

# JOY FOUND ME

I stopped searching.  
I slowed down. Joy walked in.

SUDHA RAO



INDIA • SINGAPORE • MALAYSIA



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## PREFACE

This book wasn't written with effort. It was written from surrender.

For years, I believed joy was something I had to chase, through achievement, perfection, approval, or even spiritual effort. But the deeper I went, the more I realised: Joy isn't earned. Joy isn't created. Joy is simply remembered.

That's why the title **'Joy Found Me'** feels so true. It speaks a quiet truth that joy comes not through striving, but through stillness. That's when we stop trying so hard, joy finds its way in.

It's like when you stop searching for your glasses, only to realise they were sitting on your head all along. Joy is not far away. It's not something waiting at the end of a long journey. It's here and now, beneath the noise, beneath the effort, beneath the need to control.

There's a beautiful Osho quote that reflects this truth: 'Don't seek, don't search, don't ask, don't knock, don't demand. Simply relax. If you relax, it comes. If you relax, it is there'. I discovered this in quiet moments – in letting go, in simply being.

I stopped searching..., joy walked in. I found that what I was searching for was always here. Not in effort, not in striving, but in silence, in surrender, in presence.

This is the way of the spirit. A way of softness and inner trust. It's not about becoming someone new. It's about remembering who you already are beneath the noise of becoming. This is what we call 'Living In Spirit', not chasing life, but resting in it. Not pushing, but allowing.

This book is a gentle offering. It holds stories, reflections, and reminders to return to what is already inside you: peace, clarity and joy.

You don't need to fix yourself.

## *Preface*

You don't need to prove anything.

You just need to slow down and listen.

This book is for anyone tired of pushing, proving, or perfecting. It's a silent invitation to simply be, to rest, to return. Because when you stop searching so hard, joy finally has the space to find you.

### **Gratitude**

With all my heart, I offer thanks!

To my parents, for their blessings and unconditional love.

To my husband and children, for their support, trust, patience and love that carry me through.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my brother and sister-in-law, my brothers-in-law and co-sisters, including my sister-in-law from my husband's side and her husband, for their unwavering support and encouragement.

I also offer my deepest gratitude to all my extended family and my dearest friends, whose unwavering love and support have profoundly shaped the person I am today. Your presence, encouragement, and belief in me have been invaluable in making this book possible.

This is not a book about doing more. It is a book about being. About resting...watching...remembering. About letting joy return to you – naturally. Let it come. Let joy meet you exactly where you are. No effort. No struggle. Just presence.

Sudha Rao



## **PART 1**

### **THE WAKE-UP CALL – WHEN LIFE WHISPERS AND JOY KNOCKS**



# CHAPTER 1

## 1.1 MY WAKE-UP CALL – WHEN JOY FIRST KNOCKED IN

### THE BEGINNING OF BECOMING ME AGAIN

I've always been what people call a “happy-go-lucky” woman, a wife, a homemaker, and a mother to two wonderful children. For many years, we lived in the U.S. My husband worked hard, and I gave myself all to raising our children and running the home. I believed that's what a “good woman” should do.

On the surface, life seemed full and blessed. But deep inside, there was a quiet ache, something I couldn't explain. I felt like I should be happy, after all, I had everything. And yet, there were days I would cry without knowing why. There were moments I'd lash out or withdraw, angry or irritated over nothing. Fights over small things became more frequent. But the anger wasn't really at others, it was a confusion, a disconnection inside me.

There was no major tragedy. No obvious reason, but I felt like I was falling apart inside, and no one knew.

I first noticed this ache after our son was born, while we were living in, California. Sometimes, I would find myself crying and feeling unhappy, but I couldn't quite explain why. I was heavy with nameless emotions, like a sadness that came out of nowhere and refused to be understood. I just knew something inside me hurt, even when everything around me seemed fine. I didn't know what to name the feeling. Not depression. But something deeper. A kind of spiritual numbness. An emptiness that no amount of “doing” could fill.

It was like a low, constant hum inside me whispering, “There's something missing,” or “This isn't all of you.”

Life looked perfect from the outside: a caring husband, lovely home, two beautiful children and amazing friends. But inside, I felt like a stranger to

myself. I smiled for everyone, showed up for everything, yet there was a stillness that turned into restlessness. I kept asking myself, “Why am I so unhappy... when I have no right to be?”

Before I share what changed, I want to say a big thanks to my husband! When I first came to the U.S. in early ninety’s, he signed me up for a typing class – without even asking me first! Back then, I didn’t know how to use a computer, and I was nervous. I remember tapping the keys slowly, like a beginner learning to dance. But that small, funny start led to something much bigger: my first class at Ohlone College. I had no idea that learning how to type would open so many doors for me. It turned out to be a real turning point in my life.

Then, in 1999, something small changed everything.

My brother came to visit us in the U.S., and during that time, I learned how to use email for the first time. It may sound simple, but for me, it was a spark, something new, something mine. I still remember how exciting and strange it felt to send a message that someone could read instantly, no matter where they were.

Just logging in, typing, sending a message. It was such a small act, but I felt alive. Like a corner of my soul had just switched on.

I started thinking more deeply. I realised I wanted to give back, to do something meaningful. Maybe it was the influence of my parents; they were always involved in social service. Watching them give selflessly had left a deep impression on me.

One day, I sat down and started a non-profit academy for children called Geeta’s Child Academy (GCA) – a small weekend centre to teach children human values through stories, songs, and games.

My close friends joined in, and their children became part of it too. Our garage turned into a space filled with laughter, ideas, creativity, and warmth. We shared chai and conversations.

I wrote stories, poems, and songs. Then we shared them with children and made lesson plans to teach good values to kids from 4 to 11. Some friends taught Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil. Others taught songs, dances, and drama. We also did programs and many fun activities together.

What began as a simple idea turned into a heartfelt mission: to nurture young minds with timeless values in a fun, engaging, and meaningful way.

And just like that, something in me woke up. I felt alive again.

That small step – starting GCA – became the next turning point in my life. It wasn't a big project. There was no fame, no stage. But it gave me something I hadn't felt in a long time: purpose.

It reminded me of who I really am – a woman with her own light to share. Being a mother and a good wife makes me proud, and as a multitasker I give my best to many roles. Yet I learned that true joy comes not only from what we do for others, but also from finding ourselves. GCA became my first awakening, showing me that when we return to ourselves, we live with more love, more freedom, and more celebration in every role we play.

Of course, the journey wasn't always easy. There were lessons to learn about people, about giving, about boundaries, and about myself. But through it all, I kept creating, not from pressure, but from presence. I wasn't performing. I was simply being.

Looking back now, I feel deep gratitude. That small, quiet beginning in my garage led me to a much bigger place within. It showed me that joy doesn't always come from chasing something big. Sometimes, it flows through you when you finally allow yourself to be real.

GCA was more than a weekend academy. It was the mirror I needed. It reflected the parts of me I had forgotten, and it helped me begin the most important journey of all: the journey back to myself.

## **RETURNING TO INDIA – AND LOSING MYSELF AGAIN**

Things changed, and in 2002, my husband wanted a change, so we moved back to India, first to Bangalore.

I thought I'd feel "at home" again, back in my culture, among my people. But, surprisingly, I felt more lost.

Everything around me felt unfamiliar. The roads, the rhythm, the pace. I couldn't drive. The traffic scared me. Our daughter struggled to adjust. My husband got busy with work. Our son was just five.

I had to hold everything together again.

And in doing so... I lost myself again.

I smiled. I planned. I served.

But deep inside, I was back in that place of numbness. That quiet ache returned, only this time, it felt heavier.

I was exhausted from pretending. I felt like I was watching life happen, not living it. There were mornings when I'd cry over my coffee and not know why. Days when I'd snap at the kids, not because they did something wrong, but because I felt like I had disappeared. Again.

Then one morning, sitting quietly with a cup of coffee, I heard a soft voice inside me whisper:

“Is this all there is?”

It wasn't a breakdown. It wasn't dramatic.

It was just a gentle question.

A stillness. And in that stillness... something shifted.

## **A NEW DOOR OPENS**

That same year, I enrolled in a Psychotherapy/Counselling Skills Diploma course at a well-known academy in Bangalore. Something in me said, “This is your space.”

The course changed me from within. It gave me language for what I had always felt. It reminded me: I was not broken. I was simply not seen. Not even by myself.

The shift was slow, but steady.

I began:

- Pausing before reacting, asking, “Is this really worth it?”
- Spending time with people who lifted me, not drained me.
- Letting go of proving, performing, or pleasing.

Most importantly, I began to listen not to the world, but to myself.

The course rerouted me to my path. I am forever grateful. It showed me what I had forgotten:

I am a natural counsellor. I've always had the instinct to listen, to hold space, to reach out. Now I had the skills to ground that instinct. I wasn't starting from scratch. I was remembering who I had always been.

For a while in Bangalore, it was chaos, a phase of unlearning and relearning. I made new friendships, some short-lived, and spent most of my time by myself. I read a lot. Built a library of books that felt like companions. Every book I read, I made notes. Sometimes I'd share them with a few friends while walking. Life was going on. Children were growing. Parents were nearby, and I'd visit them often.

But internally, I felt a little lost. Drifting. Just taking life as it came.

And yet, somewhere in all of this, I began to understand something deeper.

Joy isn't always loud. It doesn't always come with applause or big smiles. Sometimes, it whispers.

It arrives when:

- You stop chasing perfection.
- You let go of roles that no longer fit.
- You stop trying to be everything for everyone.
- You come home to yourself, even in silence.

**You can have everything and still feel disconnected.**

**You can have nothing... and still feel full.**

The key is not what you have. It's how you see, how you feel, and how honestly you live.

You don't need to escape your life. You just need to return to it softly.

Because the moment you pause, the moment you listen...

Joy finds you.

## **THE TABLA ADVENTURES AT HOME**

Now here's something funny from our lives. This was during that period.

I've always been into music. I learned classical singing and later even taught both of my kids.

My son plays the violin and drums. My daughter also sings; she has a beautiful voice. Music runs strongly in our home.

Well... almost.

My husband – bless him – has zero musical sense. He can't catch a tune, and he definitely doesn't have a magical musical ear. Not even close.

Then one day, completely out of the blue, he announced he was going to learn the tabla. Maybe he was inspired... or just having a moment. (Just kidding.)

Every Friday, the tabla teacher would come home. My husband didn't even know how to sit properly with the instrument, let alone actually play it!

It was hilarious and great entertainment for all of us.

We all tried to keep a straight face at first. But every time he played, we'd all end up laughing, even if he couldn't help it.

It was as if the tabla was confused too: "What is happening to me?"

The teacher? Oh, he looked very happy, not because of my husband's progress, but because of the tuition fees! It was so obvious.

The poor husband tried hard for a few months but eventually gave up.

And honestly? We were all a little sad; we were going to miss the Friday entertainment!

But, through all that laughter, I learned something important:

Sometimes, we try too hard to be what we're not.

But life flows better when we simply follow what comes naturally.

So now, when I see someone forcing themselves into something that doesn't fit, I remember those tabla Fridays and gently remind myself: **"Do what flows, not what frustrates."**

## **HITTING MY INNER BOTTOM – BEFORE RISING AGAIN**

Looking back, I now understand that those years weren't just "busy" or "stressful." They were my emotional and spiritual rock bottom.

