

**LIFE**

**LIVE**

**IT**

**WELL**

**Krishna Vardhan Gilara**  
**(RAMBHAJO)**

**LIFE LIVE IT WELL**

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**SIMPLY JAIPUR**  
A COMPLETE DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

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**Life Live it Well**  
by *Krishna Vardhan Gilara*  
(*Rambhajo*)




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*To all the fitness lovers  
who want to live life well...*



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# Forward

**W**hat elders do or rather what they preach; the younger generation naively follows. My son Krishna Vardhan gilara and author of this book grew up seeing me and his grandparents relentlessly persuading a healthy lifestyle. He has grown up in an environment where health is given utmost priority. During the lockdown owing to the COVID-19, our family instead of getting into panic mode got more inclined towards finding ways to stay healthy at home. Our discussions mostly revolved around mental and physical health and how we could ensure overall wellbeing. My son has seen and learned a lot about a healthy lifestyle since the pandemic hit the country in 2019. He used to talk discuss a lot

of things about health and I have been the feeder for knowledge to him, which has eventually, I think inspired him. I have always believed in sharing with the ones who need it and I am fortunate enough to see my son growing up with a similar value system. It was his idea that this book has shaped up when over dinner he expressed his wish to share his knowledge which he acquired from me about a healthy lifestyle with people outside. I wasn't apprehensive since I have always believed in letting my kids do anything that makes them happy, for they learn to take ownership of their actions from a very young age. My only concern was his studies since he is too young to spare his time away from the 10th International General Certificate of Secondary Education IGCSE board exams. But he was confident and we went ahead with the idea. With utmost pleasure, I would like to say that he managed both, his time for studies and the book. His discipline for early to rise and late to bed was at one point concerning and the other was admirable. I have never thought of becoming a part of this book. It's because of Krishna's determination that we together discussed things and penned in the book. I wish every one of all age groups gets the benefit out of

it as we have tried not to make it too heavy with the jargon and information. The knowledge we wanted to share is mostly conveyed in a conversation so it draws your interest and keeps you engaged. All the information is what we do at home to stay healthy is what the book address. I wish my son all the very best to achieve his novel intentions of sharing his knowledge with the world for the benefit of humanity.

**- *Abhishek Gilara***



# Chapter - 1

## Life in Lockdown



I sat curiously on my couch in our dining area. This was my fifth interaction with a news channel, especially the Prime Minister's speech that I never understood why people paid much heed before. I was waiting for the 8 pm speech the entire day just like the entire nation, for the fear of the Novel Coronavirus was looming over our heads. Several theories were discussed & predictions were made – If a complete lockdown will be imposed in India just like China and Italy. I was too young to understand what lockdown meant, for the life revolved around school, dance classes, and cricket matches on the grounds. But that day was different. Our Prime Minister Narendra Modi appeared on TV



screens and all eyes were sharply faced to the television screens. My mother, too apparently, decided to listen to the speech to further plan the stock for groceries in our house. The Prime Minister authenticated all those predictions that the virus has attacked the country and the solution is to go for a few days of lockdown. It started with one day and we all came out on our galleries lighting diyas and banging thalis. Some criticized; some participated oblivious to the idea that a leader would want everyone to engage in the situation that the country was living in. That's what India is – full of opinions. The lockdowns kept on increasing but that day our Prime Minister appeared on T.V. screens and announced the world is facing an attack of novel Coronavirus and we will go for a few days of lockdown that increased for almost 45 days. It felt like the end of the world. Everything came to a standstill. It felt like everything was destroyed. For my father, it was his business, for my mother, it was her evening walk, but for me, it was about understanding the idea of lockdown and coming to the terms with it. The only understanding I had was I am not allowed to go out and if I do, the consequences were

unfavorable – though, at my age, I anyways had to take permission from my parents, it gave a sense of wicked satisfaction that my parents will be living with similar restrictions. I know it's a dark comedy. But isn't that what we all have learned to live with and come to the terms with life in fear, restrictions, and uncertainties. The life goals have come to a halt , dreams seem to be a distant reality and humanity is tested like never before.

At my age, I may have not understood the importance of bringing the food to the table, but I learned that my father did think about the saving he had in hand and if that would continue to serve the family, and for how long? For me, the first few days were black with no clue to a ray of hope. But gradually, I understood the importance of being with family, when I saw thousands of laborers walking miles to be with their loved ones. I started feeling grateful and cherishing the time with my family members.

As the days and weeks passed by, I found myself nose deep in books and the internet. As a kid and a curious student, it was most crucial for me to know everything about the virus, for I was becoming a part of the history and

coming times, where I would retell the stories from the past – and not all stories have a happy beginning but most stories lead to a happy ending. Gathering data about the virus was the most interesting aspect of my daily routine. I would gulp over the social media and note down each piece of information that I felt was adding to my knowledge. From the inception of the virus to its spread, I was keen on knowing everything about it. But then, reality hit. I learned too much that it reminded me of my joint family and their safety, most importantly, the stock of groceries and medicines. I saw the time when the prices spiked like never before – at least the time I have lived on this planet earth. All the economics theories were failed except, less supply creates more demand leading to biased prices. And I witnessed it. No, I never heard this but I learned this with practical experience.

It was one morning that I realized that we are living in uncertain times, which have affected nearly every aspect of our lives. As we work and study from home, juggle the demands of home-schooling and live in a more isolated world. Though I know I am not alone. Before

this madness, life was busy, flowing like a straight river. My life revolved around school, dance classes, heading out with friends, chitchatting over many issues that were far from the real world. The weekends and days are really not similar. The weekends were not a happening thing for me, for it demanded me to stay at home and not see my friends, but now every day looks the same. Making cheerful memories, competing in dance competitions, or simply having dinner with friends isn't a thing anymore, even when we live in partial lockdowns. It really never meant too much until it was all taken away owing to the COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdowns. But as they say, 'life goes on and we all found our peace with the new normal and the virtual world. Physical dance classes have been replaced by online dance sessions. I find my socialization time walking the dog but rain does ruin this aspect and my pooch and I find solace in the comforts of our home. I won't say I haven't been able to make memories but yes, these memories have a lot more instances of moist eyes. If nothing, this time has taught me many responsibilities that the kids of my age were never introduced to. I have learned

to focus on online learning just like my father. I have seen him being up-to-date with his work, which has eventually become my habit too. Life has got all those twists and turns and with all-time at home without any distraction, I found plenty of time to work on my dreams – maybe this is called a blessing in disguise. I have started making my own decisions as far as my education is concerned. As a student, the journey of staying at home has been a rollercoaster ride. With no interaction outside and meetings turning virtual, it demands constant reminders of positive sides and finding that one big optimistic idea that 'Everything is possible, no matter what.'

Nothing compares to going to university for the first time and experiencing interaction with fellow students and attending live lectures. I was thinking exactly the same when I saw my seniors graduating from 12th. Every student dreams and plans a lot for the first day of college but the plans took a back seat. While the global pandemic has brought this all to a halt, I find myself one of the privileged people to have been given enough space to study and prepare independently in the last few months. I do realize that the lockdowns have changed

the way we see the world now and this could be the reality for all of us for a while. But this time has taught us the most important thing – adapt and accept the new way of celebrating life.

It was also the time when stress had become a global phenomenon. There was no good news, no aspiring conversations, the world had come to one frame with novel coronavirus hitting almost every door. While social distancing and masks became the most crucial guidelines, washing hands and using sanitizer was a completely foreign thing for most Indians. I was actually reminded of that advertisement that features children suggesting to wash hands for at least three minutes. It was funny for me, but later I realized it was being far-sighted. With so much stress and uncertainty, what became important was to keep our mental health in check. This wasn't much applicable for the children before, for they had a distraction and among all of the human ages children are the most unaffected. But the pandemic didn't spare children. We were home, no school, no exams. Never a child would have willingly asked for going to school or appearing for exams but the demand

and supply rule of the economy was applied here too. I was wondering what will be the day like when we will click a picture and say 'first day of school'.

While I was still that one unaffected individual in the house – thanks to my young age – I saw my father moving forward very quickly and eyeing for opportunities within the circumstances. That's when I understood the difference between being responsible and being dependent. I could sense that my father's mind, just like anyone outside was almost freezing and his life had taken a pause. But as things started settling and we started understanding how to live with the virus that my father started forming future policies as to how the business should run following the COVID-19 protocols. I could feel my father believing that this challenge can't stop him. He wanted to move forward but he was equally conscious about the safety like anyone outside. There was no one to guide him as to how to start things again. My father kept surfing social media and formulating his own policies for business in the time of the pandemic that we still live in. He took up online business courses on finance

management, business management to keep his mind active that he told me, will help him run his business.

As a young boy, I had no opinion about the lockdown. But I believe the pandemic made all of us much older than our age. During the lockdown when life was surrounded by TV, social media, and books, I at least developed my perspective about the lockdown. I know that there is always a space for pushing our boundaries and adjusting to the new normal. After a month, it sort of didn't feel that we ever lived a different life and I still feel that most of us have forgotten the way of living in pre-pandemic times. Life sort of has made us all know the importance of the things that we took for granted. For instance, our family – it played the source of support system and we all came much closer to each other – thanks to *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* telecasts on Doordarshan. I never thought this would also be a thing to pursue when I was looking for video games and Marvel fantasies. Life has slowed down with more practical dreams and targets. Patience is playing a key role as a guiding factor. Time has taught us to analyze our dreams, sit and think about our fast-paced



life. We all have indeed known for what we were unnecessarily running for. Life has given time to all of us to relax and mule over the superficial and unrealistic ambitions and set more achievable targets.

