. With barely 40 days to go, I was restless and scared. Locked inside the house with no household help, it was nothing short of a nightmare. There were zillions of video calls from relatives and friends giving me hope with their innumerable suggestions.

Finally, after much resistance, my gynaecologist agreed to deliver my child sticking with my original natural birth plan. I was given a list of dos and don'ts along with a prescription to undergo the COVID-19 screening test. Before the test result could arrive, I underwent labour. Doctors and nurses were sceptical and honestly, even we had no choice but to embrace what was coming our way. The entire hospital floor was booked and only one attendant (my husband) was allowed to take care of the things during this crucial hour. The operation theatre was full of whispers with everyone hoping me to be ‘negative’ of the virus. The only one who was unaware of the ongoings and determined to come to the world was my newborn warrior. He overcame all obstacles and arrived shining like a star in all his glory.

Days became nights, scare and anxiety were overtaken by happiness, laughter and delightful cries. With no office leaves to plan, no time management to follow and no guests to entertain, our entire focus shifted to the new love of our life. We are happily following his schedules, taking joys in his activities and holding him before he outgrew our arms. This made me realize there is always a better and a brighter side of the story, which is not planned by us but planned by the supreme power. While we are perturbed by small incidents and focus our energies on thinking what can go wrong, God surprises us by painting a brighter and more beautiful picture with colours unknown to our myopic vision.

Now, I can say it without a second thought that it couldn’t have been better than this and I am happy it didn’t happen my way.
As monsoon subsides, leaves falling off the trees mark the arrival of autumn or fall, a time for celebration across cultures and around the world. October is the month of thanksgiving, harvests and light.

Here are some of the popular autumn festivals around the world.

1. **Oktoberfest: Germany (cancelled due to the pandemic)**
   It is the world's largest beer festival and travelling funfair. Oktoberfest is an 18 days folk festival which happens in Munich, Germany. More than 6 million people from around the world attend the event which encompasses parades, exotic food and music.
   The tradition began in 1810 with the wedding celebration of Prince Ludwig of Bavaria and Princess Theresa of Saxony- Hildburghausen, after which it became an annual celebration. Over the years following the First World War, Oktoberfest was replaced by smaller autumn celebrations. However, since the beginning of 1950s, the current traditional procedure, the Mayor tapping the first barrel of beer to commemorate the celebration began.

2. **Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta: New Mexico (3rd - 11th October)**
   Every year, pilots, participants and spectators from all across the globe come to the world's largest ballooning festival where each morning at the break of dawn, more than 500 hot air balloons take flight into the skies of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The festival takes place for 9 days in early October.
   The fiesta began in 1972 as the highlight of the 50th birthday celebration of 770 KOB Radio with a humble amount of only 13 balloons and the numbers have grown ever since. The fest also includes filmmaking contests, balloon races and afterglow fireworks. The explosion of rainbow colours, creativity and awe-inspiring designs is what makes it the world's most photographed event.

3. **Phuket Vegetarian Festival: Thailand (17th- 25th October)**
   Also known as the ‘Nine Emperor Gods Festival’, it is a 9-day celebration beginning on the eve of the 9th lunar month of the Chinese calendar. In this colourful festival, participants abide by a strict set of rules which includes abstaining from using or consuming animal products, sex and alcohol. The purpose of this religious practice is to display devotion to their beliefs for their gods and ancestors to obtain good health and peace of mind.
   The event, however, is not for the faint-hearted as it includes piercing of body parts, walking on nails or across hot coal and other bustling activities.
4. **Dussehra: India (25th October)**

Also known as Dasara or Dashing, Dussehra is a festival celebrated by the people of Hindu faith for various reasons across India. The celebration marks the end of Durga Puja or Ramlila. It signifies the victory of good over evil.

In some parts of India, it is a remembrance of goddess Durga's victory over demon Mahishasura. While in others, it remembers Lord Rama's victory over the evil Ravan, hence saving Sita. Ramlila is re-enacted every year wherein people celebrate the burning of towering effigies of Ravan with fireworks, marking evils destruction. There are community gathering, recitation of scriptures, puja, fasting and immersion of Durga. The epic Mahabharata is also commemorated during Dussehra, marking the victory of the Pandavas over the evil Kuru warriors.

5. **Halloween**

Halloween signifies the first day of Allhallowtide, the time dedicated to remembering the dead. The holiday is traditionally celebrated all over the world and is originated from the ancient Celtic Harvest Festival. Each year, it is celebrated on the 31st of October.

The celebration includes trick-or-treating, costume parties, bonfires, playing pranks on each other, visiting haunted attractions, going to churches and lighting candles on the grave of the dead remain popular. It is one of the most popular and fun holidays around the world.
H.E Denisa Gokovi was born in the city of Shkoder, the ‘cradle of culture’ in Albania. She developed an interest in the piano from an early age of six and later on went on to study it at the University of Art in Albania. She holds a Master of Arts in Music Theory and Composition from the Academy of Arts. Today, H.E Denisa Gokovi is an accomplished musician and a leading pianist in Albania. She has won many national and international awards she has won following her performances. She is renowned for doing concerts for humanity. This is where she performs live concerts and donates the proceeds to underprivileged communities and children globally.

Denisa Gokovi aids young artists in their professional development and training as upcoming musicians. Recently, Gokovi had a dignified presentation at a conference and festival in Albania where she collaborated with a young dancer, Ms Geraldine Gryka who inspired many young people with her human and artistic talent and attractiveness. This collaboration was appreciated by the national audience and was considered one of the best professional presentations in Albania.

Aside from her performances, Denisa engages in humanitarian work both nationally and internationally. She has been a part of many charitable activities and has greatly contributed to using her imagination, professional image, productive ideas, and ongoing consultancy on improving people's psychological well-being. She has also shown that volunteering is an opportunity, a form of rebellion against the ills of society, and a liberating activity.

She has always believed in her vision and in the unconditional belief of people that potentially one day, the world would hear her story. She has been writing her philosophy in the upcoming book titled the ‘Deception of Truth’. In this book, she hopes to share her perspectives on justice, equality and freedom. Her perspective is influenced by various innovative spaces such as the humanitarian model of youth tolerance and spirit, integrating their vision into a fair advantage over the right choices.
H.E. Denisa Gokovi has sought to document major changes and organize members of various international organizations on fundraising objectives to open children's centres, women charity centre, and proposed agreements between countries that plan social education campaigns and improve the economic situation. Her mission is to create radical changes in activities that interpret the culture of different countries by promoting young people through humanitarian work. Her success is to be measured by the existence of heroes, the greatness of truth, and the individual ability and human attitude to conquer the ills of society. Soon, her activism will focus on the field of entertainment and humanism. This calls for cultural innovation, structural leadership, sharp diplomacy and human positioning. This power of leadership and human greatness will lead global justice in all the corners of the world as the rights of poor populations are realized.

