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# EUDAIMONIA



FINDING YOUR SOULS SMILE



# CONTENTS



## **eudaimonia, p1**

The origin of the word "eudaimonia" is happiness.

## **about ascend, p2**

turn towards inner growth

## **infostation , p4**

Knowledge in your pocket

## **out of the box , p10**

exploring beyond the horizons



## **editorial section, p21**

uniting Free Thinkers

## **tête-à-tête, p30**

"One step closer to the brilliant minds"



## eudaimonia

EUDAIMONIA is a Greek word that means well-being and flourishing — a good life filled with meaning. The term eudaimonia refers to well-being as distinct from happiness per se. Not all desires, not all outcomes that a person might value, would yield well-being when achieved.

Some desires may be pleasure producing, but their outcomes are not good for people and would not promote wellness. Subjective happiness cannot be equated with well-being. The eudaimonic conception of well-being calls upon people to live by their true selves.

Eudaimonia occurs when people's life activities are most congruent with deeply held values and are holistically or fully engaged. Under such circumstances people would feel intensely alive and authentic, existing as who they are.

Aristotle gave the concept of eudaimonia and held that happiness is a vulgar idea as not all the desires are worth pursuing. Some desires might yield pleasure, but they do not produce wellness. For Aristotle, true happiness can only be achieved by leading a virtuous life and doing what is worth doing. To realize the human potential is ultimately the human goal.



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S U S T A I N A B L E



H A P P I N E S S

## Ascend-Psy Care

Ascend-Psy Care (APC) is a registered MSME – A Behavioural Health Science and Psych Innovation Enterprise based in New Delhi, India. APC is envisioned as a world class Cognitive Behavioral Therapy center, training and supervision hub for budding psychotherapists as well as an institute for high quality, ethical research in Behavioral Science aimed at futuristic mental health needs. All our services are well informed by an international perspective along with being strongly grounded in the Indian setting which makes it a unique endeavor. We believe that “Mental Health is Indispensable”. Come, Ascend the path to Positive Mental Health with us!

Ascend-Psy Care was formally established in 2019 by Dr Nimisha Kumar, a Senior Consultant Psychologist and UK trained CBT therapist. She has over 15 years experience in practice, teaching and research and has

worked at premier institutes like AIIMS, MAMC, Sitaram Bhartia Institute and Jamia Millia Islamia University. At Ascend, we believe that Mental Health is indispensable and are passionate about mental health awareness and our team consists of young, dynamic, and highly professional members. We constantly look for talented and passionate volunteers to work with, so that mental health gets the priority that it deserves.

We at Ascend-Psy Care envision to facilitate Mental Health Wellness, which is a basic human right for every individual. We are passionate about serving society and creating mental health awareness and wellness. We aim to establish a high-quality CBT treatment, teaching, training, and ethical research institute firmly grounded in evidence-based practice within the Indian context.





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# INFO STATION

# SUSTAINABLE HAPPINESS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

WRITTEN BY SWARNIMA JAITLEY

Beep, ping, or boop?

Which one of these sounds makes your dopamine surge?

If it's none of these then probably you are one of those who keep your phone on silent and religiously check the notifications on that device glued to your conscious if not your hand.

The purpose of putting the reader on the spot is not just to make you question if you have become the Pavlovian dog that was once just an assessment constricted to laboratory circle but to resolutely press it against any denial that exists if at all. Digital originates from digits 0 and 1 these binary functions that have encompassed our whole biome. Algorithms are the foundations of the coming age regardless of the friction that many of us think we hold against it because the truth is we are already very much reliant on these, from our eased Google searches to being offered the next best song based on our taste buds to everything else.

From generations we have been connected to the world around us through narrations in one format or other, the beauty of which is that it bestows all of us all with our holy grail i.e. the reason for our existence and the part to be played unfortunately with the dynamically evolving scientific upstages we are being easily replaced like the labor class after the industrial revolution. This conveniently gives birth to the crisis of our existence, the most evolved species left to play no role in the core of the new world is something that can be very perturbing especially in the age where external and instant validation acts as the elixir of our happiness. So if nothing will stay constant and there is nothing for us to hinge upon what do we hold and should we not feel nihilist?

Dystopian or utopian both the realities are coexisting and the foundation of its existence is Homo sapiens. Japan has a village called Ogimi, which is known for the commendable life expectancy that the residents show, what we miss here though and what has been comprehensively explained with utmost grace in the book Ikigai is that not only people are living a long life but they are living a long fruitful one. They are still charged up with the feelings of happiness and joy which seems to be seeping away from the rest of the world. What makes it easy for them to sustain their merriment is the eccentric trick they have been able to reserve through generations, that of belongingness. The community exhibits a great deal of love and bonding amongst each other which is embodied in their style of agriculture, architecture, business, and rituals. Celebrations are an important part of their lives and are not restricted to the big ordeals but to seize every opportunity they can get to rejoice and connect. Time in its very nature manifests change and that by virtue is not an act of cruelty but that of progress, it is these evolving junctures that made the mental state of well being an imperative subject. The 21st century right now seems like Pandora's box which has led us to diminish the significance of that one thing that was left in the bottom of the box, 'hope'. The going is tough and it is now more than ever that we need the hope of a better future. For the communities to bond and get together and for us to accept our environment and our neighborhood and to let the gentle breeze of nature flow all over again, marking the scent of harmony.

The world is so confined between the 0s and 1s that it strikes them so ferociously trapping them in the vicious cycle of black and white thinking, the core of our world grows in these grey areas which we fail to regard. By dropping this cloak of ostentatious pretense we see that this scrutiny of being perfect that we all painfully go through is not what is holding this world together. It's time we learn to let all kinds of feelings in because the zest we elate ourselves might not make your heart so cheerful if it didn't know what sorrow, fear, and anger are. We are a wonderful complex of all emotions that are to be felt to be as human as we are meant to be. In these testing times, all we need is to be human enough to hold hands when scared and dance together when happy to truly sustain every bit of emotion, happiness being not the only one.



# THE ART OF SMILING!

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI

"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy".

-Thich Nhat Hanh

The sun was shining softly above my head. It was around 7 Am. I was jogging in the nearby park like every other morning before leaving for college. While crossing the small ridge, I heard a bunch of old citizens laughing deliberately until they could laugh by themselves. Just by listening to their laughter, I was filled with so much joy that I couldn't cease but smile. As I was returning home, I smiled at everyone, milkman, vegetable vendors, maa, and dad and even though, it was just a "smile", I noticed their faces lighting up in a reflex. You must have seen the painting of "Mona Lisa." Do you wonder why is it so famous? Do you remember the time when you were in kindergarten and your teacher asked you to smile when you greet? Can you recall the last time you smiled at someone and they did not smile back and you found it weird? A mother smiles wide when the sound of her baby's wailing reaches her ears and it is when the baby smile so innocently in their sleep that it fills each heart with utmost joy who gets to witness it. According to a group of researchers, it was mentioned that children smile around 400 times, and on an average basis, adults happen to smile around 15-20 times a day. Science has proven that the art of smiling is capable of altering and changing your moods in positive ways. When you are in a situation that makes you feel good, endorphins are released from the brain. These endorphins are in charge of sending signals to our facial muscles and these muscles must contract and relax in a way, which leads to the formation of what's popularly known as A SMILE!

These happy hormones namely endorphins and dopamine are released when you smile, thus making you feel happy and at ease.



A French Physician who studied the facial expressions in the nineteenth century revealed that a smile is unique to every person and involves the movement of eyes and cheeks. It is a myth to talk of a perfect smile when in reality every individual has its imperfect movement of muscles of eyes and cheeks and it is perfect in its sense.

Surprisingly, certain food items can make you feel happy:

- a) Bananas: They contain not only potassium but also tryptophan which uplifts mood.
- b) Dark Chocolate: The reason that you feel happy eating chocolates is because it helps managing stress.
- c) Green tea: Not only makes you healthier but also happier!
- d) Spinach: It contains folic acid that helps in relieving depression.
- e) Oranges: Makes your skin glow because it is a rich source of Vitamin C.

Our brain keeps a record of the number of times we have smiled genuinely, and since nothing remains hidden from the powerhouse, it only counts the number of times you've genuinely smiled, which no one else can know.

Now keeping the technicalities aside for a moment, think about it. It is our responsibility to deal with the challenges in life and learn to dissolve the difficulties with a genuine smile! After all, your smile can go a long way and even though humans are mortal, your smile will stay eternal.



# COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS AND BE GRATEFUL!

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI

It would be a white lie if you claim that little things in life are insignificant and do not make a difference to you. The truth is, they do matter. Everything affects everything. Furthermore, what is significant to me might not be even worth considering to someone else. Perhaps, because each one of us is different from one another and have variant definitions of everything. Nevertheless, little things affect all of us. The only difference is our definition of deciding what's "little". It might upset me to find a strand of hair in my food while it might exasperate you to see a dent in your car when your driver reports a minor accident to you.

Individuals have certain traits and qualities that make each one of us unique. Consider the same case of finding a dent in your car. If you are a positive person, you will dismiss the dent as being "trivial" by feeling grateful since there was no loss of life or serious damage to any living being. In case you feel pessimistic, you might complain that every bad thing happens to you and might even scold your driver for no fault of his own. This might sound irrelevant at first but in reality, if you think about it a little, you will realize that our attitude and our characteristics play a major role in how we react to situations in life.

