

26 DAYS 26 WAYS
for a happier you

An A to Z Guide to Self-Help and Self-Awareness



AUTHOR : PRIYANKA NAIR

Mental Health Awareness Enthusiast

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This book is entirely dedicated to
my late grandma Mohini Devi, who was an epitome of selfless living.
To my biggest source of strength my father Narendra Joshi, my mother Anju Joshi,
my beloved husband Binu Nair, my dear brother Krish, my best friend Roopal and
my little bundle of joy, my daughter Ishaanvi.
I would also like to mention a special thanks to Team BlogChatter for coming up with
writing challenges which pushes one to test their own limits and explore greater avenues.

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Preface

Hello readers,

Thank you so much for choosing my book and giving me a chance to express my intentions through this short and very first published work of mine.

26 Alphabets and unlimited possibilities, if used wisely have the enormous potential to unravel the deepest and the kindest of the words which could act as balm for an individual, a pain-reliver for many.

I have chosen 26 ways of dealing with each inner demon, outer influence, unwanted force of action and limiting belief which comes in our way of a beautiful and peaceful life. This is my A to Z self help guide and I can promise you once you are finished reading it, you will be smiling, and you will feel more connected to your inner self.

Book background:

I wanted to express, and I started writing in Dec 2017, totally unaware of the blogging world, I gained momentum only in 2018 and went into full time blogging. My family and my fellow bloggers have been a tremendous source of encouragement to me through their words of appreciation which only made me write more effectively and creatively.

I started as an Open Diary Blogger but as I started to connect with the people around the world, I realized how much we lack in terms of being present, being sensible and responsible towards others.

I could only see people dealing with stress and anxiety at different levels based on their capacities and I wanted to be there for them, I wanted to speak few words which could soothe them or make them smile, Hence my goal was set and I became focused as I found my purpose.

Today I am known as Mental Health Awareness Blogger, and this book is all about spreading Mental Health Awareness, spreading Self-love, Self-help, focusing on breaking societal Stereotypes and overcoming them. Accepting self, living in the moment, expressing gratitude and being grateful for what we have.

Hope you all like reading my first attempt in order to spread some awareness and be the change I want to see in the world. I have kept the book very short and simple to understand, and I can promise you it won't disappoint you.

Let us get started with my 26 days and 26 ways of Self-help, Self- Awareness, Self-exploration and self-healing.

Happy reading!



WAY 1: Acceptance

When I say Acceptance, here I will not say that accept the person the way he or she is to make your life bit easy weasy, rather I am going to stress on making even with SELF first, Self-Acceptance is certainly the key to happiness, before accepting others the way they are, accepting the glorious mess we are inside-outside helps to override the glory and flurry of others. We hustle, we struggle, we succeed, we fail, we rise, we shine, and we just move on, but do we really move on with life? While traveling in this train of life, we come across so many stations we leave unexplored, unraveled, untraveled, we try to discover, we try to unfold so many hidden truths, deepest desires, unspoken words and in the end we just stress our mind our body, the body in which we reside, the mind which is the prime tool of our living.

The first step towards making yourself and your circumstances acceptable to others is by beginning to accept your own truth. One needs to accept and take responsibility for self in order to rise above all odds in life. Self-Acceptance does not only stress on self-understanding but also helps in self-introspection which helps us understand our weaknesses and strengths. You certainly cannot be anything and everything you want to be but if you focus on what you are today, it might help you to make the road to success bit easier to travel.

We put tremendous pressure on ourselves looking at others, comparing our success metrics with others. We might not be capable of doing something today, but maybe tomorrow we might be in a much better state of mind and body to outperform others. If we keep cursing ourselves for things we could not do and goals we could not crack, we will start missing out a part of us every time we do it, and then a point will come when we will no longer be able to sustain anything in life.

Accept your present situation, if you are fighting an illness, be aware it is temporary you will recover, and you will shine. If you are unemployed, take charge of your life, stop not till you get the job of your dreams or create one for yourself. If you are single, betrayed, heartbroken, accept, it was just not meant to be and do not punish yourself repeatedly thinking about it. The more you punish yourself for the things happened in the past or things which are beyond your control the more will go closer to depression, anxiety, and stressful emotions.

“Once we accept our limits, we go beyond them – Albert Einstein”

Accept your presence, accept what you have today as nobody can go back and undo what is done but can certainly work on the present scenario for a better tomorrow. We human beings are masters of our thoughts and perceptions. Let us not make it harder for us, Take it easy. Accept your truth, work on it, don't forget to smile, love yourself, embrace yourself, deal with self with a little bit of sensitivity and love. No one else but you are the personal caretaker of your OWN SELF.

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## Way 2: Being Yourself

How many times in life, you have been cursed for how you are? How you walk, how you talk, what you choose to wear, what you eat, and how you look?

I am a very simple living person, a minimalist, who focus on broader aspects of life and stay away from anything and everything which brings nothing but negativity in life. I have stopped paying heed to what others think and how they react to my choices. As in my last chapter or my first way "Acceptance", I talked about how accepting our own truth and identifying our inner strengths and weakness makes us a stronger person. I will go ahead while I share how I accepted and chose myself.

Choosing not to please people doesn't mean that we are choosing to be rude or ignorant. There are times and situation wherein you might feel like the victim of your own circumstances. Initially you let people invade in your space, once they enter, they capture and conquer your territory and you start getting restless, that is the point you exactly understand what went wrong, I am a highly emotional and sensitive person who lets everyone in her life, at least I used to be, a while ago. As I moved on with my life, I experienced a lot of bitterness around, not everyone who appears to be with you is with you, not everyone who follows you on social media likes you or loves you. There is a very thin line in between for us to identify and understand it.

You cannot please everyone; you cannot churn yourself to suit everyone's needs and demand all the time. But something you surely know is what you want for yourself. Right from clothing, to cooking, from working to be a homemaker, from being an engineer to be a photographer, it is entirely your own choice. When I started blogging, no one entertained the idea. Perhaps people use to make fun of my career choice and doubt my abilities to write and sustain for even a few months, today it's been two years, I have penned over 270 articles and poetries and have been writing regularly and doing fine with what all the minimum efforts I put. When I started my own YouTube channel that was the time, I faced the real heat, the hate, the negative vibes from my near ones, can't call them dear ones now.

Not all my friends are my subscribers, hardly any relative or known person admire my efforts. There exist hardly a few bunches of people who keep me going. Apart from this, I experience episodic criticism from them, what for? Just trying to make some space, an identity for myself. It used to bother me a lot, it used to trap me in a negative zone. But I realized that if I give in for this situation then I would give up on my whole idea of making my own identity which was way bigger than any negative comment or word of criticism I have come across. Hence, I stopped

listening to them and started to cut lose all the source of toxicity out of my life. I kept limited contact with people and stick to the ones who bring out the best in me.

*"Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea.*

*Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success" - - Swami Vivekananda*

I swear by this quote of Swami Vivekananda and I read it again and again, there is so much power in these words, which puts an urge inside you to gear up and do something for yourself. It sounds difficult but trust me it is not that difficult to implement once you decide to take the ownership of your mental being. You just must take charge of yourself, help yourself when no one else is helping you. Remember, No one gives you the power you must take it.

Be you in all ways and always!!

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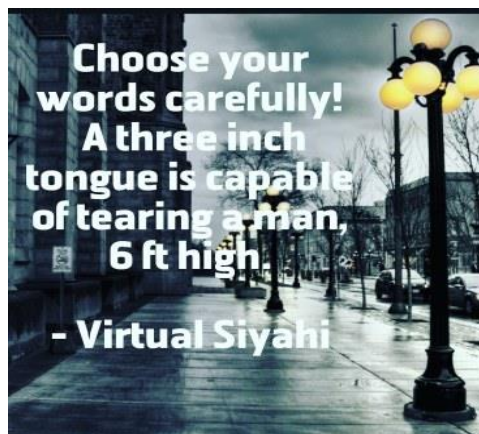
Way 3: Criticism

This single nine lettered word is powerful enough to cause depression, suicidal thoughts, and isolation in people around the world. This word has been the catalyst for why people have locked their desires, passion, and hobbies and are living their life by making huge efforts not to come under the public scanner. The power of this word in shattering someone's self-esteem is legendary.

Over the time people have found new and innovative ways to take this word into the mainstream and with the advent of social media, it has been a cakewalk for the cult followers of this demigod to unleash their wrath on the poor and hapless souls.

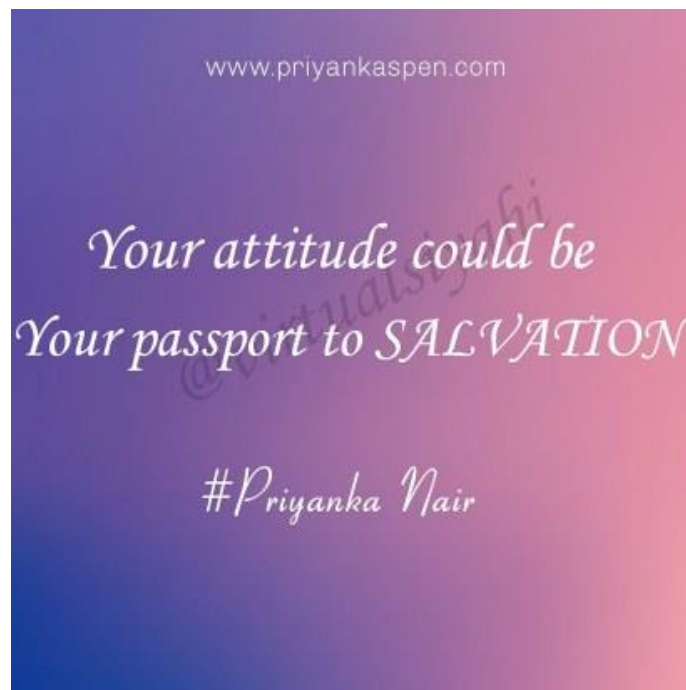
Trust me when I say this, if given a choice we can be critical about anything and everything around us, but why do we really need it? It is indeed very easy to criticize others and destroy them through your words, but isn't there any other way we can put forward our thoughts without maligning the person?

Why can't criticism come in a polite and constructive way? Why does it always have to be explosive, destructive and earth-shattering? Why can't people accept the fact that not everyone is the same and that people can't be perfect all the time?



I personally have a problem with people who think they are perfect. Perfection is thrown around so casually by people who make it look like they bought a kilogram of perfectionism from a grocery store. If someone is aiming for perfection with a true heart, then I will salute that person, but it should not be at the cost of causing criticism to others.

Everyone who believes he or she is a perfect being needs to understand that even they started out as amateurs. A little bit of attitude alteration might go a long way.



Let's start a movement and let's take a vow that we will never criticize others and if by any chance we are better than someone let's help that person in being better. One can be analytical but being critical is not professional. We are the privileged few who can read and write and use words to our advantage, so let us use for better things in life. Let

Let 's promise ourselves that the next time we use our knowledge it should be to lift others and not to pull them down. There is immense talent in this world, and they are just waiting for that one positive word from someone who will give them the confidence to come out of their isolation and create an impact on this world.

I want each one of you reading this to make a promise to yourself that you will never criticize anyone you come across because never know the battle that person is fighting within the self.

Let us come together and not be the reason for someone to go back into hiding. Let's spread some love around.

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## Way 4: Depression

We live in a society where we must hide our inner self and wear a pleasing mask all the time. Portray a perfect picture of life, filled with varied colors of a perfect family, successful career, and relationships. To live in the society is to survive all the hardships and yet manage to smile and the one who can do it effortlessly is the one who knows how to live, isn't it?

How many times have you cried all night and the next morning you were back in the routine just like nothing happened? How many times you had a suicidal tendency just before you attended a dinner date? It is what goes inside a human mind a human body which everyone around fails to see, the scars, the impressions of some incidents are so deep that the pain becomes inevitable and the person starts finding solace in that pain. He starts searching for isolation, where he can be himself.

Depression has no face, but depression is for REAL. It is something which cannot be explained in words and felt or understood by everyone. The emotional turmoil, the feeling of disgust and frustration, anxiety, stress level, an individual goes through is very hard for him to experience and accept for himself at the first place, by the time the person understands what's wrong with him, people around him makes his life more miserable by treating him in an inappropriate manner.

It could be the person you just saw laughing his heart out before you hear his tragic suicide. So what does depression look like, how do depressed people look like? How do we know if somebody has suicidal thoughts? When asked these questions many of us would probably imagine a crushed soul, crying shell of a person hiding in a pillow.

However, people who struggle with such feelings of depression try their best to hide their feelings in their daily lives. They just pretend normal but deep down inside they are screaming and yelling for help. They look like any other person walking down the street but if you try to hear between their words, read between the lines you might find that feeling of emptiness residing inside them.