It wasn't loud. It didn't look like a breakdown from the outside. But I was crying for no reason, fighting over little things. I was waking up tired, numb, angry, confused – and so much more. Sometimes, I couldn't even recognise myself.

The smile played its part. The to-do list was done. But the joy? The peace? The clarity? Gone. Say it, The smile was forced, I guess.



That's the thing about spiritual rock bottom: no one sees it. There are no bruises. No breakdowns to explain. But inside, you're hollow. You feel like a shell of who you used to be. You feel unseen, not just by others, but by yourself.

Now, years later, I see that as a sacred time. A time when everything false was quietly falling away, a time when something deeper in me was preparing to awaken.

That small whisper inside, "Is this all there is?" wasn't despair. It was the start of my return, a quiet invitation to come home to myself.

## **FULL CIRCLE**

GCA, the counselling course, the books, the pauses, the laughter, the tabla... they all became part of my healing.

Each moment, each choice, brought me closer to my essence.

Joy didn't come all at once. It came in whispers. In coffee breaks.

In writing poems, letting go of roles that no longer fit, I no longer needed to prove or perform.

I used to think I had to do something big or great to feel fulfilled.

But now I know – you don't have to chase greatness.

You just have to become real.

Not perfect. Just be authentic. Just be present. Just be you.

And that's more than enough. Because joy doesn't always knock loudly. Sometimes, it's just a quiet breath in your own company. A smile at your own silliness. A Friday tabla session gone wrong. A moment where you feel, after a long time:

"I'm here. I'm me. And that's enough." So, if you're reading this and feeling lost... confused... tired of holding it all together... Know this:

You're not alone. You don't have to have a breakdown to begin again. Sometimes all it takes is a pause, a tear, a question.

And the courage to listen. Because the moment you do... Joy will knock.

And this time, you'll be home to answer.

## 1.2 THE JOY OF LIVING MY TRUTH

### THE GENTLE SHIFT WITHIN

After a quiet wake-up call, I didn't change everything right away.

Life still looked the same. I still played the same roles, fulfilled the same responsibilities. But something inside me felt different.

I started to feel softer, like a gentle breeze after a big storm. That softness wasn't a weakness. It was strength, blooming in silence. It was the beginning of a new way of being.

I didn't try to fix everything at once. I didn't overhaul my life.

I simply began to slow down. Breathe. Listen to myself more.

I stopped being so hard on myself. I stopped rushing through my own emotions.

And that's when the real transformation began, quietly, gently, one step at a time.

### TINY ACTS OF TRUTH

At some point, I felt a deep need to say sorry, not because of guilt, but from a place of clarity and love. To anyone I may have hurt, knowingly or unknowingly, I reached out. I spoke from my heart. And with that honesty came a deep sense of relief.

I also felt like reconnecting with old friends. I didn't force anything.

I just followed the inner nudge. And when I did, it felt right. It felt true.

I began doing things that honoured my peace. Not because I had to... but because I wanted to. No pressure. No noise.

Just small, everyday steps that whispered: "This is you now. You're allowed to feel good. You're allowed to choose joy."

Life didn't suddenly become perfect. But it became more manageable, more aware, more tender.

"The first sign of healing is when your heart begins to soften towards yourself."

## **NEW CITY, SAME INNER WORK**

A few years later, we moved again, this time to Hyderabad.

But, unlike the overwhelming move to Bangalore, this one felt lighter. We were more grounded. We had grown.

To our surprise, many of our old friends from the U.S. had also returned and made Hyderabad their home. It was as if the universe had gently placed us where we belonged.

Our daughter found her people again. She was smiling, thriving.

And with that, a deep breath of relief returned to my chest.

She made lasting friendships. Our son adapted well. Even the city began to feel familiar.

Both our children joined an international school, and soon after, I joined the same school as a Life Skills Trainer.

It was a full-circle moment. Life was weaving all the threads together.

Thanks to my counselling diploma and my years of self-reflection, I was ready. I created an entire Life Skills curriculum for teens, filled with stories, values, reflections, and real-life tools. It even became a book (though I never published it).

But that didn't matter.

What mattered was this:

“For the first time, I was not teaching from a role; I was teaching from my truth.” This made all the difference.

## **TEACHING AND HEALING**

In those years, I wasn't just supporting children. I was healing myself.

The confusion I had once felt in Bangalore began to dissolve.

There was a kind of soft landing this time. It didn't feel like starting over. It felt like picking up a journey I had once paused.

We had good friends, long conversations and stories that often overlapped and intertwined. The kids had playmates. We had a community. And slowly, gently, we belonged again.

## **FINDING MY FLOW – A DIFFERENT KIND OF WISDOM**

Working as a Life Skills Trainer was never on my “plan.” As I stood in front of teenagers, guiding them through empathy, values, choices, and self-awareness... I noticed something beautiful:

I wasn't teaching from theory. I was sharing from my lived experience.

But once I began, I realised something profound:

“I had always been a life skills teacher, just without the title.”

And in that, I discovered something powerful:

“You don't have to be an expert to help someone. You just have to be honest about what you're still learning.”

That honesty opened a sacred space.

Listening, counselling, storytelling, music, it all flowed naturally into that space. It wasn't a job. It was an expression.

Because every time I stood in front of a class, I felt... alive, seen, at peace.

No masks. No pretending. Just the truth.

That role didn't just teach students how to grow.

“It reminded me how far I had come.”

And in that, I discovered something powerful: My students shared their fears, doubts, and dreams. And, in listening to them, I was healing old pieces of myself, too.

## **THE GIFT OF ALIGNMENT**

I finally understood what it truly means to live in alignment. Not that life becomes easy, not that everyone agrees with you.

But you stop fighting yourself.

“Alignment doesn't mean perfection, it means peace with your path.”

## **SIGNS YOU'RE OFF YOUR PATH**

1. You feel uneasy or unhappy for no clear reason.  
Life may look fine on the outside, but something feels missing inside.
2. You feel the need to constantly please others.  
You're more focused on their expectations than your own truth.
3. You feel stuck in routine and self-doubt.  
Life feels dull – like you're just going through the motions.
4. You feel pulled into the past or anxious about the future.  
The present moment slips away, and with it, your sense of peace.
5. You feel disconnected from love and joy.  
The things that once lit you up don't reach you the same way anymore.
6. You feel tired, even after rest.  
You ignore your inner voice, even when it whispers that something's off.
7. You feel led by fear more than trust.  
You feel unseen, unheard, misplaced – like you're living someone else's life.

## **SIGNS YOU'RE ALIGNED WITH YOUR PATH**

1. You feel at peace without needing a reason.  
There's a quiet contentment within you, even during uncertain times.
2. You make choices that feel true to you.  
You trust your inner voice more than outside opinions. You feel energised by even small wins.
3. You feel energised and inspired.  
Your days have meaning, and even small things feel fulfilling. You lose track of time doing what you love.

4. You live more in the present.  
You're not stuck in the past or worried about the future – you're here, now.
5. You feel connected to love, people, and purpose.  
Your relationships and passions feel nourishing and real.
6. You feel guided from within.  
Even when the path isn't clear, you know you're being led by something deeper.
7. You feel calm, confident, and clear.  
You're not chasing, proving, or performing – you're simply being who you are.

You don't need to become a new person. You just need to remember who you've always been.

## **A CRASH COURSE IN SURRENDER – ON HYDERABAD'S ROADS!**

Let's just say... this was hilarious.

Hyderabad also had a sense of humour, especially... on the roads.

One day, I decided it was time to finally drive in Hyderabad.

We had a driver at the time, and I asked him to teach me how to drive here.

He completely flipped the rules I had learned in the U.S.

He said, very confidently:

- "Don't worry about pedestrians... they'll keep crossing anyway."
- "Keep honking. Keep moving. Don't slow down."
- "Don't look in mirrors, people will come from anywhere."
- "Don't leave any space in front of your car or someone else will take it!"

I couldn't stop laughing.

But strangely, that madness became a spiritual lesson.

That madness, that chaos, forced me to let go. I had to stop reacting. Stop controlling. Just stay aware, alert, but detached.

And it made me notice something profound about India: Even in chaos, people aren't angry. They just move on. Even if someone bumps into your car, they'll smile and say, "Sorry bhaiyya," and keep going.

No drama. No tension. No blame.

That chaos had a rhythm. That rhythm had a kind of peace. That rhythm of surrender – that quiet flow – taught me how to live with less tension and more grace.

So many lessons. So many blessings. Hyderabad didn't just give me a new address, it gave me a new alignment. A new peace. A new me.

My joy multiplied when I wrote down these funny, wild lessons.

Because they weren't just about traffic. They were about life.

## **JOY IS ALREADY HERE**

Before, I thought I had to do something big to deserve joy.

To prove myself. To earn rest. To justify my presence.

But now I know...

"Joy doesn't come because you earn it. It comes when you become available to it."

You become available by being present. Right here, right now.

The mind wants to chase. The heart wants to rest. Joy meets you when you stop running.

So if you're feeling overwhelmed... If you're tired of performing, proving, pleasing...

Pause.

Ask yourself: "What joy can I notice right now?" You don't need to feel joyful. You don't have to force anything.

Just notice. Maybe it's the light pouring in through the window.

The warmth of a hot cup of tea.

*Joy Found Me*

The softness of your breath.

Or simply the truth that you're still here.

Joy doesn't always shout. Sometimes, it just whispers. But it's always near.  
Let it find you.



## **1.3 PERCEPTION CHANGES EVERYTHING**

After I learned to notice joy in small, quiet moments, I discovered something even deeper.

Life doesn't shape us as much as the way we choose to see it.

Two people can walk through the exact same moment and feel entirely different things. One sees a burden. The other sees beauty.

What's the difference? Not the situation. Not luck. Not even timing.

Just perception, the lens we use to view life.

### **A SIMPLE MOMENT IN HYDERABAD**

It was one of those chaotic Hyderabad afternoons – hot, noisy and relentless.

The doorbell rang like an alarm that wouldn't stop.

The gas cylinder delivery had arrived late – again – and the delivery guy stood at the door, annoyed and impatient.

The ironing guy was waiting at the gate.

The maid had taken sudden leave, without notice and breakfast dishes were still stacked high in the sink.

My younger one had forgotten his school project at home, and I had to take it to the gate.

At the same time, the cook shouted from the kitchen, "Tomatoes are over! No more for rasam!"

It was chaos. It was a perfect storm. Every demand, every responsibility collided in one overwhelming moment.

Earlier in life, I would have reacted sharply. I might have lost it.

Maybe snapped at the cook. Yelled at the delivery guy. Scolded my child for forgetting the project. Maybe drawn into that thought:

"Why is everything always on me?"

But that day, something shifted. I paused and gently asked myself:

“Is this truly a crisis... or just how I’m seeing it? Can I just meet this moment, one piece at time?”

That one question shifted everything.

I saw the delivery man doing his job under the hot sun.

The cook rushed to finish lunch. The school staff patiently waited.

None of them was an obstacle. They were just life... moving around me.

Nothing outside had changed, but something inside me had softened.

And when I softened, the moment softened with me.

I moved from one task to the next, calmly. No rushing. No yelling.

Just a deep breath between each action. And magically, everything got done.

That moment taught me: “It’s not the mess, or the noise, or the interruptions that disturb us. It’s how we hold them in our mind.”