# Chapter - 2

## My Mentor



**F**or ages, successful people have acknowledged the importance of a mentor behind their achievements. Our history presents mentors like Guru Draonacharya from *Mahabharata* to Gopal Krishna Gokhale – the mentor of Mahatma Gandhi. We can't deny the role of a mentor in one's achievements - from inspiration to being a guiding force and introducing new avenues. A mentor is important to attain excellence, success but finding one is equally upon a chance, luck, and more about your willingness to learn. I have found my mentors in my parents and teachers; I learned the true meaning of mentorship when I saw my father's inspiration and his mentor Ms. Megha Kapoor.

I have seen my father always fit. He is a very hardworking person both in his personal and professional life. I have always seen him setting impossible targets and putting all his efforts to achieve those targets. He has been in a healthy physical and mental state which he dedicates to his mentor. When COVID-19 was at its peak and the numbers were going high, just like anyone else across the world, the fear of getting the infection was looming over my head and I am sure my father wasn't spared too. But he showed immense courage and confidence, for he said, he has his training to watch his back. I didn't see him under the weather during the entire peak of COVID-19. He kept himself busy with his daily routine and chasing his dreams – upgrading with his lifestyle and fitness strategies. He kept on learning from young people including my friends and he still continues the same. I have seen my father exploring new avenues of existing knowledge and incorporating them in his plan of action – here it's about fitness and living a healthy life.

In an Indian family of 21 people all living under one roof; life is full of sharing and caring – it's a thing – we share a lot of food

and tons of calories. It's my father's discipline that we all have been healthy and didn't catch the virus, especially my father, mother, sister, and myself. He has always persuaded us to follow our dreams and to achieve them, he insisted upon our good health. He keeps on guiding us with his tips to stay healthy and my little mind forced me to delve into this knowledge and share. I want to share everything I learned with you all but not how I perceived my father's wise words but how he gave it to me – in the purest form. As I said, having a mentor is a blessing and my father too had one who guided him. My father's mentor has been his inspiration for the last four years, especially for his fitness and his dream community that he wants to build that is of like-minded people who are passionate about fitness and healthy living. And when I got in touch with Ms. Kapoor, she agreed to most of the observations I have about my father. She told me that my father is an hardworking and goal-oriented man.

“Abhishek is a hard-working person and is extremely dedicated towards his family, work, and health. One of the greatest qualities that he has is that once he commits something he

will do it. He is extremely competitive and always wants to do better than what he did yesterday. He is sensitive and works very hard to inspire his family and friends to walk on the path of fitness. I wish him happiness and good health.” said Megha Kapoor. In the next few chapters you will be interacting with my father and I am playing that middleman connecting my readers and my father for a more authentic and organic conversation around health and wellness.

### **How do you define a mentor who is also supportive of your goals?**

Mentorship is a relationship between two people where the individual with more experience, knowledge, and connections can pass along what they have learned and mastered over the years. But most importantly, a mentor is someone, who is ready to impart the gained knowledge to the student. In conventional terms, a mentor is a senior person and a trainee is much more junior, however, keep in mind that knowledge can come from anyone. Every achiever in history has accepted the importance of their mentors in their success & rise to excellence and so do I. Some people are very fortunate to find a mentor

who provides meaningful direction and guidance in their lives, no matter in what field.

**Tell us about your mentor. What strengthens your relationship as a mentor and a student ?**

As I said, I have always been inclined towards fitness because both my parents were fitness enthusiasts. I continued going to the gym and working out after marriage and was always in the right hands as far as my fitness guidance was concerned, which I felt were educated and certified fitness experts. I met my mentor, Ms. Megha, through my wife, Deepa Gilara. She used to train with her and insisted I consider Ms. Megha as my coach. Honestly, for the first few weeks, I wasn't confident because our ways of training didn't match at all. We both had different ideas about training and pursuing a certain discipline. It took me a month to come to terms with her ways of training and she has been my mentor for the last four years. For me, she is the best mentor that I could have found and come across. Her positive attitude, enthusiasm, and focus is inspirational. She is a very proactive communicator and full of knowledge about the subject matter. She is patient and goal-



oriented. These are the basic aspects that I believe are most important in any mentor.

### **How was it for you to continue training during the lockdown?**

Ms. Megha is very committed. We shifted from gyms to the virtual world and her exercise schedules and diet plans would come on Whatsapp messages. Zoom meeting wasn't that popular way of connecting for the first few months of the lockdown but when it did, we were part of it and most of the training happened using Zoom. There wasn't a single day when we weren't working out or talking about fitness.

### **Does your physical training include mental fitness as well?**

Of course! Ms. Megha is very much aware of the combination of being physically and mentally fit. While for physical fitness she suggested equipping ourselves with dumbbells, bands, boxes at home, and continuing working out, there were conversations about the importance of mental health. It is admirable that she trains as per individual strengths. There are no unrealistic goals when you are training under her

guidance. We lived in a time when there was so much negativity. People were thinking about immunity but not working out, instead people started cooking and binging on food like never before. Many people have put on weight and then looking for ways to reduce it. This wasn't the case for me. Although there was so much negativity around owing to the increasing numbers of COVID-19 virus, Ms. Megha would seriously try and discuss things that would distract our minds or at least, help us accept the situation that we all are in. This at least, to me was very helpful to develop a positive attitude towards the situation back then.

### **Can I be her student?**

Yes, you can. She is a perfect mentor for anyone aged above 15. She mentors as per one's age, requirements, necessities, and strengths.

### **So Megha Kapoor, What interested you to become a mentor?**

I have been an athlete for over 15 years and I always believed that there was more to fitness than just running some miles every day. I have been a sports person and have played tennis

nationals so I always believed my fitness is much better than an average person. This thought was stopping me from honing my game because somehow it didn't make sense to me that my tennis coach is my fitness trainer and my nutritionist as well. When I was in the US for higher studies, I was part of the Varsity tennis team; my coach would only concentrate on my game. Fitness and nutrition were taken care of by the other two experts of the respective fields. That's when I realized there is a gap in understanding fitness. In 2015, when I came back to India, I observed the concept of fitness and being fit was completely misunderstood – being fit meant being able to lift heavy weights, controlling diets, and being thin. This was the time when I thought of educating people about the right meaning of fitness. Fitness means being able to have worked 16 hours a day and still have the energy to go out with your family or friends. In other words, it means the ability to be your age and live life without any pains and aches, especially the ones which are common in younger individuals – knee, hip, and lower back.

# Chapter - 3

## Family Support



**C**onsistency is the key to success but most people fail to maintain that same discipline longer. It plays the biggest obstacle on the way when people start something and want to achieve something, especially their health goals. Losing weight, eating healthy, maintaining a healthy lifestyle are permanent and an essential parts of life. However, most people find that an added responsibility. Moreover, having a strong support system can help you sail through the tides. You can feel tired to move out of your bed and yet have a motivation to jump off it and hit the gym or your favorite yoga mat if you have that one forcing guide – your partner, your family. No one person can help

you with everything. It's always about teamwork and for the workout, that primary support system is your family that stands rock solid to support your personal and professional ambitions.

Another crucial aspect that plays an important role in your daily discipline to fitness is to have a concise workout plan. The chances of you being consistent with your routine increase when you have a workout plan and diet chart. I have learned that these conventional modes of self-motivation have increased the likelihood of being consistent in the routine that one decides to lose weight or start a healthy life with balanced eating.

Once you can build yourself healthy, it is imperative to consider your family's health before you step out to make your community and countrymen healthy. Only once you can build a healthy family, can you have a constant supply of encouragement and added motivation to help keep your health and fitness goals on track. You will start feeling like a child's play once your family members are part of your fitness journey for their own better health. It not only boosts your confidence but your morale spikes up

resulting in a successfully healthy living life. Moreover, this is what I have learned from my father and he ensured that we all in the house remain physically active.

According to BMC Public Health's research report, physically active children are likely to become active adults; thus, an active lifestyle should be promoted from childhood. The report also stated that physical activity is beneficial to people's physical and psychological health. The study found that the presence of family support resulted in a high level of positive results on a day to day basis. It was observed that one participant who participated in physical activity was constant and influenced their peer group as well. With their friend's support, children participated in physical activities to be with their friends, meet new people and make new friends. They also emphasized the importance of getting support from adults. The research mentions friends and parents' support and positive bonding have a strong impact on their participation in physical activities. Family, in particular parents, has been consistently and strongly linked with youth's involvement in exercise or fitness routine. The study also



concluded that proactive strategies that focus on the inclusion of family and friends in early adolescence may sustain the presence of social support throughout the adolescent years and thus cultivate a habit of participating in the physical activities throughout the lifespan.