The mood swings are such that the person doesn't plan for suicide attempt it could just happen within a snap of time, over the slightest trigger. In one moment, a lady could be kissing and admiring her newborn baby at the other moment she might feel like committing suicide. The fight is real, the struggle is real, this is perhaps the biggest fight anyone could fight with self, it is like me against myself, one part wants to live but the other one takes a toll repeatedly.

## **What causes Depression?**

Depression is an extremely complex condition, there could be so many reasons to feel depressed or no reason at all, but its complexities are such that person feels overwhelmed with sadness and loneliness for no known reason. It could be due to some bad incident in the form of physical or emotional abuse, loss of dear ones or family history. Sometimes depression co-exists with a major illness or may be triggered by another medical condition.

## **What could we do? How can we help someone?**

We can certainly help our near and dear ones, by being a part of their struggle, it is time to speak up when you see an unusual behavior in the person, sleeping disorder, sudden mood shifts, change in eating habits or any behavioral change could be a matter of concern. Don't try to "fix" the person, just be a good listener. This simple act of talking to someone face to face might help someone suffering from those feelings.

- By listening and understanding even the tiniest signs we can save lives.
- Do not take everyone at their 'face' value.
- If you think that somebody is showing some signs of depression, ask the hard questions before it's too late, but have a very soft approach.
- Try to be there, be present
- Help them open, take medical help if needed.

I believe the bravest thing anyone could do is to fight for his own life and live each day with full strength and determination even if the thoughts of suicide or negativity crops inside every now and then.

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Way 5: EGO

"EGO" - The tiniest word powerful enough to break down any relationship.

What ruined you, I asked? Your ego, my inner self replied.

EGO is something instilled in everyone, it's an individual's sense of self- esteem, and self-proclamation. What makes one person with ego different from another is the level of egoism that person possess for self. Philosophy says it's a conscious identity of self, a self-made decision.

It is made up of many beliefs a person has acquired in his whole life right from his childhood, in the surroundings he lived and with the family members he was born and brought up. It becomes the part of the person's personality which separates him from the outside world. It becomes his way of understanding and reacting to things.

Fun fact, ego is Latin for "I"

The Ego shield a person develops over a period defines his action and affects his relationship with his near and dear ones in the long run. Some people are easy going and they are taken for granted in most of the cases and some people are too difficult to deal because of their ego, that continuous ego pampering becomes so smoldering after a point of time that one gives up on the whole idea of making things work, making that relationship work.

Initially, it is difficult to gauge a person with an ego as it hides behind the opinions and slightest conversations but after certain emotional reactions and frequent episodes of arguments one can spot the noticeable reactions, it leaves behind. Few common conditions of egoism are:

- Showing Anger at anyone and everyone, just to prove their point right.
- The feeling of insecurity also gives rise to an individual's ego in certain situations
- The unexplained jealousy
- The need to impress people around with their dynamism
- Some instilled limiting beliefs like, you are the best, you can never lose, you are meant to be a winner, etc. which causes a long-term unhealthy egoism in an individual

An ego shield makes a person so unapproachable that we think before speaking to them and we hesitate to open. It is said that an over-inflated ego can affect our relationships and our identity as perceived by other people.

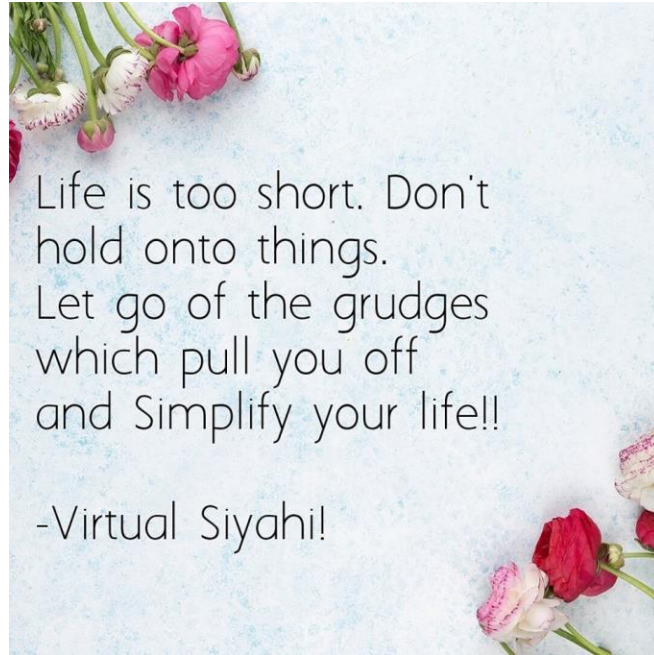
Research has shown that the ego can be held responsible for many negative human traits like criticizing and judging others, acting manipulative, being inflexible and rigid, having severe mood swings, possessing a constant need for praise and approval, need to feel superior to everyone around, feeling fearful, anxious, being uncooperative, taking things too seriously, taking offense easily, constantly worrying over little things, feeling resentful towards others, inability to live in the present moments, feelings of hopelessness and despair and the need for power and control over others.

Ego is a part of our personality trait and it cannot be eliminated, even a person knows the consequences of this attitude, he continues to behave in the same manner because he is controlled by his behavior. We could aim at controlling the behavior, the response rather than destroying our inner peace. Once we learn that our Egoism is coming in between our growth in relationships and at the workplace or anywhere, we need to suppress the negative demands of our ego.

To experience the true beauty of any relationship a person must get rid of his/her ego. On the contrary, if you allow your life to be based on the mental projection, there is a chance of you going down the path leading to depression.

I see people doing well, I appreciate them, and I feel good or I feel jealous and make snide remarks because my ego doesn't allow me to praise anyone else. I had an argument, I realize my part of the mistake, I say sorry and I move on or I wait for the other person to come and say sorry because I cannot mend my ways. This is the ultimate relationship between you and your ego.

The real challenge is to become aware of what your personal ego looks like and take the full onus of the improvement which will only result in blossoming relationships, positive mindset, and a peaceful mind.



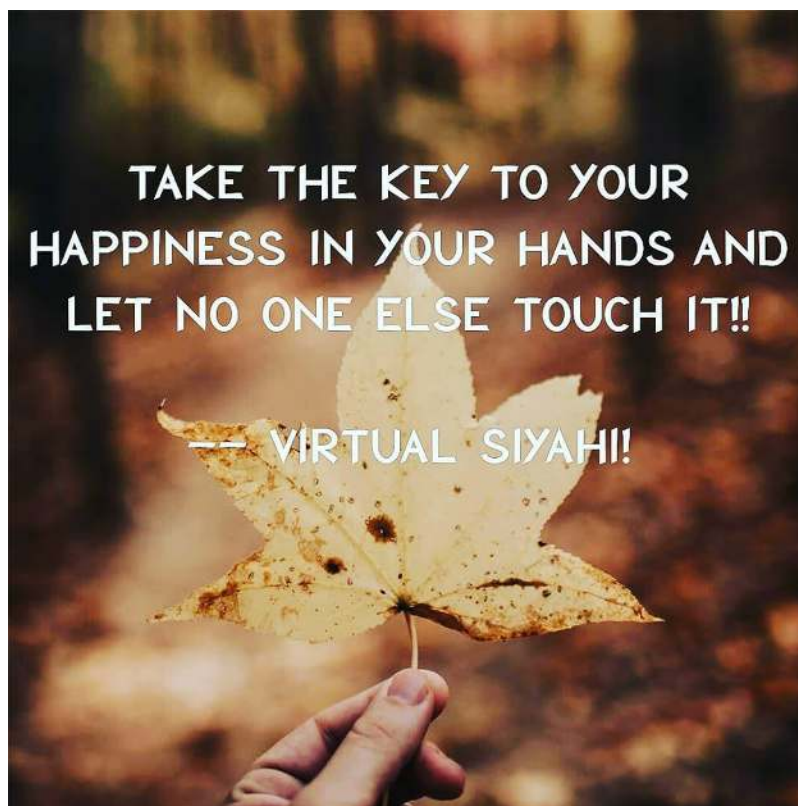
Let go of your EGO and free yourself from the burden of grief, jealousy, anger, frustration, and disappointments. Life is meant to loved and lived with the ones you love, make it a better place by loosening up a little.

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## Way 6: Five 'S'

Sort, set in order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain-- These are the Five 'S', an improvement technique inspired by **Japanese** culture adopted by many organizations in order to make the workplace organized and smooth to operate, adhering to efficiency and safety as well.

Now you might be thinking what this Five 'S' has to do with the Mental health or self-help measures I am representing, so I ask you a very simple question, when organizations can adopt means and ways to obtain efficiency and effectiveness in productivity, and also monitor it on regular basis, then why do we as a human fail to take care of ourselves, our mind and our body altogether?



Why can't we adopt certain measures to help ourselves? In this post I will share my five cents with you which I started imbibing in my daily life to make it bit peaceful, organized and healthy.

For a lot of people growth happens very painfully because the necessary preparation has not taken place. Most human beings have unfortunately allowed themselves to be molded entirely by the external situation ~ Sadhguru

Hence when we give our control to the external forces then we can never imagine where it will take us or how we will end up ourselves, so we got to take charge and here is how:

### **Self-Love**

Self-love is not selfish or being obsessed with self, it simply means we choose our selves over anything else which costs our mental peace. If we want others to love us, we shall love ourselves first. It's a state of appreciation for oneself that supports our physical, psychological and spiritual growth. When we begin to love ourselves, we begin to explore all our strengths and weaknesses. How to start?

1. Know what best works for you
2. Whom should you stick with?
3. Stop comparing yourself with others

### **Self-Control**

Resisting temptation is the key here. Self-control is nothing but your own ability to alter all the responses in order to avoid certain consequences, undesirable actions or behaviors which comes in your way. No matter how smaller your goal is if you keep pushing it you will never achieve it, you know you have diabetes and you need to control, you know you procrastinate and yet you complain. How to start?

1. Meditate as it improves your emotional intelligence.
2. If you have an idea, just don't sit on it, take immediate actions.
3. Set short term goals, rather than pressurizing self with higher goals.

### **Self-Awareness**

Self-Awareness is like a mirror, an approach to see yourself as it is without any biasness and take needed action. Improve your self-awareness by being in present, focusing on your breathing and your senses, it helps your brain's ability to resist destructive impulses. We become mindful of our capacities and abilities and act as per that, and not how others want us to behave. How to start?

1. Try to listen to your body, your body gives you signal when it gets tired.
2. Talk to yourself, do not indulge in mental arguments, just listen to your inner voice.
3. Soak in your feelings, vent out your emotions.

## **Self-Acceptance**

Self-Acceptance (Way One) does not only stress on self-understanding but also helps in self-introspection which helps us understand our weaknesses and strengths and find ways to make things work for us. How to start?

1. Let go of the past, incidents, which is not in your control
2. Stop blaming and cursing yourself for some wrong decisions you made in life.
3. Celebrate every little success you attain.

## **Self-Discipline**

For all the things I have mentioned above, let me tell you something, you will perhaps read it, might like it, even love it or entirely find it a bogus idea, but trust me you will forget about it because that's what we do with our mind and our body every time, we read something good we like it, we want to practice it but we are either too lazy or just not disciplined enough to put things at work.

If you really want to regain your willpower and have control over your daily habits, start working on it now, here is how:

1. Follow the KISS principle- Keep It Simple Stupid. A very effective managerial technique.
2. Reward yourself when you accomplish a set task
3. Get adequate sleep, don't exert and start fresh every day with gratitude.

At last, I would say be kind to yourself and love yourself, give yourself little space. Take care of your body and listen to it. You can challenge yourself to practice the tips given above for a week.