Humans are neither god nor devil. We can choose to adopt positive qualities like benevolence, generosity, forgiveness, etc. or we can opt for arrogance, unrighteousness, etc. Our actions have a direct relation with our thoughts and the creative energy of thoughts relies on what traits we choose to cultivate.

To be grateful is to adapt one among many virtues. One can start to learn how to be grateful by acknowledging efforts, motives, and actions.

You might not realize it but such a tiny gesture of saying a "THANK YOU" to anyone with a genuine smile can make someone's day!

Here are a few ways you can practice gratitude:

- ✓ Write things you're grateful for daily: This exercise can make you realize that few things are amazing and can make you feel good about yourself!
- ✓ Appreciating nature: When nothing feels right, go to your favorite spot in a garden, and sit there. You'll be awestruck by the beauty of nature.
- ✓ "Thank You Box": I keep a thank-you jar and put slips after mentioning one thing that made me happy the whole day.
- ✓ Let people know who made you happy: It is easy to do and you'll be surprised to see their response!
- ✓ Meditate and think: Think about things/people/incidents that make you feel worthy.

Experiment saying thank you to anyone who does something for you. Let's say, smiling at your newspaper vendor for his morning service, or by appreciating your mom's food by complimenting her, or by acknowledging your friends who are there for you to listen or by showing enthusiasm to your boss while s/he guides you to learn a new skill. Changes start from very little things and often, from our own lives. Once you learn to count your blessings and acknowledge what you have instead of what you lack, you will feel a kind of lightheartedness and a great deal of joy. Of course, since we're humans and deal with emotions like anger, fear, frustration, etc., we might feel imbalanced and upset. It is in such times that you've to remind yourself about the good things in life and once you turn towards the light, darkness turns away itself.

# SELF-ACCEPTANCE

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI

It is a normal day. There is nothing special about today, there is no occasion nor any celebration. It is just another regular day where you wake up, carry out your daily activities, and go back to sleep and repeat this cycle, again and again. Sounds mundane, right? Well, it does not have to be.

If you give this a thought that what makes a particular day so special, you will realize that it is the attention and wishes we receive from people on some particular occasions like Birthdays and so on. We need some form of validation from the outside to function healthily but if we rely too much on seeking it from others than our selves, in that case, it becomes a little difficult to love yourself when someone else does not remind you that they love you.

It is okay to have insecurities and fears about oneself but it is a mistake to believe them to be your reality. Accepting oneself is not a course that you can complete in a month or a year, it is a process, daily labor, and a journey with no destination. A whole universe resides inside you, only if you believe it to be true.

Acceptance of Self is to be aware of yourself, both your abilities and weaknesses. It is about embracing your flaws as well as owning up your skills. Your happiness depends on your sense of worth and satisfaction you have with your identity. You do not have to be perfect to love yourself. You have to be courageous to love your imperfections! Many of us have experienced body shaming, bullying, trauma, and many distasteful experiences that made us question our worth, and it was a struggle to deal with your negative thoughts, wasn't it? There can be many reasons for a lack of self-acceptance. It can be childhood trauma, alcohol and drug abuse, poor academic performance, crimina

behavior, eating disorders, and many others. Lack of self-acceptance stems from low self-esteem which makes us feel bad about ourselves. "I am not good enough", "I don't deserve anything good" are some of the various negative thoughts that cross our minds often. It is important to remind yourself how incredible you are! Yes, positive affirmations are necessary. It helps you to cut down your negative thoughts against you. This is proved by science itself as positive affirmations help in building self-respect and cultivates belief. In the famous book "You can heal your life", Louisa Hay has mentioned her brutal and abusing relationship, cancer, and many difficulties that followed. At that time, she too turned towards healing by using positive affirmations and psychotherapies.

Following are some ways that can help you to deal with yourself in a better way:

1- Remember to treat yourself well:

The world will treat you the same way you allow them to treat you. You deserve a healthy treatment and nothing less.

2- Try to harness positive thoughts:

Breathe in and out and remind yourself that you are not your negative thoughts.

3- Deal with your fears:

Gather yourself to turn against your fears. You can win the battle against your fears only when you allow yourself to step in the battlefield.

4- Forgive

It is essential to forgive others and not hold grudges because they are only going to affect you. Moreover, forgive yourself for the way you've been treated and the way you've treated yourself.

5- Take a pause, do not stop.

It is not always possible to stay positive, it is natural to experience other emotions. Allow yourself to feel them and then, breathe out and let go.

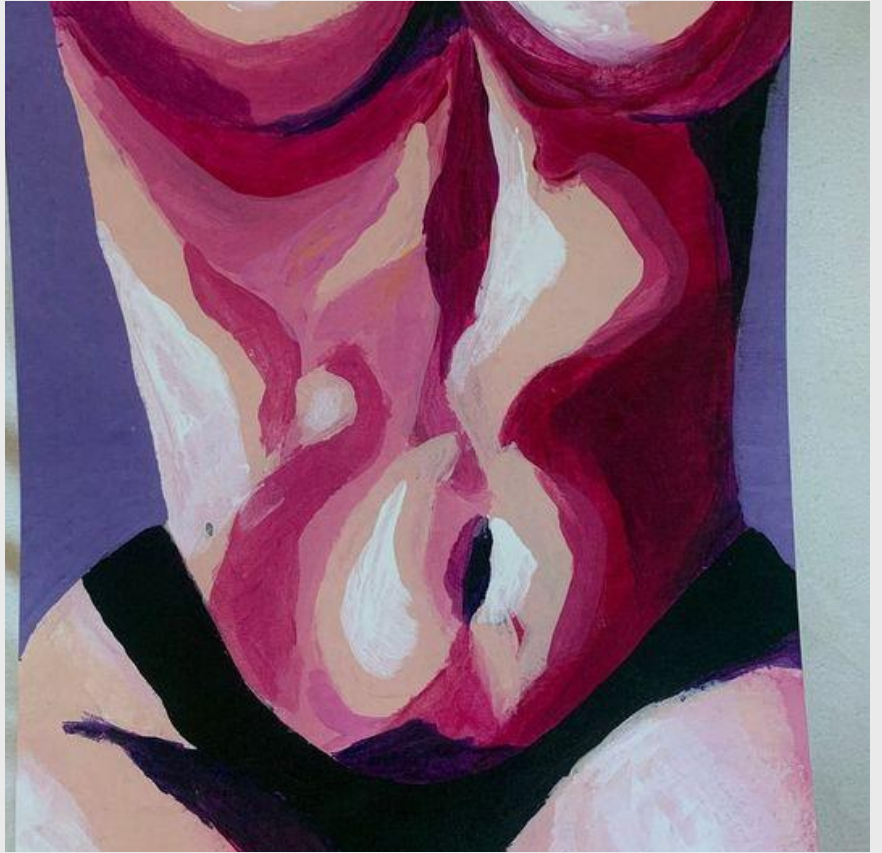
After all, your demons are in your head. Ring the bell of acceptance and wake the angels up from sleep!

# ONE-STOP SOLUTION TO ALL YOUR BODILY FLAWS

WRITTEN BY SWARNIMA JAITLEY

Do you know the best skincare routine? You gently exfoliate the burden of societal norms and unrealistic beauty standards and then moisturize yourself with the love and care you have stored within you. I do not write this from a completely apathetic point of view, where I am insensitive to the struggles of just 'looking good' rather I come from the empathy of this rat trap that the world has become. From a very elementary level, we have been taught that beauty lies within but at every other instance when you see this being challenged it weakens your belief. The beauty industry is a giant mammoth of multinational corporations feeding on your insecurities. Recall the times when you were a child and think about the times when you felt you weren't pretty enough? Was it something you always thought or was it something that you were taught? I loved myself till the time I was told there is something unlovable about me. If we as a society believe in the notion 'beauty lies within' then how come we are spreading so much hate?

Too much makeup, too little makeup, too much skin, too little skin, too dark, too white, too skinny, too curvy, too much eating, too little eating, too confident, too insecure, and the list goes on.