I resonate with the research as being grown up in a family with a host of loving people around who has supported me for whatever I intend to do. My father who believes the same also grew up in a similar, in fact, much more intimate environment at home, thanks to our smartphones, which do steal us away from family time occasionally. I bring to you the conversation that I had with my father about how a nurturing family got him to where he is and how he is trying to ensure that the tradition continues. As I promised I would give you the unfiltered reading & not my version of understanding. Here's what I learned.

### **How do you see the joint family culture in Rajasthan?**

I would say Rajasthan is the epitome of the big fat joint families. Even today, it has a big culture of living in a joint family no matter if their business is together or separate. The joint

family culture is such that kids are grown up with the idea of being one family even if there are separate kitchens in the same house. There is no distance for kids or for any family member for that matter. Everyone has the rights over another person or the space or things – it's combined and mutual. They bond strongly with their siblings as well as their cousins which imbibes the feeling of being complete within the family and finding comfort among each other.

**When we all were following a certain lifestyle during the peak of the COVID-19, I know you had discussed a plan of action. What aspects were most important for you to ensure we all stay safe?**

Honestly, it looked very difficult to maintain a system within the protocols in a joint family. You can't easily maintain distance in a family of 21 people in the same house. It's an alien idea for them to stay away from each other. But I knew we had to abide by the protocols and some basics that we all could try and follow. To ensure that no one from outside could come in contact with our family members as a possible carrier of the virus; we

restricted movement of every family member to the outside world. We stopped meeting each other daily within the house. We restricted our eating together tradition. At any point, if meeting other family members or an outsider was essential then we ensured a rule of wearing a mask is followed strictly.

### **Were the family members supportive of these rules?**

Absolutely. I have a joint family of 21 members and all of them have faith in me and my decisions. They knew if I am making any rule then it's been done after a lot of research and enough considerations have been given to a decision. I used to read and watch a lot of updates on TV related to the virus and the precautionary measures which were changing so frequently at that time. I was very firm on following some basic rules like wearing a mask and keeping a distance. All the family members would follow the guidelines very strictly. We have a family WhatsApp group and I used that to circulate rules that were best for everyone's health and safety. No one took them lightly. I also want to confess that I have been tough on my family members for

protocols but I knew it was in their benefit and I was also sure that my family would listen to me. We used to meet each other wearing masks and eat in our rooms avoiding the common dining area. The sit-together meetings were limited and we shifted ourselves mostly to our respective rooms. There was no outside food allowed in the house and kids too handled it very well. We all live in the same premises but I didn't even meet my parents for days during that time and they too were restricted to go to meet other family members. We were all connected because of our strong bond that kept us going in that time when despite living in the same house we didn't meet each other very often.

**I understand about the family members following the rules. But we also have house help, what was it like to balance it?**

We have made a rule in the house that everyone has to wear a mask including our house helps. It's their safety too. We restricted their movements completely outside the house and they happily agreed to follow. Unfortunately, despite being too aware and following all the protocols one of our house

helps did get the infection and since he lived with some other helps in the same servant quarter, all of them were infected. Fortunately, my wife, daughter, son, and I were not because we used to wear mask whenever we interacted with house help. When our house help wasn't around for about 15 days, we four did every household chore – from cleaning, cooking to washing clothes. I would say, now I know that I can cook too – lol.

# Chapter - 4

## Daily Routine



**H**abits are quite powerful and a healthy routine is a set of positive habits we develop as a daily practice. Whether we realize it or not, we all have many routines that consciously or unconsciously we all follow to eventually achieve our daily goals. For instance, leaving your bed and getting ready on time to reach school or office is a routine, however, it is hardly possible that we all have paid a keen eye on our day-to-day activities. We never focus on analyzing our routine but if we do, we know that our daily actions are leading us closer to our goals. However, I have learned that it is important to note our actions are in the right direction which is to achieve our goals. Similarly, if



your actions have no attention, or if you are acting without paying any attention to where your actions are heading you, chances are that you may fail or go in the wrong direction. I have learned from my father that your daily routine will become the most powerful ally for your success so ensuring that your everyday activities are in sync with what you want to achieve in life is very important. Starting from the basics like starting your day from the right foot to sleeping on the left side and many other basic activities, that you will know further in the book as he keeps on reminding me, have helped me become a conscious individual. In the list of basic rules, we strictly followed the early to bed early to rise routine. If I quote my father here, he says, "An ideal daily routine encourages you to wake up earlier and go to bed earlier. As a result, you'll likely be tired at the same time every day."

I have always seen my father as a very organized person. He likes to know his plans well in advance and does detailed planning for anything that he wants to do. I have never seen him casually considering any move or acting spontaneously barring the emergencies at home or at work. I confess it took some

time for me to come to the terms with my father's well-planned attitude and learn to act accordingly. For me, my father said, to start with, it is important to know how to identify the right way to balance everyday actions leading to a balanced life. He always said that the importance of routine is completely associated with how we function and how our brain functions. Just like our physical health is related to our daily actions, our actions play a very big role in our mental health as well. A spoiled or non-healthy routine leads to a variety of mental health conditions, including bipolar disorder, addiction, and depression. The reason one encounters mental health issues also relies on non-planning and being too spontaneous. This is okay for the beginning but if this persists, things will only become worse since the mind is very much conditioned the way it has been functioning for a long time. It is important to organize ourselves and know what to expect from our actions. Once we know our abilities and act upon our plans it is easier to counter the thoughts and symptoms of any mental health condition. It reflects in our personal and professional lives when we are organized and

pre-planned with our actions. According to a research paper in the Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, family routine helps to moderate impulsiveness and oppositional symptoms and traits in children. This is not surprising when we understand that a healthy routine protects and helps children feel safer as they know what to expect. It is how a healthy family is ensured, especially in the time when health is at stake. I closely observed my father's routine in the last two years. It is inspiring and challenging to follow but once brought into the daily action it truly has the power to change the whole ball game and your mindset towards life and ways to look at it. I can list my father's routine here but it will be my version of learning so here's what I say – straight from the horse's mouth.

### **How do you define yourself as an individual and a professional?**

I am an ambitious person who loves to frame personal challenges in personal and professional endeavors. When I say framing challenges, they aren't risky rather they are thoughtful and complement my healthy life and work dreams. For instance, I never take

any sea adventure rides or even roller coasters because I feel they are risky. It's a very small thing but I am not comfortable and I don't try it. I may be considered someone scared of small things or not trying the thrill of life but that's my comfort to not to do anything that puts me in a situation that is forcing me towards stress and that's not right for the sake of adventure. But I like getting up as early as three in the cold morning and exercising. I am a jeweler and I like to design my jewelry personally. I try to create unique and exclusive designs, which is a challenge but I give it to my creative instincts to come up with out-of-the-box ideas. I took COVID-19 also as a challenge and framed values and rules for both personal and professional life to abide by strictly. Challenges are always there and will always be but meeting those challenges needs certain strategies including patience. During the COVID-19 surge, when business took a back seat for a few months, my fitness continued. I continued my exercise at home as gyms were closed. I made my home a gym and did the workout under the online supervision of my coach. And the same I did for my work as a jewelry designer. I used to

sketch my designs and share them with my team of designers who before COVID-19 would meet me in person and take down those designs but during the lockdown, we moved to Zoom calls and still managed to bring the best designs.

### **What did your routine look like before and after the pandemic hit the world?**

Very different from what it is now. I used to socialize a lot and go for many holidays in and out of India. I used to eat everything but in moderation unlike post the COVID-19 hit. My health was 40 percent and 60 percent rest, which surely changed in the last two years. Now it's the opposite. There was no fixed time for eating but now there is. My routine changed completely post COVID-19. In one of the interviews, I heard that Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar wakes up at four in the morning. I pushed myself to wake up at the same time and it's a habit now. I start my day with a black coffee, pre-workout fruits, and read several online newspapers. By six in the morning, I start my online fitness training for an hour and when there is no training I work out myself. I leave for work by eight and work

till six in the evening. My breakfast, lunch, and several small meals in a day will be in the office and after I am home it's my family time. I make sure to have dinner with my family as early as eight pm. We sometimes watch television for news or other entertainment and by 9.30 or so we all head to our beds. If there is an event to be attended we try to keep it between our dinner and bed time so that we don't spoil our routine. We usually don't socialize frequently and post COVID-19 it has reduced to minimal.

### **Did anything change in professional life after the pandemic?**

My health has always been my priority; business and family were second and third. But now, my family and business have replaced their place and health remains my utmost priority. I used to travel for many business trade fairs across India which now has been reduced to almost 70 percent after COVID-19. Now, it has shifted online. For instance, we have moved to Instagram to promote our services and avoid going personally to our vendors and buyers. Once I start my work at eight in the morning, I usually

finish before noon and after that, it's mostly about planning and dedicating my time to research and development. I work six days a week and keep Sunday for myself and the family. I make sure to meet people by appointment; it's not rude but it's a part of better planning. As I said most of my work has gone online so I try to do things digitally. I have reduced personal interactions following the COVID-19 guidelines. Masks and sanitizer are compulsory in my office premises and we all strictly adhere to it. We have a rule of three warnings to follow the protocol and in case someone still fails there is a mandate to terminate the candidate in the guidelines. I understand this is a bit of a tough rule but my priority at work is my staff's safety and their health.