When perception shifts, peace begins.

## **REAL LIFE: MY SON’S ASTHMA ATTACK**

There was a time when even the smallest cough from my son would keep me awake all night.

He had asthma, and every episode filled me with fear.

My mind would spiral: “What if it gets worse? What if I miss something? What if I’m not enough?”

Sleep became rare. Panic became routine. His illness drained not just him, but me.

But something changed when I changed.

I began to ask for help when I needed it. I learned to breathe with him, not panic around him. I kept his medicines ready, stayed prepared, but stayed calm.

I realised: fear didn’t help him heal. But my calm presence did.

His asthma didn't go away overnight. But the way I met it changed.

I was no longer consumed. I was available and grounded.

And, more importantly, I stopped seeing illness as a crisis.

I saw it as part of our shared growth.

“Our view of life is shaped not by reality, but by our own perspective.”

## **THE EYES YOU CHOOSE**

Looking back, I see it clearly:

- Every move taught me something.
- Every city showed me a new version of myself.
- Every experience shifted how I viewed life.

A tantrum wasn't about me. A delay wasn't a punishment.

A “no” wasn't rejection, it was redirection.

“What we see depends on how we see. And how we see... changes everything.”... a moment of deep realisation.

## **PERCEPTION IN EVERYDAY MOMENTS**

### **1. Walking Through the City**

Earlier, walking through traffic and noise left me tense and irritated.

But slowly, I began to notice other things, like

The flower vendors arranging marigolds,

The children giggling in school uniforms,

The man carrying his lunch on a bicycle, smiling at strangers.

The traffic didn't change. My eyes did.

### **2. Same Old Chores**

Cooking and cleaning used to feel like an endless loop. But then I started lighting a diya before entering the kitchen. I played soft bhajans.

I moved slower. I breathed more.

And just like that...chores became meditation.

The work didn't change. But I had.

### **3. Family Interactions**

There were days when I felt unseen – especially when the kids were teenagers, caught up in their own worlds, or when my husband was buried in work and barely had time to look up. In the past, I used to take it personally. I'd wonder if I was doing something wrong, or if I mattered less as life moved on around me.

But now, I pause. I've learned to give space without losing myself. I remind myself that love doesn't always look like constant attention – and that being unseen doesn't mean being unloved.

Sometimes, it just means people are busy surviving their own days. And that's okay. I reminded myself: Everyone carries something. Not everything is about me. So instead of withdrawing or snapping, I chose to hold space. Gently.

They didn't change. I did. And that changed everything.

## **HOW MANAGING DOMESTIC HELP IN INDIA MADE ME MORE KIND AND AWARE**

Life in India runs on support: cleaners, cooks, and drivers.

But early on, it was chaos.

The helpers couldn't get along. Some even manipulated. Others gossiped.

Tension filled the house. At one point, it felt like I was the HR manager of a small, emotional battleground!

But even this taught me.

"People's behaviour often reflects their inner struggles, not your worth."

When I stopped reacting and started watching – calmly, quietly – the drama lost its power.

I told them: "Work in silence. Do japa internally. Treat this house like a temple."

It sounded strange, but they actually began using sign language!

The house became quiet again, oddly sacred.

No accusations. No drama. Just grace.

And grace worked better than control ever could.

## **AMAZING LESSONS FROM MANAGING DOMESTIC HELPERS**

(with a generous side of laughter)

### **1. You're not the boss.**

You're just a humble scheduler negotiating with a kitchen queen (cook) who might show up... if the stars align.

### **2. Driver says, "Madam, coming in 10 minutes" = Pray and wait.**

Time is a flexible concept. 10 minutes can mean tomorrow.

### **3. Sick leave policy: Unlimited.**

Especially during festivals. Bonus points if it's everyone's cousin's wedding this month.

### **4. They ghost you, then reappear as if nothing happened.**

No explanation. No guilt. Just, "Amma, Is everything Ok??...."

### **5. You develop spy-level skills.**

Tracking footwear outside the door becomes an art form. Are they here? Were they ever here?

### **6. The emotional rollercoaster is real.**

You love them, you're mad at them, you beg them, you make food for them, and then they quit.

## **7. No one can multitask like them.**

Chopping onions, yelling on the phone, and updating you on neighbour gossip, simultaneously.

## **8. Praise works better than pay.**

Say “You are the best”, and say this to all...

## **9. They know your secrets.**

They know your secrets. And they’ll share all the kitty party details with the neighbours.

## **10. You’re replaceable.**

But she? She’s an empire.

## **THE LENS IS YOURS**

You can’t always change the noise outside.

But you can soften the voice inside.

- Look through a lens of compassion, not control.
- Look through patience, not pressure.
- Look through love, not lack.

“The outer world stays noisy. But the lens we use, that’s ours. That lens shapes our peace.”

## **ZEN STORY THAT STAYS WITH ME**

One morning, a young monk was sweeping the temple garden. The sun was soft, the breeze gentle.

Suddenly, a man walking by shouted, “You’re doing it all wrong!”

The monk froze. Anger flared inside him. “Why insult me?” But before he could react, his teacher, who had been watching silently, stepped closer and whispered:

“He’s not shouting at you. He’s shouting from his own pain.”

The words were like cool water on fire. The monk paused, breathed, and saw it: the man was not his enemy – he was suffering.

Later, instead of holding onto the insult, the monk brought the man some water and invited him to sit in the shade.

That simple act of compassion changed everything – for both of them.

People act out of their inner wounds. When someone is angry, rude, or harsh, they are often crying for help without knowing it. Never take it personally – nothing is ever personal.

This story is a living example. The monk saw beyond the words, beyond the ego, into the deeper reality – and chose love over reaction. That’s the heart of Zen.

## **THE FUNNY SIDE OF PERCEPTION – AND YES, IT’S REAL!**

Perception Really Is Everything... Even in Household Chores!

Once, when the maid didn’t show up, we had to take turns mopping the floor. Now, in many Indian homes, there’s this unspoken (and slightly dramatic) belief: “Men should not hold a broomstick.”

It’s apparently bad luck, tradition... or just a really convenient excuse.

But the floor needed cleaning, and I needed help.

So, I got creative.

Instead of handing my husband the broomstick (and risking a cultural scandal), I sweetly said:

“Can you just use a wet cloth and wipe it down like this?”

No broom involved. Crisis averted. Marriage intact. Floor shining.

We were laughing the whole time because, really... when you shift your perception, even a missing maid turns into a comedy show and a team-building activity.

Because let’s be real, joy comes when you stop taking life too seriously.

## **THE GOLF CONFUSION**

One day, I decided to learn golf.

Fresh air, a fancy game and a new challenge – what could go wrong?

The coach kept saying, “Wow, ma’am, what a shot!”

I wasn’t sure if I was doing great or just helping him save up for a trip to Goa. (Still a mystery.)

Most of my shots flew into the bushes... or in the general direction of the sky.

One almost hit a tree.

One almost hit me!

At that point, it didn’t feel like golf anymore; it felt like a slow, peaceful adventure gone wrong.

But I smiled because sometimes, you’re not lost.

You’re just aiming in a very creative direction.

And who knows?

Maybe my missing golf balls are sitting somewhere... enjoying enlightenment.

## **THE WILD WEEKEND**

One weekend, everyone was out. I had the house to myself.

Did I meditate like a graceful yogini? Nope.

I wore a face mask, put henna in my hair, made chaat, blasted 90s Bollywood, and did a dramatic solo dance performance, with a mop as a co-star.

I even gave an emotional award speech to the kitchen sink. Why? Because joy doesn’t always look peaceful. Sometimes, it looks ridiculous. And that’s okay.

“Sometimes the best spiritual growth happens... when you pick up a mop, turn up the music, and dance your heart out to a microwave.”



**Let This Be Your Gentle Practice.** The next time life feels heavy, pause and ask: “Is this really the problem? Or just how I’m seeing it?”

You don’t need to fix everything. You just need to soften your lens.

Because perception quietly, powerfully, changes everything.

## **1.4 IS IT NECESSARY? – A QUESTION THAT BRINGS PEACE**

After I began seeing life differently, through a calmer lens, with more softness and presence, I noticed something else shift quietly inside me.

I began to witness myself.

I started observing how often I reacted without pausing, how quickly I would speak when silence would've been wiser, how often I'd carry little frustrations in my chest, hold on to opinions, replay conversations, get caught in emotional spirals that quietly drained my energy.

And then, one small question entered my life like a whisper from within and slowly became my compass.

**“Is it necessary?”**

**One Simple Question That Changed Everything**

It began quietly. I'd ask it in little everyday moments.

**Before I reacted – I paused.**

**Before I sent a quick reply – I breathed.**

**Before I got pulled into worry – I whispered to myself:**

**“Is this necessary right now?”**

The more I asked, the more space I felt inside me. Space to choose, to slow down, to return to calm.

“Half the battles we fight begin with unnecessary reactions.”

I realised something powerful: It wasn't life that was exhausting me.

It was my own mind's habit of over-thinking, over-explaining, over-committing. But when I paused and asked, “Is it necessary?”

I found relief. Clarity. Peace.

## **IT WASN'T DETACHMENT – IT WAS MATURITY**

This wasn't about being cold or disconnected. It was about being conscious. Being fully aware.

I saw clearly:

- I didn't need to attend every argument.
- I didn't have to react to every opinion.
- I could walk away without guilt.
- I could let others speak and still stay silent.
- I could choose peace over proving a point.

It was like clearing out a cluttered room inside me. Suddenly, there was more space to breathe.

## **A POND, A THOUGHT, A LET-GO**

One morning, I sat at a quiet park near a small pond, holding on to a friend's rude comment that had been echoing in my head for hours. I had already replayed the scene in a hundred ways.

But in that stillness, something inside whispered:

"Is this necessary to carry?"

And suddenly, it became clear: Her comment was long gone. But I was holding it like a hot coal. At that moment, I chose to let it go.

Not because it didn't hurt, but because I no longer wanted to carry what wasn't mine.

"You may not choose what happens to you, but you can choose what stays with you."

## **THE THREE STONES**

Years ago, in a self-awareness workshop, a teacher shared a story that left a quiet, permanent mark on me.

A student visited their old teacher, heart heavy with pain. The teacher handed them three small stones.

He said:

1. **"This first stone is what was said or done – the insult, the injustice. It's real. But you don't have to carry it forever."**

2. **“This second is the pain. It’s natural. It shows you are alive and feeling.”**
3. **“And the third... is your anger. The wish to hurt back. That one is optional. That one is your choice.”**

Then he looked gently into the student’s eyes and asked:

“Is this one necessary?”

The student was quiet. And then, slowly, they dropped the third stone. It was just a stone, and with it, a decade of emotional baggage loosened from their shoulders.

That story has stayed with me for years because most of what weighs us down... was never ours to carry long term.

## **HOW I USE IT EVERY DAY**

This question became my compass:

- When I was about to blame: “Is this really necessary?”
- When I was about to argue: “Is this helping me grow or shrink?”
- When I felt guilty for resting: “Is this pressure even real?”

Each time, I felt a little lighter. I began living with more intention and far less noise.

## **SMALL REMINDERS FROM REAL LIFE**

### **1. Every message doesn’t need a reply.**

Earlier, I felt guilty if I didn’t reply instantly. Now, I give myself time and space. It helps me respond, not react.