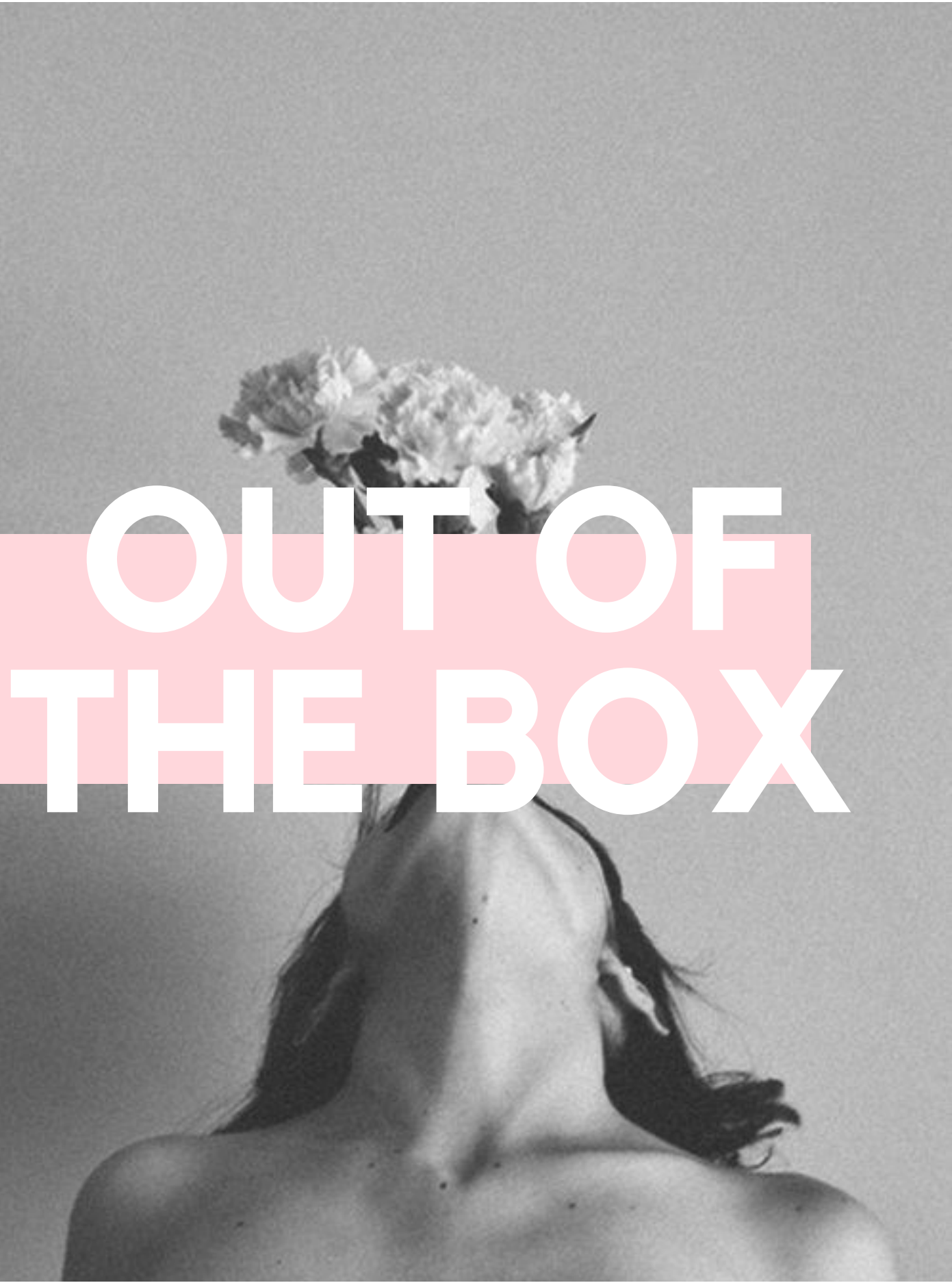


I want you to be the 'too' today and tell your loved ones too. Teach your kids it is okay to be 'too much' because the universe wouldn't have added you to its family if you weren't enough. Our concept of self deteriorates as we cut ourselves inch by inch to fit this irrational space. The romanticism of eating disorders, the celebration of desired weight fluctuations, and the perception of how someone with ill health should look like make us savages, cannibals who are eating each other out and are creating a sterile ground.

I will leave you with a 5 minutes rule. If it cannot be changed or 'fixed' within 5 minutes, it is not to your business to point it out. Someone's dynamics with their body is not your space to take, the words and tone we use for ourselves seep into our worldview, to see the beauty in others, you will have to go through a process of challenging these norms that are restricting you.

You cannot pour from an empty glass.

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# OUT OF THE BOX

AUGUST 2020



# CLEARING THE DARK CLOUDS AROUND THERAPY

WRITTEN BY SWARNIMA JAITLEY

For the longest time counseling sessions and mental health professionals were showcased in very mechanical and gloomy undertones on cinematic screen, this shady portrayal of the otherwise very healthy alliance between therapist and client added dramatically to the stigma attached to seeking 'help'. Therapy was not acknowledged beyond the realms of a couch, notepad, and 'talking'.

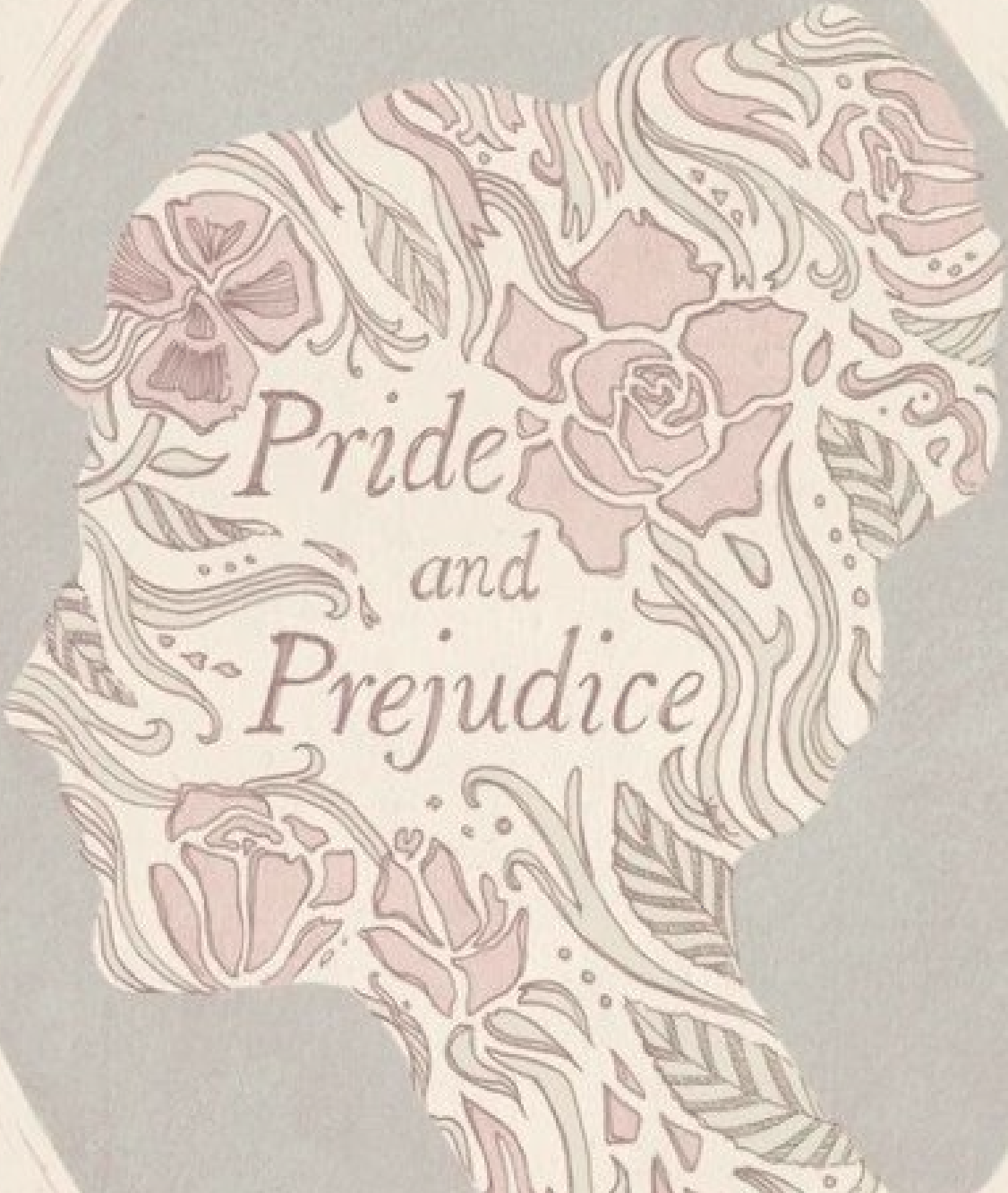
Whilst talking is a major part of communicating, the non-judgmental and holistic approaches of various therapy techniques were sidelined.

At the liberty of being candid I would put out that when I heard about a movie related to mental health, I never imagined something on such lighter tones like Dear Zindagi. The whole plot of the movie is filled with joyful positive glimpses while treading sensitively around sentiments and vulnerabilities of dealing with mental illness.



"Zindagi ek jigsaw puzzle ki tarah hai. Mere jaise log us puzzle ke khoye hue tukde, dhoondne mein madad kar sakte hai par only you can complete the puzzle."

This specific scene I feel lies perfectly filling the voids that the taboo around psychology has created. A paramount argument that is brought to a discussion about taking therapy is the fear of dependence on professional health and the medicines that make you numb. Now while I don't strike out the possibility of medicines during therapy, it is not the only plan of action and is a part of any medical treatment. Any doctor who helps with your diagnosis does not wish to control you or make you dependent to make money, it is an unethical claim and corruption of morality comes in any field, we need to step back and not generalize. In the beautifully challenging book that life is, a therapist only acts as a dictionary to help you understand it better. Even the most literate of us take aid of it to either correct or enhance our vocabulary to communicate our sentiments more distinctly.