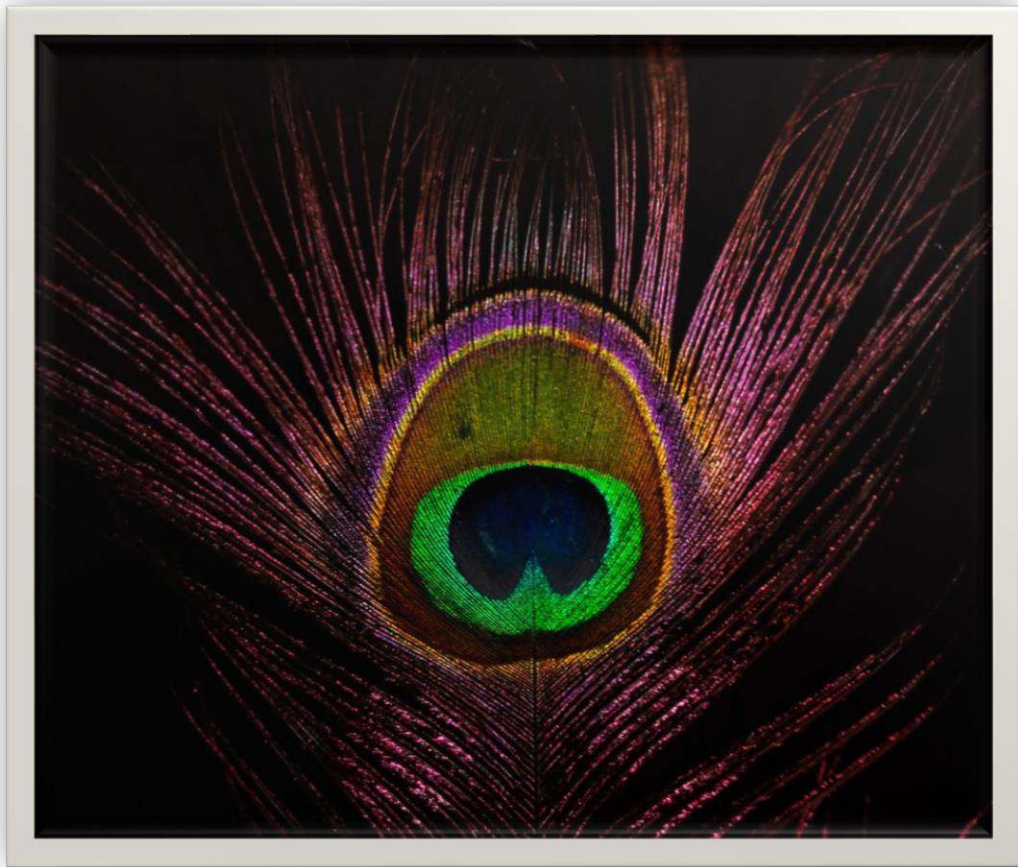
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Way 7: Gita Saar

While I started reading the Bhagwada Gita to seek answers to my questions and test my beliefs, I could not find any better self-help measure than the holy script itself. The epic Bhagwada Gita and it's summary. It is always great to go back to basic.

If we go by the definition, then Gita Saar is a religious expert which narrates verses from the Bhagavad Gita that elaborates on yogic and Vedantic philosophies, with examples and analogies. In short, it's a summary of the legendary Sanskrit scripture which is the part of the Hindu epic Mahabharata.

Mahabharata is an epic legendary narrative of the Kurukṣetra war and the fates of the Kaurava and the Pandava princes. It also contains philosophical and devotional discussion which is sworn by eminent personalities till date.



Quick Fact: Mahabharata is roughly ten times lengthier than Ramayana.

Who wants to live with tension, pressure, sorrow, or grief? Although no one is spared from this, as these elements have some essential part to play in our life. Gita gives us a unique perspective of life and it is not only to read but to live with, there is a lot to learn and to understand from each verse and text it contains.

I have yet not finished reading Bhagwad Gita, but whenever I am reading it, I find myself in a very different zone. Statements like kyu vyarth chinta karte ho? kisse darte ho? We have been hearing since ages, I still remember the time when on Sundays my whole family used to wait to watch the next episode of Mahabharata at 9:00 in the morning. That was not the age for me to understand its relevance, but today when we are surrounded by daily life's battle and many challenges, it all started making sense to me.

The teaching, the preaching shared by Lord Krishna as the charioteer of Arjuna at the battleground shows nothing but demonstrates the pure poise, patience, and perseverance.

Bhagwad Gita stands the test of time. It is not only restricted to the teaching of Lord Krishna to Arjuna for performing his duties, but there is a lot more to it. Perhaps many of us might think that they already understand the importance of performing their duties but let us learn the Krishna way.

- Gita is the book of self-discovery. It contains the message of divine centered living based upon the right knowledge, belief, devotion, self-surrender, detachment and dispassionate performance of tasks as opposed to the ego-centered living, which is characterized by self-centered thinking, egoism, and suffering arising out of non-attainment of desires.
- Gita doesn't ask us to detach from the world but to detach from our limiting beliefs. In fact, physical or emotional detachment from the world is impossible as we live in an interconnected world. It shows a path to free our emotions from jealousy, envy or desire to control, for us to stay in harmony.
- It shows how by eliminating desires, without abandoning the actions, a person can free himself from the bondage caused by desire driven actions. Such an approach not only liberates human beings from the struggling part but also greatly reduces their anxieties and frustrations, resulting in a peaceful and contented life.
- It allows us to live our daily life effectively by managing our desires, our choices and the consequences, shows ways to deal with difficult situations by managing our emotions.
- It allows us to act outside our comfort zone and unleash our hidden purpose, our purpose of very existence. It is only by understanding the hidden self in us we would be able to discover the supreme self, who exists in all of us and in whom we all exist.

The Bhagavad Gita has influenced many great thinkers over the years.

Mahatma Gandhi “When doubts haunt me when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-Gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile during overwhelming sorrow. Those who meditate on the Gita will derive fresh joy and new meanings from it every day.”

Gita is mediation, Gita is life summary, read it to believe it.

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Way 8: How to Control Negative Emotions

Controlling our own emotions is like sprinkling salt as per taste, no more no less and if we succeed in striking the right balance, it helps us to be in harmony with our outer and inner state just like a perfect recipe for our taste buds.

I will begin by sharing an excerpt from the Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda on controlling negative emotions here. Every vicious thing will rebound, every thought of hatred which you may have thought, in a cave even, is stored up, and will one day come back to you with tremendous power in the form of some misery.

"We might be the master of our own thoughts, yet we are slaves of our emotions".

If we project jealousy or hatred, it will rebound on us with compound interest, and I think we all have witnessed this in our life. No power can avert such rebound, once we put them in motion, we must bear the consequences of the same.

If we make a note of our doings, then maybe we can refrain ourselves from repeating them again in the future.

For example:

~ If we hate someone, the hatred will come back to us someday in some form or another.

~ Likewise, if we love someone, we might not receive the love from the same person but in order to chase that love, we overlook many people on the way who were willing to love us unconditionally. It came back but we were not there to receive it.

It is normal to feel all kinds of emotions under various circumstances but controlling our negative emotions are important for us and we can start by following these three simple practices, even if it doesn't work for you it won't take anything from you.

1. Change your Focus

When we shift our focus on the positive aspects of our life, it begins to change. Initially, it appears to be very difficult but focusing on what matters and what brings out the best in us really helps. You will always find people reminding you of your failures and cursing you for your choices in life, but what is done is done and we cannot just undo it, it will only lead to more resentment. Instead, why not focus on making a better tomorrow by living your present moment.

2. Change your Thought Process

If we have been receiving the same result every time, we want to do something good for ourselves then maybe it's time we alter our approach. Every situation and every experience in our life give us either a good experience or a lesson to learn, keep the lesson, learn from it and move on.

3. Change your Reaction/Response

Don't be entrapped in our own mind, if you have something which is bothering you figure it out, if you need help, yell but just not sit with it. Whenever you are alone and find yourself dwelling into the hounds of the past, alarm yourself to tap out. If you keep on going there, again and again, you will start liking it and trust me then it would be very difficult to return.

It's not that we lose something when we refrain ourselves from showing such emotions, but we choose to store our energies for better things, for higher gains. Love more, live more with a happy and healthy mind.

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## Way 9: Itchy Intentions

Why does Itching feel so good? Why do you have that compulsion or desire to "itch" when you see someone doing something and moving towards their dreams with passion, the itch increase, we scratch more but we forget that any relief from scratching will be short-lived.

When I was working in a Multinational Company where I just faced the regular office politics and work pressure which we all go through occasionally, but once I was home, I felt a sigh of relief.

In 2016, when I was diagnosed with a rare kind of Tuberculosis, I had to forcefully sit at home and undergo treatment which lasted for a year, that was the time I started writing, Initially everyone took it positively thinking I am just cutting on time by writing, but guys you all know writing is no less than an addiction, and I too got addicted, now it was words and me playing in my mind, the life lesson, the situation I was in, the urge of doing something, all became a combined supernatural forces which turned me into a blogger in a year.

Read Here: [My Journey from size M to XL](#)

*It was last August 2016, when I came to know that I am suffering from a critical disease known as Lymphadenitis Tuberculosis. A rare kind of TB, The symptoms I experienced were just exhaustion, fatigue, irritation etc. so i decided to see a doc, after consultation with 3 doctors, finally a doc could sense something is seriously wrong, I underwent several tests, scans and they doubted it might be Lymphoma, a form of cancer ,but only after biopsy it was confirmed that it is not cancer at least , and whatever it is, is curable..*

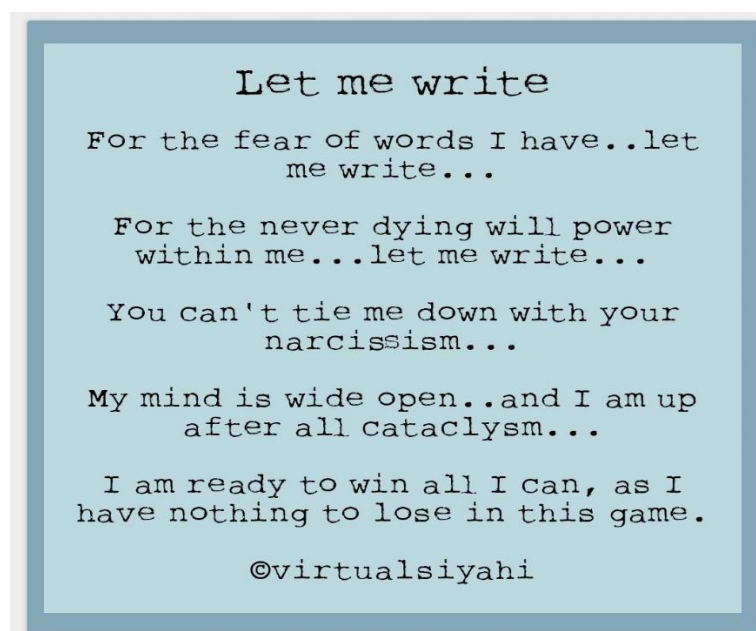
*That period of 15 days, when I was undergoing the tests, biopsy, waiting for the reports, I saw that fear in my family, fear in me, my daughter's eyes asking what happened to my mom. As I used to lie unconscious for hours. This phase of my life gave me a close look to what could be the effect of this on life of my people. It was like an alarm for me to get up do something. I told myself, "you are wasting your life, "find your purpose", "start living" and just when I got my reports, I promised to myself that from now till the treatment period of whole one year I will never live a life of a patient, I will live more, work more, love more, be kind to people, help others, I do not know why this happened to me, but it gave me so many reasons to cherish life, my daughter became my biggest strength, because of her I completely forgot that I am under therapies, medications. My family, my friends and few of my relatives, called up daily just to know the progress of my treatment, they traveled all the way long just to see for themselves if I am Okay. I understood who care, and they have made a very special place in my heart by supporting me in this journey. Life itself is a biggest teacher, it teaches you so many things by what all you go through in life and we should Live the Life we learn!!*

*I am sharing this incident just to motivate all those who are reading this, we might feel that we have no good reason to cherish our lives, we might feel low about ourselves, we might fall after every defeating experience but most important thing in life is to get up every time you fall and give it back to life. We can have so many reasons to live for, you can find reason in your child's smile or in your career.. It's just a matter of what YOU choose. How you want your life to be. Going into depression and giving up on life is the easiest way out but accepting the challenges life gave u and throw back the ball in its own game is what makes the difference. This disease gave me high BP, Arthritis, 13kg of weight gain, lower blood platelets, lower energy but still I love my life because i have more to cherish than to complain.*

*Just get up get going, let nothing stop you, live the life you want, be the designer of your only kind of version.*

### **First Itch**

I was a passive writer at the beginning and slowly I got a hold of blogging world (still learning) and started posting my work at various platforms of the social media, the positive feedback was very less and comments from my friends and relatives were in a larger chunk making fun about my writings and doubting my career choice.



It was easy for me to just shut my Pandora box and go into hiding and never dare to write. I left my school and friends' WhatsApp group. There was a time when I had to uninstall WhatsApp and Facebook because I was facing a lot of negative vibes from my cousins and friends just because few of my stories were published in the newspaper, and various recognized and very well-known

platforms and I was posting it everywhere happily to share my little achievements, which somehow they could not digest.

I stay in touch with my good friends and believe in nurturing relationships, but I never expected this kind of reactions from my own people. Just because a person is not doing something (could be due to any reason) and someone else is trying to stay in life by following her passion, why does it become so hard to accept by the people.