To achieve her vision, H.E Denisa Gokovi holds various roles which include:

- Global Goodwill Ambassador at the Canadian non-profit, FAAVM
- Ambassador for Human Rights and Peace for Cad bridge Corporation, USA
- Honoured member of the ‘International Royal Academy’ of the UN
- Ambassador of Culture &Art for the International World Peace Committee
- Ambassador for Arts and Humanities in the ‘Royal Society Group’
- Ambassador for African Child Projects
- Goodwill Ambassador to of the Noble World Records, India
- Dame Grand Officer of the Holy Order of Protection & Education for women children and families (H.O.P.E)
- General Coordinator for ‘Wisdom International Festival’, Albania.
- National Brand Ambassador of International Non-Olympic University
- Adviser of INOU Peace – Mission

H.E Denisa Gokovi has also received various awards such as the Global Humanitarian Award by the World Peace & Diplomacy Organization in 2019. She has been appointed as Chairperson & Speaker for Albania in the Women’s Economic Forum, India and also in the Global Ambassadors' Organization for Human Rights. She is member of the ECO LEAGUE Forums team & Cher Eco City - Singapore (2019-2021). The Greatness University bestowed upon her the prestigious ‘World Greatness Award’ as she has been a leading light that is shining brightly and attracting followers from various parts of the world, and recognize her as a Leading Light of Greatness.
TARAMATI S MATHIWADE - YACHTSWOMAN

She is a ‘water girl’ and always enjoys sailing in the water. She loves the sound of the waves.

Our famous yachtswoman, Taramati S Matiwade is from Kolhapur. Passionate about sailing, she runs the Yachting Association of Kolhapur. She has made a space for herself in the men’s world, standing shoulder to shoulder in many sporting competitions. Gender is never a consideration, for her, performance is the target.

She has won many accolades. She is the ‘First Indian Yachtswoman’ and was also awarded ‘Best Lady Crew’ at 33rd NDA-Inland Enterprise Championship.

What made you join yachting as this is a very different sport?

I always wanted to do something different and make a mark. Women had not yet explored yachting. So I decided to make histories there. It is an adventurous game with very fewer women. I love being on the water. I am working hard to move forward in Hobbie 16 and Match racing.

What challenges have you faced?

I have faced a lot of challenges. The biggest one being that yachting is a male-dominated game. There is no support around and no infrastructure. It is like making a tunnel in the mountain. But then, I had the determination and grit which helped me to reach where I am today.

How do you balance your personal and professional life?

It is a big challenge in India because being a woman there are many expectations from the family, relatives and society we live in.
I never thought I would also be a victim of cultural beliefs or social pressures. It only affected my career my performance adversely. I had to be strong-headed to overcome all the hurdles.

**What do you love the most?**

I love cooking and discovering new food. Though Indian cuisine is my favorite, I cherish lasagna, Thai noodles, green Thai curry as well. I have travelled a lot around the world because of my sport. I love being close to nature, a place with a beautiful garden or an alley of different trees.

**What is your message for Women Shine readers?**

Follow your heart and passion. If you believe in yourself, you can fight against all odds and achieve your goal.

-Team WS
A go-getter, passionate about modelling and fashion, Richa has already achieved milestones at a young age. She is just 23 years old and has already marked a dent in the fashion world. The dream to do something big in the ‘glamour world’ took her to the ‘dreamland’, Mumbai.

In 2018, she won the title for World Supermodel South Asia followed by getting the third position in the World Pageant held at Fiji where she represented India. She got many accolades. She was also Miss India Global in 2019, where she represented India in China among 30 other countries.

With the support of many, she also raised funds for Cancer Patients. And with this, she got the title, ‘Beyond Beauty’ as she raised maximum funds for ailing patients.

She has bagged various global projects for modelling in various locations like Qatar, UAE, Thailand and China to name a few. She has worked with top brands Jabong and HP.

Richa always wanted to expand her horizon. Apart from modelling and fashion world, she tried her hands on acting too. She left no stone unturned to groom herself in acting skills. She joined theatres and did plays. She did a short film ‘The Knot’ in 2017. Now, she is all set to conquer the digital world. She has bagged the leading role in web series. She is a part of the music video ‘Tere Bina’ which was recently launched.

Like others, her life in the ‘city of dreams’ was not full of roses. She has had her struggles, undergone many auditions, faced rejections. “If you have a strong faith in yourself, just be persistent and have a positive mindset. You will achieve anything you wish to.”, says Richa. She has a strong support system, which she is proud of. Her mother has been with her in all good and bad times.

-Team WS
Sex plays an important role in shaping human lives. It has been realised that the sex impulse is present in various forms from the earliest months after birth until the end of life. Being a basic instinct like hunger, it's satisfaction is essential for sustained harmony and well being.

Sexual activity, however, demands complete concentration and relaxation. It cannot be performed in haste or tension. The modern men who are usually tense and highly occupied are unable to follow these norms. The consumption of alcohol also leads to inadequate sexual functioning. Many people, therefore, suffer from sexual disorders.

**Impotence**

It is the most common of all the sexual disorders in the male. It can be defined as a failure to obtain an erection or maintain it for a reasonable length of time without attaining orgasm. The main causes of impotence are fatigue, devitalised condition of the system in general, abuse or misuse of the sexual organ over a long period, glandular deficiencies, infectious venereal diseases and psychological factors.

Many people carry their office problems to their bed. They are constantly under stress and stress is a deadly enemy of potency. It stimulates the sympathetic nerve which inhibits an erection. These people are haunted by the fear of loss of manhood, particularly when a temporary loss of desire or an occasional failure of potency occurs. This may ultimately result in impotence which has a devastating effect on their personal lives.

Impotence may quite often result from ones feeling of guilt about masturbation, pre-marital sex or about having contracted venereal diseases previously. Infact, any act which arouses feelings of insecurity can precipitate impotency.

**Treatment Chart for Sexual Disorders:**

**Part 1:**
- An all-fruit diet for 5 days with 3 meals a day at 5 hourly intervals. The bowels should be cleansed daily during this period with a warm water enema.
- Upon rising, have 25 black raisins (soaked overnight in water) along with the water they are soaked as well as the water kept overnight in a copper vessel.
- In the breakfast, include fresh fruits and a glass of milk sweetened with honey and some nuts, especially almonds.
- For lunch, have a bowl of freshly prepared steamed vegetables, 2 or 3 whole wheat chapatis with butter and a glass of buttermilk.
- Have a glass of carrot juice or sugarcane juice in the evening.
- Include in dinner, a large bowl of fresh green vegetable salad with lemon juice dressing, moong bean sprouts and cottage cheese.
- At bedtime, have a glass of milk sweetened with honey and 4 dates
- Avoid smoking, coffee, tea, alcohol and all processed canned and refined foods especially white sugar and white flour products.

(Make liberal use of garlic, onion, carrot, yeast, lady finger, curd, lecithin and food rich in vitamin E, A, and C.)