# *Pride and Prejudice*

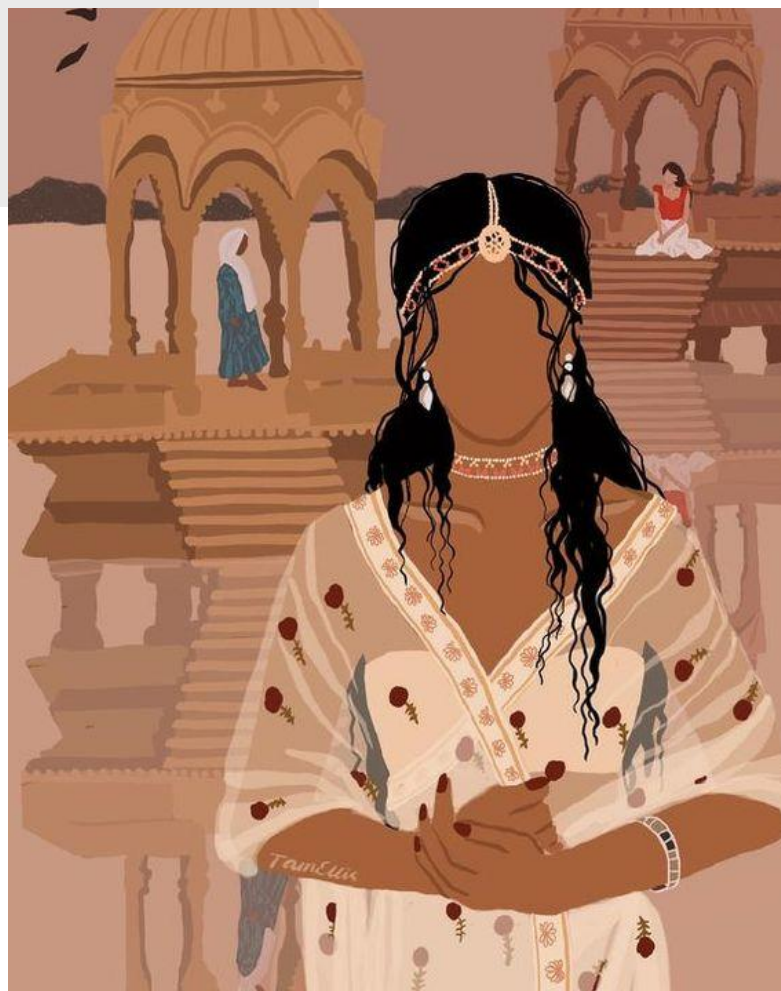
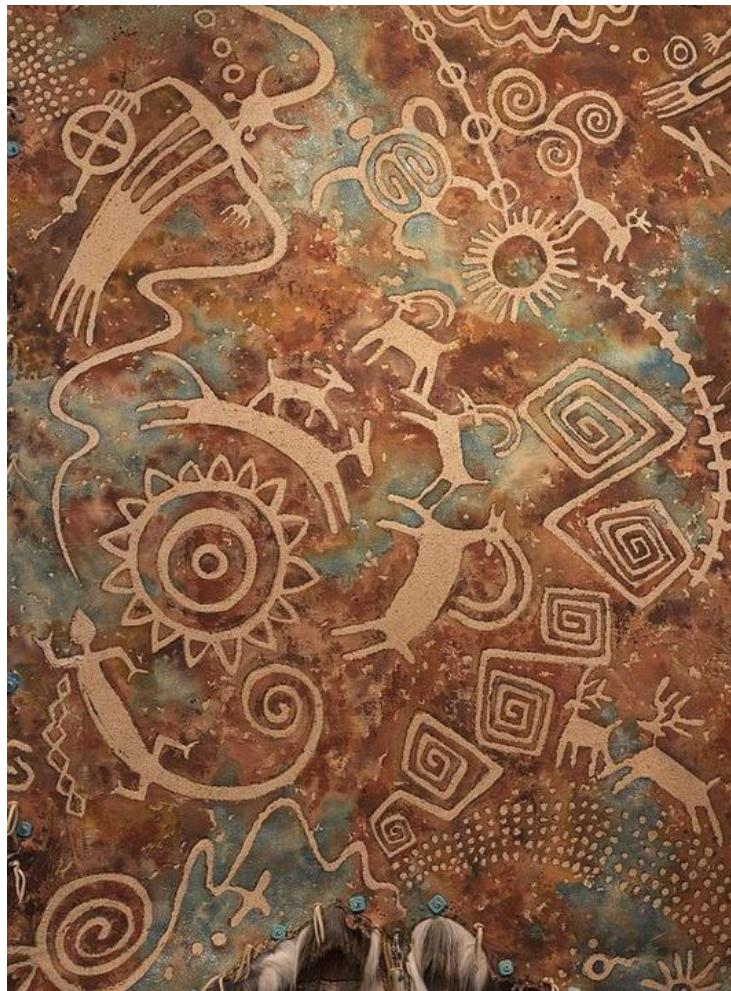
I got my hands on Jane Austen's popular work of classic literature "Pride and Prejudice" quite recently and I have fallen in love with Austen's writing. *Pride & Prejudice* is set in the household of Bennet Family of Longbourn estate. The five daughters of the Bennet family are seeking grooms for their marriage and Elizabeth, famously known as "Lizzy" turns to be the most enchanting protagonist. The classic romance between Mr. Darcy and Miss Bennet is intimidating. Mr. Darcy is a proud man and Miss Bennet is a very opinionated woman, in the sense that she develops various prejudices against Mr. Darcy. The title does complete justice to the book. The detailed description of Austen's characters will make you fall in love with both romance, as a genre and her writing, in general. If you love the world of romance, then this is a book you must surely pick up. If you're not a romance fanatic, then do it for the love of literature!



# ELITISM IN ART

WRITTEN BY SWARNIMA JAITLEY

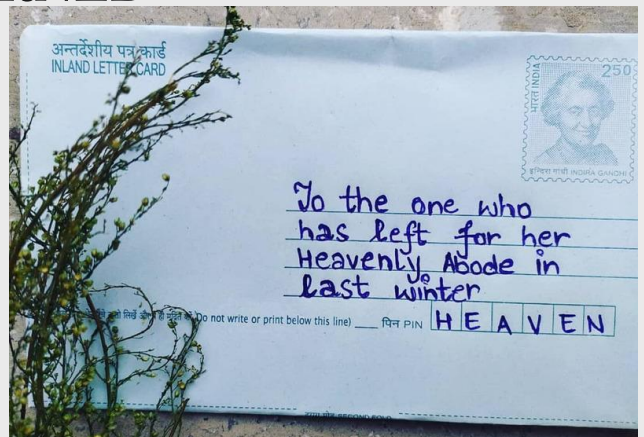
'atomspehre' Were you able to make out the word atmosphere from the series of jumbled letters? The reason you were able to do this is that your brain is smart enough to grasp cues. These can be verbal or non-verbal and they aid in transference of emotions. The origin of any art form was as simpleton as this, to communicate emotions. When our ancestors completed the daily struggle of surviving, they started making their lives more enjoyable by indulging in activities that would bring them joy like paintings, singing and folklores, and many such outlets traces of which can be marked from early cave paintings to the digital portal that is allowing me to express. Somewhere while settling the hierarchies into the societal functioning, a few people became more important and naturally did their expressions became more significant this was achieved by various means the righteousness of which is not in my capacity to judge but I would like the readers to allow me to take you forward from this point. With gradual developments in the field of art and culture, some stories became supreme while others got sidelined.



The classical literature, Beethoven's symphony and Picasso's paintbrushes, needless to say, got larger space. Whilst their work was commendable it's true purpose was to emanate sentiments and it was upon the receiver to appreciate what resonated with them. Over the years humanity fought with wars, colonialism, prejudice, and oppression that art became a way to influence and overpower the masses, it became as a tool to discriminate between the classes and this rooted biases are still reflected years later when we look down upon each other for not knowing things, the enchantment of language lies in the fact that we can communicate through it to know things we don't and if we use the same media to create judgments it nullifies the intelligence and capabilities of humans as a global race. The beauty of these illustrations and the charm of all the art forms in the world lies in its accessibility and resonation with its audience. The mutual respect and admiration of all expressions is what brings more diversity to culture and is the paramount road to think beyond borders.r sentiments more distinctly.

# TO THE ONE WHO HAS RETURNED BACK TO HEAVEN

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI



Are you still watching over me? Just like you looked out for me back in 12th grade. It was only two years back that you uplifted my spirits by encouraging me to ignore the sorrows in the classroom. When the entire class used to find me provoked, you could see the sadness and loneliness behind my anger. Perhaps, since you were a home science teacher who could sense the psych of her students by their behavior and help them overcome their problems.

I remember how you convinced me to learn from the bitter experiences in life and focus on my journey to become successful. You knew I was lonely among thousands of students and friends in school.

You talked about the desire of intimacy in life, sex education, peer pressure, addiction, and discussed everything that was whispered in ears and laughed among us. You knew how badly it may affect us and you always believed in creating awareness and understanding problems of youngsters.

I miss how straightforwardly you expressed your excitement before teacher's day because you wanted to read my message for you in the small card I could afford to bring. I have written many letters in my head, partially dedicated to your skills and mostly about your absence.

Your orange crepe saree with printed yellow flowers draped your confidence very well and was capable of hiding your sadness. I loved listening to you in class when you shared your life experiences with us. You were not scared of being a subject to mockery, you took it well unlike me.

I could feel your pain when you confessed the inabilities you were crippled with, in early years of marriage but how motherhood made life beautiful for you. You dealt with a lot and you became powerful after experiencing powerlessness.

One afternoon, you said it out of nowhere to always try and remain financially independent because a woman needs to control her assets if she is seen as a liability. Some of us laughed because we were only 15-year-old girls and couldn't decipher the meaning of your concern back then. I understand it now. I miss your coconut tricolor ladoos, and experimenting in home science cooking practicals. The coconut chutney and vadas were less than perfect but you were generous in your remarks. I am extremely sorry for shooting up your anger over a messed up kitchen and unwashed dishes after the practice was over. I called you on your birthday a month before I heard of your demise, you did not pick up. I thought you were busy with your family and festivities. Little did I know, you were celebrating the past years of your life on your death bed. I heard from other teachers that you were not mournful for traveling back to heaven and was content with the life you could live. I shall not consider life to be burdensome, you would not like it.