## **Second Itch**

I think I expect a lot from myself, the blogging rage was not enough so I took up Vlogging as I had shared in my very first chapter that I was very much made fun of my videos on YouTube again by friends and relatives, but I had to express, writing was enough for me so started speaking also.

I simply started with my channel, I focus in my content and leave the glorifying part for the later stage, but yes again you are judged on your face value.

One day one of my neighbors asked me why do you create videos on YouTube? Who is going to listen to you? When Mahatma Gandhi says something, and you say something there is a huge difference, then what made you follow this idea. Now being a highly sensitive person, my heart ached, something broke inside me, but somehow, I managed to smile and said nothing in response.

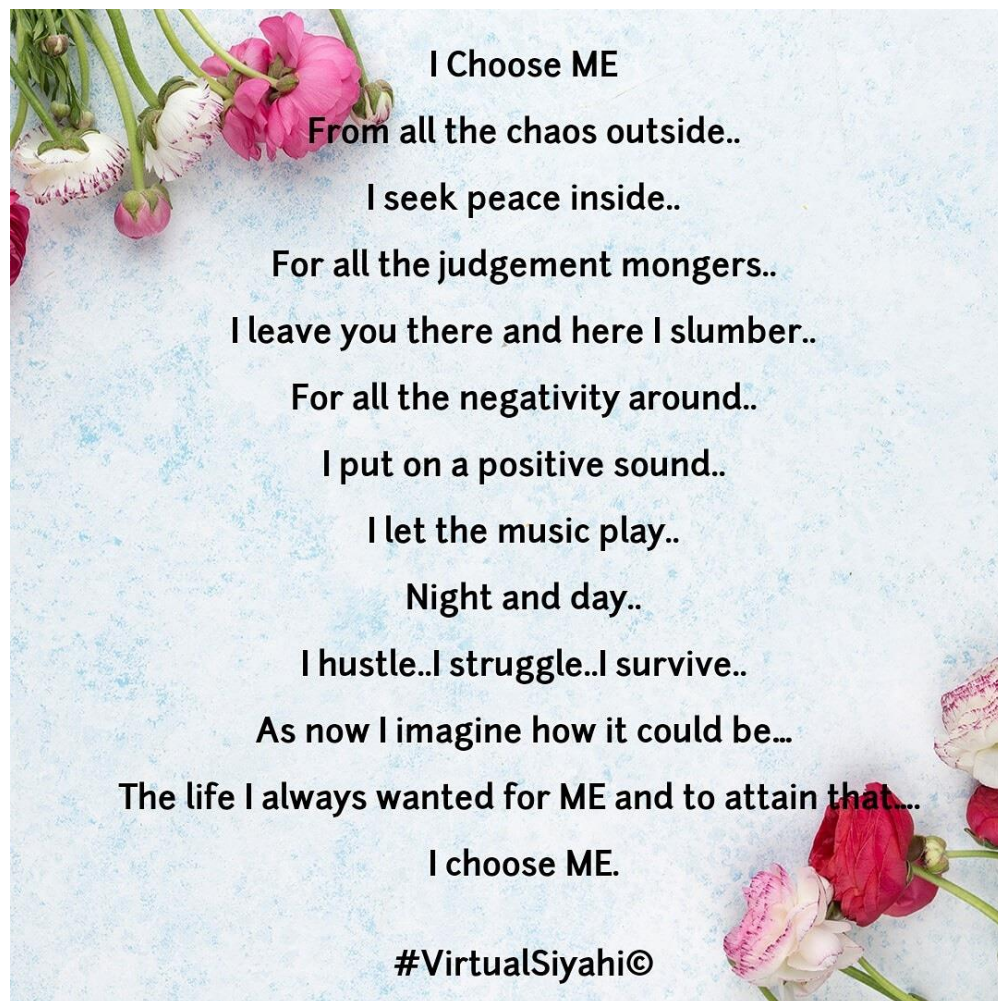
Another incident was a little bit humiliating when one of my friends showed me her four-year-old son's videos playing with toys which they upload on YouTube with more viewers and subscribers than mine and made fun of me saying that, look a four-year-old has got more skills than you. Again, I just smiled.

People have these Itchy intentions all the time, and it is not only me who has faced this, I am sure the scenario must be worse with others, but you know what it could lead to?

- Stress
- Self-doubt
- Comparison
- Performance pressure
- Anxiety
- Completely giving up the idea
- Mood Swings
- Occasional Emotional Outbursts

But, Snap!! I came out of it because my desire or my "Itch" to make it for myself was stronger than theirs for breaking me. How?

- Staying away from toxicity
- Choosing to be more assertive
- Believing in self and the whole idea of your dream
- Stop for nothing
- Expressing gratitude to everyone, even who tried to pull me down, because they helped me to hold on and move on.



In the end, I would say that work towards your dreams and find your passion, follow your passion, you will find many obstacles in your life but tell them you are not listening to them, let your work make some noise.

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## Way 10: JudgeMentality

"We can never judge the lives of others because each person knows only their own pain and renunciation. It's one thing to feel that you are on the right path, but it's another to think that yours is the only path. " -- Paulo Coelho

It is very easy to judge people and situation on what it appears from outside, but that perception of a situation or a person might not be genuine, it is a human tendency that we tend to believe what we see, and especially when it is inclined towards something negative, something suspicious.

When we generalize and judge people quickly without taking ample time, we've chosen a shortcut to understand that person. It's superficial of us, and a lack of wisdom within us. We overlook the possibilities, we just Judge, we pass judgement without knowing the truth.

I will share a personal experience, which was not only an eye opener for me but gave me a reality check on my perspective as well.

Once there was a lady staying in the same building with a newborn baby, she must be in her late 30's. She hardly use to talk with anybody around and stayed very low key, people said she never cooked, she did not even have proper utensils in her house, her baby is always messy, what kind of a lady she is and blah blah...and several statements were made on her way of living.

As she was staying on the same floor, people were more curious to gather information about her from me, I never knew anything because they had recently shifted, and I believe in giving time to others to settle down. But few of them shared common maid and were making many assumptions based on the information they got from the higher authority, "The Housemaid" I used to listen to these conversations whenever I met with other ladies at the gym or society play area for kids and wore their lens to see her, I started looking at her with all those preconceived notions.

It was just a normal evening when I coincidentally met her on my way to the gym, She was struggling to walk, her brother was supporting her, I just stopped and asked if everything is OK and just in a few minutes of conversation I came across something which shook my soul to the core and left me baffled.

This lady had met with a severe accident five years ago the affects were such that she was in coma for a year and was half paralyzed and had been bedridden for four years and only recently she was much stable and could walk with support and move a little. She decided to conceive, that

too after twelve years of her marriage and was struggling hard to manage her daily life. Her right hand was still affected, and she could not even hold her newborn. What else could be so hurtful for a mother who can't even hold her baby? She felt nice talking to me and invited me to her house.

By this few minutes of passing conversation, all the judgement statements people made about her just vanished, and I realized how others perceive the situation and spread the judgement passed by them based on their limited understanding of the situation and others just not only wear their eyes to see the world but also believe in it.

***When we judge others, we do not define them, we define ourselves.***

We easily believe others, we easily judge people based on how they appear from outside, or how they pretend to appear. Some are judged by their past mistakes, some are judged by their present acts, some based on their lifestyle, some based on their way of dressing up. We are on this continuous Judgementmeter and victim of Judgementality at times.

But the fact is we just cannot judge people, we are more than the bodies we inhabit, they're little more than clothes, and yet we judge so much by them. We cannot scan a person just by our ignorant eyes which fail to see a person as a human with kindness. Let's stop judging others and relieve them of the heavy burden they are carrying on their shoulders because of us--- Anonymous.

P.S: I still visit her; her baby is one year old now and I visit her often. I used to cut her baby's nails, I loved to oil her hair, I and my daughter enjoyed cuddling her. She is indeed a very happy child.

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## Way 11: Kindly Be Compassionate

***“One of the secrets of inner peace is the practice of compassion.” Dalai Lama***

Sometimes the best action you can take to help relieve emotional suffering of another person is by being there with them with all your attention on the person and their problems, you don't have to say anything you just have to be there for them.

### **What is Compassion?**

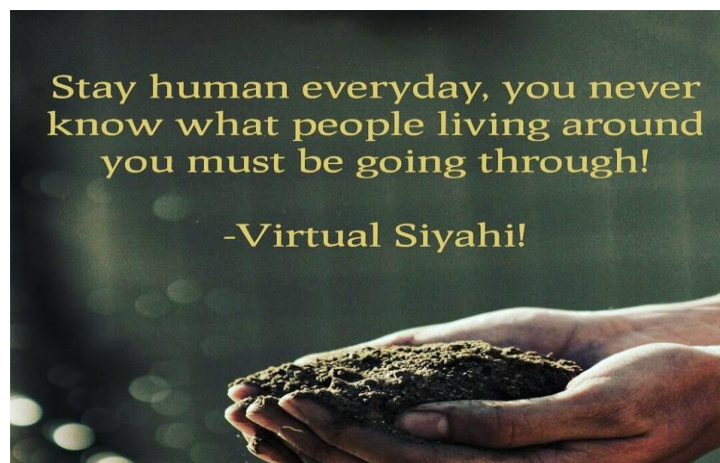
A consideration or concern for other's emotions and sufferings. To be kind and caring.

### **How can we adopt Compassion in our life?**

Practice Compassion when you see a girl who is over-weight, crossing her marriageable age, living in depression, facing rejections, and betrayal, she has got already so much to deal with and people around her makes it worse by making her realize her weaknesses, making her feel miserable by asking her those forbidden questions, giving her unsolicited pieces of advice.

Practice Compassion, when you find a young boy who needs emotional support as he is weak from the inside, but he is the stronger sex and if he admits or confesses to the world that he is weak, he is unable to face the world and is afraid of taking decisions. People will make fun of him, he will be made an object of mockery, and he might end up in depression.

We human beings always need a push most of the times, not every person is self-motivated or determined, but hardly anyone cares to become a strength and bring the beauty out of the worst situations.



There are certain human limitations, not everyone is the same, we see the world based on our beliefs and try to impose others to see it that way but the fact is we cannot understand the pain or suffering of others unless we get to the core of it.

Some time ago, I read somewhere that depression and anxiety are linked to a state of self-focus, a preoccupation with “Me, Myself, and I.” When you do something for someone else, however, that state of self-focus shifts to a state of other-focus.

If you recall a time you were feeling blue and suddenly a close friend or relative calls you for urgent help with a problem, you may remember that as your attention shifts to helping them, your mood lifts rather than feeling blue, you feel energized to help; before you know it, you may even have felt better and gained some perspective of your own situation as well.

For true compassion, we will have to expand our understanding, so we don’t mistakenly create more pain from suffering.

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Way 12: Lack of Sleep

If someone would ask me, what is one thing you want right now? Without a second thought I would exclaim, SLEEP! A quite basic essentiality of our life.

With the binge writing, balancing with household chores, dealing with a toddler, completing my desk assignments, my sleep cycles have gone for a toss and I am sure for many people in this technological enslaved world are victim of disturbed sleep cycles.

It is said that a capacity of Human Body can be gauged best under stress, the willingness, the love towards the work makes you forget every pain, you are ready to sacrifice your sleep and are ok roaming around with that sleepy potato face whole day.

Jokes apart, lack of sleep can result in unlimited stress, irritation, fatigue and varied mood swings ultimately hampering your productivity in each task you perform throughout your day.

A body needs repairing and maintenance too. The sleeping mode is the best way to rejuvenate ourselves. With me the problem is even when I try to sleep my mind is awake and kicking me with words, that time I feel I can even write a book, the struggle of remembering the ideas and thought plot for the next write up and the need for sleep gives me hard time falling asleep.

To make things little easy for me, I try and schedule my posts well in advance and when I am done with my morning chores and when Mr. Nair and my Junior are off to work and school respectively is the time I spend with my blog, Youtube channel and spend some time in reading as well.

I try to take out maximum output in these 6 hours till the time my daughter is back from her school after that its only me and her and little bit of making and replying to comments. Before going to sleep I give some time to my blog and other social media platforms to check my next posting and read some more blogs as Mr. Nair is there for the baby.

Apart from my little blogging world, there exists a world which is even worse.

In present scenario sleeping late has become so common, there was a time when staying awake till 12 was like a heinous crime, now I see people leisurely enjoying their time sitting and reading some books, watching web series, checking out something on their mobile phones and next day rushing back to work.

But lack of sleep can result in underlying health condition in the long run, and we human beings are masters of living in ignorance and taking things for granted.