**Part 2:**
- Physical activity in the fresh air, sufficient exercise and yogasanas such as bhujangasana, shalabhasana, pawanmukatasana and shavasana.
- Vigorous massage all over the body twice a week.
- Cold hip bath for 10 minutes daily.
How to manage Diet, Fitness and Sleep during COVID-19

“Life imposes things on you that you can’t control but you still have the choice of how you’re going to live through this.”
- Celine Dion

The outbreak of coronavirus in December 2019 in China led to a pandemic all over the globe. Life was thrown out of gear when this minuscule virus-infected human beings in large numbers. To prevent ourselves, the directive was ‘stay home, stay safe’. The only way we human beings could dodge the virus was through social distancing, usage of the mask and good hygiene.

Global population has been reduced due to the large number of deaths caused by this virus. There is fear and anxiety writ on everyone’s face as we face an uncertain future. Our lives are now full of gloom and doom. Due to the current situation, the economy has hit rock bottom and people are dying of poverty and starvation. The lockdown and social isolation are playing havoc on our physical and mental health. To prevent ourselves from catching this deadly disease, we need to work on our diet, fitness, mental health and sleep.

To prevent yourself from getting drained of energy and becoming a mass of frazzled nerves, you need to remain positive and healthy during the pandemic. Here is how you can achieve that.

Diet

A diet which is healthy and balanced with nutrients required for the overall well being of the body can keep a person in the pink of health. A diet fortified with vitamins and minerals can keep diseases at bay and can reduce the risk of diabetes, thyroid and heart ailments in a person. Green leafy vegetables like spinach, broccoli, kale, cabbage, beans and fruits like kiwi, apples, grapefruits and berries if added to the diet can boost your immunity.

You can try smoothies, salads and stir-fried vegetables to make the food healthy and tasty. A sprinkling of different herbs on cooked vegetables can enhance the taste as well as strengthen body immunity. Foods rich in zinc, such as seafood, cashews, liver, beef, and egg yolks help in increasing immunity while magnesium-rich foods like nuts and whole grains help in giving a person the zen-like calm. Omega-3 fatty acids in fish help in reducing anxiety and should be added to the diet. You should also add some antioxidants to support the immune system.

Being in the house decreases physical activity and since most people are working from home, erratic work hours have led to erratic mealtimes. Try to schedule the mealtimes so that digestion doesn’t go for a toss. Junk food and sugar cravings should be kept at bay as these foods can create more health issues and can lead to low immunity.

Along with a balanced diet, remain well hydrated to get rid of toxins from the body. You should intake at least 3 litres of water. Some nutrients act as mood enhancers as they release endorphins or the feel-good hormones. Such nutrients should form a major part of your diet. You should take carbohydrates, proteins and fats in a balanced ratio to keep your body in good health and shape during the pandemic.
Fitness
Physical fitness is a must during the pandemic and otherwise. Eating unhealthy and becoming a couch potato can lead to chronic ailments like hypertension, diabetes, obesity etc. Follow a healthy regimen by doing exercises inside the house. You can use the stairs or balcony, do squats, lunges, pilates, Zumba, stationary cycling, weightlifting and yoga. A few exercises can be performed lying on the bed as well, like marching hip raises, side plank with a twist, leg lift with the knee in, diamond reverse crunches, jack splits, scissor legs, dolphin plank, around the world abs, arm extension to shoulder tap and arabesque leg lifts. These exercises help in strengthening of abs, butt, thigh, chest and arm muscles and will help to keep the weight in control and give a person a toned body without having to go to the gym.

Mental Health
Meditation is one of the best ways to calm the mind and this helps in the elimination of negative thoughts from the mind. Meditation has been used as a tool from time immemorial to combat stress levels, reduction in depression and anxiety and memory enhancement. It involves breathing exercises where one needs to focus on inhaling and exhaling, counting the breath and visualization. A 5-10 minutes meditation session if added in the daily routine can help you get rid of negativity and lead a peaceful life.

Sleep
A restful sleep devoid of any anxiety is important for the body. A sleep-deprived person can suffer from chronic and psychological ailments. Sleep too is an essential requirement to rejuvenate the body during the pandemic. 8 hours of sleep is a must for a normal person.

To get sound sleep, follow a proper bedtime schedule as erratic schedules can lead to insomnia. Keep gadgets away before sleeping, meditate, take a hot bath, read some good books, listen to soft soulful music and drink a cup of hot milk before going to bed. Milk contains an amino acid called tryptophan which helps to induce good sleep. Having a good sleep will help to alleviate stress and strengthen your immunity.

Take all precautions, look after your health, indulge in hobbies to keep negative thoughts at bay as the poet Shelley quotes, “If winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”
If music is food for the soul, travel must be fire for the soul; once ignited, it leads us to new destinations and new experiences, enriching our life like nothing else. No wonder they call it ‘wanderlust’!

Being a freelance anaesthetist who is on call 24×7 in a high-pressure work environment, I realised that a getaway was the time when I could be myself unmindfully and wholeheartedly. So over the last few years, I have travelled extensively and widely to the extent that colleagues who contacted me occasionally were always asking me if I was travelling or in town?

Honestly, that one hour of my life spent in Bunol town near Valencia in Spain accounts for one of my best travel memories. It was ‘La Tomatina’, world’s biggest food fight festival celebrated on the last Wednesday of August every year.

On Wednesday, we booked a bus from our hotel at Valencia to proceed to Bunol, a ride of approximately 38 km. En route, our guide told us about the dos and don'ts; particularly that the tomatoes have to be squashed before throwing. She also talked about theories on how this festival came into being, could be a class war, a practical joke on a bad musician, the aftermath of an accidental lorry spillage or possibly disgruntled townspeople attacked councilmen during a celebration. Whatever started it, people enjoyed it so much that it was repeated in successive years.

As we reached there, we could feel a palpable thrill in the air. Most local people were dressed in white. Bunol has a population of 9000. It is a small town, so the authorities have limited official ticketing for the event for 20,000 people. The shops and houses cover their walls with huge blue polythene covers to protect the walls from the inevitable mess.

Technically, the festival starts when a brave soul has climbed the palojabon, a greased wooden pole approximately 2 stories high and reached the coveted ham at the top. The signal of the fight to start is the firing of water cannons. At 11 am, many trucks loaded with ripe tomatoes pass through the centre of the town (plaza de pueblo) throwing tomatoes on the bystanders who then pick them and crush and playfully fight with them. The whole street becomes a river of tomato puree in no time and everybody is drenched in tangy tomatoes. The crazy yet well-mannered fun people have in this one hour has to be witnessed once and it will stay in your memory for a lifetime.

A hooter then blows signalling the end. After the second siren, no more tomatoes can be thrown. Then, the cleaning process starts which involves the use of hoses of firefighting trucks by the authorities. People are extremely kind and help the passersby to clean up with the help of hoses from their balconies. We headed to Bunol river to wash and clean. There too, strangers helped each other wash away the tomatoes in their hair and body. As we walked back to our bus, to our surprise, the street was almost clean. A certain air of revelry and post-festive spirit still prevailed.
La Tomatina' is an indelible tangy memory for me. This whole scene has been recreated by Ritesh Sidwani in his popular movie ‘Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara’. We have one life to live.

So travel not to escape it or it will escape you.