**There is a strong contradiction between living a balanced life and chasing our dreams. It requires a lot of manipulation with our ideal lifestyle. What is your take on that?**

There is a saying, 'Survival of the fittest. We all have heard that. It's a simple saying but has a deep meaning – the one who fits will only survive. In order to survive in the present time,

we must do all those things that are essential to live and by surviving here; I mean to stay healthy and alive. And the present scenario demands to follow all the health protocols to stay away from the virus. The biggest threat to survival is to save ourselves from infection and once we are healthy we can follow our dreams. I understand it is difficult to stay at home and still aspire to achieve our dreams outside but there is always a way and one can always use the time to prepare and plan which eventually will help to achieve your goal when things normalize.





Chapter - 5  
Eating Habits  
(Eat this Eat that)



**Y**ou are what you eat. In essence, what is put into the body is what the body will use in the construction and replacement of its cells, hormones, and neurotransmitters. Therefore, the human body is composed of the very food that one consumes. We all have learned this science and while growing up we all have ignored this age-old proven theory. As a growing teenager, I wasn't so balanced as far as my eating habits were concerned. Just like every child, I too was fond of eating unhealthy junk food, although my father always restricted, but he had been of the opinion that we learn things with our own experiences. For the last few years, I have started eating simple but

delicious food. I realized that there was never a time that made us pay attention to our health as much as the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year has also made it clear that not everything in the world of health is under our control. However, many of us are lucky enough to decide one of the most important factors in keeping our health in check, and that is what we eat. My father always says that healthy diet plays an important role in our overall health and immune systems. The food we consume directly affects the way we feel and the way our body functions. He also says healthy eating habits can also improve the quality of life and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. And unhealthy eating habits can take a toll on your physical and mental well-being. It's never too late to adopt healthy habits and give up on a sedentary lifestyle. My father always says that healthy eating habits improve the quality of life and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Similarly, unhealthy eating habits can take a toll on your physical and mental well-being. It's not only about what you eat; it is also about how you eat and the other practices that you follow in your daily routine.

You may be eating healthy food every day but if your sleep and wake-up cycle is not in sync with what you eat, it will never add any benefit to your goal of achieving a healthy life. In your pursuit of healthy eating and, therefore, achieving a lifestyle you will also come across many hurdles and that's where your self-discipline will play a big role. For instance, you may feel tempted to eat snacks or outside food instead of picking up a fruit. For that, the best way to begin with is to keep that fatty and starchy food away from your eyes and keep fresh fruits and vegetables in a close proximity. However, this is temporary, for you can't control things; rather you have to adapt to it in your new lifestyle so that you never feel tempted to do things that are not complimenting your goal.

Meanwhile, it is also important to follow some other basic healthy habits; for instance, put your phone away when you are eating this way you will focus on your food. There have been several researches that state that owing to the present times when everything has slowed down and the flow of information has become too overwhelming & mostly negative, consuming this kind of content can directly

affect your thought process & simultaneously affect the food that you are eating apart from being distracted. This can also lead to consuming less quantity of food that you require. I have learned these things from my father and have been trying to mold myself in a new way of living just like my father. He follows a certain lifestyle, certain food habits and has a very specific diet no matter what. Once I started paying attention to his daily routine, I realized this is the most important aspect of my father's lifestyle that keeps him fit and inspiring for many individuals around him. Yes, I will mention here what his eating habits look like in a day but the way he follows it and explains it.

### **According to you, what is a healthy eating habit?**

I am not a dietician or nutritionist but a fitness enthusiast. I keep on learning from available eating guides, be it from social media or in magazines or newspapers. My mentor Ms. Kapoor also plays a big role in ensuring how healthy I eat and so do my wife and my parents. But whatever I have learned, I am sharing what is healthy to eat. Starting from

what one should avoid doing – alcohol and smoking. Try to avoid drinking alcohol as much as possible. Keep it occasionally and in a controlled manner. Try to avoid smoking and eat fresh fruits and fresh food products. Limit sugar and added sugar products. Try to finish your meal before 8.30 pm and drink a minimum of two and a half liters of water in a day. You can dine out but it should not be more than twice and ensure a clean place that follows hygiene.

### **What does your day look like when it comes to food and eating habits?**

I have always been a fitness enthusiast and have followed a balanced diet throughout but I didn't know what is healthy and what is not till I came in contact with my fitness coach. Although I was never a foodie, I would occasionally eat fast food and drink as well. There was no fixed-timing for meals like I would eat dinner late at night at times. But things changed post-COVID-19 and so did my eating habits. I consulted with my mentor Ms. Kapoor who is also a nutritionist and instantly gave up alcohol and smoking. Soft drinks, fast food, and even sugar, or eating any sweet that



is unhealthy. At present most of my diet includes protein. I have fixed timing for every meal though dinner is almost equivalent to minimal whatever little I eat is also done before 8 pm at home. I start my day at 4 am with black coffee followed by pre-workout fruit and peanut butter. Post-workout I take a protein shake, as recommended by my mentor, followed by breakfast. My lunch includes dal, vegetable, rice, and chapatis, after which I take vitamin capsules like Revital H, Cod liver oil (300 mg) followed by a protein shake with milk, dry fruits, and banana by 4 pm, as recommended by my mentor. To keep the body alkaline and gut health in place I take green tea in the evening as it is an antioxidant and light dinner which usually includes vegetables, *paneer tikka*, *besan chilra*, or tofu.

### **What interested you to try cooking?**

I never cooked before the pandemic. I didn't even know how to make coffee. But when our house help was infected I was forced to learn basic cooking to extend my help in household chores to my wife so I too started investing little time in the kitchen. I would say I have

learned a bit & I try to make a few things every week. I relish cooking now & this is how I came to know my one more passion other than fitness.



# Chapter - 6

## Self - Control



**I**n the time of emails, text messages, notifications, and colorful screens we are left with very little time to pursue the other activities that some-or-the-other way will help us lead a healthy and stable life. Spending time on phones and screens can be ungratifying in the long run. However, not many can escape this web of screens and pave the way to self-discipline and self-control. It requires setting the right goals and sticking to them. It is also about developing an ability to control our behavior and impulse that we are often introduced to when we want to go ahead with our plans to achieve our goals. I have seen my father and learned that by exercising self-control, we make an active

choice and forgo our immediate pleasure for the increased opportunity to fulfill our greater goals. It needs a behavioral change since self-control is the ability to regulate and alter your responses to avoid undesirable behaviors to achieve long-term goals. Several researches show that possessing self-control can be important for health and well-being. My father once told me that he started with some common goals such as exercising regularly, eating healthy, not procrastinating, giving up bad habits like drinking alcohol, smoking, and saving money to learn the art of self-control.

According to the 2011 Stress in America survey by the American Psychological Association (APA), 27 percent of the respondents identified a lack of willpower as the primary factor keeping them from reaching their goals. The majority of people surveyed believed that self-control can be both learned and strengthened. Here, the research area may not be India but the idea of individual practices are mostly similar across the world, and technology and individual response to it is similar to the greatest numbers globally. Several researches in the past have shown that people's capacity or willingness to exert self-

control is not simply determined by the amount of self-control they exerted on the previous task. People's cultural backgrounds and beliefs also contribute considerably. I did speak to my father about this and he explained to me that self-control or willpower touches upon nearly all aspects of healthy living. Eating right, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, studying more, working harder, spending less time on TV or phone screens are part of being a disciplined individual and one develops this habit through willpower or self-control. It is no doubt that self-control has become a hot topic for scientists and social psychologists to understand the roots of human behavior and help people live a healthier life. Roy F. Baumeister, Ph.D., a social psychologist at Florida State University, is one of the field's leading researchers. His new book, "Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength," co-authored with journalist John Tierney, describes surprising evidence that willpower is a limited resource subject to being used up. For me, it is not easy to understand what self-control or willpower is. In fact, it is not even the age to know what self-control is, for I am too young to suppress



any desire and allowed to live my childhood to the fullest, however sooner the better. I have learned that self-control has always been an important aspect of every successful individual's life in history and people who can delay gratification and resist temptations tend to be healthier, wealthier, and happier. While the world has changed dramatically with the COVID-19 pandemic, people with high willpower demonstrate a remarkable capacity to stick to pre-existing habits and have the flexibility to develop new habits that better meet situational demands. The combination of these two—maintaining past habits and developing new ones—is a key ingredient to success in these turbulent times.

Several studies show that mental distress increased substantially during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and is still haunting people despite things gradually becoming better. It is the time that everyone exercises self-control with regards to personal and social health behavior. It is normal to feel tempted to go for trips and venture out in gatherings and if nothing, join the extended family for a wedding or a family function but owing to the time, it is essential to hold our horses and

practice self-control. I won't say it's not important, it is indeed, however, things can be delayed or planned better. I can write this because I have seen it getting practiced very closely. It is difficult but it isn't so impossible and the small steps surely count to the bigger achievements.