Lack of sleep can:

- Effect our mental abilities and emotional state
- Cause dullness and lethargy
- Can contribute to weight gain by making you feel too tired to even exercise.
- You feel exhausted the whole day and don't feel fresh
- Effects our ability to concentrate and memorize things

There are many negative impacts of disturbed sleeping patterns. In this world of technological friendly human approach, we have become so mechanical that we tend to ignore our body, mind, and soul altogether.

It is only when some chronic medical emergency hit us, we realize all the leniency we showed towards managing our body.

Please take care, sleep well, stay fresh and healthy. The world can wait but health can't.

Jaan hai to Jahan hai.

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Way 13: Mental Arguments

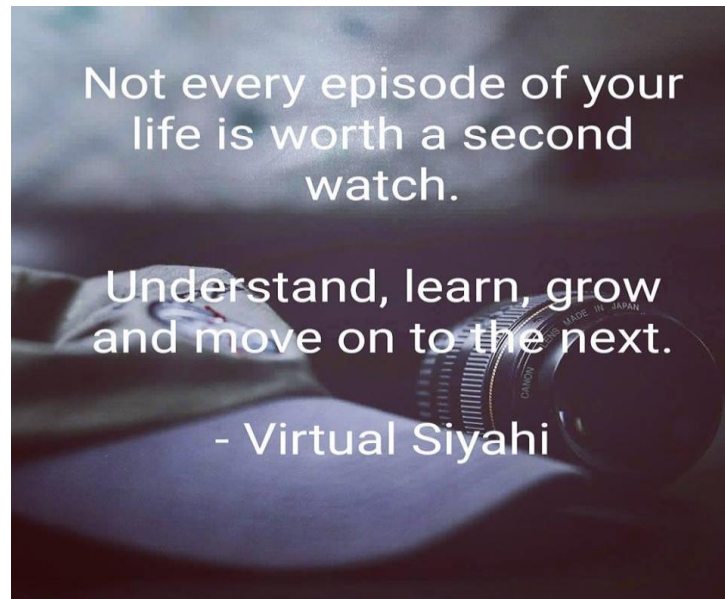
Thirteenth way of dealing with mental disturbance is the most vital form of mental illness and we will discuss about an internal demon we build inside our mind incessantly, causing in unnecessary stress.

We know we are simply procrastinating or overthinking but somehow, we find peace in that inner conflict. Someone says something to us and by chance, if we are among those you dare to call a spade a spade and is straight forward enough to give it back to the person then it's the survival instinct.

But lest we forget, we have a set of people who fail miserably in answering back and standing for themselves and later on, the guilt of not able to cope up with the mechanism becomes suffocating and makes one restless inside their mind and they start seeking closure through these never-ending Mental Arguments.

We think of so many possibilities like, I could have said so, what if I did this? What if they said this? and we create an everlasting conversation in our mind with that situation and the person which results in mental arguments, where we try to please our conscious mind for something which has already happened a long time back or we create an illusion of something which might happen in future.

We think we overthink, and we produce something which doesn't even exist and start living with it. We replay old conversation in our mind and stress our mind. We visualize about saying different things in the argument, imagining how the other person might have responded, or whether adopting different strategies would have worked for us.



What Mental Arguments result in?

When we are in a state of arguments with our family member, peers, friends or anyone, what are the feeling we go through? Anger, frustration, fear, guilt the same happens to us within us when we argue with own mind and the result is unknown to us.

Once I had a great friend for whom I used to work for his social media handles, he is not much aware of the social media workings and since he was my friend I always insisted him to improvise, maybe he didn't like it and suddenly asked me to leave his online workplace, I was badly hurt, One because I am highly sensitive and emotional person and secondly I was putting all my energy in his work and giving the best results I could in my purview. I said nothing to him.

But since I did not have a closure I could not stop thinking about it, thoughts like what went wrong, what did I do, what was my mistake, then counter questions hit me hard for few days, I even stopped writing for few days, I was mentally tired and I felt bad.

One day he came back saying that he was in bad mood and I was continuously throwing new ideas which he was not interested at that point of time and apologized for the same, I got the closure but I never returned back to his work, I politely declined his offer, because that incident cost me my mental health without any reason.

This is a very small example compared to many big incidents happening with people around causing a ripple of disturbance in their mind.

How can we overcome Mental Arguments?

- Feel your feelings, accept them and reciprocate them, sometimes the inner built just increases with every passing incident.
- Meditate, Inhale and exhale, let in and let go, no it is not easy to say, but also easy to do when you adapt it in your daily life.
- Keep yourself occupied, there is a lot we can do to help ourselves, remember? An empty mind is the devil's workshop?
- I know by this point you will think, it is not easy, and the thoughts just don't leave you, then how about you leaving the thoughts? Remember my Way 8, Point No. Three? Change your response

I hope this example have been helped to think someone in a different direction, in accepting self, loving self, taking care of your inner self, showing some love and kindness to self because, Mental Health Matters.

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## Way 14: Narcissism

Have you ever come across a self-driven, self-obsessed, 'I am the best' attitude carrier and someone who boasts his/her grandiosity all the time?

Let's discuss how to spot a narcissist in your life and how to deal with them.

### What is Narcissism?

It is a Personality disorder in which a person has an inflated sense of self-importance, self-adulation, self-absorption, and self-entitlement.

In today's selfie-obsessed and 'flaunt your best' culture the word narcissism gets tossed around very easily describing someone who is full of themselves. But in psychological terms, **narcissism doesn't mean self-love.**

It's more accurate to say that people with Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) are in love with an idealized image of themselves. And they're in love with this inflated self-image precisely because it allows them to avoid deep feelings of insecurity. But propping up their delusions of grandeur takes a lot of work—and that's where the dysfunctional attitudes and behaviors come in.

### How to spot a Narcissist in your life?

- Who needs constant attention and admiration.
- Who thinks they're better than everyone else.
- Who dishes out insults and condescension, but flies off the handle at the slightest disagreement or whiff of criticism.
- Exploits others without guilt or shame.
- Sense of entitlement.



### **How to deal with a Narcissist?**

Just when you know, you are dealing with one Narcist in your life, you need to:

- Maintain a healthy boundary
- Don't take anything personally
- Don't share much about your achievements and success with them
- Be easy and calm while talking to them.
- Be patient and avoid arguments.

I know it's hard, we tend to take a load of a lot of things personally, but it is a personality trait of the person which can hardly be altered. So just to protect yourself from their power plays, and stress, establish healthier boundaries, look for other friends, keep a distance.

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Way 15: Overcome Fear

What is Fear?

What are you scared of?

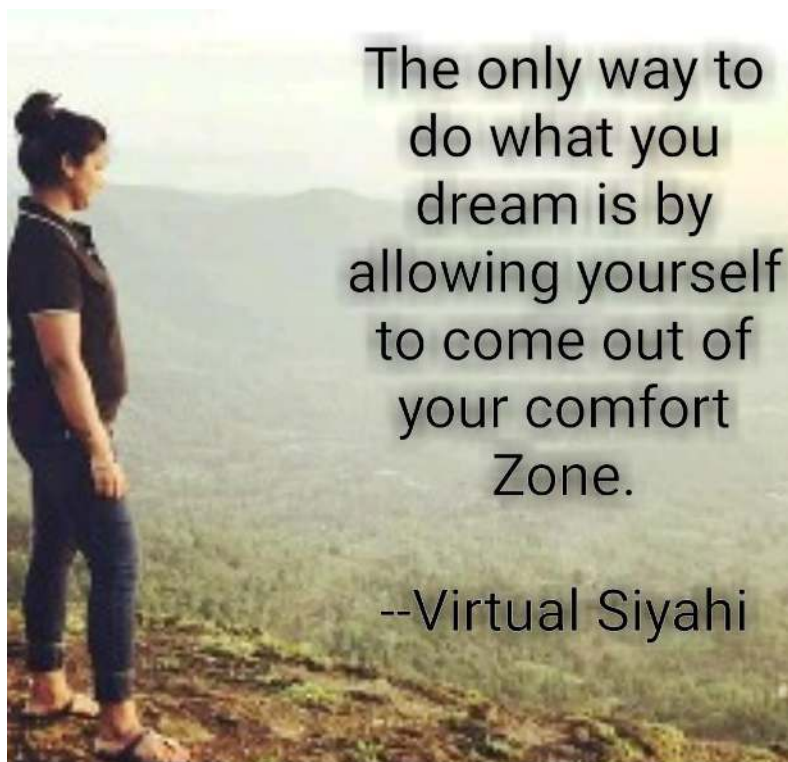
What stops you?

What holds you back?

Ever tried asking these questions to yourself? If not, then DO it now!!

I will try to make you aware of your own self, will request you to have a deep check inside you and ask these questions to yourself?

Write it down on a piece of paper, make even with it and then simply flush it off. Let all your fears know your will-power is stronger than anything else in this world.



We all have some fear instilled deep within us, it could be a stage fear, fear of getting defeated, fear of rejection, fear of not being accepted, fear of losing etc.etc. and to avoid the fear we avoid getting into those situations, we hesitate to ask questions, we hesitate to believe in our own ideas.

Over the period, I have learned that the best way to overcome your fear is to FACE it, to just have an encounter with it and finish it off for once. Unless you are willing to face your fears, you probably won't be able to transcend them.

Identify your fears first, what is causing a barrier in your growth, or maybe something which becomes a reason every time for not doing something you actually want to do, become an observer of your inner space, feel that fear and observe the whole thought process and as you get a hold of your thoughts you will realize that you and only you have the power to shoo away all the fears of your life.

If you still feel miserable as you cannot get over your fears then Please watch Munibas Mazari's Video, I am sure many of you might have come across it earlier as it is an old video but watch it again and this time with a different mindset. She fought a tough battle in her life but came out of it with such grace and gratitude, it is worth a watch, I could not take my eyes off even for a moment.

Muniba Mazari, a Pakistani Artist, activist, motivational speaker, and television host. She uses a wheelchair due to injuries sustained in a car accident at the age of 21 which makes her Pakistan's first wheelchair-bound model.

Such inspiring and real life stories is a living proof that the fear in which we live is all created by us and is initiated by the outside world and we carry those beliefs with us throughout our life, without even giving a single thought of giving a try to overcome it and see the positive effects.

A single step, a slight change in thinking can change our entire life and we can turn our weakness into strengths, and we can see our scars turning into the mark of beautiful experiences life has given us.

Fight your fears, Overcome your fears. "Journey of thousand miles could be completed only when you are ready to take that first step."

~~~~~

## Way 16: Poisoned Thoughts

*The mind is everything, what you think you become - Gautam Buddha*

What is Poison? A substance which is harmful, which could destroy one completely, something which could even kill you.

If you are a victim of food poisoning, you could still get saved if you are medicated on time, but what about the mental poisoning? The poison which you are slowly letting inside your mind and body? Aren't we slowly becoming a victim of Thought Poisoning?

***I bring to you another way of getting rid of the victimhood of unwanted or unwarranted emotions and situations.***

Sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly. What life brings to us is a bunch of unpredictable stories and we are a significant part of it and sometimes even a creator of it.

**We create our own reality**, any situation which is good or bad is the consequence of the choice we make in our lives, the decisions we take and things we forego in order to accomplish something in life.

**Negative thoughts are like fully loaded guns**, which when triggered spread end numbers of negative elements around us and become the first culprit of self-destruction while believing them becomes second.

Feelings of hatred, envy, jealousy, anger, lust, doubt, fear, revenge, boastfulness, insensitivity, resentment, grudges, arrogance, selfishness are just very few to list here, it's up to the bearer of the gun to stop or to continue being the victim of the uncalled emotions.

Every thought we possess, be it negative or positive has some **potion of energy** in it, a source of creation, a source of any good or bad vibe we could spread around us. Each thought we go through has the power to build us or to destroy us fully.

Thoughts are the creation of our mind based on the situations we are in and how we intend to deal with the situation is what matters, is what counts. We might live a splendid life, do thousands of good deeds but just one thought which gets maligned or poisoned and could ruin our thousands of good deeds.

In today's world where everyone is living a mechanical life trying to step up the ladder and where emotions are cornered to survive and stay in the game, **people live in ignorance and fail to handle people and things around them with some sensitivity.**

So much stressful lifestyle, so much competition to survive, to thrive what one does to rise above others, **to prove themselves is an overtly evident of a poisoned mind resulting in unhealthy relationships and lifestyle.**

### **Who is responsible for our present situation?**

Our mind, our thought process, it is in our hands how we choose to direct them when we should stop, reflect and then react. If we are surrounded by toxicity or unhealthy relationship, you know it's time you cut off from them, any situation, place or person which doesn't spark joy in your life or put you down should be removed from your life, only then you could free yourself from any thought poisoning.

It is like a poison which once enters inside the body starts spreading and takes a toll over your heart and beautiful emotions you have inside you and **only leads to self-destruction.**

**Like every decision, the situation begins with a thought, no one else but only we are responsible for our predicaments. Our blessings come from our own efforts and our curses come from our own malignity.**

### **How to Overcome it?**

To completely eradicate the poisons from our mind we should:

- Have some sensitivity toward others
- A sense of forgiveness to mankind
- We must acknowledge the efforts of others
- We must love more, we must live more and conquer all our inner demons of fear, anguish, stress, jealousy overthinking and self-doubt.

This is the only way to live a healthy and mindful life.