Dr. Pooja Gulati
Ruled by the element air, Libra is a sign which needs the security of a partner to go ahead in life and they can do anything to make people happy. They also have a great intuitive power which helps them to understand good or bad. For them, a sense of right-doing is very important, they can't see any kind of pain around due to a stupid act of ego.

If you will see them from a distance, you will find them maintaining a balance between the heart and the mind. They always do a background check or their homework to make a better decision, but also maintain the feeling of warmth and understanding in relationships. Beautiful inside and out, Libra stands for harmony, elegance, and equality.

We know how much you love to please others, but don't forget to fulfil your own needs once in a while, too!

The most compatible signs with Libra are generally considered to be Gemini, Leo, Sagittarius and Aquarius. The least compatible signs with Libra are generally considered to be Cancer and Capricorn.
**Libra & Gemini**

You are both intellectual signs and love to share your ideas and debate about things, it keeps the fun going between you two. At every level, you both complete each other's needs. Overall, yours is a very cool relationship, just be aware of that you both can be indecisive at times.

**Libra & Leo**

Leo is a more passionate lover, they love to show you off and take you out on dates, wearing amazing outfits, grabbing all the attention and that's what will attract you the most, their way of dealing with things, how elaborate and fun they are. You are towards the intellectual side and would let Leo take the upper hand in the relationship and you would love that yourself. The only negative in this bond is that Leo tends to go over the board with their planning and you need to bring them down with love and comfort.

**Libra & Sagittarius**

Extraverted, excited and adventurous, the communication in your relationship will be full of magic. However, you both don't like difficult conversations which may pile up and can be a big issue later.

**Libra & Aquarius**

This is a light and fun match. Your compatibility is very strong as you both are excellent communicators, fun-loving, social and there is no shortage of chemistry here. You both want a lover who is your best friend, that is why you both will have free spirit nature towards things. The only negative in this connection is that you can be a little bossy at times and Aquarius, a silent rebellion.

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Kopal
Tarot and healer

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Waxing removes unwanted hair, making your skin soft and beautiful but beauty comes at a price. Bumps and red rashes can appear after waxing which can last for hours or as long as 3 days, especially if you have sensitive skin. The bumps are a result of an inflammation of the hair follicles called folliculitis and is unsightly and can cause discomfort.

Here are some tricks and tips to help treat any discomfort and skin irritation and prevent it from happening ever again so you can wax with an easy mind next time.

- **Cold water or ice** - Wet a soft washcloth in cold water or wrap an ice cube in a washcloth. Apply it directly to the rash to close the open pores. Leave on for as long as you can tolerate it, up to 10 or 15 minutes. If you are using cold water instead of ice, re-wet the washcloth every few minutes to keep it nice and cool.

- **Aloe vera gel** - Apply a generous layer of the gel on your skin several times a day. Keep the aloe vera gel in the refrigerator. Applying the cold gel will further ease irritation and any swelling of the skin and follicles.

- **Vitamin E or tea tree oil** - Both are excellent for soothing any irritation or rash after waxing and will help the skin heal. Apply a generous amount of either vitamin E (which is more readily available) or tea tree oil on the skin several times a day. Just pop open the vitamin E capsule and apply.

- **Grape seed oil** - It soothes the skin and eases any pain. The grape seed oil also hydrates the skin and helps new scars heal. Apply a small amount to your hands and massage it gently into the skin.
Fathers and daughters: from infant to toddler
We live in a society where the father is an equal partner in caring for the child. From day one, fathers are encouraged to be hands-on, changing diapers, giving baths, putting the baby to sleep and calming her cries. This presence and effort is the beginning of a very important relationship. He needs to spend time with his infant daughter, taking care of her physical needs and supporting her mother and once the little girl starts toddling around, it is essential that he gets down on the floor on her level and play with her.

Fathers and daughters: from tween to teen
It’s those pesky ‘hormonal’ years that can often have fathers shying away from their moody and sometimes standoffish daughters. When there’s a girl in the house, fathers should focus on cultivating a trusting relationship so that she feels secure talking with him about what’s going on in her life. When required, fathers should apologize and ask for forgiveness, as this shows respect and love to your daughters and heals the pains that will otherwise be inevitable.

As a girl continues to grow and her teen years become fraught with complicated issues, fathers should continue to work on building a trusting relationship, show affection and support her as she learns more about who she is and what kind of person she wants to become.

A father’s influence on a daughter’s self-image
A father’s involvement in his daughter’s life is a crucial ingredient in the development of a young woman’s self-esteem. Verbal encouragement, being consistently present in her life, being alert and sensitive to her feelings, taking time to listen to her thoughts and taking an active interest in her hobbies; your direct involvement will help diminish your girl’s insecurity and increase her confidence in her abilities.

Father’s influence on his daughter’s relationships
The type of men that women date and have long-term relationships with are also directly related to the kind of relationship a girl has with her father. The hope is that the father figure in a girl’s life will aim to skew the young girl’s opinions of men.
As human beings, we all have to face unpleasant situations at some point in our life. Sometimes, we can handle these situations very well and at other times, the situation bogs us down and makes us feel helpless. While there are people who break the barriers and live up to a higher purpose in their life, some just give up and feel defeated.

Being a human behavioural coach and having worked with hundreds of people, I have found three crucial but common behaviours that make or breaks people.

The Power of Thought, Association and Now

The Power of Thought

Thoughts become things. As you sow, so you reap. The power of thoughts is the most important and the foundation of all success. An average person has about 12,000 to 60,000 thoughts per day. Of those thousands of thoughts, 80% are negative and 95% are the same repetitive thoughts as the day before. We are usually going through the day on autopilot mode. We are conditioned by external influences to repeat the same things and so we get into a comfort zone. Some narratives get stored in our heads which either set us up for success or break us down.
What did you hear when you were growing up? From your parents, teachers, friends? Did they appreciate you for your singing, math, painting, cheerfulness, communication? Or did they shame you for being overweight, for skin color, for being less intelligent? Did they teach you to express yourself fearlessly and explore things courageously? Or did they bind you in superstitions, mindless rituals and condition you to be tied down? Did they tell you that money does not grow on trees? That you are middle class and you can’t dream of riches? Or did you tell to reach for the stars?

You attach a feeling or an emotion to each of these thoughts. And once you do that, it starts showing up in your daily behavior. For example, you are told that snakes are poisonous. You attach the emotion of fear to the visual of a snake and the moment you see a snake, you run away (behavior) from there.

So, the first thing is to become aware of is the thoughts in your head. Don't let them defeat you. Think positive!

The Power of Association

You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with”- Jim Rohn.

Who are you spending most of your time with? Are the people around you inspiring you for greater good and success? Or are they pulling you down? Who you spend your time with and how you interact with them is the next important behavior. Are the people around you complaining, gossiping or being negative all the time? Are you spending your time learning from the best in your field, reading the best books, working with coaches that help you attain your higher purpose and bring out the best version of yourself? Who you associate with determines whether you break barriers around you or get entrapped in them.