Oh, also I forgot to thank you for the diary milk chocolate you gave on farewell to your favorite students. I have the wrapper in my diary you wanted to get published along with the pocketful of lessons I learned from you. You remain alive in the memories of your students and this is your legacy.

Yours sincerely,  
A student and a learner  
Annie



'BRILLIANT...VERY FUNNY'

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

# A SPOT of BOTHER



author of  
*The Curious  
Incident...*

**How long can you worry about a lesion?**

**What can be more important than a nominal skin allergy?**

**Your daughter's wedding? Your son's identity struggle?**

**Your wife's affair?**

As lunatic as this line of questioning may sound to you, the reader can't help but sympathize with George who seems to have forgotten how to let go. What starts as a minor skin infection unravels like an avalanche in his mind taking away from him every possible plant of joy on its way. The book is a beautiful read for anyone with or without anxiety to empathize with the strength our thoughts, though dysfunctional and the importance of the constant support and care people with anxiety needs. The path gets very lonely and requires major support but there is light at the end of the tunnel.

MARK  
HADDON

# LESSER KNOWN NARRATIVE ABOUT LOVE

WRITTEN BY SWARNIMA JAITLEY

Rana and Piku, two fundamentally different people who are stuck together by destiny and Rana's impulsive infatuation for Piku which he realizes later was not a very wise move only to change his mind again in the end. While Piku is a movie about the loving bond between father and daughter, the pragmatic lens through which it showcases every relationship is commendable. Rana is not your typical 'savior - alpha' hero, his aura is deeply rooted to his middle-class grounds with feminism that isn't about preaching but comes out with his trust in Piku's decisions and admiration of her accomplishments. He is devoid of any righteous air and that is what makes the characters more human.

Neither Piku nor Rana is goody two shoes living in a magical world, where Rana helps and supports Piku throughout her tussle with the idiosyncrasies of her father, he also takes a step back when he feels overwhelmed by them. Both the characters display complete complexity and make independent decisions even after feeling the charge between. Even at the end the essence of how slow and multiplex the nurturing of relationship is shown beautifully. The romanticizing of such simple gestures are necessary for our cinema to let people feel more liberty in their relations. The burden of doing something magnanimous to win over your loved one and the obligation to make grand sacrifices hangs like an albatross around the neck of the liaison of two multifaceted individuals.



It is not someone else's duty to make you happy, adding the weight of such unrealistic expectations hampers not only a healthy relation but self-growth too. When we decide to work upon our emotions, we bloom and flourish into this intricate persona making our journey of self-growth and healing more momentous. It is an arduous journey, to begin with, and making someone else carry the burden for you is unjust to you and them. The only person who should have the power to complete you should be you, your partner should be someone to make this journey more enjoyable with them but not someone to embark on this voyage for you.

# A NEW DAWN SITS AT THE EDGE OF DARK HILL

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI

Yesterday evening,  
I felt extremely crippled with  
lethargy and my body  
showcased unwillingness to  
get up, like an adamant child  
who is not ready to move itself  
without getting chocolate balls  
and salty chips,

My heart was throwing  
innumerable tantrums  
because it has been spoiled  
with my undivided attention  
and wanted me to listen  
to it's unrequited  
demands, again -  
I refused this time

Maa asked me if I want  
to eat Dal Chawal or some  
mouth-watering cuisine but  
nothing excited me  
so I nodded without mentioning  
it to her that my taste buds  
are paralyzed because  
there is a shallow feeling in my gut,

Even though  
my eyelids paraded  
and pleaded to get a break  
from their duty to stay awake,  
my mind could not  
go to sleep and it was  
accompanied by some coffee  
to stay awake and listen  
to stories in my head

I dragged myself towards the window  
that offered me  
a serenity and view outside -  
outside of my body  
outside of my mind  
outside of uneasiness  
I sat there, losing myself in  
the paragraphs of the written text  
on books that have  
always been on my reading list,  
till the time I could hear  
birds yawning in their chirp  
as if they were  
also tired yesterday night  
but decided to take  
a flight today morning;  
and the beam of light disturbed  
my conscious sleep  
and jolted me with energy  
to realize my original self -  
the energetic one,  
the one who behaves like  
an obedient child and understands  
the reasons why his mom  
doesn't want him to eat  
a lot of chocolates,  
It felt like a new dawn  
was waiting to wake me up  
while I thought,  
I am traveling in abyss  
If I fall  
from the edge of darkness.

- Annie Pruthi

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# THE WINNIE THE POOH LESSON

WRITTEN BY SWARNIMA JAITLEY

The journey of mental illness goes a long way, the process of healing is not an easy one and requires persistent efforts and compassion not just from the individual but their surroundings too. Hence it is imperative to know how to be supportive in this challenging journey. The act of being there for someone is misunderstood by many. The need for support should not be confused with the need of finding the right answers. Sometimes well-intentioned suggestions and words can be more damaging than strengthening. It is okay to acknowledge our inability to understand or feel confused by the emotions thrown at us by someone dealing with mental ailments. The social stigma and lack of awareness itself make it very difficult for someone to accept themselves and the burden of explaining how much they are trying to not be who they are just added to the misery. Whilst everyone tried their best to make Eeyore happy they never blamed him for his emotions and invited him to every gathering knowing very well the undertone he brought to them. He was loved and accepted for who he was unconditionally and I feel there is so much to learn from Pooh and his friends.

Once it so happened that Pooh and Piglet were enjoying their cozy wintery nights and it struck them that they hadn't heard from Eeyore for quite a few days now, concerned about their friend they decided to travel across the Hundred Acre Wood to Eeyore's stick house. Inside the house was Eeyore.

**"Hello Eeyore," said Pooh.**

**"Hello, Pooh. Hello Piglet," said Eeyore, in a very gloomy tone.**

**"We just thought we'd check in on you," said Piglet, "because we hadn't heard from you, and so we wanted to know if you were okay."**

**Eeyore was silent for a moment. "Am I okay?" he asked, eventually. "Well, I don't know, to be honest. Are any of us okay? That's what I ask myself. All I can tell you, Pooh and Piglet, is that right now I feel rather sad, and alone, and not much fun to be around at all. This is why I haven't bothered you. Because you wouldn't want to waste your time hanging out with someone sad, and alone and not much fun to be around at all, would you now."**

**Pooh looked at Piglet and Piglet looked at Pooh, and they both sat down, one on either side of Eeyore in his stick house.**

**Eeyore looked at them in surprise. "What are you doing?"**

**"We're sitting here with you," said Pooh, "because we are your friends. And true friends don't care if someone is feeling sad, or alone, or not much fun to be around At All. True friends are there for you anyway. And so here we are."**

**"Oh," said Eeyore. "Oh." And the three of them sat there in silence, and while Pooh and Piglet said nothing at all; somehow, almost imperceptibly, Eeyore started to feel a very tiny little bit better.**

**Because Pooh and Piglet were there. No more; no less.**





# TO MY BELOVED CHAI

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI

A lot of people enjoy having you, but you're more than a want to me or a pleasure. I need you every morning in breakfast with aloo paranthas, you make the best combination with them.

Although there are a lot of people in your family, like Miss Green tea who is preferred by health-conscious people and mostly promoted by health professionals, I do not like her that much. Mr. Black tea acts as a helper in reducing diabetes and lowering the blood pressure which is quite appreciable.

I love you the most, your flavor is enriched with green cardamom and honestly, you don't taste the same without it. Maa prepares you with a reasonable amount of sugar and tea leaves, and let cardamom boil in you.

I wanted to thank you because you bind us when served- me, mom & dad, and my entire family. We chatter the most over evening tea on Sundays, you're best complemented with spinach pakoras when it drizzles outside.

You act as a catalyst to my thoughts. How do you act as a medicine, though? Whenever I have a bad headache, you quickly come to my service and take it away. Oh, did I ever mention it to you that a lot of people replaced "over a cup of coffee" to "over a cup of chai"? It's because my love for you is most intense.

Yours faithfully,  
chai lover.



# I LIVE FOR THE SPRING

WRITTEN BY ANNIE PRUTHI

On some days,  
I feel incredibly sick  
and paralyzed with  
the inability  
to feel anything at all,  
and days feel longer  
because when longing sticks  
on my tongue,

It makes me lethargic and  
nights are unbearable  
because I do not have the energy to feel sluggish time,  
dragging itself so slowly  
that I wait and wait  
and wait and wait  
and wait and wait and  
feel so impatient  
that I end up writing 10 poems,  
at least.

But it is for days,  
when I feel like the first dawn  
of the spring season,  
that I choose to survive  
longing, emptiness, nightmares, and life, in general  
because when flowers bloom  
& honeybees make love,  
when the clouds sing a parody  
in their thunder and  
when the droplets of rain finally  
hit the ground,  
unafraid of seeping into the earth,  
when the kids jump in  
the poodle of water and their mothers fret and laugh on the inside,  
when lovers dismantle themselves in front of each other,  
and the kadak chai compliments  
the Moong Dal pakoras,  
It is for those times that I choose to live.

I choose to live for the spring  
after the harsh frigid winter,  
I choose to live for life  
after fighting the harsh battles  
of time.