~~~~~

Way 17: Quest for Inner peace

A peace anthem for your soul

Sometimes you must show the light

Sometimes you must be the light

I stand stranded in the middle of nowhere

~~~

*Sometimes seeking questions*

*Sometimes finding answers*

*I leave the trail for my memoir*

~~~

What you seek outside is inside you

From the glories and the miseries of the past

To the tensions and worries leaving you aghast

Tell them not to disturb you, not to interrupt you...

~~~

*Live in present, breath in and breath out and as you do so you become aware of your existence...*

*The moment you touch that inner chord of survival you will be in harmony with your mind, body, and soul.*

*That would be the time you will experience peace within you and your quest for peace will end for once and for all.*

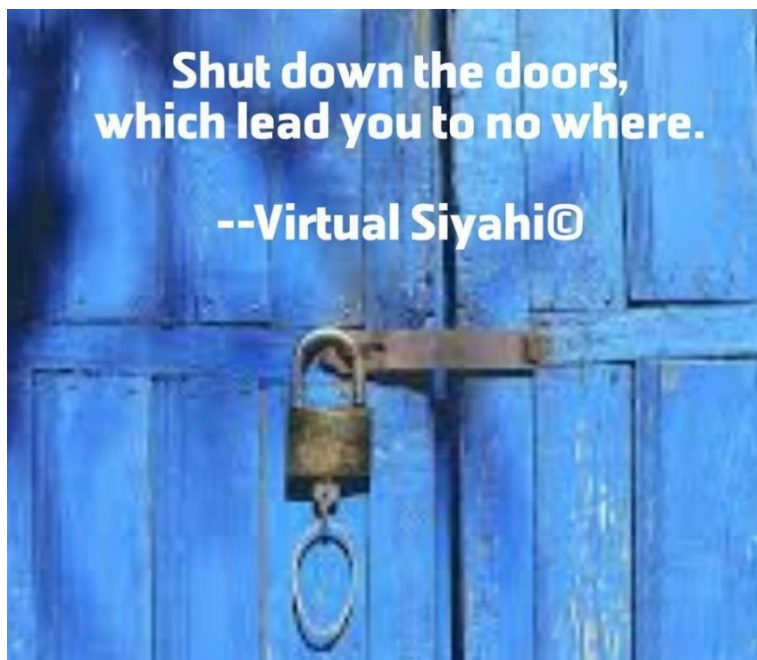
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Way 18: Reduce the Baggage

Adopting this practice could be your **Passport to Salvation!!**

Let us do some mental exercise with this chapter.

Let us together **inhale all the possibilities** and fill our lungs with the enormous potential of a healthy life and let us **exhale all the toxicity** of our life by slowly releasing all the pain, suffering and disturbance we have been holding on within ourselves for years.



Throughout our life, we carry a lot of baggage with ourselves, unnecessarily. The baggage of expectations, the baggage of grudges, the baggage of anger and baggage of lots of emotions, only wanting to drop it at the very end of our journey. The solution lies in not having conflicts but in resolving them as soon as one can. How long is too long and what is the dead end?

- So why not resolve all the conflicts within before we head towards our destination.
- Take quick action on what truly matters.
- We spend more time thinking and thus create more negativities around us.
- A lot of people know what is needed to be done at that moment, but don't do anything about it.
- While you're caught up in what you think you cannot escape out of it.

In relationships, if you had some bad incidents, you start to distance yourself from those, once you have truly loved or appreciated. A certain mismatch of ideologies are bound to happen in any relationship but we just stop communicating and we start thinking that we no longer cherish the company of that person but the fact is we do not agree with a particular dominant thought of that person which could be just ignored in a positive manner, but we choose to move away.

Letting go of grudges helps you sleep better.

Holding onto resentment causes stress.

The problem lies in the thought process of the person and not with the person. This understanding helps you to unburden the bitterness you carry for someone once you cherished being with.

Why do we have to wait for that last moment, when the thought still keeps on knocking our subconscious mind every now and then, pointing that things would have been different **if I would have handled the given situation in a certain manner**, why not take a call, right now? So many ifs, buts, whys, how's just to for a silly reason which might get worked out if we speak out once.

Kehte hai na, Baat karne se hi baat banti hai..to koshish karne mein harz kya hai janab..

Baat bani to thik, nahi to shukriya, alvida aur adab.

Before life gives up on you... Take that call, unburden yourself, reduce the baggage one by one, before your final call and live as a free soul!

~~~~~



## Way 19: Society, Stigmas and Stereotypes

In my whole series, I have been stressing over various elements which lead to stress and how we can try to overcome them and today I am going to share something very personal, holding a deep sentimental value for me, because I know somebody is listening to me today :)

I present the most cunning societal siyyapa (problems) we all face and come across through stigmatized and stereotypical attitude of the society we penetrate in.

**Color Shaming and Body Shaming** are no less than a leading cause of depression, frustration and anxiety in people today, yesterday and maybe in the future.

**Results: Lower Self-esteem, inferiority complex, isolation, and zero confidence.**

**Who is responsible: YOU, ME and whole Society?** We knowingly and unknowingly right from the childhood use such terms with our kids and family members, *zyada khaegi to moti hojaegi, dhup me ghumoge to kale ho jaeoge*, We don't aim at anything but it has become a casual way of talking since ages and we are carrying forward it, passing on the grand legacy generation to generation.

### **My Personal Experience:**

Being a dark-skinned female, I always experienced this dark color paradox bothering me from my teenage to marriageable age, (after that I gave a bait shit about it) girls with fair complexion were beautiful by default and dark toned girls like me had to always face this color differentiation stigma and to cover up my family and friends used to say although you are dark in color you have got sharp features, nice hair and you are beautiful.

Even my dark-skinned classmates (especially boys) ridiculed the color of my skin. One of them called me “Kaali Maa” I pretended I didn't hear him and walked away. But my heart broke. The most amusing part was if a boy is dark in color, he is addressed as 'Dark and Handsome' but for the girl again the rules were different here.

Unfortunately, **this diversity in skin color has created a hierarchy of beauty** – a hierarchy that tells you that the light-skinned people are the epitome of beauty, while the dark-skinned people fall at the bottom. **Why only fair is lovely. I kept wondering.**

I was unaware of this until I was in the seventh grade when I found out that my dark skin could put me in a tough spot and stunt my self-esteem.

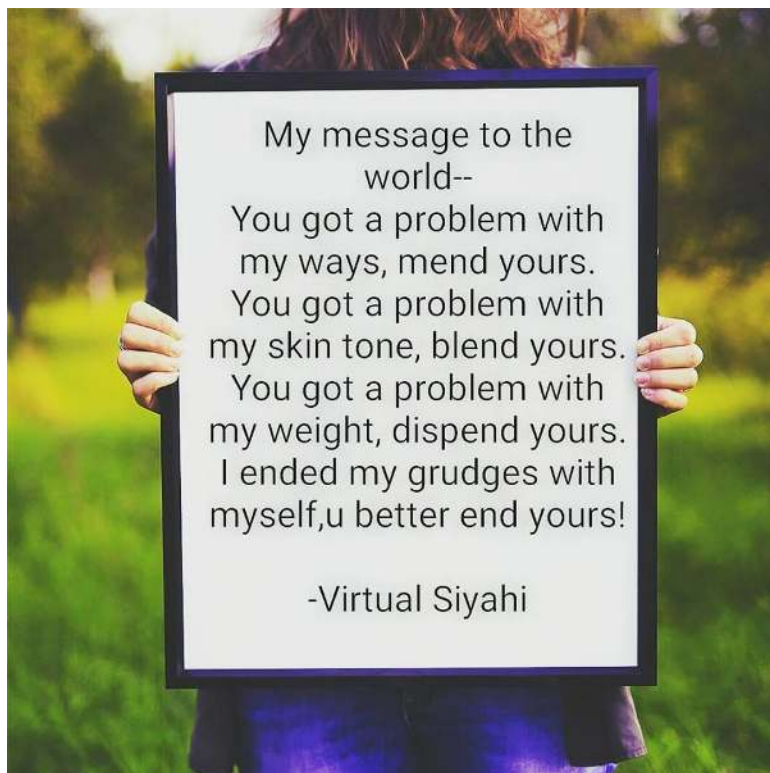
In the tenth grade, when I was attending a relative's marriage, my grandmother said why do you wear light colors? You look darker in light color clothes and again I had nothing to say.

I hated wearing white and black. I hated taking pictures in a room that wasn't well-lit because I knew that while the faces of all my fair-skinned relatives/friends would show up in the picture, mine wouldn't.

Then came the era where finally Dark was IN... the term "**DUSKY Beauty**" was evolved and it gave us due consideration and **our skin tone was recognized finally. Volla!!**

Thanks to all the dark skin Supermodels and Actresses. But by this time, I had realized one thing that even if it doesn't matter to you personally, the people around you will never let you take it easy. They make it a point to make a big deal about it.

**People in India have got this unfair obsession with the lighter skin as if it is in our hands to choose the skin color shades of our wish.**



But as I grew up I started accepting me the way I am and groomed myself as a person and followed my own mantra, **"Stay Unfair, Stay Beautiful"** it means, it is all about our attitude and how do we look at our self, how we work for our betterment.

**It is only YOU who can bring out the best in you and trust me you will outshine! Be you in all ways and always.**

~~~~~

WAY 20: The Log Kya Kahenge Syndrome

I always swear by this way of sashaying away from the predominant malady prevailing in the humans and how it affects the sanity of another human, co-breathing together.

We are very much aware of this malady, a condition which spreads faster than anything among people over decades and decades, it is so infectious that people carry those germs within themselves from generations by default, and are happy to be with it and trust me when I say this, **forget love, care, smile it has got the immense power to bind people across states, cultures and irrespective of any religion, all you need is to grab a corner and start a conversation about a person/family and you see people joining you soon.**

Interestingly here the Log/people, consists of any number of person whose aim in life is to invade others privacy and **WE give them that freedom to enter our space and capture the most sensitive corners of our lives wherein they decide what is to be done and what is not to be done**, we start living to please those people, who don't even matter in our lives and all our life we carry a burden on our self and then we pass that burden on to our children.

- A boy wants to pursue his career in **Indian Classical Dance**, but he is refrained from doing so just because of **Log Kya Kahenge**.
- A girl wanting to marry someone out of her caste/religion, but again **beta Log Kya Kahenge?**
- A woman wanting to step out and work has become acceptable to an extent but a Man who doesn't want to go for monotonous work and pursue his passion for cooking, cannot be acceptable because of **Arey Log Kya Kahenge?**

End number of examples could be quoted here. We even refrain ourselves from trying even a new haircut or lipstick, thinking **Log Kya Kahenge? See how we have given the remote control of our life, our happiness to others.**

Many dreams are killed, left unheard and so much is left undone just because of the fear of LOG. We have been dealing with this Malady, from years and we are still dealing with it, sometimes we fall for it and sometimes we fight back but what good does it bring out, I could never understand.

We stop doing something for the sake of what others will think, but do they really think? They never take responsibilities of the after effects of we not doing something, do they?

We always ponder the fact that why do we need to please somebody who is not even a part of me? that too for my basic living, my dreams, and above all my life, the only ones who matter are my parents, my kids, my better half and above all Me, myself as at the end it will be only between Me and myself.

Let's not stop ourselves from what we could have done in our life by not doing it just for a few people who won't even matter in the future. Let not what you can't do come in between what you can do just because of these viral thoughts entering your life.

Take charge of your life!

*लोगों का क्या है, हलकी सी उभरती हुई उम्मीद की किरण को भी अपने हाथों से बुझा देते हैं..
अँधेरा चाहे कितना ही घना दिखाई देता हो, पर अक्सर जहाँ हलकी सी रोशनी दिखाई देती है वही जाकर
अपने व्यथाओं की आग लगा देते हैं*

~~~~~

## WAY 21: Unsolved Question Paper

*"Life is an exam where the syllabus is unknown and question papers are not set"* an excerpt from the famous author **Sudha Murthy's book, Wise and Otherwise.**

We all prepare for the exams very seriously throughout our academic span, passing out each exam is the only motto we have. We try to give our hundred percent in order to get the desired results, but what about the few sets of people who do not even try to attempt the question paper, what are they doing in their life today?