When a raindrop falls from the sky, it is so pure that if you catch it in your palm, you can drink it. If it falls on a leaf, it becomes a dewdrop. If it falls on a hot surface, it evaporates. If it falls in a gutter, it becomes filthy and if it falls in an oyster, it becomes a pearl. So who are the 5 people you associate with most frequently?

The Power of Now

Most people constantly regret what they did in the past or worry about the future. 97% of our worries are baseless and result from an unfounded pessimistic perception. Worrying depletes us of our energy, leaves us tired, angry and frustrated with ourselves. When we are in this negative state, we tend to lash out at others and heap our anger and frustration on others. This then leads to a breakdown of relationships with those you love, further making life unpleasant for us.

In today's VUCA world, people are hustling, multitasking all the time. Answering emails, taking phone calls, replying to WhatsApp messages and trying to finish a quick working lunch while trying to get children to do their online classes, finish domestic chores and so much more. We need to slow down and take time to smell the roses. Enjoy your meal, savour the taste of it, feel the texture of the food on your tongue, enjoy a heartful conversation with family, look at the rising sun, hear the birds chirping, do one thing at a time and be fully mindful and aware of the situation around you.

Yesterday is history, the future is a mystery, today is a gift and that's why it is called the present. Be in the present. Experience the 'now'. This is the only time you truly can enjoy and make a difference to.
Co-Parenting

What is co-parenting?
Co-parenting is a kind of understanding or contract undertaken by two or more adults who together take on the socialization, care, and upbringing of children for whom they share equal responsibility. Co-parents may include a variety of configurations, including a mother and a father, two mothers, two fathers, a parent with an adult sibling or grandparent or a parent and another adult relative.

Co-parenting in India:
In a country like India where marriage is a lifetime commitment, divorce after having children is gruesome for both parents. What will happen to your children and how will you deal with society are the questions every Indian parent would ponder over. Co-parenting after divorce can provide a healthy chance of living a normal life for your children. In India, where divorce reasons are mostly because of abuse or desertion, parents are always at fighting ends. This affects the upbringing of the child to a great extent. You should be very careful that the conflicts and anger with your spouse should in no way affect the growth of your child’s mind.

To make co-parenting more than a mere obligation, follow these things to let your child save the ugly truth of divorce.

- **Divorce with joint custody**: An adverse divorce brings about bitterness, publicly exploiting the emotions of parents as well as the child, leaving the child hurt and confused. Divorced couples should take up joint custody of the child, putting aside your differences for the sake of the upbringing of the child.

- **Residential proximity**: Most common insecurity in a child’s mind is the fear of uprooting them from their base when parents decide to live far apart from each other. Often a child is attached to his/her birthplace. Relatives of the family play a significant role in framing the roots of a child. In co-parenting, a child is free to visit family without hesitation. Living in nearby locations gives a better chance in providing this privilege to a child.

- **Societal status**: Often wide gaps in financial status and social standing of both parents start influencing the child’s preference towards a more comfortable position. In India, fathers are earning usually and have free-hand in expenses while non-working mothers are left with child support for the childcare, which is not enough to maintain the previous lifestyle. In this case, what both the parents can do is to co-operate with each other in fulfilling the child’s needs. Co-parenting is often costly since it involves providing two homes rather than one for a child.
• **Resolving personal conflicts:** Often divorced couples cannot resist the rising anger over disagreeing issues. Especially for women in India, encounter with ex-husband again and again during co-parenting can be tormenting. Arguing in front of kids, and worse dragging them in between you for an opinion, won't solve any purpose of co-parenting. Using a child to take messages back and forth between the parents will further deteriorate the healthy environment for a child's growth.

• **Acceptance of parenting style:** It is impossible to provide the same parenting to a child by a father and a mother. So criticizing parenting style only confuses a child, tampering the effect of co-parenting. To work out best, each parent should agree on making a co-parenting plan that divides the major responsibilities among parents like education, medical and health, extra-curricular activities, character building among others.

### Key steps for healthy co-parenting

- Healthy communication with your ex, working out a few strategies to effectively manage your child.
- Avoid negativity towards your ex-spouse (especially in front of the child).
- Reflect on your role in ending the relationship, and work on yourself. Co-parenting is easier for a happier, more balanced individual.

#### Effective co-parenting communication methods

- Talk to your ex-spouse like he is your colleague/ business partner.
- Listen to their perspective, ask for permission if required or make requests.
- Let the conversation be kid-centric.
- Focus on the present and future, let bygones be bygones.
- If you are angry, take time to cool off and respond objectively.
- You are in this for the child, so try to come up with a compromise for the child’s sake.
- Seek professional help, if required.

#### Common co-parenting struggles

- Constant changes in schedule, dealing with an uncooperative parent.
- Inconsistency in communication.
- The child’s lack of interest in meeting one parent.
- Fighting, resentment, power play, insecurity because of a new love interest in the parent’s life.
- Financial concerns/ disagreements.

Co-parenting is just like parenting in the sense that your child still comes above all. You may have taken a different route, but the end goal is still your child’s happiness. Don’t try to race through it, apply the brakes when the road gets messy. Be patient and hopefully everyone will get out of it unscathed.
BE THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS

All life forms on this planet matter because each one has survived the journey of thousands of years of evolution and is here for a reason.

For humans to think that they are superior and to believe that this planet is ours to decide who would stay and who would not, is not only foolish but catastrophic. We should have learnt at least that much from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Let's consider certain examples. Almost every day, animal lovers and animal feeders face the trauma and stress of poor voiceless beings put to immense pain and torture. Some animal caretakers face violent opposition from the neighbourhood and fellow citizens who have only learnt to talk about themselves and seem to be against the very existence of homeless cats, dogs and other animals. Then there are circuses, zoos, joyrides (camels, horses, elephants, etc.), illegal breeders, chemical testings on various animals – treating them like mere objects bereft of pain, emotions or feelings.

Whether it is in the name of commercial benefits, fun or religion, animal cruelty needs to stop.

Humans have legal rights and can raise their voices if their rights are violated. Animals have rights too but they cannot raise their voices for themselves so they succumb to pain, trauma, stress and abuse until someone steps forward and be their voice.

The most important of all emotions in this world is empathy and if you, as a human, feel it, well, you are unfit to call yourself the most superior of all species.

While laws may not evoke compassion that a person feels for these innocent creatures, they can be a deterrent for offenders any time they come close to harming animals. Following is a list of laws that you can use to protect them.

• **Section 11 (i) of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960** says that abandoning an animal, leaving it in a situation that it suffers pain due to starvation or thirst, is a punishable offence. In this case, the fine can go up to ₹50. If the same crime is committed within three years again, the person has to pay a fine of anything between ₹25 and ₹100 or imprisonment of up to 3 months or both. Neither the fine nor imprisonment is strict enough to prevent people from harming animals.

• Killing, poisoning, maiming or torturing an animal is a cognizable offence under Section 428 and Section 429 of the Indian Penal Code. The punishment for such an act is rigorous imprisonment which may extend for up to 2 years or a fine or both. In this case, as well, the fine is just ₹10 or above, an amount so minuscule that places no value on an animal's life.
As per the **Animal Birth Control Rules 2001**, no sterilised dogs can be relocated from their area. If the dog is not sterilised, the society can ask an animal welfare organization to sterilise and vaccinate it but they cannot relocate it.