### **2. Not all silence needs to be filled.**

Earlier, if someone said something I disagreed with, I’d jump in. Now, I let silence speak. It’s often more powerful.

### **3. Not every “sale” is self-care.**

Yes, I’ve clicked “add to cart” during emotional days. But now I pause and ask, “Is this necessary?” Most times, it’s not.

**4. Gossip used to be tempting.**

Especially during chai-time conversations. But now I ask, “Does this bring light or noise?” And usually... It’s just noise.

**5. Rest is never optional.**

I’ve learned that skipping rest isn’t strength, it’s self-neglect. So now I ask: “Is pushing through necessary?” And if it’s not, I rest without guilt.

## **PLANTS, MY PEACEFUL FRIENDS**

There are days when I talk to my plants. Me: “You’re quiet. You listen. You don’t talk back. You don’t roll your eyes at me.”

Honestly? They’re better listeners than my kids. Is it necessary to talk to plants? No. Does it restore my sanity? Yes.

“Sometimes, the most powerful response is no response. Sometimes, peace means doing nothing and feeling everything.”

## **ONE MORE TINY BUT REAL MOMENT**

One evening, just as we were about to leave for a wedding, my daughter opened the door and accidentally spilled a full bowl of soup right on my silk saree.

My first instinct? To scold. To yell. To react. But then I saw her little face... eyes already filled with tears. I paused. Took a breath. And asked myself, “Is scolding her really necessary right now? Or is a hug more healing?”

I chose the hug.

The saree still needed cleaning, but our hearts stayed soft, connected, unhurt. And in that small moment, I felt so proud of who I was becoming.

Calm over chaos. Love over reaction. Peace over drama. That felt more beautiful than anything I could’ve dressed up in that night.

## **HERE IS A MANTRA THAT HEALS**

Let the world rush. Let people argue. Let the noise continue.

**You... pause. You... breathe. You... ask: “Is this necessary?”**

Because what you don't carry... is just as important as what you do. And when you stop giving energy to what's unnecessary, what truly matters will begin to shine quietly... from within.

"You don't have to fix everything. You don't have to attend every battle. Sometimes, your peace is more important than your opinion."

So stay soft. Stay grounded.

And keep asking: "Is it necessary?"

Because that one small question... Can bring the biggest peace.

## 1.5 BE AWARE OF THE THIEVES OF JOY

### THE MOMENT I SAW THIS CLEARLY, MY LIFE CHANGED COMPLETELY

For a long time, I thought joy was something I had to chase. I looked for it everywhere, in relationships, achievements, travel, and even spiritual practices.

But one day, I paused. And I saw something simple: Joy wasn't missing.

It was being stolen quietly.

Not by people, but by thoughts, emotions, habits, and pressures I didn't even notice.

They crept in slowly... Through overthinking. Through worry and fear. Through comparison. Through the never-ending scroll on social media. Through the pressure to do more, be more, and prove more.

They didn't snatch my joy in one big moment. They covered it up, little by little.

I didn't even realise how noisy my mind had become.

"Be more successful."

"Keep going, don't rest."

"Don't speak up, you'll be judged."

"Others are ahead, you're falling behind."

And in all this noise... I couldn't hear my own voice anymore.

I was doing everything, except truly living.

**So here's a soft reminder: Watch your mind. Watch your energy.**

Notice what's dimming your light. You don't have to fight these "joy thieves." Just become aware of them.

Because when you shine the light of awareness, they naturally lose their power.

I learned something beautiful: Joy is not something you find. It's something you uncover. You were born joyful. Look at a child, dancing and laughing freely, for no reason. Their joy is not borrowed from the outside. It comes from

being fully present. It is a fragrance of their own being arising because they are totally in the present moment. That same joy still lives inside us. It's just hidden beneath years of stress, pressure, and overthinking.

When joy is buried, life feels heavy. Even after resting, you feel tired.

Even after success, something feels missing. Even in a crowd, you feel alone. You smile on the outside but feel dull inside.

I know that feeling. I've lived it. But here's what helped me...

I started protecting my joy like a flame in the wind. Not by running away, but by slowing down. Not reacting to everything. Taking small pauses. Choosing peace over proving. Saying no when needed. Spending time with people who made me feel seen.

Some days, this meant sitting quietly with a cup of tea. On other days, by walking barefoot on the grass. Sometimes, doing nothing and not feeling guilty about it.

If joy feels far away... know this: It hasn't left you. It's just waiting for you to slow down enough to feel it again.

## **HERE'S WHAT HELPED ME:**

- I forgave myself and others, not because everything was okay, but because I was tired of carrying the weight.
- I rested, deep rest, not just sleep, but stillness.
- I played again. I laughed out loud. I danced. I sang in the kitchen. I stopped waiting for the "right moment" to enjoy life.
- I started speaking kindly to myself. My inner voice softened.
- And most of all, I practiced gratitude. Saying "thank you" for the little things, my breath, my family, my best friends, the sky outside – opened my heart to joy again.

## **JOY THIEVES: WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR**

These can slowly steal your joy. Check it out, you may be seeing them in your life too:

- **Overthinking made the mind busy** – saying "Not now" helped bring calm.



- **One scroll on social media brought comparison** – remembering that everyone has their own path brought peace.
- **Guilt and regret stayed too long** – letting go helped protect peace.
- **Trying to be perfect was exhausting** – focusing on small steps felt better.
- **Wanting to control everything caused stress** – letting life flow made things easier.
- **Holding on to anger felt heavy** – forgiveness brought freedom.
- **Resting used to feel wrong** – now, rest feels like strength.
- **Always rushing made life feel hard** – slowing down brought more joy.
- **Forgetting to be thankful took away joy** – saying “thank you” brought it back.

## **JOY IS ALREADY HERE**

Joy doesn't need a big reason. It lives in:

- Your breath.
- A kind word.
- A soft smile.
- A quiet moment where nothing is missing.

Joy comes not when you chase it, but when you create space for it.

## **I REMEMBER A SUFI STORY – THE MAN WHO LOST HIS JOY:**

A man told a wise Sufi, “I have everything: home, family, work... but no joy.”

The Sufi gave him a small mirror and said, “Every morning, look in this and say three truths: What you have, who you love, what you're grateful for.”

At first, the man felt silly. But slowly, he smiled again.

He saw flowers in his garden. Heard his child's laughter. Tasted his food with presence.

He told the Sufi, “I didn't lose joy. I just stopped seeing it.”

The Sufi smiled, “Yes. Joy is never far. It waits for your heart to open.”

## **REAL-LIFE JOY CATCHERS**

Here's a funny little story from my life:

Back in the day, when I called my husband during his office hours, he would press the "I'm busy" button on phone.

At first, I used to feel a bit annoyed. But then I thought, "Hey, I want to be busy too!" But... doing what?

So, I made a new best friend – the TV, watching good movies. We didn't have YouTube in those days.

I sat down, grabbed snacks, and told myself, "I'm in an important meeting."

Later, my husband called back. And guess what?

I didn't pick up immediately. I texted, "Busy. Will call later."

In the evening, he asked, "What were you busy with?"

I said, "Oh, I had back-to-back meetings with the TV all day. Very intense."

We both burst out laughing.

That's when I caught a joy thief: waiting around for someone else to make me happy.

Then onwards ... I've learned to entertain myself. Be my own source of fun.

Less sulking, more laughing. More living, less waiting. Less planning, more playing.

No more chasing people for smiles – I started making my own!

Why wait for others to make you happy? Realised, that's the biggest joy thief.

## **REAL-LIFE JOY CATCHERS – PART 2**

One day, I walked into a South Indian restaurant and ordered a dosa.

The waiter asked, "Is sir coming?"

I smiled and said,

"No, no, sir is not coming. But you can bring the dosa... and if you're free, come keep me company!"

He looked shocked. Then, he laughed. I laughed. The dosa arrived. Joy level: 100.

You know what I've learned?

I don't need people around to have fun. I've become my own happiness machine.

I go for walks alone.

I watch movies alone.

In India, I used to buy THREE movie tickets – left seat, right seat, and middle seat.

Guess where I sat?

Smack in the middle, like a queen.

All by myself, popcorn in hand, smiling as if I owned the theatre.

Why not? Bit by bit, the joy thieves gave up and left me.

And joy? It stayed with me. Forever.

Go ahead – order that dosa, buy those movie tickets, laugh loud, live big.

Happiness is not a +1 event. It's an ME + JOY deal!

## **JOY THIEVES & THE EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER I NEVER BOUGHT TICKETS FOR**

Here's what I've learned about Joy: It's not lost.

It's just hiding behind wet towels, weird compliments, and my late-night overthinking marathons.

Let me explain.

### **LESSON 1: OVERTHINKING IS THE BRAIN'S VERSION OF STAND-UP COMEDY – EXCEPT I'M THE ONLY ONE NOT LAUGHING.**

Every night, I switch off the lights and say, "Okay, sleep now."

My brain: "Sure... but first, let's replay that phone call from 2 weeks ago."

“Did he sound tired? Should I have asked twice?”

“Did I talk too much? Should I delete myself?”

Suddenly, I’m lying there like a fully charged Wi-Fi router, connecting to every unnecessary thought at once.

## **LESSON 2: MY HUSBAND ONCE CALLED ME “NORMAL.” AND THAT’S WHEN I KNEW – HE DOESN’T KNOW ME AT ALL.**

I’m emotional. I over think. I over share. I talk to myself. I can feel people’s energy and sometimes predict the future.

I’m a spiritual, dramatic, chaotic rollercoaster with no brakes.

NORMAL?!

I am not some boring side dish. I’m the full thali – with masala, spicy mango pickles, crunchy papad, and a surprise dessert when you least expect it.

I am not “normal.” I am the main character.

## **LESSON 3: WET TOWELS ON THE BED = JOY THIEF IN FABRIC FORM.**

Me: Calm. Peaceful. Zen music.

Universe: “Let’s see how long that lasts ...”

Enter: Wet towel on the bed.

Zen didn’t just leave – it ran out screaming and booked a one-way ticket to the Himalayas.

So, here’s the real secret: Joy thieves are everywhere.

In your brain. In laundry. In random compliments from clueless husbands.

But if you can laugh before you lose it, if you can cry, shout, sip tea, and still joke about it.

You’re not on a breakdown. You’re just riding the emotional rollercoaster... in style. And that, my friend, is called winning.

## **1.6 MIND GAMES – STOP SELF-SABOTAGING**

For a long time, I didn't realise how much my own mind was playing tricks on me. I thought I was being 'realistic', 'cautious', or just thinking deeply. But slowly, I saw the truth. I wasn't being thoughtful. I was stuck in mind games.

Quiet, sneaky thoughts that seemed true but were quietly stealing my peace, confidence and joy.

Thoughts like:

- "What if they don't like me?"
- "Why haven't they replied?"
- "Maybe I said something wrong."
- "I feel anxious... something must be wrong, right?"
- "Am I overthinking? Or missing something? Or just confused?"

I used to follow these thoughts everywhere, every time I did, I ended up drained, uncertain, and disconnected from myself.

### **MIND GAMES ARE MENTAL POWER PLAYS**

Mind games are tricks of the ego – love needs no power play. Mind games aren't always loud or dramatic. Sometimes they're soft whispers, doubt, fear, confusion, overthinking, or trying too hard to please.