**What drives you to exercise willpower or self-control? Can you walk us through a typical example where you have exercised self-control?**

When the first lockdown happened it distressed me to a great level. It took me some time to come to terms with that situation and accept that this is also an opportunity to achieve something that has been waiting for a long time. I reminded myself that I am not a person who would worry over things and sit back. Every minute I reminded myself to find new ways to achieve my goals. I used to think and plan new ways with the limited resources to adopt and act to pursue a fulfilling life. During the first phase, my primary worry was to keep my family and myself away from the virus and then focus on our overall health. I gave up meeting a lot of people and I still

follow that. It took time to hold myself back from meeting people I would meet very often and exchange ideas but it was needed and now it has become my practice. I would say, by controlling this one habit of meeting many people has come with other practices like traveling less and staying home, no drinking as there are no social gatherings and in total, I have become a healthier person. I just had to control one thing and several others just followed, so you just have to start from somewhere.

**When you say, you have limited social gatherings; this may alienate one from near and dear ones. Moreover, this could also lead to social criticism.**

I agree. 'What will people say' has always existed in Indian society and I don't deny the fact that there are certain norms by society to follow and as a responsible individual everyone should abide unless they become a burden. But basics like asking your guests to wear a mask or sanitize should be taken in a positive tone. There is no harm in following what basic guidelines are and I believe it is right on our part to practice it. Once your

friends and relatives know how you function everyone will understand. It is okay to not shake hands and hug your friends and family members if you have met at a function. It is not as complicated as we make it. It is very simple and logical to follow the guidelines. We do that for many things in our daily lives. I can say this because I am practicing it every day and I haven't lost my relations with people. All of them still love and respect me the way they used to. There is a respect for being responsible. I did meet a few people who weren't quite enthusiastic about following rules and I couldn't deal with it. It is okay to mutually disagree with something that has a longer benefit.

**But there are times when things are really important and you may want to disobey your willpower.**

It does happen. But the important thing is following the basics. You may control a few things. For instance, visiting your dear ones' wedding or a funeral where your presence is important. I understand one needs to be there and live with the times while fulfilling all the duties, however, you can follow the guidelines

and yet manage your presence. There is no harm in taking a rapid COVID-19 test, wearing a mask and sanitizing yourself and your belongings. This is also a part of self-control. It is possible to continue everything and yet stay safe.

# Chapter - 7

## Spirituality



I have grown up in a family that strongly believes in spirituality. During the surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, my father told me that patients with their spiritual powers may utilize their beliefs in coping up with illness, pain, and life stresses. Spirituality is a broad concept with possibilities of many perspectives. In general, it includes a sense of connection to something bigger than us, and it involves a search for meaning in life. Many describe a spiritual experience as sacred or transcendent or simply a deep sense of aliveness & interconnectedness. For centuries poets have paved the way for spirituality. Poets like Bulleh Shah, Rumi, Kabir, Rahim have been pioneers of speaking about



spirituality. Our literature has emphasized being in connection with the supreme power to lead a happy and content life.

Spirituality means different things to different people. For some, it's about a belief in God and active participation in organized religion. For others, it's about non-religious experiences that help them connect with their spiritual selves through quiet reflection. People practice different things to attain that spiritual state. Yoga, prayer, and meditation are primary sources of attaining that oneself for many across the globe. Many people call spirituality separate from being religious and many people identify singing prayers as spirituality. So far, there is no direct link has been established, but the researchers have consistently found that the religious involvement is correlated with better physical and mental health, including better sleep, lower blood pressure, and overall self-esteem. Some studies also indicate that those who are spiritual tend to have a more positive outlook & a better quality of life. Studies demonstrate the positive impact of spirituality on physical & mental health with an improved quality of life, coping skills, and less addictive behaviors.

Some may find that their spiritual life is intricately linked to their association with a church, temple, mosque, or synagogue. Others may pray or find comfort in a personal relationship with God or a higher power. Still, others seek meaning through their connections to nature or art. Like your sense of purpose, your definition of spirituality may change throughout your life, supporting your own experiences and relationships.

### **How important is spirituality for you?**

I am a very spiritual person. I have learned that there is a supreme power that leads everything around us and it is important to try and connect with that spiritual power. I believe in staying close to positive practices and staying close to God in any form is also a spiritual practice. God has ways to teach us and lead us to achieve our goals following the right path. It is important to surround ourselves with things that bring us closer to the supreme power or give a constant reminder of someone bigger than everything around us. I have always ensured to constantly remind myself that life has a bigger meaning. I recently built a new house and to ensure that the house

brings positive and calm vibes I have many paintings and idols of different gods. I may believe in one god or I haven't seen any but it's about faith and the belief that something powerful exists that is important for you to lead a happy life. I prefer an environment that brings me closer to the God and its power. I am a strong advocate of following the religion one is born with that keeps us sane and helps us fight against the adversities that life sometimes throws at us. It is only your positive approach that helps you sail through the difficult times and your calm mind will help you follow that.

# Chapter - 8

## My Life Principles



**W**e all have grown up listening to our parents and elders suggesting that our time is limited; don't waste it living someone else's life. Try and don't trap yourself in a dogma that forces living the results of other people's thinking. It is important to follow your own inner voice and not let others' opinions matter to you. Be driven by your own voice because you know what you truly want to become.

I am too young to draw any life principles for myself except to follow a routine for my studies and extracurricular activities but I have seen all my family members living with certain ideologies and following them in their daily routine. I have grown up in an environment

where every individual is driven by their principles and knows how they feel about their life and what they are doing. To my knowledge, they are living their best life with no regrets so far. I have seen my father following a strong value system and principles in his day-to-day life as he told me once that they are very essential to lead a healthy and successful life. If you are not able to see where your life is going and not able to feel that you are living every moment of your life in peace, then it needs a lot of work because it is up to you to create your life experiences. There is no point in settling up for the less since you deserve all the best things in life. Every day needs to be filled with joy, passion, and rigor. If you are someone who thinks principles are for the people who want to live life with guidelines, then you are truly mistaken. These principles are only to bring a balance in life and believe it or not, each one of us has some life principles that we live by – some given by the family and some we form as we grow up in society. Before I discuss my father's principles and bring him to open up more about what he truly believes in, I would like to point out a few life-changing principles that

truly promise to offer a life filled with joy and passion.

- Start every day with a fresh thought
- Be true to who you are
- Stop complaining
- Be proactive and take the ownership
- Try and Focus on how to do it than what to do
- Create your own opportunities
- Every day live more consciously
- Be committed to your growth
- Discover your life purpose and know your inner self
- Live in alignment with your purpose
- Hold yourself high and know your value
- Design your ideals and set your goals
- Take action on your goals and dreams
- Create a bucket list
- Do the things you love and enjoy them



- Make your passion your career
- Learn to take feedback and learn from criticism
- Be positive and don't badmouth others
- Be a compassionate human being
- Don't live in the past and let go the attachments
- Build genuine connections and spend time with them
- Help the ones who need your help
- Be your own adviser and keep developing yourself
- Don't settle for less and set your role models in life
- Generate passive income
- Be clear of your end objective
- Take a break and relish every moment of it
- Be grateful and embrace change
- Maximize your mind, body, heart, and soul
- Love yourself and your life to the fullest

Don't they sound interesting and motivating? Indeed. I have pointed this out as I have learned them from my father. I have tried to implement many of them in my life so far and there are many that I am sure will become part of my life as I grow. But here's what my father lives up to and I feel these life habits and values are applicable for each individual who respects life and wants to live it to the fullest.

**What do you think of life principles and what are some of the basic beliefs that you follow in your everyday life?**

I think everyone has their own principles in life because we need some ground footing to lead our lives. Sometimes, these principles are formed based on our parents' guidelines, demands of our own lifestyle, school, college, work, relations and so many other aspects of our life. I have learned a lot in life, much from my mistakes and a lot from observing my elders and others around me. I believe, no matter what, we all need to have some beliefs to live with. For me, I abide by my parent's words by all means. I take advice from them for all matters – personal or professional. My father taught me to do what is right and what

goes with our value system. As a married man, I share everything with my spouse. I strongly believe that if there is anything that I can't share with my partner, it means I am doing something wrong. I follow early to bed and early to rise protocol, which has always helped me to achieve my targets. Similarly, daily exercise has also become part of my belief in my growth as an individual and as a professional. I always try to promote healthy living ideas & can't gel with the ones who are not supportive of this idea and have been living their life without any goal. To live with these principles I have a strong belief system to follow each day so that I don't fail in following any of them.

I follow the advice of our gurus and ensure that whenever possible I share it with the people around me. The most important belief that I follow is to share what I have. There is no point in living life within your confined space. If you are privileged with something then share that with the ones who aren't. I am blessed with a healthy body & I know some of the ways to stay fit and lead a healthy life so whenever I get the opportunity I share it with people . This gives me the utmost satisfaction.

# Chapter - 9

## Social Media & Mental Health



Centuries back Greek philosopher Aristotle said 'Man is by nature a social animal, an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes an individual.' We all resonate with this thought, for we live in a society and a lot of people around us – our family and some who we choose to stay around.

Undoubtedly, we need a company of people around us to thrive in life both socially and as an individual. There are many aspects that as an individual we need to implement to grow and achieve our desired ambitions. And to live that ambition we need to have stable physical

and mental health and the strength of our connections has a huge impact on our mental health and happiness. Being socially connected to others can ease stress, anxiety, depression, boost self-worth and provide comfort and joy to our overall existence.