According to **Section 38 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960**, dogs can be sterilized only when they've attained the age of at least 4 months and not before that.

Keeping, or confining any animal chained for long hours with a heavy chain or chord amounts to cruelty on the animal and punishable by a fine or imprisonment of up to 3 months or both.

If an owner fails to provide its pet with sufficient food, drink or shelter, he/she shall be liable for punishment according to **section 11 (1) (h) of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960**. Again, the fine extends to mere ₹50 with a subsequent crime committed within three years of the first one to be fined with ₹25- ₹100.

It is illegal to slaughter animals at places like temples and streets that are not licensed to do so. The act of animal sacrifices is covered under the **Local Municipal Corporation Acts, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Indian Penal Code (IPC)**.

Teasing, molesting, injuring, feeding poison or causing disturbance to any animal by noise or otherwise is prohibited according to **section 38(j) of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**. Anyone found guilty of this offence may face an imprisonment of up to 3 years or a fine of up to Rs 25,000 or both.

**Section 16 (c) of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972** also makes it unlawful to injure, destroy wild birds or reptiles, damaging their eggs or disturbing their eggs or nests. The person found guilty can be punished with an imprisonment of 3 to 7 years and a fine of Rs 25,000.

According to **section 98 of the Transport of Animals Rules 1978**, animals should be healthy and in a good condition while transporting them. Any animal that is diseased, fatigued or unfit for transport should not be transported. Furthermore, pregnant and very young animals should be transported separately.

The Delhi High Court states that there are no laws that prohibit people from feeding stray animals. Feeding strays is both lawful and helpful since it makes it easy to confine them to one particular area that they belong to.

The Animal Welfare Board of India issues IDs for people who feed stray animals. These IDs help people who want to protect the strays from abusive animal-haters. The board also organizes Animal Welfare Fortnight which does not gain the kind of attention that it should.

The laws are too lenient and a live example is the recent case of Lucknow's brutal woman, Pooja Dhillon who crushed two small puppies under her feet. She not only killed them demonically but also made a video of the heinous crime. The video got leaked and an FIR was registered against her but she was bailed out immediately. This viral video definitely caused her some social bashing but is that enough for the magnitude of crime that was committed by this sociopath?

No! We need to collectively raise our voices for better and more stringent laws for animal protection. Sign petitions, write emails to concerned authorities and continue doing so until a positive outcome is reached.

Rakhi Kishore
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Women are known to be born leaders. It becomes all the more amazing when women lead with beautiful examples at every step. It is amazing how women have explored so many aspects of their career. Today, women are just not restricted to being a housewife or a mother, they are much more. The icing on the cake is when you come across women who are sheer magicians at what they do. There is one such woman who is a chef, TEDx speaker, writer, former actor, fitness enthusiast and a mother. She likes to call herself ‘a mommy chef’! The magic she puts into her food and everything she does certainly sprinkles some magic dust on everyone.

The beautiful and vivacious, someone who constantly bubbles with optimism, Chef Amrita Raichand was born in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. Despite losing her father at the age of 3, she grew up under the protective love and guidance of her fiercely independent mother and protective brothers which helped metamorphize her into the gorgeous human she is today. She has had a diverse line of career choices up to her sleeve. Amrita holds a double major in Economics and Commerce and has a six-year degree in Bharatanatyam. From being a teacher at a kinder garden school to holding a diploma in marketing management and computer graphics, Amrita has excelled at everything that she took up. Excellence came naturally to Amrita yet she wasn’t able to pursue culinary arts or dance as a profession as these were not very recognised then. She aced her stint in acting, however, soon realised that it was the culinary world that was her real calling.

We all don a new personality after becoming mothers. Our responsibility as a mother pushes us to explore all the possible opportunities. Something similar happened with Amrita. Being someone who follows clean eating practices, Amrita took it upon herself to cook for her little bundle of joy when she became a mother. Trust mothers to create magic out of food and create recipes that have never been heard before. Amrita started experimenting with various types of foods to feed her fussy toddler and soon landed the show ‘Mummy ka Magic’. After being widely appreciated or her show, she decided to make this hobby a profession an acquired certification from one of the best culinary schools in the world - Sunrice, The Global Chef Academy, Singapore. There, she pursued an advance culinary course to hone her skills further. From assisting hassled mommies to ease their mealtime struggles to speaking at the Tedx summit about child - food equation, Amrita has come a long way in becoming a household name and being the solution to every mommy’s child food woes!

Her website www.amritaraichand.com will take you on a magical culinary journey with a vast array of recipes to suit every parent’s needs. She has an amazing line-up of articles and events up her sleeve on food and fitness on her website. When you talk about women who motivate and lead, Chef Amrita is a fine example to follow.

CHEF AMRITA RAICHAND

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Quinoa Stuffed Chicken

- BY CHEF AMRITA RAICHAND

INGREDIENTS:

- Chicken breasts – 2
- Salt & pepper – to taste
- Chopped thyme – 1 tsp
- Hudson Oil (for frying)
  (For the filling)
- Boiled quinoa/cooked brown rice – ½ cup
- Bell peppers (finely diced) – 2 tbsp
- Onion (finely chopped) – 1 tbsp
- Garlic (finely chopped) – 1 tsp
- Chilli flakes – ½ tsp
- Cheddar cheese (as desired)
- Hudson oil – 1 tbsp
  (For coating)
- Roasted makhana (coarsely ground) – ½ cup
- Almond flour – ¼ cup
- Egg – 1
- Chilli flakes (to taste)

METHOD:

• To prepare the filling, heat oil in a wok, add the chopped garlic and onions to it and cook until translucent. Then add the chopped peppers and sauté till partially cooked. Now add the boiled quinoa or the cooked brown rice and sauté for a few minutes on high flame. Adjust the seasoning and take it the wok off the flame. Allow it to come to room temperature.

• Now take the chicken breast, remove the supreme and clean it properly. Remove any excess fat. Butterfly the chicken with a sharp knife and flatten with a meat hammer to flatten it out. Marinate with salt, pepper and thyme.

• Once the filling is cool, add the cheese and mix well to bind the filling. Fill the marinated chicken breast with the prepared filling and close the chicken breast tightly.

• Put some almond flour and the roasted & crushed makhana in two separate plates and whisk an egg in a bowl. Season all three with salt, pepper and chilli flakes.

• Now coat the prepared chicken breast first with the almond flour, then dip in the egg mixture and finally coat the chicken evenly with the Roasted crushed foxnuts. Once the coating is done, refrigerate for about 30 minutes.