PSYCHOPEDIA.1TH

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE- AASHNA

# PSYCHOPEDIA – THE JOURNEY

I grew up as an average student, not brilliant, as far as I remember maybe I was once the monitor of my class but then I always knew we all have the right to dream or be whoever we want to be. I finished my Masters in Psychology in 2015. I honestly, I had no idea till the last day of my exam what I wanted to do with my life or who I wanted to be, it was only when life made me uncomfortable and asked myself “now what” that I wanted to do something, just something so that I don’t keep waiting for the interviews that I applied for. I knew I had potential and it required me to create opportunities for myself, not just sit at home and wait for things to happen. So the first lesson I learned was to “take the first step”.

I finished my final Master’s exam in May - July 2015. I was 23 then, I started my venture called “Psychodelia”. Yes, I did take my first step but the fear, the doubts, and the voices I had to shut it all. I had to believe that this will lead me somewhere.

Psychopedia is a coaching institute for Psychology students but I didn’t want it to be just any coaching institute, I wanted it to be a safe space for students, where they feel welcomed and appreciated. An institute requires faculty, it requires space and it requires students to walk in. The first step was finding a place and it required funds. And in gathering this fund, I used up all my savings and my pocket-money to make the ends meet for Psychopedia. For 6 months, I didn’t hire anybody. No extra faculty, no extra hands to take care of the cleaning, every penny was precious and my own two hands were sufficient to get the job done, even if it meant being exhausted out of my mind at the end of the day. I was the peon, the marketing person, teacher, every role I had to step into I couldn’t complain about. Was it easy? No, and it’s still not easy. The second lesson I learned was things may be difficult but not impossible. I used to wait the whole day for students to walk in & I still remember my first two students walked in after 1.5 months. I remember I used to keep telling myself, in the first year of their venture Coca-Cola just sold one bottle. There were days I used to feel all hopeless and I remember I used to go for a walk during which I used to put up a Ted Talk by Muniba Mazari.

That was when I learned my third lesson - “give gratitude for whatever you have”. So instead of complaining why no students are walking in, I started being grateful that at least I have two students and that turned things around for the better.

I haven’t had it easy, from a good spacious place, we even had to shift to a classroom that could only accommodate 10 students. We worked in that small classroom for the next 2 years and when I finally upgraded, the pandemic happened. It felt as if I had gone back to July 2015 but how we define growth is very important. For me, growth is that I didn’t give up. From an institute, I have shifted to a desk at a co-working space but I know it does get better. I am 28 now, I remember I never had a 5-year plan because every day was a challenge so I took it day by day and it’s been five glorious years of Psychopedia now. From not even knowing if I would survive as an Institute to turning 5 this year, it’s been a journey. I hope when the world tells you “You can’t do this” they read stories about you in the Inspirational column. Just believe in yourself. Lock away the years of conditioning that taught us we are not enough because trust me, you are enough.





PS\_PERNAS

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE- PRERNA

# HYSTERIA

Hysteria today is defined as exaggerated and uncontrollable emotional derangement. It comes from the word "hystera" which means "womb". It was considered primarily a woman's disease of wandering "womb". This disturbance of femininity was thought to be caused by the development of sexual feelings with no outlet, an assertion with no narrative. It was widely accepted that all women have seeds of hysteria.

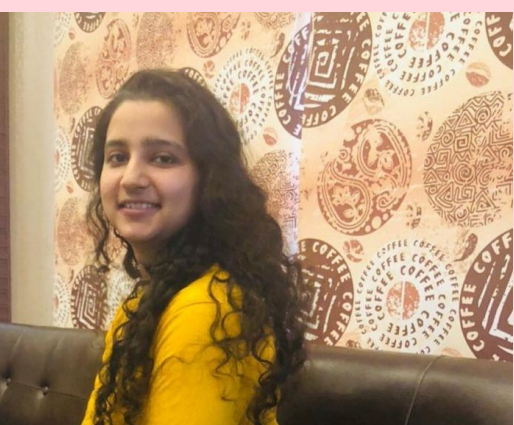
For centuries there was no mention of a male counterpart. Some cases of "male hysteria" were men portraying female characteristics, unmanliness, or homosexuality, the feminine in the man was essentially an illness. It was the disease of the weak, passive, overly emotional. In the 20th century, the word "hysteria" was enough to cause a man's castration. Any woman, who avoided marriage, sought more than the idle home life and had aspirations unheard of which took her away from her destiny, maternity was hysterical. The Victorian stereotype was that an incompatibility existed between cerebral and uterine development and all energy of a woman must be dedicated to the uterine destiny.



The cure?

Pseudo-pregnancy, the rest cure, where for a month or more a woman was restricted to a bed, prohibited to read, write, sew, and fed to gain weight. Symbolically, to put the deviant woman in her biological place. With the onset of the feminist movement, many feminists were diagnosed with hysteria and sought help for it. A woman successful in her area of work and who had failed to achieve a mature successful relationship was a true hysteric. The narrative was controlled by men dominated psychology circles. Feminism came to be known as a healthier version of hysteria. Hysteria was proto-feminism or the pre-political form of feminism. To have a mental illness that affected only women is a fallacy, for we had enough examples of men suffering from the same.

To link it with the women's suffrage was an agenda man successfully carried on for the longest time. The systemization of women caused social, political, physical, and emotional setbacks to the entire gender. "Intellectually competitive women were sterile flowers doomed to bring forth only blossoms of hysteria." More power to men and women who could never be more than the femininity the society ascribed to them.



THIS MONTH'S FEATURE- KARNNIKA

## CHANDIGARH TO PAONTA SAHIB - A JOURNEY

The trees were bidding a sweet goodbye as I looked through the blemished glass window of my bus. Across that glass, the sun looked like a freckled golden amber. The air carried the subtle fragrance of freshly plowed soil, the green-yellow grass, and the potato harvest in fields. I was quite familiar with this route and even the noisy bus I was traveling in. Chandigarh as they say tricity was now my second home. It took almost 4 hours by bus to reach my hometown Paonta Sahib- the Guru ki Nagri and I was a veteran customer of HRTC and CTU. After crossing the whole sheaf of concrete huts, the pathway was now greeting wild grass and dusty ongoing construction of the flyover. Every time I crossed that passage, I used to wonder, what will happen when these small mounts of Morni hills will be thrashed to pave the way for human urban complexes. But as soon as my honking bus moved a few miles between the vast green fields, this thought evaporated somewhere in the fresh breeze of that rustic scenery. After a few kilometers, the bus slowed down and the frequency of honks increased. Small towns and the traffic was quite a distraction, but then some more thoughts poured into my mind. Can the human mind ever stop thinking?

I looked at the houses and imagined what kind of people must be residing in? How they are managing to live near this stinky canal of garbage. The kids playing around that channel of garbage used to bother me and after brainstorming for few minutes I usually preferred to take a nap. I could imagine myself sleeping with my mouth open and my head waving like the wipers of the windshield. What a funny sight!

After almost 1 hour the bus halted at one of its permanent stoppage- a dhaba, though not a fancy one but decent enough to refresh. As few passengers got down to have tea and refreshments, some preferred to stay in bus and enjoy their yawning sessions sitting in their respective seats only. Some rushed to the washrooms and some wandered just to stretch their legs. Once I overheard someone, saying that this place was once all deserted and owner of this dhaba came here with a small 'redhi,'

Anyways, I grabbed my water bottle and heard a voice! Even that voice was familiar to me. A group of banjara people who lived somewhere near that dhaba used to come and sang with an instrument which was very similar to sarangi.

Tere jaisa yaar kahan, Kahan aisa yaarana...  
Yaad karegi duniyaa, tera mera afaana...

This particular song was no less than an anthem to them. My eyes got stuck on a girl who was singing along with them. A small young girl, with big twinkly eyes; she wore a suit and covered her head with a dupatta. Her tiny hands clutched two stones and created beautiful beats out of it. She sang: Yaara teri... and smiled at every other line of that song. What a beautiful smile she had, she was a gifted child with a sense of accented tones. I gave her candy and her smile was my reward. I could see her free-spirited happy soul who hardly cribbed for anything. Her eyes danced on her tunes and hands moved with every single throb of music. Are these the fairies of God's wonderland? I wish I could have stayed there a bit longer but as the bus started, everybody started herding towards the bus.

I looked at her and she looked at me,

we exchanged the pleasantries through our smiles and that very moment became ours. Isn't it amazing to surrender yourself to a moment of joy, love, and admiration! As I adjusted back to my seat, I was ecstatically satisfied. These are the moments that can stir the purest emotions in you. The bus progressed and there came the board which said "We welcome you to Himachal Pradesh."

We crossed Kalaamb which is an industrial area and the hills near Nahan gave the much needed cold.

The hilly roads can sometimes trigger the motion sickness but then the lavish green forest keeps you going. The patchy roads and the jammed window of my seat can be a situation sometimes. But I was habitual to it. I rested back and clenched the handles of the seat as the probability of getting a jerk can be high.

After 10 km the road smoothened a bit and then all I do is wait for the Batapul chawk which gives me a feeling of home. After juggling bags and a lot of effort, I got down from the bus near my lane. Seeing my house from far is a feeling that can never be explained in words but every one of us has experienced it.

As I ponder, I realize that I may have taken this journey 50 times or more but it's new every time. The crops and their color keeps changing, the roads are mended, there may be new buildings built, new passengers and more than anything I won't be the same. As Heraclitus once said- "No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it, is not the same river and he's not the same man."