Throughout our academic life we have met these five kinds of people:

- The toppers, the 'A-listers
- Distinction holders
- Average scorers
- Borderliners
- and the ones who fail terribly and all the complications in their life begins, they face criticism, they get demotivated, disheartened and just lose all the hopes and shut themselves.

### **Sounds familiar?**

Yes, as the same situation applies to our **daily life**, amongst us we have such set of people, some are rock solid, very strong, tough and determined souls, who just make it even with life in every situation.

Whereas for some it seems to be a manageable affair, some people find it very difficult to cope up with the tough times but eventually they also learn and grow, but **the problems persist for those who do not even attempt to clear the clutter from their lives, and face all the complications with a heavy heart.**

I don't say they don't want to attempt but throughout their life, they wait for a perfect time, perfect day and it never comes, trust me no one gives you the power you must take it for yourself.

I would not say that the attempt will surely lead them to success, but slowly and gradually success comes to those who **TRY, what counts the most is the attempts you made to make it even with your present situation focusing on a better tomorrow for yourself.**

**Solve the unsolved question paper.**

Take charge of your life, come out of the sad story and be the hero of your story, it is never ever too late to take that first step towards your own betterment.

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WAY 22: Value What You Have

If I start on a dramatic note then I would say, Bhag daud bhari ye zindagi jisme rukna mana hai, thakna mana hai, aise mein koi choti choti cheezo par kaise dhyan de?

VALUE WHAT YOU HAVE BEFORE IT'S GONE.

Especially things which are available for free and in abundance, BREATH being the primary source of survival, how many of us consciously breathe in and breath out? I guess none. We do not even pay attention to it, because it's happening continuously without any effort.

Likewise, there are so many things which we should value in our lives and be grateful for their mere presence in our life. As you never know what time will bring to us and the things, we have with us in the present will become just a thing of memory.

Our primary focus is mainly on materialistic things which bring us momentary pleasures but nurturing and strengthening what we already have given us a very beautiful life.

"You only know what you've got when it's gone."

What should we value?

- A mother's unconditional love for her child
- A father's hard-earned money and his life which he completely surrenders for his family
- Those innumerable and illogical your kids ask you, as they will soon start searching for the answers on Mr.Google
- A husband who is faithful and caring
- A wife who is loving and there for you
- Your sound minds
- Your healthy body
- The food you get to eat daily

How do we do that?

- Stop comparing your life with others
- Express gratitude for what you have, as it changes everything
- Appreciate more, reciprocate more
- Enjoy every little moment with your friends and family members

What counts in the end is the wonderful moments you share with your family, beloved ones, and friends. Enjoy and pay attention to these beautiful moments, even if they have become totally ordinary to you and learn to appreciate the value of these moments.

"When you arise in the morning, give thanks for the morning light, for your life and strength. Give thanks for your food and the joy of living. If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies within yourself" – Tecumseh

I recommend:

The Magic - Rhonda Byrne

This book changed my perspective about life, I have read it twice and at the end of 2018, I gave myself a writing challenge of **28 days**, as the book consists of 28 chapters.

Every day I use to read each chapter and share the summary of the chapter on my blog. Hence, I strongly urge all of you to read it once and practice some exercise the book prescribes, because to experience the magic of gratitude in your life, you must practice it.

I hope you find this way very simple and applicable for a beautiful life ahead.

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WAY 23: What Holds You Back

I believe each individual breathing in this universe wants to attain his own sanctum sanctorum at some or the other point of time. No matter how mountain high the difficulties seem to be, that urge to take a plunge in the ocean of dreams and pick up the best one for self keeps burning deep inside.

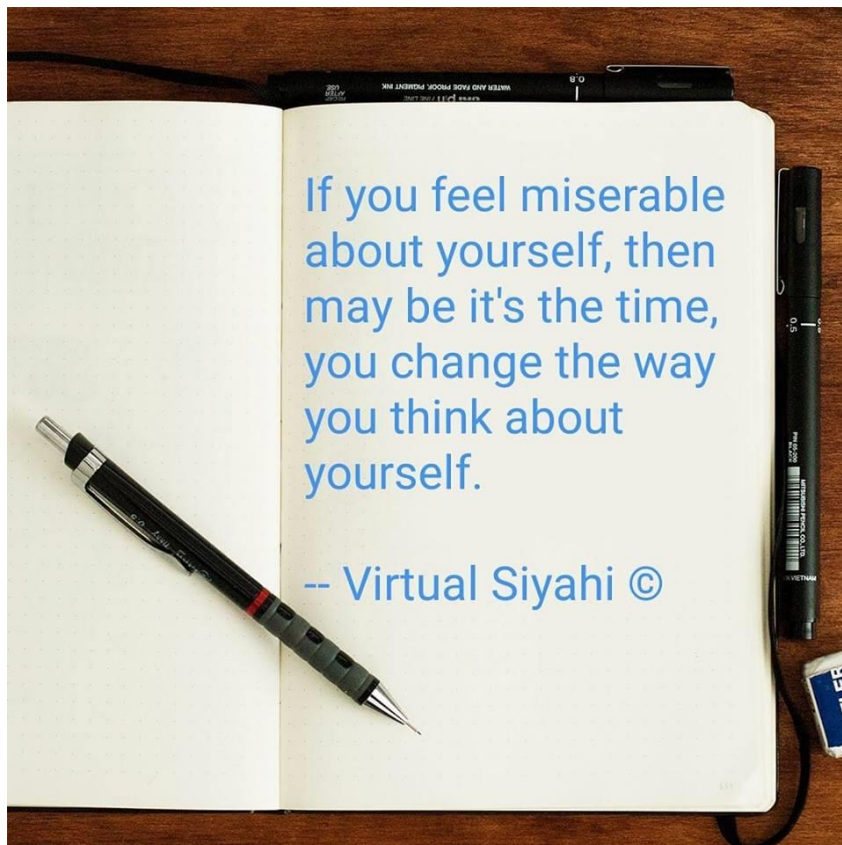
Then what makes one different from another one?

How one outperforms others?

What holds one back?

What holds you back?

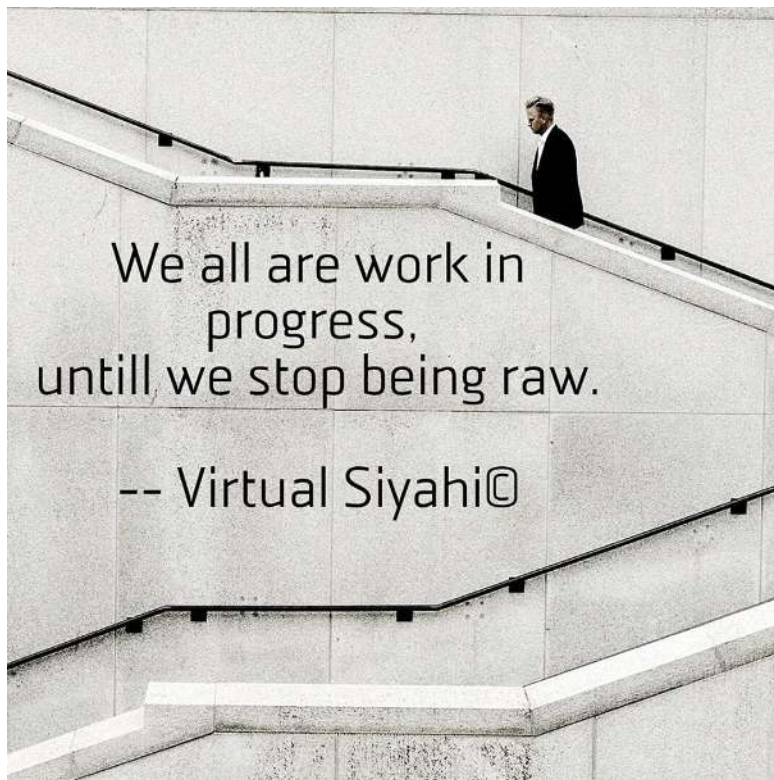
Is it the fear of the unknown? Have you ever asked this question to yourself? If not, then please do it right away.



Instead of comparing our success with other's success, instead of criticizing others, instead of blaming others for our present situation, we should time to time ask this simple question to ourselves, that why are we not doing anything for ourselves, what is holding us back and how do we overcome it?

Below mentioned few steps might be of some help:

1. Identifying and acknowledging our fears.
2. Writing it down, reading it aloud to oneself.
3. Feel that fear, let it go down to your spine and get familiar to that fear.
4. Ask yourself, how worse it can be if I decide to face this fear?
5. Once you are friends with your fear, start working on it.
6. Be present, be in the moment.
7. Take one step at a time, do not rush.
8. Do not stress or pressurize yourself.
9. Keep a record of your actions, monitor them.
10. Be open to learning new things.



I am still a work in progress, I believe we all are :) But if you ask me what fear I had or how did I overcome it? Here is the answer---

I loved writing, it was all good till I was writing in college or in my personal diary but then I learned about blogging, I started writing, I got addicted to my blog and it became a course of fear for me, but I wanted to do it because I wanted to write.

I started writing and facing all my fears of writing one by one, my major fear was my **grammar and my vocabulary**. I always feared of writing something wrong, I sometimes asked my husband to cross-check my writing for me. But after writing 50 articles, I gained confidence, after getting a few comments on my blog I gained more confidence.

Today I have over 270 **articles in my credit** and all my fears are bygones. Through writing, I have learned new words, met new people, understood a different perspective. I am still learning, trying to improve my vocab and learning new ways to be creative, but now nothing holds me back for sure :)

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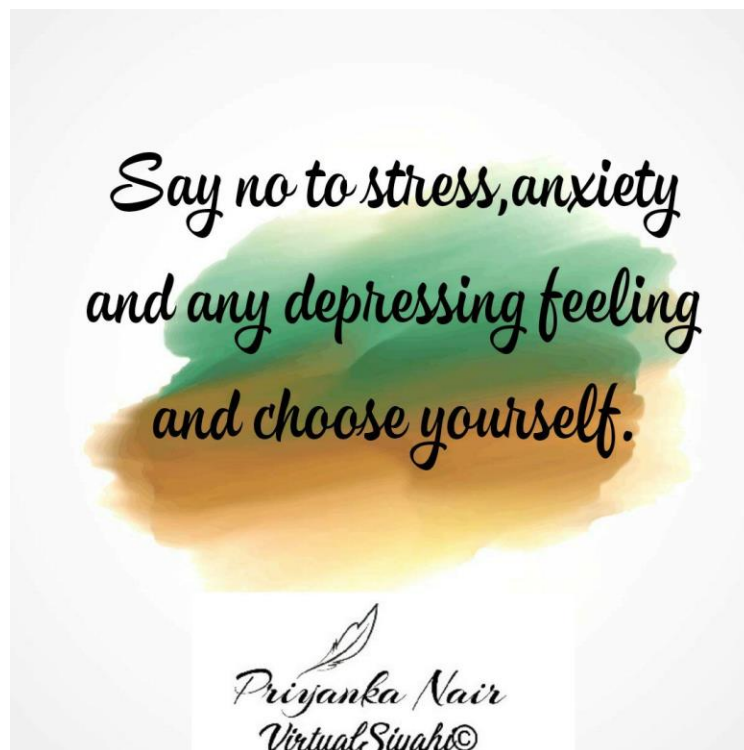
## WAY 24: Xenagogy

*Xenagogy is referred to a guide for the tourist or visitors.*

### **My Blog background:**

I started as an Open diary blogger in 2017 and use to write once or twice in a month about the stereotypes, limiting beliefs and anything which hampers the growth of a person on an individual level.

Knowingly or unknowingly I developed a niche, I could connect with my readers by sharing life lessons and a few experiences and soon I discovered that a lot of people are dealing with end number negative emotions, depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, relationship, trust issues, career stress and what not and I started focusing in this particular area, I started reading a lot and got so much involved that I have also taken a huge task in my hand to accomplish doctorate in Psychology which I am preparing for at present.



## How my blog is a Xenagogy to Self-help?

As I started connecting with a lot of people I could feel their pain, maybe I could empathize a lot and it led me to follow a path of spreading awareness, although initially I got few comments saying that it is easier said than done, the tips or steps I stress to follow doesn't have any impact, but I never had a doubt on my own intentions as my aim was simply to spread some awareness that **STRESS** is a leading cause for many physical and emotional disturbances among us.

**People still don't believe it, but it is scientifically proven that too much STRESS can increase the risk of conditions like obesity, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, depression, gastrointestinal problems, and asthma in an individual.**

As Mahatma Gandhi rightly quoted, "**Be the change you want to see in the world**", hence I decided to be the change, started doing my bit through my blogs and later started speaking about it on Youtube Channel to reach to maximum people.