Earlier, what people and social activities during human gatherings would do – to entertain and keep individuals engaged – social media has systematically replaced that space. We have many social media platforms – the primary being Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, YouTube, and Instagram among many other domestic and global platforms – to find new people and connect with them. Physical connections have their own benefits, it's important to remember that social media can never replace real-world and human connections. This has always been the case, however, with the COVID-19 pandemic in place when the entertainment activities have moved from physical events to virtual activities and conversations, social media platforms have played a pivotal role in keeping people updated about the situation. Moreover, we all have seen the use of social media in circulating information when during

the second wave of COVID-19 the country had an excruciating numbers of positive cases and medical facilities came to limitations. When humanity was tried, individuals through social media kept many lives going by actively participating in updates and floating information for the people in need.

While virtual interaction on social media doesn't have the same psychological benefits as face-to-face contact, there are still many positive ways in which it can help you stay connected and support your wellbeing. Since it's a relatively new medium and technology, there's little research to establish the long-term consequences of using social media. However, multiple studies have found a strong link between social media and an increased risk for depression, anxiety, loneliness, self-harm, & even suicidal thoughts. Psychologists have time and again confirmed that the social media world is more deceptive and hence it is important to look in depth than looking on the surface. The appearance of the posts on social media can contribute to a lot of stress and anxiety. Reality seldom comes on social media, hence it is advisable not to compare your life with anything that appears on virtual



platforms. Although I am too young to access social media, during my stay at home and online studies, I had enough access to social media sites and it was important to keep myself aware. But I did see my father actively surfing through different social media platforms to keep himself updated and keep our relatives and family friends posted about our whereabouts. I had a long conversation with my father about social media and how he has been able to use it moderately and wisely. Let me take you through the conversation I had with my father.

### **How important is social media for you?**

We all know the importance of social media both for the personal and professional sphere of life. It has become the most essential part of our life. For me, there was a time when I was so addicted to social media, especially Instagram. I opted for the platform to promote my healthy lifestyle along with some business activities. I have two accounts – one for my fitness activities and one business account which is completely handled by my social media team. As far as my account is concerned I use it to update my exercise pictures,

activities, videos, and some information about a healthy lifestyle and routine. When COVID-19 hit the country, I started utilizing the platform to share COVID protocols, guidelines, and several other health-related information that I would implement in my daily routine. To gain updates and share them on my platform, I followed many health accounts on Instagram to keep myself updated. This helped me a lot with awareness and many other updates that I wasn't completely aware of. There were times that some of the accounts substantiated my beliefs regarding health which was sheer learning. So, overall, it was an evolving phase and learning experience through social media.

**Several studies state that social media affects mental health negatively. What are your thoughts on this?**

I agree. Social media is vast and has a very deceptive appearance. Just like what we see is not always true, social media functions on the same rule. It has a lot of content for everyone and it caters to all kinds of users. It is up to us to choose our content wisely. It is very important to have a sense of responsibility

when we are accessing any social media account. The basic reason for stress among a majority of people is due to comparison with someone else's life. Seeing a happy post by some of your contacts on social media can develop a sense of dissatisfaction with our own life and a feeling of missing out or losing out on living that supposed happy life visible on social media. These small aspects can surely develop stress initially and gradually can lead to depression and anxiety.

For another instance, try looking on social media if eating ice cream in cold weather is good or bad. There will be several pages and information of both the views – supporting the question and against it. There will be several theories to support both the inputs. Ultimately, it's upon us to use our rationale and decide what works in our benefit. Just like this, several theories and data and supporting multiple views which lead to confusion & leaves one perplexed about reaching any decision. This also leads to confusion and can have negative effects on our thought process. It is important to use social media as a reference and gather relative knowledge from other sources as well to finally make a conclusion.

## **What do you think is the right way to use social media?**

If we judiciously use social media then it's a blessing. It has connected the whole world. We can use it for business promotions. We can use it to find healthy ways to live and eat and improve our overall well-being and lifestyle. We can use it to keep ourselves updated with current affairs around us and across the world in a much-compromised way. We can use it to learn new ways to do things that we are already doing or aspire to do. We can use it to express our feelings, thoughts creatively & can also explore how others think about certain things. There is an immense opportunity to connect with people of similar interests across continents to seek help and share ideas. There is an opportunity to promote your product with zero investment. There are several positive usages of social media, primary being floating the information, however, the crucial aspect is to use it wisely and responsibly.



# Chapter - 10

## Live with the New Normal



**I**n 2008 when the global financial crisis became rampant, experts termed the dramatic economic, cultural, and social transformations 'New Normal'. The changes caused instability and social unrest, impacting collective unevenness and social unrest and impacting individual lifestyles. The term has become popular again during the COVID-19 pandemic to point out how it has transformed essential aspects of human life. It has been discussed among cultural theorists that there is a relationship between culture and personal feelings and information consumption during the times of crisis. However, it is up to us to adapt to the challenges of the current pandemic and similar crises and respond



positively or negatively. This response to the situation can greatly impact our personal and social life. There is no doubt that we all have learned many lessons from this crisis that can be used to build a better society. It is completely upon our capacity how we respond, adapt, and manage resilience in the face of adversity, flexibility, and creativity without forcing ourselves to make changes. As long as the world is introduced with multiple variants, we all may have to adjust to a new normal as we all get back to work, school, and more normal life. When we speak of the new normal, it suggests that way of living may not return to the way it was before the virus outbreak, but the new normal encourages certain conduct and behaviors, especially in public, to safeguard the health and well-being of our families and the community as a whole.

Life is not the same as we know it during the pandemic. The fear and anxiety of contracting the virus brought a kind of change that is unprecedented. As a result, our way of thinking, attitude, and behavior have shifted. These changes have dramatically affected our way of living now and as the coronavirus pandemic started this decade off on the wrong

foot, we are still coming to terms with the health and economic outbreak as it continues its rampage across the globe. However, every night has a new ray of hope and the darkest clouds have a silver lining, in this case, the pandemic brings the opportunity to bring the future with new ideas and new goals of better health, better life, and better humanity.

It is important to adapt constantly to live in the world. Two years after the COVID-19 pandemic, we have suddenly been forced to adapt to the new normal – work-from-home, schooling from home, online classes, online orders, small weddings, immunity crisis, face mask, social distancing, and the list goes on. For many 2020 was the worst year and in 2021 everyone was hopeful for a better year, but it too proved to be difficult for many. The pieces from the present situations have vastly affected our personal, social, economic, and spiritual spheres. I sometimes wonder if this is a new normal or is it a reiteration of the old.

Now, about two years after COVID-19, we are starting to see a way to restore health, economies, and societies together despite the new coronavirus strain. As I learned from my father, in the face of a global crisis, we need to

improvise, adapt and overcome. The new normal is still emerging, so I think that our immediate focus should be to tackle the complex problems that have emerged from the pandemic by resilience, recovery, and restructuring. But above everything, the most important aspect to work on is to keep our health and immunity in check.

The virus has been here for a long time, as the World Health Organization stated and suggested that the 'Government organizations should use this opportunity to invest in health systems, which can benefit all populations beyond COVID-19, as well as prepare for future public health emergencies.' And it is important to stay aware of our health and adopt healthy lifestyle, this way we can also help our government to help the ones who need it and the ones who can't manage to follow a certain lifestyle due to their social, work or cultural conditions. There may be little to gain from the COVID-19 pandemic, but we must keep in mind that no one is being left behind. When the COVID-19 pandemic is over, the best aspects of the new normal will survive and enrich our life in the future, only if we have a better health.

There have been many impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. I mentioned many of them in the last few chapters but a few are here to stay till we individually work to better our lives. Just like every bad phase has some learning, this time also has some positive sides. Yes, I have learned from my family that we should always look for the positive in the darkest times and I think, the COVID-19 too has brought in some positive effects to our life and around. For instance, people are bonding more with their families at home.

A global movement has begun to share information about the virus to develop social guidelines and vaccines – a big step towards humanity. Public health is being largely scrutinized and given heavier importance with more funding & attention to its advancement. Digitization has taken precedence over working in an office set up or meeting people personally. Virtual places have become a new comfort zone for all of us. Most importantly, health, hygiene, and sanitization have become all the more crucial aspects of every individual's life. They are the primary attention to defend against the virus. Every individual has become aware of their health

and exercise and healthy food has become primary for everyone. Certain lifestyle changes and behaviors are important to adapt to the new normal and improve our lives. Here's what I have learned from my father.

### **What are the ways individuals can adapt to the new normal lifestyle?**

First of all, follow the guidelines for everyone's safety. Wearing masks, face shields, social distancing, and proper hand hygiene may tend to be a nuisance for some, but protecting ourselves is protecting our family and the community. Take vaccines and booster doses, it is our responsibility. It is also important to seek help in time and help others in need. It is normal and healthy to feel anxious sometimes, a heightened sense of anxiety, stress or even loss of appetite should be handled with care. It is easy to misunderstand one's emotions towards changes and challenges, especially during these uncertain times as we are in today. Try and stay positive. Consume positive and light-hearted content. Pick up a hobby or exercise routine which will divert your mind and it is very meditative.