Every journey leaves a mark on my soul and this one left me with-  
*Rhythmic flashes of the lights,  
Amidst the haze of those dreamy nights,*

*Aromatic vapors rising in the air,  
One with feathers I wish to pair;  
Not to crawl and not to run,  
To witness the magic of cosmos:  
I crave to fly across the sun!*





PRANSHUSAXENA\_

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE- PRANSHU

# THE ART OF BEING SELFISH

Since childhood, I have always been fascinated by the behavioral aspects of people. How we respond to situations around us, how we somehow overcome our existing barriers, and still evolve, and this is just my curiosity in a nutshell.

I, since I started speaking, have always been the one with questions on almost everything around, and sometimes it was just the wondering of how things are the way they are and why. Questioning is not bad, but it also is important in what direction you are holding them.

The only question which stayed for long is why are we, the way we are? The process of questioning, on one way, taught me to never truly be over-confident on any situation and on the facts that come across, and on the other way, It also gave me the ability to look into the gray area which is one of the most disliked areas by the ignorant people and the ones who are reluctant

to move outside the box of blacks and whites. While all this was happening, the habit of questioning also came for me and my actions. I delved into existentialism and it has not been a pleasant ride but what has always moved me is the ability of us, the people to overcome the emotional challenges that we face by some sincere initiatives made while taking good care of ourselves.

I, based on my experiences, have always found one thing to be the most effective for myself, which is to truly be, selfish. It might not sound right to you but for me, it worked. I mean for me being selfish means the very basic definition of the term 'putting yourself first in terms of your physical, mental, and emotional well-being', which I think should be our utmost priority. I never discourage people to be selfless or lose empathy but in the process of giving out, we many of the times lose something which we might ourselves need the most.

This comes from me because I, in general, have always been quite self-critical and because of which one minor setback pushed me miles back, While all of this was happening, I was focused more on giving out than taking some time in for myself. I tried re-imagining my better version of other people in my life and helped them grow and nurtured them, be it in a relationship, friendship, or family.

I never had the slightest idea while I am putting others at first and myself at second, how much damage I was making to myself.

As I always think, that 'acknowledgment is, the half battle won', I am working on the being 'selfish' thing as it is truly doing wonders for me and trust me, while I am taking care of myself and being selfish, I feel like a better version of myself around the people I love and am around with the most. It derives from within and I have not mastered it yet. I still fail when it comes to keeping expectations but I just am trying to go ahead with something which makes me feel happy and I am fine with these minor setbacks as long as the future me, seems happy.

I used to be a person who've always held my past and memories, the closest but this process also has made me understand how important it is to sometimes let things be the way they are and lose some baggage of the past. The more you live in your present, the lighter and happier you become. I know it sounds and is demanding but the hack is to love yourself the most. As once you become selfish, you start owning your decisions, your expectations are held by yourself and no one else and to be honest, you would never hurt yourself, would you?

So, do not ever take yourself for granted, you matter. 💎💎



# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The title gives it away.

Some of you must be intrigued right now while otherwise are wondering "WHY ARE WE READING AN OLD RUSSIAN PIECE PUBLISHED IN 1866!" Both reactions are expected and all your fascination and doubts will be answered when you give this book a try. Spoiler: somewhere near the end there is a mention of a plague originating from Asia. Now just for that bit of scary prophecy, you have got to give this book a try. The book focuses on the mental anguish and dilemmas of Raskolnikov - a college student who SLEEPS A LOT, DOES NOT LIKE MANY PEOPLE, HAS HARDLY 1 GOOD FRIEND, IS BROKE BEYOND BELIEF (basically, his character loosely represents all college students) - upon committing murder (THAT, does not represent all college students). This book is surely a page turner, filled with such inner turmoil that it'll make you want to read till the very end and cherish it forever.

## FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

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AMAZON CLASSICS

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SRISHTI,27

THIS MONTH'S FEATURE- SRISHTI

# MY MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCE

I don't know where to begin as I am bad with words but I can try. I grew up doubting my value as a person and we always been the kind of girl who hid her face because she was too afraid to tell the world what she has got to say. I had a lot of issues since childhood and I am still dealing with them. I developed basic anxiety and self-worth issues. I often conclude that people do not find me important enough.

So I usually prefer to keep my mouth shut in a lot of situations, even if I have a lot to say. Sometimes I'm rigid and I make no movements at all because I feel if I do something or make any movement, something wrong will happen. I stand or sit completely still and start staring at the floor.

There are a lot of moments when I was not myself. These moments, everybody else might have forgotten. For them, everything might be normal now but the same wasn't the case for me. I remember it vividly. The turmoil my mental state was in.

Everyone refused to acknowledge my cry for help until I started studying psychology.

Those open house discussions about mental health my counselor who was always there to LISTEN, helped me in ways that I cannot explain.

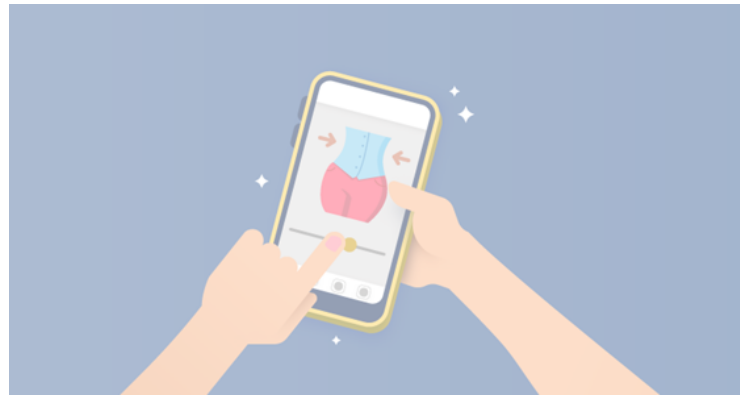
Earlier, I always had problems expressing my feelings. I felt the need to express and say it out loud but I just could not. And it is not supposed to be that way because the longer you suppress it, the more it eats you up. Only after counseling sessions, I became self-aware and I feel awareness is the key. If we are aware of our emotions then half of our problem is solved. As I became aware of my anxiety, I was ready to tackle it.

I saw how we felt like a family while sharing stories in group counseling.

My counselor had explained to me once that all those terms like normal and abnormal that society calls someone who is dealing with mental health issues are nothing but labels. There is nothing like normal and abnormal and it is so natural to feel our emotions. I read somewhere people start to heal the moment they feel heard&#39;, and it is true. My healing began when I felt heard. I read somewhere & people start to heal the moment they feel heard&#39;, and it is true. My healing began when I felt heard. Anxiety is not easy to deal and healing is a slow process. I am sharing this story because I do not want anyone to feel as lonely and hopeless as I have, especially with the rise in mental health awareness and the changing times. There is nothing to be ashamed of instead it is brave to seek help.



# CELEB SOCIAL MEDIA AND AN UNREALISTIC STANDARD OF LIFE



## THIS MONTH'S FEATURE- PURVA

Social media has become an increasingly impacting platform for body image in the past few years, and celebrities have had a huge influence on this. Countless celebrities post Photo shopped and Face-tuned images of themselves that present an unrealistic beauty standard. It can have an impact on how you see your own body, how you view other people's bodies, and what you find attractive in general.

A research conducted by Pennsylvania University reveals that the more time we spend on social media, the more disturbed and lonely we become. It is also important that we realize that our addiction to social media is making our life exhausting and deteriorating our perceptions. From eating your 'me' time, making you feel depressed and lonely to the insecurities that get highlighted by others- all this is contributing to a lower self-esteem.

### CELEBRITY POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA MAKES YOU DOUBT YOURSELF

- As humans, it is natural for us to compare ourselves with others. Whether you're aware of it or not, you're probably comparing yourself to celebs you see on social media. When those pictures with a thin waistline and no stretch marks are put up on social media as ideal beauty standards, it makes us feel insecure and even ashamed of ourselves.

□ Social Media creates a false body image because so many celebrities/influencers post pictures of bodies that aren't easily achievable or might be photoshopped. Every picture is filtered, edited, and fixed to make it look perfect. These photos are taken a million times to get that perfect shot which is posted and leads to people comparing themselves.

□ Traveling, relationships, social life, inspiration, food, luxury items- everyone dreams to have that lifestyle. This is where people get stuck, sitting there wondering why their life can't be like everyone else's. The problem is that it's not realistic and we don't realize that no one posts about their failures and bad days on Instagram.

□ Social media presents things in a way that makes us crave for that kind of lifestyle. Whether it be body image, food, lifestyle, or events, their online image is much more perfect than reality. What we don't realize is that everyone has their own stories behind their pictures, all kinds of strengths and weaknesses. Everyone struggles with sadness, loneliness, and many other emotions.

□ It is not just the celebrities posts and images that can affect you. Seeing celebrities get trolled or fat-shamed on social media

comments may make you more likely to do it to others—whether that happens in real life or just in your head.

### SO, HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR MENTAL PEACE AND SELF ESTEEM?

□ Media literacy is important- Inform yourself about how these celebrity images are manipulated even after the celebrities have personal trainers, make-up artists, etc., and realize how unrealistic it is to try to meet that ideal as a normal human.

□ Set a screen time- You need to maintain a log of the time you are wasting by being online every day, which will help you in devoting time for other activities.

□ Social media detox- You can simply start by unfollowing toxic people and turning off your notifications to reduce your urge to check updates. Delete your social media if you feel like it. No matter how perfect their lives look online, remember that they're regular people behind the screen, just like you. Set realistic expectations for yourself and rather than feeling ashamed, take pride in who you are. Learn to appreciate the beauty of others without questioning your own.