They show up as:

- Overanalysing someone's silence or tone.
- Making stories in your head that aren't true.
- Blaming yourself for how others act or feel.
- Believing you must be perfect to be loved.

These aren't just thoughts. They are patterns. Loops. Emotional habits that keep you stuck in stress or survival mode. They don't help solve anything; they only keep you trapped.

## **WHY DO WE PLAY THESE MIND GAMES?**

It's because the mind is always afraid. It wants safety, control, and approval. In trying to protect us, it often blocks our joy, love, and freedom. The mind is not the enemy – it is only a servant that has forgotten its place.

When we live only through the mind, life becomes a series of worries and plans. But our true self is free, alive, and fearless. It does not need certainty or praise.

When we rest in our being, the mind relaxes, the heart opens, and life flows naturally. Every moment becomes a celebration, every breath a gift, because we are no longer trapped in thought, but fully alive.

## **HOW I BROKE FREE**

The biggest change for me was realising: I am not my thoughts. I am the one who notices them.

One morning, I woke up anxious. My mind said, "You're behind. You're not doing enough. Today will be hard." Before, I would've believed it and let it ruin my day.

I would pause when painful thoughts came. Instead of getting swept away, I'd name what was happening:

"Fear is here."

"Worry is trying to take over."

That small pause gave me space – it softened the grip of the thought.

Practice pausing and saying, "Oh, that's just mind talking." You don't have to believe it or follow it.

## **SIMPLY WATCH THE THOUGHTS LIKE CLOUDS PASSING BY. THEN THEY LOSE THEIR CONTROL OVER YOU.**

I stopped believing everything my mind said.

Thoughts like:

"You're not enough."

“If they don’t respond, you’ve failed.”

I started to see them for what they were: stories, not truths.

By observing my thoughts instead of identifying with them, they began to feel lighter.

I could return, again and again, to my breath, my senses, this moment.

And I stayed gentle with myself.

Judging the thoughts only made them louder.

But meeting them with compassion helped me stay present, without harshness.

## **REAL-LIFE STORY: A FRIEND’S WAKE-UP CALL**

A dear friend gave everything to her marriage: love, patience, loyalty. From the outside, everything looked fine. But inside, her husband controlled every decision and often brushed off her feelings. She kept shrinking to keep the peace.

One day, she looked in the mirror and didn’t recognise herself anymore. Not broken, just quiet where she used to shine.

She didn’t shout or run away. She said softly, ‘I love you, but I won’t lose myself to keep this .

That quiet, clear stand changed everything.

He woke up, too. Now they handle things with respect and care. She no longer shrinks. He no longer controls.

## **HOW TO STAY AWAKE NOW**

These simple habits help protect your joy and keep you out of mental traps:

- Pause before reacting – notice first, act later.
- Trust your body – tension shows what the mind is hiding.
- Watch actions, not just words – behaviour shows the truth.
- Make space for quiet – stillness brings clarity.

- Respect yourself – if you feel you need to shrink, something is wrong.
- Notice your thoughts – don't follow every thought automatically.
- Breathe and return to now – the present moment keeps you alert.
- Say no when needed – protecting your energy is not selfish.
- Laugh and play – joy keeps the mind from becoming serious and trapped.

## **HOW EXTERNAL TRIGGERS AND MIND GAMES STEAL YOUR JOY**

Sometimes, things outside of us and our own thoughts team up to take away our happiness:

- You see someone's perfect life on social media – that's an external joy thief.
- Then your mind says, "You're behind. You're not enough." – that's an internal mind game.
- Suddenly, your mood drops, even though nothing in your real life has changed.

In simple words:

- Joy thieves take away your peace.
- Mind games make you doubt yourself and see life differently.

## **SMALL STORIES, QUIET TRUTHS**

1. A man kept complaining that he was always tired.

His friend said, "Have you tried going to bed earlier?"

"No," he said, "I stay up scrolling because it feels fun."

Sometimes we avoid the simple truth because it feels hard, even though that is where real change begins.

2. A student was upset about failing a test.

He said, "I studied everything from the book, but I still failed."

His teacher asked, "Did you try practicing problems instead of just reading?"



We often look for answers in the easiest place, not the right one. Real understanding comes when we face what feels challenging.

3. A woman said softly,

“I stopped arguing because I realised some people don’t want to understand, they just want to be right.”

Choosing silence isn’t giving up.

It’s protecting your peace.

Knowing when to step back is a kind of strength – not everyone is ready to listen.

4. Two friends had stopped talking after a fight.

One said, “I don’t remember why we argued, but I’m still angry.”

The other replied, “Me too. I think it’s more about not wanting to forgive than about what happened.”

Sometimes, anger sticks around long after the cause is forgotten.

The ego holds on tightly, even when the heart wants to let go.

And beneath these simple stories is this quiet truth: Truth doesn’t shout. It appears in moments of stillness and honesty.

When we pause and listen deeply, we find that peace was never lost – we just forgot where to look. The mind is loud, but the truth is quiet. The mind spins stories and wisdom is still. We don’t need to believe every thought. We don’t have to play every game.

When we stop reacting, we return to clarity and peace. That’s where joy lives.

## **MEET BHOLA & BABLI**

Between the reflections and realisations in this book, you'll keep meeting Bhola and Babli, your everyday desi couple bringing laughs, love, a little bit of chaos, and unexpected wisdom at just the right time.

I created them as a light-hearted pause in a journey that often gets serious. A little breather. A small laugh. A big reminder: growth doesn't always have to be heavy.

## **THEY'RE A PERFECT MATCH... AND A PERFECT MESS.**

Bhola thinks Babli is innocent (and a little clueless).

Babli thinks Bhola is sweet... but mostly slow.

The comedy? It writes itself.

He's all about shortcuts and peace.

She's all about depth and details.

Funny, messy, relatable – just like life. You'll laugh. You'll nod. You'll say, "I know a couple like this." Maybe you are that couple.

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Why are they here?

Because their story is all of ours.

Because humour is also a teacher.

They fight over Wi-Fi and chai, misplace the remote mid-drama, and call it "growth." Because sometimes, healing looks like snacks and sarcasm.

Every few chapters, Bhola and Babli will pop in, not to distract you, but to remind you:

- Big lessons can hide in small, silly moments.
- You can be growing and still be a little messy.
- Real life is snacks, surprises and second chances.
- Being strong doesn't mean being serious all the time.

## *Chapter 1*

- Healing can happen between jokes and tea.
- Growth can come with giggles.
- And real life is equal parts messy, funny and meaningful.

We all have our Bhola & Babli moments.

The only question is, “Are we laughing through them...” or taking them too seriously?

## **BHOLA & BABLI – BREAK #1: ARGUMENTS, APOLOGIES, & EXTRA DRAMA**

### **1. Silent Treatment**

Bhola: “Are you giving me the silent treatment?”

Babli: [Silence]

Bhola: “Ah, peace. This is my favourite fight; I am loving it.”

### **2. Is It Necessary?**

Bhola: Before you speak, ask: “Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?”

Babli: By that logic, 90% of my words are cancelled.

### **3. Genuine Hug**

Bhola: “I told my wife she should embrace her mistakes.”

Friend: “What did she say?”

Bhola: “She gave me a big hug.”

### **4. Expert advice**

Bhola’s neighbour asked, “Why do you keep talking to yourself?”

Bhola replied, “Because sometimes, I need expert advice.”

### **5. Fight Meetings**

Bhola’s Friend: “Why do you always look tired?”

Bhola: “Because Babli schedules fights like meetings.”

Friend: “At least your calendar’s full!”

### **6. Memory Loss: Bhola’s Secret Conflict Strategy**

Babli: “You never admit when you’re wrong!”

Bhola: “That’s not true! I just wait until you forget the topic.”

## **7. Bhola vs Babli: The Exam He Never Studied For**

Bhola: “Why do our fights feel like board exams?”

Babli: “Because you don’t study, you walk in overconfident, completely unprepared, forget everything I said... and somehow still get promoted to the next fight.”

## **8. Bhola’s Relocation Plan**

Friend: “Bhola, why are you standing outside your own house?”

Bhola: I said, “Calm down, during a fight.”

Friend: “That’s it?”

Bhola: “Yeah, Babli calmly changed the locks, packed my bags, and told the neighbours, “I’m on vacation.”

Friend: “So, when do you move back?”

Bhola: “After I master the art of saying sorry... in five different languages.”



## **PART 2**

### **THE UNBURDENING – LETTING GO TO LET JOY IN**





## CHAPTER 2

### 2.1     **RELEASING WHAT NO LONGER SERVES ME**

For a long time, I didn't even realise how much I was holding on. Holding on to people, roles, regrets, expectations, and even pain that no longer helped me. I carried it as if it were still mine.

#### **AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE OF RELEASE**

Releasing means letting go of thoughts, habits, people, or situations that drain your energy or block your growth. Sometimes, holding on feels like safety, but really, it weighs you down.

I told myself for a while, "It matters. It meant something. I can't just let it go." But holding on didn't bring peace. It brought pressure. It kept me stuck in places I had already outgrown. I've learned that true freedom comes when you choose peace over pressure.

Sometimes, the message is clear, but we keep rereading it. The conversation is over, but we keep replaying it. The person has walked away, but we hold on in our minds.

Life moves forward. The phone rings, we answer. The sun sets, we turn on the lights. The day ends, we sleep. Plans change, we adjust. We lose touch, we remember. We fall down, we rise.

The seasons shift, so do we. The clock ticks, and still, we keep going. Mistakes are made, lessons are learned. Hearts break, then heal. Rain falls, and flowers grow. Life moves forward – quietly, relentlessly, beautifully.

But often, we hold on to what is already gone, to people who are no longer really with us, to identities we've already outgrown, to pain we've already processed but not released.

Letting go is the real lesson.

Letting go can feel like losing. The pain is familiar, even when it's heavy. But I've learned something important: letting go doesn't mean forgetting. It means making space, not because you're giving up, but because you're ready to grow.

**When I started to let go, I felt a lightness I had forgotten. The mind became quiet, the heart opened and life began to flow naturally. Letting go is not losing – it is making space for joy, peace and freedom.**

## **WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT LETTING GO**

- I'm not responsible for fixing everything or everyone.
- Guilt isn't proof that I cared – my heart already did that.
- I don't have to keep holding on to what keeps hurting me.
- I no longer need to shrink myself just to keep the peace.
- Silence isn't the price I have to pay to feel safe.
- I'm done proving I'm enough – I always was.

Letting go comes from love, not anger. Letting go comes from clarity, not fear. I choose peace not because I was broken, but because I am whole. In that choice, I find real relief.

The mind relaxes, the heart opens, and life flows naturally. Every moment becomes a celebration, every breath a reminder that I am fully alive.

## **SIGNS IT MIGHT BE TIME TO LET GO**

You feel constantly drained, anxious, or stuck when you're around certain people or thoughts. The same painful patterns keep repeating, leaving you stressed or hurt.

There's a heaviness inside when you engage in certain habits or relationships. Joy and peace feel distant in the parts of life that should matter most.

If any of this resonates, it might be time to loosen your grip. Letting go doesn't mean giving up; it means making room for something better.