• Now heat oil in a deep pan and fry the stuffed chicken breast on low heat till cooked through and golden brown. Remove on a kitchen paper, Slice the chicken evenly and serve along with tartar sauce.
KOOTU KHANDVI

Ingredients:
- Kootu flour – 1 cup
- Buttermilk – 3 cups (or 1 cup curd + 2 cups water)
- Rock salt – ½ tsp
- Chilli powder – ¼ tsp
- Refined oil – 1 tbsp
- Black mustard – 1 tsp
- Green chillies – 4
- Coriander – 1 tbsp (chopped)
- Coconut – 1 tbsp (fresh and grated)

Method:
1. Mix kootu flour, buttermilk, salt and chilli powder.
2. Heat a wok and pour the above mixture. Cook on a medium flame, stirring continuously till the mixture is quite thick.
3. Grease 3-4 trays and take out some mixture in each tray. Spread quickly and evenly, as thin as possible.
4. Let it cool slightly and cut into 2 inch wide strips.
5. Roll each strip tightly and arrange in a serving plate.
6. Prepare the tadka by heating oil in a pan and add black mustard, curry leaves and green chillies. Sauté.
7. Garnish by sprinkling the chopped coriander and grated coconut.

SAGO AND STRAWBERRY DELIGHT

Ingredients:
- Sago – 1 cup
- Milk – 1 litre
- Sugar – 80g
- Strawberry puree or crush – ¾ cup
- Strawberries

Method:
1. Soak the sago (sabudana) in 2 cups of water for 3-4 hours.
2. Cook the sago in milk on low-medium flame. Stir occasionally till it is thick and creamy.
3. Add sugar, stir and cook for another 4-5 minutes on a low flame.
4. Remove from the fire and cool completely.
5. Add the ⅔ of the strawberry puree or crush to the sago kheer. Mix and pour it in a serving dish.
6. Garnish with the remaining strawberry puree or crush.
7. If available, you can use fresh strawberry pieces in sago kheer for garnishing.
Ya Devi sarva bhuteshu... the microphone intoned. The pujas were here, the chill of the morning air, the blooming lotus and the baskets of sheuli, the scent of dhoop and the slow chanting of hymns to Goddess Durga; all announced the arrival of the long-awaited Durga Puja days.

“Durga! Who named me that?” wondered Durga, sitting on the steps of the house she called her own. There, she worked happily and was treated very well. Durga had no parents, no siblings, no aunts, no uncles or any relatives in the whole wide world. Not that it mattered now to her, she was quite content with her life but her past... Durga's eyes grew moist as she thought back.

“God knows why we have to bear this burden! Her mother died leaving her with us and she is eating into our house.”

“Arre Bhai, why are you taking out your frustration on this unfortunate child? It's not her fault that her mother died and her father met with an accident when he went looking for a job.”

Ear pulled if she asked for her hair to be plaited, two slaps if she asked for more to eat, four slaps if she was caught playing instead of helping her aunt. For her, life could be counted in slaps and beatings.

And then fate played another trick.

The overcast skies spelt doom. The rain beat down relentlessly on the coastal villages. God's fury descended like never before. Overnight, roads became rivers, villages turned into lakes, people and animals drifted like logs. Durga hung on to the tree she had climbed when the water had flooded their home. Hours passed, or was it days? she did not know! This was how Durga was found; on a tree hanging on to a branch, her survival instinct so strong that she could take the battering of the rain and strong winds for so long.
The army jawan found her and was stunned. Out of four hundred people in that village; only 3 survived and she was a survivor! Her innocent face warmed the hearts of the rescue organization volunteers. After initial enquiries revealed her orphaned status, a gentleman named Tapan Das came forward to take her with him. He surmounted the baffling bureaucratic red tape to finally take her home.

Aparajita was a motherly soul. Oh Ma, what a miracle! Imagine this waif-like creature surviving! She was about fourteen perhaps but looked much younger. They looked after her, fed her well, taught her the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. She was a neatly dressed youngster who helped in the house doing what she knew to do well, sweeping, swabbing kitchen help and running errands. Playing with the toddlers Vijay and Vinny, Durga felt life was bliss, she had never been so comfortable ever in her life. Her young body blossomed healthily, she learnt how to take care of herself under the guidance of Aparajita.

Durga woke up from her reverie on hearing her name being called, Durga! Durga! Durga! What happened? Why are your eyes moist? Why are you crying? Aparajita’s concern showed on her pleasant face.
Nothing Mashima. I was just wondering, who named me Durga and why Durga? The beautiful lotus-eyed mother deity, the invincible conqueror of Mahishasur and I have nothing in common with her. “What a waste of a beautiful name!” she sighed.

Who said you have nothing in common with Ma Durga? You represent ‘shakti’, the strength to fight adversity. After all, you have only been fighting battles all your little life. Beti, you have lost your parents, relatives, survived that raging cyclone, hanging on a tree. You are the embodiment of ‘fortitude’ and ‘resilience’. Your calm presence calms me, your Masa. Your affection envelopes all, you are the personification of ‘love’ to Vinny and Vijay. You are Durga, the ‘protector’, Durga, the ‘conqueror’, Durga, the ‘strong’. What made you think lowly of yourself? asked Aparajita, her eyes flashing. Whoever named you, did so because Ma Durga wanted you to be named after her.

Durga was overwhelmed with emotions. She felt that the Goddesses’ strength pervaded her whole being. She was Durga, not Durga the orphan, but Durga the invincible!
RUNJHUN NOOPUR
AN AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR, ENTREPRENEUR AND HAPPINESS COACH.

A NALSAR Hyderabad graduate, Runjhun was trained to be a lawyer. However, the black letter of the law did not appeal to her creative and spiritual instincts. Instead, she chose to set out on an eclectic journey driven by her love for writing and spiritual instincts. Over the years, she has donned multiple hats including that of a start-up junkie, a brand consultant, a content expert, a dancer and a traveller. Her journey has taken her all over India and her struggles along with her unconventional choices have enriched her with experiences that range from mystical encounters nestled in the deep Himalayas to the challenges of the fast-paced, hyper-competitive world of the urban metros.

Runjhun was brought up in a family with deep spiritual leanings and liberal values. Both her parents were feminists long before the term became fashionable. They rejected dogma and encouraged curiosity and critical thinking that became a cornerstone of Runjhun’s value system and creative vision. She lost her father at an early age. But despite the relatively short period, she spent with him, his influence and inspiration pervade her life and work, both as an author and a speaker.

Her childhood experiences with life and death along with her parents’ teaching and influence honed her spiritual instincts to an extent where the first piece of writing that she ever published was a spiritual essay that appeared in the prestigious Speaking Tree column of the Times of India. She went on to write multiple articles for the column and one of her pieces was also chosen to be a part of the Best of Speaking Tree collection alongside the writings of several reputed spiritual thinkers.
Runjhun has been writing for over 12 years now and considers writing as her one steady anchor in a life full of unpredictable choices. She has been widely published by both national and international publications including The Huffington Post, the Chicken Soup for the Soul and popular digital outlets like Arre and Thought Catalog. She writes regularly on culture, practical spirituality, Sufi philosophy and good life lessons on her blog on Medium which has garnered followers from all over the world.