@DAILY.AFFIRMATION\_





FREDRIK BACKMAN

AUTHOR OF BRITT-MARIE WAS HERE

# A MAN CALLED OVE

Fredrik Backman deserves all the love and respect for writing this marvelous book and bringing it into my life. Quite easily my favorite read because of the simplicity of human nature that it displays. You will fall in love with Ove despite him being a grumpy old man. In all honesty, this is the perfect light read for those people who are new to the world of books and for those higher up in the literary ladder too. To the people who are still in doubt about picking up the book, the 2015 film of the same name will help you in understanding the warmth that this story portrays.

# TÊTE-À-TÊTE



## DRISHTI KHARBANDA FOUNDER OF SARVANI

DRISHTI KHARBANDA IS A MASTER'S STUDENT AT SYMBIOSIS INSTITUTE OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION, PUNE. SHE WAS ABOUT TO TURN 19 WHEN SHE THOUGHT OF STARTING SARVANI. THE IDEA WAS TO BUILD A COMMUNITY, WHERE WOMEN CAN COME TOGETHER, EDUCATE THEMSELVES, EXCHANGE KNOWLEDGE THROUGH DIALOGUES, AND TAKE ACTION ACCORDINGLY. SO WE FIXED UP AN INTERVIEW WITH A WOMAN OUR AGE WHO HAD ALREADY TAKEN LARGE STRIDES IN EMPOWERING, EDUCATING AND INSPIRING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE.



Q- Can you tell me what Sarvani is all about?

Sarvani is a renowned women organization based in Chandigarh, India. The driving force behind the creation of Sarvani was to create a place that is led by dynamic females of all age groups. Sarvani's motive is to aim, educate, and empower women about various societal issues and raise awareness. It provides a platform to create a dialogue through "Sarvani Samvad" and "Sarvani Talks". Women are "bekhawf, bebak aur buland". To empower women, Sarvani has initiated a project to employ women. The volunteers are active on the ground level and young girls help fellow women by educating themselves about their rights. The initial aim was not to create a non-governmental organization but only to create a safe place for communication and interaction.

Q- What are some of the noteworthy activities Sarvani has done?

The most significant Sarvani has done is that it has provided a platform for women to talk about their experiences and listeners to their stories. Sarvani Talks is one such platform. It provides a platform for women where they can narrate their life stories and inspire one another. To give someone a platform is to provide them with a voice. Also, we are engaged in various other projects. Sarvani Flair is one such project that employs creative and artistic women by helping them create a market for their products. We have different programs and workshops for children too. A hundred smiles a day with Sarvani is also a way where we help people by providing them food or masks in current times.



Q- What all has Sarvani accomplished since its initial days?

I was only a teenager when I started Sarvani without having any clue what starting an organization means. The only aim was to create a platform for women to connect who were determined to create a change. There were certain issues I wanted to find answers for and do something about it. But I was young to know about solutions at that time. The aim is the same and yet a lot different now. My idea is no more about just creating connections but also to empower women by making them realize their potential. It's no more about just doing something but to be aware of the reason why they're doing it.

Q- What are the changes that the NGO has brought so far?

A lot of people acknowledge that Sarvani is led by really young girls. Sarvani made people believe that young minds can do a lot. Change happens when perspective changes. I can recall when we did our first Sarvani Talks where we called Dhananjay, the first transgender student of Punjab University. We've also collaborated with various environmental activists such as Green Man (Dr. Suresh Deswal), to share their stories. In Covid-19 when we're distributing meals to children, the joy and their hope to see you again is huge. Another change that I noticed was during Sarvani Talks, a girl who had anxiety in performing in front of a crowd, came up to me and told me that due to Sarvani Talks she has begun to feel very comfortable in speaking in public.

Q- Did you face any hassles during the creation of Sarvani and discrimination on the grounds of your age and gender?

Definitely. I was young and had no money. Sarvani took no donations in the first two years after it's the foundation. A lot of people thought that I am way too young to bring a change. The biggest hassle was in my family. My father was not much happy with it and told me that you're wasting your time and being a stupid person. He said you should become an IAS or IPS officer and then bring a change. I couldn't ask for money from my family. I realized things happen when you plan it and I wouldn't like to change my experiences. Time is a healer and my difficulties are forgotten. I knew I needed to continue because I was convinced what I was doing is a good thing.

Q- What problems is Sarvani facing due to corona?

Volunteers. Sarvani has been a student-run organization and we need volunteers for our on-ground activities. I remember I had no one to join me for meal distribution and I asked them you should come along if you want to but students were hesitant due to the pandemic and it is understandable but even when they wanted to come their parents won't let them because they thought it's too risky especially going to slum areas where people are more prone to the virus.

Q- Since you're a student, how do you manage between studies and Sarvani?

A lot of people ask me how am I managing my education, internship, and Sarvani and the answer to that is I don't know. I think I don't consider Sarvani as work. Today, if you tell me you can't sleep because there is work from Sarvani I wouldn't shy away and will be happy to do it. So with Sarvani I never had the compulsion to do it, it was just something I wanted to do, I just try to give my best. When I went to Pune it got very challenging I saw the whole team dynamics change and I couldn't even ask for help so I have seen worst of the times but these things only make you grow.

Q- Who has been your constant supporter throughout the years?

Honestly, I feel this is just your battle to take and nobody will be fighting your battle for you. Initially, I faced resistance from my family too. I was not bothered about people supporting or not supporting me. Nobody sat with me when I started and told me that "Drishti, you're doing a good thing," so now when I'm doing what I'm doing, I don't need somebody to tell me that I'm doing a good thing. When you're doing something that feels right, your conscience becomes your biggest support. You begin to feel then that you can do it! And only when you begin feeling that way, are you able to accomplish your goals.

I think the almighty was also my biggest supporter. I turned out to be very lucky when nobody was there to support me. I was a child with no idea about life and people, 'God' was the only one who protected me in those times I believe.

Now my father has been so encouraging with his support and he tells me that I will do great things and that makes me happy.

Q- During the times as the founder of Sarvani or even before that, was there any incident that made you feel strongly about helping others?

It was my first year of college and we visited an orphanage. One of my classmates encouraged me to visit it despite my initial resistance. It was my first time and I remember there was an activity where we gave these children drawing sheets and they would write something on the slip then they will give it back to you. I was observing this one guy who especially ran to his room to get colors and then he was using those colors to write. When it was time for me to leave, he comes running to me handing me the slip and that note read “Didi mujhe sabse acche aap large.” He used so many colors in writing that. I still have that paper. I framed it. That day when I went back home, it was a defining moment for me. He made so many extra efforts in writing that. It made me feel that we going there meant something to this boy.

Q- What have you thought of for the future of Sarvani?

We just want to create a safe space for everyone who wants to join us in working diligently on societal issues.

Q-Is there any message you would like to give to the youth and young women of today?

My message for women is to learn how to appreciate other women. We have somehow been trained in ways to be competitive with fellow women. We try to compete in every dimension, who looks the better, who dresses the better. This creates friction. It's very natural to see women being jealous of other women. The success of women can only be accomplished when we uplift each other. Women should know that they are powerful and they are empowered. You don't have to push somebody else to succeed in life. We are not in a race with one another.

Another thing I want to say is that when you want to do something, don't let anybody tell you otherwise. If you believe what you're doing is right, you can achieve everything. Nothing is impossible. Believe in yourself and have faith.

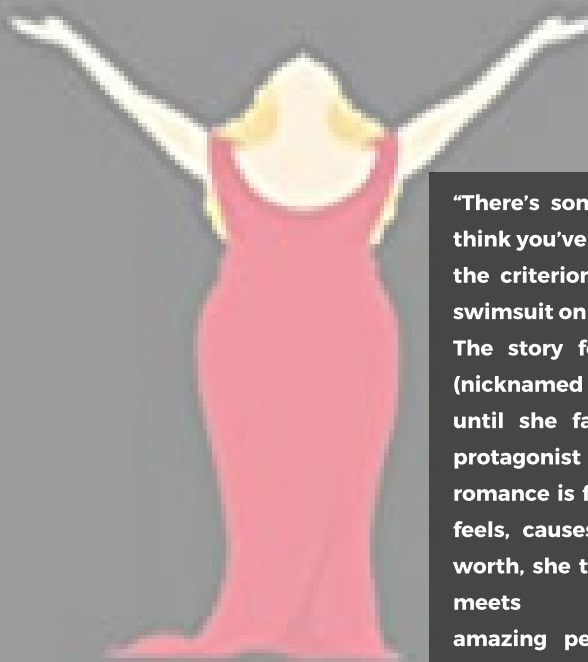
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# DUMPLIN'

GO BIG OR GO HOME.



"There's something about swimsuits that make you think you've got to earn the right to wear them. Really, the criterion is simple. Do you have a body? Put a swimsuit on it."

The story follows a young girl called Willowdean (nicknamed Dumplin) who enjoys every bit of her skin until she falls in love with Bo. Despite the male protagonist being the man of her dreams, the romance is far from perfect as the emotions Dumplin feels, causes her to question herself. To prove her worth, she takes up a challenging journey where she meets

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JULIE MURPHY

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We would like to thank you all for taking the time out to read our E-Magazine.

Our team put its heart and soul into its creation. We aspire to create more meaningful content for you in the near future.

If you need answers to your problems by a trained therapist, then don't hesitate to mail us your queries. All the questions will be answered by Dr. Nimisha Kumar, Senior Consultant Psychologist and CBT Therapist.

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