## **WHEN DISTANCE GROWS QUIETLY**

I once met a couple, Anita and Rajeev. (Throughout this book, I use names like Anita and Rajiv, or other names for my stories. These names are fictional and do not refer to real people.)

Anita and Rajeev had been married for over 20 years, had grown kids, and from the outside, life seemed steady and “normal.” But they came to see me because of something quieter than arguments – silence.

Anita said, “We don’t fight. We don’t yell. We just don’t talk anymore. It feels like we’re roommates, not a couple.”

Rajeev added softly, “She takes care of everything. I guess I thought we were doing fine.”

There was no big fight, no dramatic moment. What had crept in was emotional distance. Their love didn’t end with shouting – it faded in the quiet. Daily routines took over. To-do lists replaced connection. Even though Anita made tea every morning, they hadn’t sat and shared a cup together in years.

One day, Anita brought in an old letter Rajeev had written to her in the early days of their marriage. It was full of warmth, love, and silly jokes. She read it out loud during a session. Rajeev grew quiet, then emotional. “I didn’t know you still had that,” he said.

Something shifted. The next week, they started drinking tea together again. Just five minutes each morning, a small habit, but one filled with presence.

Sometimes, we hold on too tightly to routines that no longer serve us – even silence. And sometimes, it’s a small moment that shows us it’s time to let go of that silence and reach for connection again.

Letting go doesn’t always mean walking away. Sometimes, it means choosing to lean back in – with intention, with care, and with love.

## **THE FREEDOM IN LETTING GO**

Sometimes we can ask ourselves gently, “What am I really holding on to?” and take a deep breath, reminding ourselves, “I don’t have to carry this right now.” Letting go isn’t giving up – it’s choosing a new path. Learning to trust life again means knowing that what’s meant for us will come without force. And the most important thing to remember is this: holding on too tightly doesn’t just push others away – it pushes us away from ourselves. **Letting go doesn’t mean you stopped caring. It means:**

- You stopped forcing what doesn’t fit anymore.
- You stopped holding onto what’s already broken.
- You stopped being loyal to pain.

This isn't quitting. It's choosing clear thinking over confusion, calm over chaos, and peace over proving yourself. Sometimes, it really is that simple.

## **FINDING MYSELF BY LETTING GO**

There was a time I held on tightly to my child, treating them like they were still little. I checked in too often and worried more than I should. But love doesn't come from control – it grows with space. I learned to listen, to ask for their thoughts, and to truly hear them. Real closeness isn't about holding on too tight; it's about trust. It was a lesson I had to learn slowly.

There was also a time when I needed to feel important – to be seen, recognised, and valued. That phase passed. Now, I find peace in supporting others without needing to prove myself. It's quieter this way, but it feels honest and deep.

Letting go isn't losing love or losing yourself. Sometimes, it's how you find the truest, strongest part of you. It fits with what I've learned before: when we loosen our grip, we don't lose – we gain freedom, trust, and peace.

## **WE HOLD ON FOR MANY REASONS.**

Sometimes it's the fear of change or the unknown, which can feel scarier than staying with what isn't working. Other times, we cling to our identity, our comfort, or even familiar pain. We feel guilty, responsible, or hope that things will get better. And often, we carry past hurts that haven't fully healed. But holding on too tightly can hurt more than it helps, keeping us from the freedom and peace we truly need.

Many times holding on keeps us stuck instead of safe. We keep checking messages, replaying memories, hoping something will change. Instead of holding on to love or friendship, we end up holding on to pain. We hold on to the need to feel noticed or important.

Letting go doesn't erase what we had – it simply gives us room to breathe again. Some friendships or relationships may fade, and that's okay. We don't have to force old connections to feel new. Instead, we can stop chasing and let life bring what's real.

The more we resist letting go, the more disconnected we feel. When we release the "shoulds," we come back to what is – and that's where joy truly lives.

This fits with what I've learned: letting go is not losing, but making space for peace and real connection.

## **KAVYA'S MOMENT: CHOOSING WHAT TO CARRY**

Kavya was once our neighbour, always busy, juggling her house, kids, in-laws, and endless errands. She seemed strong, always smiling.

One evening, at the park, she shared something real:

"I carry so much in my mind... the pressure to do more, regrets I can't change, and dreams I'm not even sure are mine."

She didn't cry, but I could feel the weight she carried.

She said, "I didn't realise how heavy it was until I finally stopped and gently let go of what no longer felt true."

After that, Kavya changed – not overnight, but in small, powerful ways.

She began saying no when she needed rest. She stopped apologising for not being perfect. She chose what to carry: a few real goals, memories that made her stronger, and space to feel light again.

That quiet moment shifted everything.

She stopped trying to prove herself and found peace in simply holding space for others.

Her story reminds me of what I've learned: We don't have to carry everything. Holding on too tight doesn't help – it weighs us down. Letting go is about choosing what truly matters and making room for peace and joy.

This fits with everything else I've come to understand – letting go isn't losing, it's freeing ourselves to live more fully.

## **LETTING GO, ONE GENTLE STEP AT A TIME**

I became a life coach by simply listening. Not by giving big advice or fixing problems – just being present. Somehow, that was enough. For years, coaching in Hyderabad was more than just a pastime – it was my joy-pass... a way to fill my soul with connection and meaning.

One thing I've learned again and again is this: you don't have to carry what is breaking you. You don't have to explain what already feels heavy. You can release it gently, with love and not bitterness. Letting go doesn't make you heartless – it means your heart is healing.

Realising isn't a one-time decision. It's a daily practice. It happens in small, quiet moments:

- Letting go of a negative thought before it spirals.
- Dropping a harsh judgement – especially towards yourself.
- Challenging an old belief that keeps you stuck.
- Journaling honestly – not to fix, but to feel.
- Breathing deeply, creating space inside your body and mind.
- Talking with a friend or therapist to process emotions safely.
- Letting go through physical rituals – decluttering, donating, or writing letters you never sent.
- Forgiving, even if just a little, because it frees you.

Each of these moments is a step forward. Celebrate them.

## **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU RELEASE**

When you release, you create space – space in your heart, your mind, your life. That space brings clarity. It brings lightness.

New energy, new opportunities, even joy begin to flow in.

True release doesn't mean running away from your feelings – it means facing them fully and still choosing to let go. Not because you're giving up, but because you're ready to grow.

This, I've realised, ties into everything I've shared before:

Letting go isn't losing – it's returning to yourself.

It's choosing peace, presence, and freedom – one gentle breath at a time.

## **THE MONKEY TRAP – A LIGHT MOMENT, A DEEP LESSON**

You've probably heard the story about how monkeys get trapped – they reach into a jar for a banana, but when they try to pull their hand out, they won't let go of the fruit.

And just like that, they're stuck.

Honestly... sometimes I'm that monkey.

Only, my banana is gossip or old patterns I know aren't good for me. And the jar? A group chat I should've left ages ago. A habit that drains me. A thought I keep replaying.

Letting go can feel hard. And that's okay. Sadness, fear, even anger – these aren't signs you're failing. They're signs you're healing. Letting go doesn't always feel light at first. Be patient and gentle with yourself.

## **SOFT REMINDERS FOR HARD MOMENTS**

A friend once told me something I'll never forget:

“If you can't let go, then hold on... but know you're the one carrying the cage.”

That landed deep.

Letting go isn't about being cold or careless.

It's not a switch – it's a practice. A slow softening. A return to trust.

When old habits, thoughts, or noise pull me back in, I pause, breathe, and ask:

“Is this really worth carrying?”

- Breathe in: Let it come.
- Breathe out: Let it go.
- Let go. Let life flow.

But starting over doesn't have to be dramatic. It can be a quiet shift. A small choice. A gentle beginning.

And in that beginning – in that open space – there's often a joy you didn't know you were missing.

Just like everything else I've shared on this journey; the truth is simple:

Letting go isn't about losing. It's about choosing yourself.

Again and again... and again and again – with love.

## **2.2 SURRENDER THE EGO'S NEED TO WIN**

I used to believe that, being right made me strong.

I would argue, explain, defend – even over small things – just to prove my point. I felt that letting go would make me less important.

Now I see differently. Being right is never as important as being at peace. The ego always wants to win. It feels small when challenged. But what is the use of winning if you lose something far greater – peace, connection, kindness, love?

Finally, I choose only peace. I choose understanding over ego. I choose love over being right.

And life feels lighter, freer, joyful – because the heart is no longer trapped in the need to win.

### **WHY I LET GO OF BEING RIGHT**

I used to get caught up in needing others to agree with me. I'd go back and forth – defending, explaining, even arguing – just to feel understood. In my mind, letting it go meant giving in, or worse, looking weak.

Now I see: it is not being right that matters, it is being conscious. The mind wants to prove, the ego wants to win – but neither brings peace.

I choose clarity over argument, awareness over pride, and peace over proving myself.

Life becomes effortless when the mind stops trying to dominate.

### **THE SHIFT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING**

I started asking myself:

- “Do I really need to prove this?” No.
- “Is this worth the stress?” Absolutely not.
- “Can I choose peace instead?” Yes.

Most of the time, peace was the better choice. Even when I “won” the argument, I often lost something more important: Connection. Kindness. Love.



## **CHOOSING WHAT MATTERS**

Sometimes, silence is strength.

Sometimes, walking away is the real victory.

Sometimes, letting go is how we rise.

Now I choose: Peace over pride. Understanding over ego. Love over being right.

And life feels lighter this way.

## **SOFTENING INTO SURRENDER**

“Surrender is the simple but profound wisdom of yielding to, rather than opposing, the flow of life.” – Eckhart Tolle

In my work, both personally and professionally – I’ve seen the same patterns show up again and again.

Why is it so hard to surrender and let go, even when we know it might bring more peace?

Here’s what I’ve noticed:

### **1. When Ego Becomes Identity**

Riya once told me, “If I admit I’m wrong, I feel like I lose who I am.” She had always been known as the “smart one” in her family. But over time, she realised her worth wasn’t tied to being right. It was in her presence, her kindness, her care.

Letting go doesn’t mean losing yourself. It means realising you’re more than your opinions.

### **2. Fear of Shame**

Pranay once corrected a colleague in a meeting, only to find out later that he was wrong. He avoided everyone for days – not because they judged him, but because he judged himself.

Being wrong doesn’t make you less capable. It means you’re still learning – just like the rest of us.

### **3. The Illusion of Control**

We think being right gives us control. But most of the time, it just adds tension. Once, I followed a recipe to the letter – measuring every gram – and the dish still flopped.

I laughed. I learned. It reminded me that control doesn't always lead to success. Real strength is flexibility. Let life surprise you.

### **4. Emotional Attachment**

I once worked with a couple, Rishi and Megha, who fought over everything. Eventually, Megha said something that shifted everything: “I don't need to win. I just want to feel heard.”

So we focused less on who was “right” and more on what each person needed. Most of the time, we're not trying to win – we just want to feel seen.

### **5. When Winning Feels Like Worth**

In a world that rewards competition, winning can feel like value. But real respect doesn't come from being loud or clever. It comes from listening, pausing, and showing up calmly.

The ego says, “When everything falls into place, I'll find peace.”

But the truth is, when you find peace within, everything begins to fall into place, says,

Ask yourself:

- Where in my life am I focused on being right instead of truly understanding?
- Is there a relationship where I'm still clinging to the need to win?
- What could become possible if I simply chose to let go?