**When you talk about stress and anxiety, how do you suggest maintaining personal mental health ?**

To start with, changing routine is very important. One should get up early and sleep early. This is the primary positive change that one can adapt to lead a healthy life. One should eat healthily and exercise daily. It is also important to maintain a healthy and cheerful environment at home. Read good books and watch positive and entertaining content online. Talk to your friends and stay in touch with your connections. Try to stay away from negativity and toxicity. Anything that disturbs your mental peace, get rid of it. I would not shy away and say, block the accounts online that aren't contributing to your peace. Start practicing spirituality and build faith in something positive. Yoga and meditation are all-time tried and tested methods of a healthy and composed lifestyle.

**The COVID-19 scenario has also contributed to existing fears and insecurities. How do you think one can overcome these issues?**

The best way to overcome fear & insecurities

is by facing them and working toward overcoming them. I take care of my health and my family's health. I take care of my business following all COVID-19 protocols. There is nothing that can bring an end to things in the world. Humans will always have new demands and aspirations that they will work towards achieving. All industries & businesses will be there. Just their ways of functioning will keep changing as per the current events and situations. Similarly, if we also start adapting to changing scenarios, we will stand victorious in all times to come. I also believe there is no need to be competitive. Insecurities come from the feeling of competition or considering someone better than us. There is no best in the world. Everyone has the best of their abilities; hence it is important to know our abilities and what best we can do to achieve what we want. Remember, success is subjective, something that's different for everyone with different criteria. So, it is important to have individual targets, strategies, and road maps. This way you will have better planning & satisfaction of your achievements and no fear of someone else doing better than you, which ultimately reduces insecurities.

## **How do you suggest helping kids to stay mentally healthy?**

Ever since the pandemic hit the world, kids have been at home, which is against nature. There is a reason why kids go to school and playgrounds so that they see the outside world and learn the ways to deal with the circumstance and become better individuals. But now, they hardly meet their friends, leave aside going to school, and participate in different activities. They aren't meeting their teachers and have completely taken up the virtual medium for their training. This has a huge impact on children's minds. Children are being deprived of the times before the COVID-19 pandemic. Children are frustrated, but thankfully, they haven't developed the response or realization to this emotion. To maintain their sanity parents need to take care of the child not just by feeding them healthy food but by feeding them with good knowledge and a little bit of outside exposure. Take them out for at least two hours and talk to them. Be open for any kind of conversation, if they are not comfortable talking to you, then they will find an outside source, which may not be healthy and positive for their healthy



growth. Play with them even if it's a board game or a video game. Eat with them and prepare the food they like, you may want to engage them also in cooking their favorite dishes. This is a skill that may boost their confidence and inculcate survival skills for the future. Engage them in healthy activities, especially in basic exercises. Keeping kids positively engaged is important.

# Chapter - 11

## Success and Future Goals



**S**uccess at any cost. This was a very famous dialogue during the 80s as it was part of a Bollywood movie. My father used to say this at times, but I never understood why he had so much attachment to success. As this time gave us a lot of time to have long conversations, I asked my father about what success meant to him and how one can measure it since he says it's subjective. I was told that pursuing success is like shooting at a series of moving targets. Every time you hit one, five more pop up from another direction. Just when we've achieved one goal, we feel pressure to work harder to earn more money, exert more effort, and possess more toys. In the face of such

instability, many people think success requires a winner-takes-all approach. They believe that success depends on putting all your energy into achieving one goal by any means. But no matter what the goal is, it can't satisfy all the needs that a person desires. It is the same for business, social status, a dream job, higher grades and getting admission into some recognized university, and achieving a healthy body.

Success doesn't have to be seen as one-dimensional tug-of-war between the achievement and happiness. If you follow the right path, your ideals of a good life for yourself, family, and society can become powerful and manageable as well. There are several books on high achievers which at the end say that these achievers realized lasting success by making a positive difference and by being in the process of success. Some of the most successful people who have achieved what they have and reached where they are is because they have a greater understanding of what success is really about and the versatility to make good on their ideals. Not many would know but success has a model and a proper path. There is an assumption behind success

but real success is enduring where getting what you want has long-term rewards and those you care about. These types of accomplishments deliver a sense of validity and importance. The importance of this success is far more satisfactory than momentary rewards of a bonus, a new position, a new client, or high marks. Lasting success is emotionally renewing and not anxiety-provoking. The vision of real success is unique for everyone and interestingly that notion changes over time. A person who keeps family as a priority would not call the absentee life of a top supervisor a successful person but he may have a lot of money to buy tickets for adventurous trips. Everyone has a different definition of success. For a constructor, building a sustainable bridge is a success but for a banker, this may not look very successful. So, recognizing how important success is for each person it is important to develop understanding. There are five characteristics of individuals who have achieved enduring success: high achievement, multiple goals, ability to experience pleasure, the ability to create positive relationships, and a value on accomplishments that endure.

## **Success and its complexities**

Success requires non-stop hard work. There are four incredible components of long-lasting success—happiness, achievement, significance, and legacy. These components help the achievers feel pleasure and contentment about their life; they strive for new goals and better goals than what people around them have. They are aware that they have made a positive contribution with their success and they have developed some values of success for others to follow in the future. These four categories are what form the basic structure of what people try to achieve through the pursuit and enjoyment of success.

One cannot take away one of these components as it no longer feels the real success. You cannot be successful if you have no moral satisfaction. For instance, you may have earned a lot of money but if you can't help anyone, that success would never give you the kind of satisfaction that a truly happy individual would feel. Similarly, if someone leaves everything & becomes a full-time parent, that too can be dissatisfying but at the same time, if you are not able to be a parent to your kids and are very successful in your

respective career then this will not be the joy that you desire in life. Balance is a key here.

It is important to chart your goals and balance them wisely. Prioritizing what's important for you is very important. It's like eating the same food every day and not adding any flavor to it. The four components of success can't be satisfied by the presence of a single flavor. You need all of it to feel content with your achievements. But unless you tick all four aspects with regularity, any victory will not satisfy you. You may feel what you are doing is right, but you will still feel like a loss. You are preoccupied with the thoughts of other things you could be doing or achieving and your achievements and pleasures will die soon.

On the other hand, the success that comes with all four components is enriching & accomplishing. You can achieve this synergy of balancing your success goals by doing some activities like taking time out in the middle of a high-stress period or contributing to your community of what you have achieved so far.

When you think about what makes for a moment of lasting satisfaction in your life then it can be your daily practice – a musical



instrument, exercise, sports – this may be a very basic comparison with your major commitments at work but these do work. Those who do not believe or find time for any vocational activity build the same legacy for the next generation. For instance, if my father was not exercising or following a healthy lifestyle, I wouldn't have learned the same. He says this gives him a deeper sense of success in his life. To feel this satisfaction, it needs different emotional drives and prioritizing self and others in different ways.

That's why our forefathers would say that happiness, achievement, and significance will come automatically if you simply do the work you love. No matter how much you care about your job, you will feel conflicting desires between work and home, between working on a problem and taking a break from it & taking up an adventurous trip. Structuring financial terms for your company will not give you the utmost satisfaction that being with your friend in his need will so it is important to set your priorities. I had to take a high dose from my father when I asked him about success, what he thinks about the success he had an elaborate answer as well.

## **What is success for you?**

I always wanted to have a very good education. I wanted to excel in all exams from my early childhood. I was able to achieve high grades till my higher secondary through mugging up lines in the course books, but later I realized this was not something that was true intelligence. I was getting good marks on my report cards for my parents and to make everyone happy and impress them.

I was always inclined toward crafts and sports which I had to leave behind to study for longer hours to get a good report card. I studied very hard to clear the entrance exam for MBA and to secure a seat in a prestigious college. I recall that it was too filmy when just a day before the entrance exam I decided to quit and went to my father to say that I was not going to sit for the exam I prepared for days. I expressed my wish to join his business and my father didn't say anything. He was kind of okay with my wish but I didn't know what I would do with his jewelry business, which he handled very well. I had no idea I wanted to join the business and was little apprehensive if I was able to handle it the way my father did. He used to trade – buying and

selling jewelry. As I was always a rebellious kind, as soon as I joined the business, I told my father that I wanted to develop my own designs. Though he didn't agree to it in the beginning, with my hard work I proved my skills to him and I was given a few artisans to craft my jewelry and manufacture my own designs. I was very passionate about crafts and toys from early childhood. I started playing with designs and gems as if they were my toys. Today, after 20 years in business, I have created a big segment of clients in the country and worldwide where they are buying my creatively designed jewelry in *Kundan, Meena, Polki, and Jadau*.

I am saying this with experience that you should always choose your passion as your profession. If you are not good at studies, it is fine, you may have other inclinations. There is no formula to success but following your interest and achieving a great deal of satisfaction is a key to all the happiness in life. I have been inclined towards sports from a very early age and have been regular on this aspect. COVID-19 & simultaneous lockdowns allowed me to pursue my hobby and hone my skills.