In 2018, one of Runjhun’s short story was awarded the prestigious DWL International Short Story Prize. Her debut, ‘Nirvana in a Corporate Suit’, a book on happiness that blends life lessons with delightful humour, was released in 2019 and garnered widespread praise from readers and media alike.

Her next book, titled ‘Quit Your Monday’, is a self-help book designed to help people navigate the changing patterns in the post COVID world and is due for release later this year.

As a happiness coach, Runjhun conducts experiential programs and sessions for corporates and academic institutions that merge ancient spiritual ideas with modern principles of emotional intelligence. More recently, Runjhun has started putting out weekly inspirational videos on life and happiness which have generated tremendous response across social media platforms.

Runjhun is a curious spiritualist, a firm believer in the magic of the Universe, and a rabid devotee of the idea called hope. As a dedicated seeker of life’s many adventures, her ideas and beliefs have been a defining theme in every material and spiritual pursuit she has ever undertaken.

In addition to her many passion projects, she is also the co-founder of ECORK Coworking and Creative Spaces, a unique, eco-conscious initiative that seeks to redefine work/life balance in the context of work-spaces through coworking and collaboration.
SONIA KUMAR

Sonia is a self-taught artist from Ludhiana, Punjab. Born in Chandigarh, she completed her primary education in a small town of Himachal Pradesh, Nahan. Her father had a secure job in military engineering service and they lived in an army area.

On her way to school, there was a studio and she used to watch an artist painting portraits and she was awed. While other kids played around, she often went to the studio and watched him playing with his brushes and colours. The way he signed off his paintings fascinated her. Inspired, she used to try to draw figures at the backside of her notebooks. She used to copy figures of Laxmi Devi, Lord Rama and Sita from the calendars they had at home. At the age of 10, her family moved back to Chandigarh where in my secondary school, she was introduced to oil colours and she never put her brush down.

After graduating with Mathematics and Economics from Government College, Chandigarh, she got married and moved to Ludhiana. She continued to paint whenever she got some time from all the household responsibilities. “Things become easy for a woman if she has a supporting partner”, she says “and I am blessed with one”.

Her husband encouraged her to enhance her skills and so decided to meet some senior artists in the city to learn more. “I still remember the way she appreciated my work. She gave me the confidence to display my artworks” she said.

Sonia did her first exhibition in Ludhiana in 2014 and continued with the shows in Delhi, Gurgaon, Ludhiana and Chandigarh. In 2019, she had her first successful solo show at Indian Habitat Centre, Delhi.
For Sonia, art is everywhere and each person is an artist in his or her ways. “A woman who cannot paint, sing or dance but knows how to decorate her home with beautiful curtains and bedsheets is an artist as well”, she emphasized. According to her, whenever we see something happening effortlessly, art is being created there. We can learn the techniques of art but it comes from the inside. She says, “it is the art that chooses us”.

Her work is a blend of realism and surrealism. She uses acrylic on canvas as a medium to paint. Her work reflects her observation of the social environment, human behaviour and spiritual proclivity around her. The bright acrylic colours and contrast in her paintings create a wonderful balance and makes the subject comes out very effectively.

The subject in her paintings are mostly characters from Indian mythology like Draupadi, Ganga, Aastha and Maya. Figures with are intricately portrayed and adorned with ornate objects. Her series work ‘Sacred Sounds’ not only shows her fascination towards bells but it also has a different symbolism; where the sound of the bells can meditatively calm a restless mind, t also serves as a warning to bring things into notice. Bells also symbolize how shiny little objects can lure people to them. Many of her works are on woman empowerment.
SUNIDHI TRIVEDI
If you give attention to detail, they will say, “you can’t adjust or sacrifice”.
If you adjust or sacrifice, they will say, “you’re easy to catch”.
If you do not adjust, they will say, “you’re impossible to understand”.
If you’re passionate about something, they will say, “you’re crazy”.
If you act patiently even in bad times, they will say, “you’re casual about things”.
So, let them judge you because they were born to motivate you.
Let them talk because people get curious about important things.
and ‘we’ are ‘precious’!

Independence isn’t about making women strong; women are already strong enough. It’s about changing the way the world perceives that strength. It is an acknowledgement to become so confident in who you are that no one’s opinion or rejection can rock you. It is the power to deserve to feel respected, trusted and loved. It’s the liberty to feel yourself because there’s no expiration date to reinventing yourself. It is the encouragement to learn from the mistakes because those mistakes are lessons, not failures.

Independence is the enthusiasm to do, think, talk, choose, decide, be happy in your ways and feel contented. It comes within you from you by chasing your dreams fearlessly, thinking about the possible opportunities, talking about your ideas to the world, choosing to be not ordinary, deciding who you want to become and loving what you have because love is limitless but time is not.
So before it’s too late, give a chance to feel like a free bird. And always remember, no one is judging and counting on you but ‘you’.

Be proud to be a woman. Embrace it every day!
VINAYANA KHURANA
I am a woman with a disability living in Delhi, India. Independence often means different things for different people; for some, it's about financial independence and for some, going on a night out is independence. For me, independence means to travel on my own. You might be thinking that what is so difficult about travelling. In the Constitution of India, the right to travel is an important component.

What if I tell you that, I can’t implement the right to travel in my own country because of the inaccessibility. In India, there are potholes and uneven footpaths that could a danger for a common man. As for a person with a disability, they are nightmares. Imagine you are in a motorized wheelchair and you have to go to your college. It is a tiring and impossible task. You won’t be able to make through the gate of your colony, let alone the way ahead. There are eyes on the road that stare at us, every time we step out on our wheelchair. Sometimes, I need independence from those looks and stereotypes.

Travelling is one of the many passions I have. I like to see new places and visit exotic routes with my family. We have a nice car and that is how we travel through the faraway lands among the mountains. We can not even imagine travelling by a local train or bus because they're inaccessible for a person in a wheelchair. Though, I would love to travel by train if I would get a chance. I think that one day, my country would be more accessible and open-minded for people like me and I'll go wherever my heart will take me.

PROF JYOTI RANA
This human mind has a rootless quality. If we identify this and get rooted in it, then we can enjoy the inner experience. On the other side, if we allow the mind to grow in roots, it starts thinking in the same pattern and becomes the prisoner of thoughts, events and happenings. That makes our happiness dependent on external circumstances. Our mind gets stuck in the rigid views and our ego gets easily upset. So being rooted in the rootless, shapeless and thoughtless is independence. It brings inner experience. When one is blessed with inner experiences, he or she becomes oblivious of his existence. This gives a thought of self-appreciation. Self-appreciation fills us with love and love is the centre of every creation. Moreover, a self-appreciated heart spreads happiness. Loving who we are and being comfortable with ourselves liberates us fully. We can experience life around us and become sensitive to life. That results in ease and creates a meaning of independence for me.
चमक दमक नहीं, सादगी हैं हम
daava नहीं, हरक़ीक़त है हम
सिर्फ़ पैकिंग नहीं, कालिटी हैं हम
केवल पूंजी नहीं, आपसे हैं हम
dil में लिए भारत हैं हम
hān, gaṅvājaṃar हैं हम
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