Letting go isn't giving up – it's returning to peace.

## **A ZEN STORY I LOVE: THE BAMBOO AND THE STORM**

A scholar once asked a Zen master, “What does real strength look like?”

The master pointed to a bamboo grove and said, “Last winter, a storm came. The strong oak tree broke. But bamboo? It bent. And stood tall again the next morning.”

**Being right can make you stiff like the oak – strong, but breakable.**

**Being humble makes you like bamboo – flexible, rooted and alive.**

These are simple truths, but deeply powerful. When you stop needing to prove yourself, you begin to free yourself.

Here are small ways to begin surrendering, with strength and self-awareness:

- Pause before reacting: Ask, “Is this really worth my energy?”
- Breathe when triggered: A few deep breaths can shift your state.
- Watch your patterns: Are you trying to defend, or are you trying to connect?
- Let silence speak: Not everything needs your opinion.
- Stay rooted: Someone’s disagreement doesn’t make you wrong – or less.

**True strength isn’t found in winning arguments – it’s in choosing peace.** It’s in staying calm when it’s easier to react. It’s in responding with grace when your ego wants to fight. Letting go of the need to be right isn’t losing. It’s choosing you – your peace, your clarity, your joy.

Every time you choose peace instead of proving a point... you’re not giving up – you’re rising above.

Let peace lead the way.

## **2.3 FEAR WEARS MANY MASKS**

### **FEAR IS FALSE EVIDENCE APPEARING REAL – UNKNOWN**

What is fear, really? Fear is a sensation we feel physically – in our stomach, in our body. It is raw and tangible. When it arises, it disconnects us from our inner power, from our strength. Fear is not just an emotion; it is a pause, an interruption in the natural flow of life.

What are we afraid of, really? We fear being alone. We fear dying – and sometimes even living fully. We fear intimacy, fear showing our true selves, fear our own thoughts, and even fear the choices we make. In truth, our fears are many, and they touch every corner of our life.

We are taught to fear. Fear is taught as if it is wisdom. And so we follow fear, not love. It becomes so natural, so quiet inside us, that no one even questions it.

Love is the opposite of fear. Love is clarity. Love is understanding.

For many years, I didn't realise how much fear lived in me. It was not loud, it did not scream. It dressed itself in nice clothes – planning, politeness, goals, even care. It quietly sat in my decisions, in my delays, in my endless thinking.

One day, I stopped. I said, "I will feel the fear, and yet I will move. I will do what needs to be done. Enough of hiding. I want to see clearly what is here."

And in that moment, I began to see something very simple, very true.

Fear had no real power – only the power I gave it. It was not outside of me; it was inside, quietly asking to be understood, not fought.

I realised that behind every fear, there was a longing – a longing to live fully, to be free, to be seen. And the more I moved through fear instead of running from it, the lighter I became. Life stopped feeling like a series of walls, and began to feel like a vast, open space, waiting for me to step into it.

### **FEAR WEARS MANY MASKS**

Fear wears many masks – anger, comparison, overthinking, perfectionism, even fake confidence. The hardest part? We start believing all of it is who we are.

Behind every fear, there's a longing – to live fully, to be free, to be seen.

Fear often sits quietly in our lives, and we don't even notice it. It doesn't always scream or shake us. Most of the time, it shows up dressed as "being practical," "playing safe," or "waiting for the right time."

It whispers things like,

"Be smart."

"Don't take risks."

"What if you fail?"

"What if people don't take you seriously?"

And many of us just listen.

We stay in comfortable places, even when our hearts are shouting to move. We tell ourselves we're being wise, when really, we're afraid. We fill our days with tasks, plans, distractions – not because we love being busy, but because slowing down would make us feel what we've been avoiding.

And when we do pause, fear rises quietly, like smoke from somewhere deep inside.

When we walk with fear instead of running from it, life opens up. Courage isn't about having no fear; it's about moving through it, gently, with awareness, with love.

Things began to shift the moment I stopped running and started sitting with myself. I stopped trying to "fix" fear and simply began observing it. Slowly, I realised fear was not the enemy – it was a part of me asking for love, for understanding. It wasn't there to destroy me; it was trying, in its own confused way, to protect me.

That's when everything softened. I no longer pretend fear isn't there. I see it when it appears. I let it speak, but I don't let it decide. I move with honesty. I live gently. I take steps even when fear walks beside me.

Because fear is just a shadow. It passes when I stop running. And every time I choose presence over panic, trust over control, love over fear... I come back to myself.

As I mentioned earlier, I used to think fear only showed up as panic or anxiety – a racing heart, shaky hands, or sudden tears. But when I started paying attention – to myself and to others – I realised fear often looks very

different. Most of the time, it doesn't look like fear at all. We all carry it in our own way. Sometimes it is loud, sometimes it is quiet. Sometimes it appears disguised as something else entirely.

## WHERE FEAR HIDES

Fear doesn't always look like panic or worry. Often, it hides quietly, in ways we don't expect. Here are some places I've seen it show up – in my life and in the lives of others:

**Perfectionism:** One person pushed herself endlessly at work. From the outside, she looked driven. But inside, she was terrified that one mistake would mean she wasn't enough. **Fear was hiding beneath the pressure to be perfect.**

**People-Pleasing:** Another person said yes to everything. He thought he was being kind, helpful. But really, he was afraid of being disliked, left out, or seen as difficult. **Fear was hiding behind the mask of being “nice.”**

**Anger:** Anger can be fear wearing a strong face. We react, snap, or shut down – not always from true anger, but from feeling unsafe or powerless. **Fear was hiding behind the mask of anger.**

**Silence and Avoidance:** Fear doesn't always shout. Sometimes it hides quietly. I've seen people avoid honest conversations, not because they didn't care, but because they feared conflict, rejection, or misunderstanding. **Fear was hiding in their silence.**

**Overthinking and Busyness:** When I kept myself constantly busy, filling every moment, it wasn't just productivity. It was fear – afraid of what might rise if I slowed down. **Fear was hiding behind distraction.**

**Control and Rigidity:** Some people try to control every situation, every outcome. On the surface, it looks like discipline or focus. But underneath, it is fear – fear of uncertainty. **Fear was hiding behind control.**

**Judgment of Others:** When we judge or criticise others, it can feel like morality or wisdom. But often it is fear – fear that we might be judged, that we might be seen as lacking. **Fear was hiding behind judgment.**

**Constant Planning and Worry:** Some live in the future, making plans endlessly. It seems responsible, practical. But really, it is fear – fear of the unknown. **Fear was hiding in the need to plan.**

Fear is quiet, subtle, and clever. It slips into our lives in ways we think are normal. The first step is noticing it – seeing where it hides. Once we see it, we can meet it with understanding, not resistance.

Once we recognise fear for what it really is – without worry or shame or judgement – it starts to soften. It no longer needs to wear a mask.

Fear isn't here to be battled. It's here to be seen, held, and gently understood. And when we stop running from it, we begin to uncover what's real – Truth. Strength. Freedom.

Fear isn't something outside of us. It lives in the mind – in the stories about what might go wrong, or what went wrong before. It can look like staying constantly busy, pretending everything's fine. Laughing things off to avoid what's really going on underneath.

Most of the time, it has very little to do with the present moment. True peace begins when fear is no longer avoided...but simply seen for what it is.

Fear doesn't need a fight. It just needs presence. When we are fully aware, fear disappears – not because we battle it, but because our attention is no longer divided.

Gentle awareness. A moment of being seen with love. And when fear is met this way it softens.

When this understanding happened, I came home to myself.

Fear thrives in distraction, in judgment, in the mind's endless stories. It fades in silence, in observation, in simply being.

Do not run, do not resist. Be with it. Watch it.

Slowly, it becomes nothing more than a passing shadow. The only courage you need is to be present. Not to conquer, not to escape, but to witness, to feel, to be aware.

When we are fully here, fear has no place to hide. It vanishes on its own.

Courage is not action. Courage is being.

## **LET ME SHARE A REAL SITUATION FROM LIFE. MOMENT I STOPPED HIDING.**

It was a big stage. Bright lights. A packed room. People cheering. But inside, my hands were cold. My chest was tight. Not because I feared the crowd... but because deep down, I feared being seen.

Not the surface-level version. The real one. The unpolished, human, heart-beating version. And part of me wanted to back out. Disappear.

But something quieter, wiser whispered, “Do it. Not perfectly. Just truthfully.” So, I did. I walked up there, voice shaking, heart pounding. And I spoke – not to impress, but to connect. Not to perform, but to share. And something unexpected happened. I didn’t fall apart. I didn’t regret it. I felt alive.

Because for once, I didn’t hide behind strength or smiles. I showed up as I was. That moment changed something. It taught me that fear doesn’t always leave before we act. Sometimes, we carry it with us – and move anyway. Not to prove anything, but to honour what’s true.

Fear didn’t disappear that day. But it stepped aside. Because I stopped asking for permission.

## **WALKING WITH FEAR**

Fear grows in silence. But when it’s shared with someone kind, it doesn’t disappear – it just feels lighter, easier to carry. You don’t have to be fearless to move forward. You can walk with fear, hand in hand – just don’t let it lead the way.

Everything shifted when the realisation came: You are not your thoughts. You are not your fear. You are the one who watches them. And in that awareness, fear begins to loosen its grip – like a wave remembering it’s part of the ocean. Still moving, still rising... but no longer in control.

It’s a deep truth. And a freeing one.

## **WHEN HONESTY BECAME STRENGTH**

There’s a story I carry with me. Not because it was dramatic or loud, but because it was true. Meera, a mother I once knew, was moving through a quiet storm.

Her husband had just lost his job. Her teenage son had grown distant, almost unreachable. And her young daughter wouldn’t let go of her hand – not even to sleep.

She tried to hold everything together, day after day. Smiling. Managing. Pretending she was okay.

But inside, she was unravelling.



## *Chapter 2*

One night, with the dishes undone and the house quiet, something in her shifted. She sat down, looked at her children, and said softly,

“I’m scared too.” That one sentence didn’t solve everything, but it did something more important. It opened a door.

Her son didn’t walk away that night – he stayed in the room. Her daughter didn’t just cling – she leaned in closer, but calmer. And for the first time in weeks, Meera could breathe.

Their home didn’t become fearless. But it became honest. And sometimes, honesty is what heals us. Not perfection. Not control. Just presence.

For so long, we’re taught to hide fear. To wear strength like armour. To stay “strong” by staying silent. But strength isn’t silence. Real strength is showing up – with fear, with truth, with a heart that’s still open.

Fear comes to be felt, be seen, to pass. Not to be fed, not to be fought, but to be understood. When we stop pretending we’re unbreakable, something beautiful happens: Connection. Realness. Relief.

We don’t have to force peace. We just need to stop fuelling fear. Breathe. Be here. Trust that truth is enough.

The day fear no longer ran the show... That’s when life truly began. Not perfectly, but fully. And when fear softened, joy and love walked in.

## 2.4 THE BURDEN OF EXPECTATION

Expectations are like a quiet pressure we carry without even knowing it. From childhood, people around us – parents, teachers, friends – begin to expect certain things from us. They want us to succeed, to be “someone,” to make them proud. At first, it may feel like love. But slowly, it can turn into something heavy. We start living for others, not for ourselves. And somewhere along the way, we forget who we really are.