I am 44 years old and for the last six months I have been working hard to have abs and I have achieved four abs and I will call it a success because this comes with immense satisfaction. My wife and I have always let our children be what they want to be. There have never been times when we forced our decisions or influenced their thoughts; rather we encourage them to pursue what they like dearly. I can confidently say that both my kids are following their passion and that is an achievement. I can follow what I have learned from my parents, teachers, and gurus which is part of my success and contentment, for I am blessed to live that way. I can follow a healthy routine, early to bed early to rise; this is a blessing for me. I have very loyal friends with strong characters. This is an achievement. I have a wife who supports my decisions and is always with me standing rock-solid in all ups and downs, this is a success.

My family members, including my brothers, parents, and relatives, love me and they are proud of my achievements that is a success to me. I have a strong clientele and a loyal staff that works tirelessly for theirs and eventually my goals; this is a great contribution to

achieving my goals. Above everything, I see myself as a part of my country's growth chart and that completes the cycle of success and happiness. My son is inspired by me and admires my actions and writing this book at a very early age, this is more than anything for a father and I feel this is a higher degree of achievement. He will be able to change many lives with the knowledge that he has been interested to acquire; this is a success for me. Excelling at something, acquiring wealth, and getting fame should not be considered as a yardstick of success. These are not the criteria that will give you satisfaction or inner peace. If you can follow your passion and do what you like is a testimony to being successful manifold. Setting goals is fine but as I always say, to achieve those goals you need to know what your priorities are and then the goals will just become fun for you.

**But what are your goals and how do you plan to achieve them?**

Just like many people outside I am a very ambitious person. I like to dream and fulfill my goals. I set targets and I like to excel in all spheres of life. But post-COVID my first and

foremost goal is to be fit and healthy. My priority is and will always be health. Nothing is more important for me than my health. The time has made me realize that health is everything and with overall better health, you can achieve any dream of your life. I aspire to develop a like-minded community club where everyone engages in a healthy conversation about building a strong health system.

I want people to discuss environmental issues, literature, art, culture, healthy living, healthy food, and a routine to lead a healthy life. There is a lot to achieve in life but by setting some productive goals and taking small steps to enjoy enduring success.



# Chapter - 12

## Challenges





**I**t may sound cliché but the age-old saying 'life is full of challenges', is as true as the sun and the moon rising and setting every day. Everyone comes across one or the other hurdle to live life; some people seem to meet every challenge with confidence, while others struggle to overcome them. Our inner self especially gets a sense of satisfaction from facing challenges as it brings a sense of accomplishment and can be extremely fulfilling. We all seek challenges on some levels of our life, for our highest self wants us to learn and grow and the most important tool towards growth is to experience. We face difficulties when we are faced with the same situation over and over again, and that's when

we start losing motivation to deal with the challenge and that at times leads us to miss out on a potential lesson. At this point, challenges can become problems and can cause frustration and withdrawal symptoms from the ambition. But as co-creator of our own reality, we can overcome these challenges. It can easily be overcome with a sense of responsibility and awareness that you can begin your journey into a higher state of consciousness where challenges no longer remain challenges, but opportunities to learn something new & achieve something unexpected. Before we move to define how challenges and achievements are two sides of one coin and can't be separated, I would like to point out some of the ways to better accept and meet your challenges.

Starting from the easiest advice that I learned from my father and my grandparents is to face the challenges. This may sound very absurd, but this is the most optimistic way of looking at any challenge. Roads may be bumpy but you don't change your route to your destination unless you have a better smooth road so, it is important to look for solutions rather than running away from the situation. In

many cases, this is the most important step and most obvious step, yet it is also the most often missed part. We spend time looking for a way around the issue or run away seeing the enormity of the challenge, instead of facing it. For instance, even basic things like cleaning the cupboard get delayed or ignored. Not looking at your cupboard doesn't mean it will go away. It is the same for any big or small challenge. The most important way to deal with any challenge is to face it head-on.

Next, what I have learned and I believe is one of the facts to overcome the challenges is to be present. We should not underestimate the power of being present, for if we practice facing challenges even in failure with presence and awareness, we will find most challenges are non-existent. It is important to realize that these challenges are a message from the universe to recognize your strengths. We all need to be aware of our actions and the challenges that we deal with and that can come with a lot of hard work. Meditation can help you cultivate silent awareness and focus. When I am faced with any challenge, I follow a mechanism - to understand it completely - that I have developed to deal with the

challenges. I check why this challenge is and do I believe that I am capable enough to deal with this situation. Above all, I think about what would be the outcome if I fail and what will I earn if I win the challenge. These questions aren't to solve the problem but they bring a sense of awareness in me to know my challenges and react to them wisely and bravely. Start with assessing the situation, resources, and your abilities to act and if required seek help because ultimately it is leading you to solve your issue. The sooner the actions, better the results.

No matter what situation we are faced with, we need to believe in ourselves. Challenges are opportunities to grow and growth is dependent on our potentials, which are infinite and highly active in every moment of our life. We are experiencing life with full human potentials and challenges are nothing but our imaginary limitations. This is the reason why certain challenges seem hard to us while many other people deal with the same situation effortlessly. It's not because they are better than us but they are conscious about the challenge and have found their ways to see those challenges as opportunities to learn or to

completely avoid them. Another difficulty we all face with our ambitions and challenges is to stress about the potential outcome. Once we shift our focus on the things that we are doing, instead of the result, the most difficult parts of our trial start to disappear. I have learned if we just perform our task and do not worry about the outcome, we have the power to overcome the situation. Some challenges may seem to be very big but if we remain centered and aware of our actions, no challenges are big.

Throughout our life, defining a clear self-view plays a key role in self-concept and identity development. We may encounter problems when we are trying to construct our image. We have distinctive self-reflexive skills through which we try to evaluate ourselves and our current state of affairs and put ourselves in an imaginary situation. At times we envision our potential situation from the challenge that we are facing, which creates all the more issues in the process of achievements. There are many ways to deal with it, and a few things that I have closely observed my father applying in his life can be truly helpful to start with. When I asked my

father about how he sees challenges in his life, he had an elaborate answer. Some of that I have mentioned in this chapter. But there was much to it. Excerpts from the conversation.

### **How do you see challenges on your way and how do you deal with them?**

I think challenges are not only what we are faced with but there are some we throw at ourselves. I am in the second category. I am always fond of challenges. Sometimes I can meet them and sometimes I fail but in both cases, I am happy and come out as a winner. If I win I realize my potential and when I fail, I learn a lot and realize that there are many more opportunities, this makes me feel alive. For instance, once I was given 150 burpees along with push-ups to complete in 15 minutes target by my mentor. This was not an easy task but I was determined. I finished the task in 13.45 minutes. It was unusual for me at that time. My trainer was surprised too but I did that. I was completely into that task and the next few days were painful. Every inch of my body had pain but I was happy because I could feel that achievement. This also added to my daily routine and business outcomes

because I feel fit & healthy and more focused on my work. This is a very basic example of a challenge, but there are challenges that we are faced with when we want to follow a certain routine. For me, maintaining my routine was a challenge initially. Everyone who wants to follow a certain routine will be faced with certain challenges. For instance, if you decide to wake up early and finish your exercise, you may not feel motivated enough if it's too cold, this is basic but it is a challenge. Similarly, you have a fixed diet but you have to attend a social gathering where your diet goes for a toss, and maintaining that resilience to only pick the food that's healthy for you out of so many delectable and tempting dishes is a challenge and self-control here plays a big role.

Similarly, in business, there are different challenges. When I joined the business the timelines were completely different and I wanted to bring that down. It wasn't easy. You have to make a decision, especially when you are new in the business and you have loyal old clientele. When I joined our family business our timeline for a jewelry set was three months and I wanted to finish things in




less time so that we can produce more. I had to convince my father that I wanted to build a small team of young artisans to bring in more energy to the craft. This change reduced the timeline to finish a product in 15 days. I agree that there were challenges but I saw them as an opportunity to change things and fight for what I thought was right and helpful for the business. Another thing that I was firm on implementing in my business was to follow the modern designs and crafts. I studied old indigenous designs and built my empire in ancient ways. My young artisans have accepted that view and this helped us stand out from the market designs. There was a challenge for acceptance.

We were apprehensive if this would be accepted or not, but it worked. These challenges are mental, for most of the difficulties are in mind. I had to convince my artisans for the change. Our mind loves to stay in comfort zone and when we push ourselves, it gives you signals to not to try and follow what we have been doing because that is the comfort of our mind. Changing our mindset is the biggest challenge and once we achieve it, there is no looking back.


# LIFE LIVE IT WELL

The knowledge we wanted to share is mostly conveyed as a conversation so it draws your interest and keeps you engaged. All the information in the book is what we do at home to lead a healthy life.

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**Krishna Vardhan Gilara** is a student of Jayshree Periwal High School, Jaipur. This is Krishna's first book based on health and wellness. He is inspired by his father Mr. Abhishek Gilara and this book is about several conversations between them which is pertaining to health and wellness. Krishna is a finance enthusiast and takes pleasure in playing basketball and the piano.

“ I wish to convey my message to all the readers that the book by my son is for everyone who wants to lead a healthy life and live it for a purpose. My purpose in life is to share my ways of living a healthy life with the rest of the world to achieve the goal of a healthy self, community, and country.”

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