I will succeed in establishing myself as **Mental Health or Self Help Awareness Blogger** or not, is the question I have left to time, but now when I look back I have tried to touch many chords of human emotions, unfolded many mysteries of the human mind and have made fair attempt in spreading some love and compassion towards people around me.

Hence I can call my blog Virtual Siyahi a **Xenagogy to Self-help**, as it could definitely help my visitors understand themselves, to fall in self-love, to appreciate the little things around them, to be grateful for what they have, to stop pleasing people and seeking validation, to stop being judgmental and putting others down and above all accepting that depression is for real, people suffer and we can be kind to them as it costs nothing.

~~~~~

WAY 25: You Are Your Only Limit

Yes, I know I know. You know this, perhaps try not to be the hurdle in your road to success, to travel the unknown roads, to win your unknown fears and to love yourself before others.

But STILL, something stops us every now and then, in my previous chapters also I have mentioned how feelings of fear and not attempting the question paper set by the unpredictable life leads us to a place we never wanted to be and find our condition so miserable when we compare it to others.

We are conditioned to condition, to doubt, to question our own abilities and hence we do not explore our capabilities.

Jokes apart, in the end, it is about the steps you take in order to make things work for you and what else could be the best example than the BLOGCHATTER A2Z Writing Challenge which I opted for in the month of April, where in we the bloggers who had registered for it were supposed to write a post daily starting with letter A and proceed further till the end letter Z.

It was my experience entering onto any writing challenge for one month and I must say I was really very much scared before registering for it, for the simple reason that till now if I was writing for 100 readers, with this challenge I will be writing for 300 readers, the readers will increase, the perceptions will increase and my fear of being criticized could have also increased **IF** only I have chosen **not to attempt this question paper**.

But I chose to answer it and took it in my stride and to my amazement, I got a lot of positive feedback, a lot of encouragement and beautiful words from the readers all around which made me believe in myself and write more productively. **So, I broke my limit and I reached one step closer to my goals.**

This was my latest encounter of breaking belief and conquering it, but sometimes it could be our parents, siblings, life partner, friends, society or something else which stops us to move ahead. But I feel if you dare to dream then nobody can stop you to fulfill it, if you wish to achieve something then nothing can come in your way... but only if YOU decide to accomplish it with a tough determination.

It doesn't matter how small or big your goal is but taking that first step towards addressing it, is all that matters. It is only you who set the limit for yourself, why do you restrain yourself from pursuing your interests, from giving your career another chance, from letting your dream take a flight? **Life is today, it is happening, it is now, and nobody has seen tomorrow then why wait for tomorrow?**

Why not take out those old ghungroos lying somewhere inside your old trunk, wear it and give yourself a spin?

How about wiping off the dust from your musical instrument today and strumming an unheard tune?

How about revamping your old wardrobe?

Why not join a badminton/swimming club?

Why not live a little more? Laugh a little more and Love a little more?

We all have priorities, we all are busy with our daily life, but we just get one life and in between hustling, juggling, working and lurking we need to find out some time for self. Don't let what you cannot do come in between what you can do.

Its time you increase the area of your limit and let your dreams fit in, don't forget you are your only limit.

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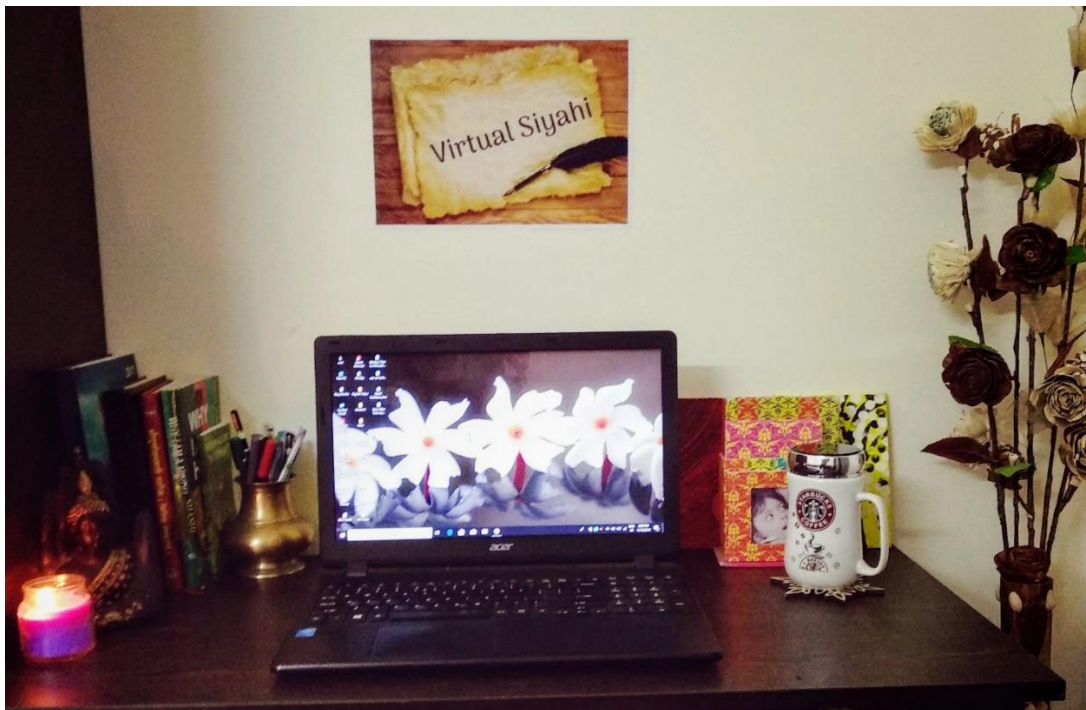


## WAY 26: Zen Moment

What is **Zen**? A moment when you experience peace and solace after accomplishing a certain important and very special task. The relief, the sigh of satisfaction and happiness is unmatched and no less than attaining Nirvana.

Accomplishing in my aim of picking up such topics has been no less than a meditative journey for me for the last 30 days, as I have been consciously writing, being present, being aware, being mindful and interacting with so many amazing bunches of people around the corner.

Writing has always been a catharsis to me, a source of relief, a getaway from the outside world. I call my blog my **Happy Place** and I am the solopreneur of the writing corner in my house, filled with deep love and warm atmosphere. I make it as bright and as beautiful as possible, I decorate, re-decorate it as this corner of my house is my best corner where I can be myself.



The idea of this whole book was to spread some self-help measure, self-awareness, self-development, self-love, and mental health awareness through my very simple and adaptable 26 ways and hence named it **26days 26ways**. I wanted to spread some awareness about the underlying illness, those depressing feelings and emotions of bitterness could create a state of mind which could lead to places you have never imagined for yourself.

I hope I was able to convey my thoughts and emotions precisely.

Just try to be there for someone who shows some sign of irritation, anxiety or unusual behavior.

Try to listen, try to be there.

We might help someone simply by being by their side, might as well save a tragedy.

I would like to thank all for choosing my book and trusting me in presenting my beliefs.

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Bonus Chapter: My Trials and Tribulations of Blogging

What led to my blog- Virtual Siyahi?

Being a mother is not about what you gave up in order to have the child, but what you have gained from having one. What I gained from having my child is something I would love to share. I am a very ambitious person and when my daughter was born I chose to quit my job because I wanted to experience each and every moment of my baby's childhood and I followed what I had exactly planned, because those moments were precious and they will never return, I choose to have a bank account full of my little one's memories than having money in it.

The ambitious me kept bothering me somewhere deep inside but I was happily raising my girl and doing so much fun together. Under certain unwarranted health issue I had to forcefully sit at home for a year and that was the time when I identified and bought back passion in my life by introspecting what I all I used to enjoy doing but could not continue due to my studies, my job, that is where the **#VirtualSiyahi** came into picture, and I started my own blog site in 2017 and started writing my heart out, and have no plans to stop.

My Personal Experience

"Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success" - - Swami Vivekananda

I swear by this quote; it is placed right above my writing desk and I believe in each word this quote stresses on. It took longer than usual, but yes, I made it. I made my way to the blogging world. I created my personal blog in 2016 before that I use to write in my daily diary, yes, I still have it with me. I am a moderate English speaker.

I love to read and started writing when I was in my high school. I used to submit my poetries in college and teachers would love reading them and stick it in the office notice board for others to read. I used to feel motivated and it encouraged me further.

I was not aware of the blogging world until a few years back. It was in 2014 I saw people coming up with their blogs with food recipes, travel stories, fashion and beauty tips. I always wished to create my own blog and start pouring out all the pent-up emotions for decades but when I saw bloggers writing brilliantly, I got scared and somehow my self-confidence lowered.

It was in late 2016, I gained the courage and immediately created my blog and posted my very first article on my blog. Days passed, months passed, I hardly got any views or followers and got disappointed and started doubting my own writing skills.

I was restless but not hopeless so went on trying and learning new skills to upgrade myself. It was in early 2017 when I wrote something on Women's Day and the write-up got selected for a local newspaper and it was published, first time I was in the newspaper and now my courage got ignited. I started writing more, started sharing more and got featured by a start-up company.

Now you must be thinking that if I can write a moderately articulated blog then what am I trying to express here?

Here is the cache, there was a friend of mine, a childhood friend, an expert in English and convent educated. She adapted blogging from just like I did and started blogging soon after a few months I started.

It was in a year back when I was interviewed by an artist to share my story and it went Really well, which I shared everywhere on the social media platforms. Where on one place people were calling me to congratulate and appreciate my efforts and my achievement, she called me up and her first sentence was, how did you manage to get yourself there?

Did you adapt SEO or SEM for your blog? Did you pay them?

With hardly 60 followers and 2500 hits on my blog a year back, I had no answers to her questions. She doubted my capabilities because she knew that her English is a better version of my English language. She was very much confident of her abilities that she questioned my abilities.

She gave me two life lessons, first, that it does not necessarily mean that the one who is highly qualified will only obtain all the success in life. And second, it is easy for others to doubt you than to appreciate you and you should cut such toxic people from your life.

This was the reason I was hesitant in pursuing my passion for writing. I knew my weaknesses and I knew there exist a harsh world waiting for me outside which will not spare me even if I make a single grammatical error. I truly agree that writing is a serious business.

But here I am writing from the last two years not focusing on the positive sides and appreciation which motivates me to write more and more. I feel when you can express yourself and when you are able to form a connection with the reader, your job is done. But yes, I am continuously working on my writing skills and never wish to stop writing. Patience and perseverance keep me going.

About the Author

Priyanka Nair is a master's in finance and has worked with renowned multinational companies in her professional career of eight years until she received her calling as a blogger. Presently pursuing Doctorate in Psychology.

Born and brought up in a North Indian family and married in a South Indian family helps her explore different cultures and traditions. Priyanka started her blogging journey in 2017 and is a budding author who has made significant contributions in the field of mental health awareness.

She is a survivor who overcame enormous odds to make her own mark in the world of blogging. She started out as an open diary blogger and gradually realized her genuine interest was in spreading awareness about Mental Health.

After battling depression during her critical illness days she realized that there are many people out there who need help, people give up on life for the smallest reasons, people who are aimless, people who don't really realize the full potential of their brain power to rise out from difficult situations In her book 26 Days 26 Ways she has explained and given suggestions on how to overcome different mental problems.

Mental problems are complex, but Priyanka has succeeded in giving a simple, rational and logical explanation to the different mental problems faced by people.

This book is a must read for people who are going through depression, who are facing a mental block and even for people who want to learn about mental illness. This book will surely bring significant changes in the lives of readers.

Learn more about Priyanka Nair here:

Blog Name: Virtual Siyahi, meaning Virtual Ink

Blog: <https://priyankaspen.com>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VirtualSiyahi>

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/virtual_siyahi/

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/VirtualSiyahi/>

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/priyanka2323>

Significant Achievements and features:

1. *Interviewed on a Podcast by Kenny Aronson, founder of The Davinci Mindest <https://player.fm/series/lets-talk-business-2434047/quest-conversation-with-priyanka-nair-blogging-business-overcoming-anxiety-and-mindset>*
2. *Featured at Women With Gifts International, a non-profit organization based in Colorado <https://womenwithgifts.org/2018/12/29/blog-featurevirtual-siyahi/>*
3. *Featured at SHEROES INDIA, largest and first Women only community in India <https://sheroes.com/articles/cancer-survivor-becoming-celebrated-blogger/MTE1OTE=>*
4. *An author at Women's Web/ Momspresso*
5. *Weekly Columnist at Different truths*
6. *Youtuber Spreading Mental health Awareness*