In this chapter, I want to invite you to look at this burden with fresh eyes. Are you living the life you truly want, or the life others hoped for you? It’s okay to pause. It’s okay to ask questions. The moment you start becoming aware of this weight, you take the first step toward freedom. Let’s explore that together – not with judgement, but with gentleness.

I have come to realise that much of my pain hasn’t come from what life actually gave me, but from what I thought it should have given me instead. It’s not always the event that hurts; it’s the gap. The gap between reality and the story I was silently holding onto.

I used to believe people wouldn’t let me down. I assumed love would always feel a certain way. I imagined that, by now, my life would look... more complete. The deeper I held onto those ideas, the more it hurt when they didn’t unfold as I hoped. I wasn’t grieving what happened; I was grieving what didn’t happen.

Over time, I noticed expectations feel like invisible cages. No one sees them, but they trap you just the same.

We start to live inside the walls of “should.”

“They should understand me.”

“My friends should appreciate me.”

“My partner should read my mind and know what I need.”

“By now, I should have figured it all out.”

But none of those thoughts are actual truths. They’re just stories we tell ourselves, stories borrowed, inherited, absorbed, some I didn’t even know I was carrying.

Life never promised to follow our scripts. It doesn’t care about our timelines or expectations. It just moves with its own rhythm, its own strange sense of

timing. The more I tried to force it to fit my mould, the more exhausted, angry, and bitter I became.

I had to learn – gently and often painfully – that not expecting doesn't mean you stop caring. It means you stop gripping. You still love, still give your best, but without needing things to go a certain way. It's a quiet shift. A softening. And strangely, once I started releasing those expectations, life felt lighter, even if nothing around me had changed.

## **WHERE DO THESE PICTURES COME FROM?**

Looking back, I realise my expectations didn't come out of nowhere. They formed slowly, almost silently, shaped by everything around me – not through deep thought, but through quiet repetition.

- Movies that showed flawless, forever love.
- Social media, where everyone looked happy, glowing, and endlessly successful.
- Family ideas about what it means to be “someone.”
- Childhood dreams I never paused to question.

I never truly asked, “Is this my truth, or someone else's story I've picked up?” These images settled deep inside, becoming silent rules. And without even noticing, I began measuring my life against them.

Even when things were peaceful, even when I had enough, I felt something missing. Not because life had failed me – but because it didn't look like the perfect picture in my mind. I was chasing an illusion, not living in reality. And that illusion quietly stole the joy of what was already here.

## **THE PAIN OF IMAGINED REALITIES**

False expectations quietly shape our suffering. We picture how things should go – how someone should treat us, how life should unfold, what success or love should look like – and we hold those pictures tightly. But often, those images aren't based on truth. They come from ideas we've absorbed, not from our own lived experience.

So, when reality doesn't match the story we've built in our mind, we feel disappointed, even if nothing is actually wrong. We blame life, other people, or

even ourselves when the real cause of our pain is the gap between what is and what we thought should be.

In the end, it's not reality that hurts us – it's the fantasy we're comparing it to.

## **BEHIND THE CURTAINS: A HOMEMAKER'S TRUTH**

I am a homemaker. I never had a formal job or a pay check with my name on it. But that doesn't mean I wasn't working. I was – every single day. I ran a household, raised children, and met needs before they were spoken. I was the quiet engine behind everything running smoothly.

In between, I still chased personal dreams, stayed social, supported others, ran errands, cooked meals, and held everyone's world together. But even with all that, a small voice inside kept whispering, "You should have done more. You should have been successful, built a career, done something big."

Even though my life was full of love and care, that voice made me feel like I wasn't enough. That's where the pain really came from – not from what I was doing, but from the gap between my real life and the picture of what I thought I should have become.

And when I finally noticed that, I saw how deep it went:

- In the way I judged myself for not being "more."
- In how I compared my life to others who seemed to be doing it all.
- How I missed the beauty of my own story because I was chasing someone else's idea of success.

I wasn't really living in the present. I was living inside a feeling of lack – trapped by the word "should."

Peace started to return when I replaced "should" with "is." Not perfectly, but with awareness, breath by breath.

## **LETTING LIFE BREATHE**

There was a time when I believed I had to get everything right. Every day, every plan, every detail. If something went wrong, I saw it as a failure. I treated life like a test – one where I had to be perfect to pass, to prove I was worthy, smart, and good enough.

But life doesn't work like that. It never did.

Over time, I began to see: life isn't a straight path with scores and grades. It's more like music – sometimes soft and slow, sometimes wild and messy. You can't control every note. But you can feel the rhythm, move with it, and even enjoy the surprises.

That simple change – from control to flow – opened something in me.

We all deal with pressure. We all try so hard. But what if we smiled with life instead of struggling against it? What if we gave ourselves permission to breathe, to stumble, to laugh when things fall apart, and to love the journey anyway?

That's what it means, at least to me now, to live lightly.

One smile at a time.

## **WHEN LIFE FEELS TOO SERIOUS**

When we take everything too seriously, life starts to feel heavy. I've lived like that – maybe you have too.

When we lower our expectations, life becomes lighter, laughter flows more easily, and each moment can be lived fully, without the burden of 'should' and 'musts'.

I used to think working without rest was dedication – but now I know that rest is where joy returns.

I tried to be perfect, but perfection only made life heavy. Being real feels lighter, softer.

I stumbled plenty, and each stumble taught me something – some even became unexpected blessings.

I held too tightly in love, afraid of losing – but I've learned that love needs space to breathe.

I tried living for everyone's approval, but it drained me – now I live in ways that bring me peace, and the right people naturally stay.

And I remind myself: "Don't take life too seriously. You'll never get out of it alive." – Elbert Hubbard

## **LIGHTNESS IS STRENGTH**

We often think being serious means being strong. But true strength can smile. True wisdom allows room for lightness, laughter and grace – even in hard times.

Life will always be uncertain. Plans will shift, people will change, and not everything will go as you imagined. But you don't have to carry it all like a burden. Simplicity is about clearing the noise so that what truly matters can be heard.

## **LET IT BE LIGHT**

Living lightly is not careless – it's courageous. It means trusting that we don't have to force everything, fix everything, or figure everything out at once. It's a choice to trust life more and fight it less. To smile even when things don't make sense.

To soften where you used to tighten. You don't have to prove anything. You just have to show up – honestly, gently, as you are. Let go of the weight that was never yours to carry. You don't have to get everything right. You don't have to impress anyone. You don't have to control it all. Just be real. Be kind. Be here. And laugh at the chaos and beautiful mess of it all.

It means showing up with grace – choosing peace over pressure, and letting life unfold with softness instead of struggle. You are not here to carry the whole world, only to carry your truth, one breath at a time.

Life isn't a stage to perform on. It's a journey to experience—with an open heart, a calm breath, and a touch of laughter along the way go. Trust more. Smile often. Let life be light.

## **BEAUTY IN WHAT GOES “WRONG”**

There's a story of a young artist who accidentally drew a crooked line on a temple wall. He thought the painting was ruined. But a wise elder turned that line into the wing of a bird – and the mistake became the most beautiful part.

That's how life often is. What looks like a wrong turn might just be something unfinished. Sometimes, the broken piece is the beginning of something better.

Mistakes often lead us to new understanding we couldn't see before.

“Sometimes, letting things go is an act of far greater power than defending or hanging on.” – Eckhart Tolle

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.” – Albert Einstein

## **THE STRENGTH OF STILLNESS**

There's a story I carry with me – one that quietly changed the way I see life.

A Zen monk named Hakuin lived in a small village. He was known for his wisdom and calm nature. One day, a young girl in the village became pregnant. Afraid of her parents' anger, she told them the monk was the father.

The villagers were outraged. They stormed to Hakuin's home, shouting accusations, blaming him for something he hadn't done.

His response? “Is that so?”

He didn't defend himself. He didn't fight back. He simply accepted what was being said, without resistance.

When the baby was born, the family brought the child to him. Hakuin took the baby in his arms and cared for it with quiet love.

A year passed.

The girl finally told the truth – Hakuin was not the father. Ashamed, the family returned, apologised, and took the child back.

Again, all Hakuin said was: “Is that so?”

No anger. No resentment. No need to prove himself right.

This story has stayed with me for one reason: it reminds me that we don't have to react to everything. We don't always need to defend ourselves, explain ourselves, or try to control what others think.

Sometimes, real strength is in stillness. In allowing life to unfold without needing to grip it.

**“LET IT COME. LET IT GO. JUST BREATHE... AND SAY, ‘IS THAT SO?’”**

Peace doesn't arrive when everything is in order. It comes when we stop trying to force life into our idea of how it should be. It comes when we surrender – not in weakness, but in wisdom.

I've come to see it now – not just as an idea, but as a way of living. Peace was never in the proving, the fixing, or the performing. It was always in the presence. In being here. In breathing through the storm without trying to control the wind.

Now, I live differently. My expectations are very realistic. I don't grip so tightly. I meet life with softer hands and a quieter heart. And in that space – the space I once filled with fear and effort – I've found something I didn't know I was looking for: Freedom.

Real, steady, quiet freedom.



## **2.5 WORRY IS HEAVY – PUT IT DOWN**

Have you ever felt like you're carrying a heavy weight – something unseen but pulling you down? That weight is a worry. It sits on your shoulders, making everything feel harder than it needs to be. But what if you could gently put that weight down, even just for a moment?

It hit me one day, quietly but deeply: I've been carrying a lot that I don't need to carry.

Not physical things, but all in the form of thoughts... invisible weights. I'd be going about my day, smiling, getting things done, but beneath the surface? A constant background tension. A mind rehearsing all the "what if's" like a never-ending playlist. It happened slowly.

As children, we hear it all the time:

"Be careful."

"Think ahead."

"Don't mess this up."

And without meaning to, we start believing that worrying is the same as being responsible. That if we worry more, we'll be safer. That somehow, it'll stop bad things from happening.

Peace comes when we stop trying to control everything and start trusting the flow of life. When we worry, our energy tightens, and our heart feels heavy. But letting go doesn't mean we're giving up. It means we're making room for calm, clarity, and strength to grow inside us.

The next time you feel worry creeping in, pause.

Take a deep breath and ask yourself:

Is this thought helping me? Or is it making me carry more than I need? Remember, you don't have to carry this burden alone. You have the power to release it – one breath at a time.

## **WORRY PRETENDS TO HELP – BUT DOESN'T**

Even when things are fine, the mind whispers:

"What if this doesn't last?"

“What if something goes wrong?”

That’s what worry does. It pulls us out of the moment and drags us into a future that hasn’t even happened yet. It tricks us into thinking it’s helpful, but all it really does is steal peace from us.

## **HERE ARE SOME METAPHORS TO HELP UNDERSTAND WORRY:**

- “Worry is like a rocking chair: it keeps you busy, but never takes you forward.”
- “Worry is like carrying an empty bag – you feel the weight, but there’s nothing inside.”
- “Worry is like trying to catch smoke – you strain and chase, but it slips through your fingers.”
- “Worry is like a mosquito buzzing in your ear: annoying, loud, but ultimately harmless if ignored.”
- “Worry is like walking in circles – you move, but you never arrive.”
- “Worry is like watering a dead plant – it consumes your energy, but changes nothing.”

It doesn’t prepare you. It exhausts you. We think worry is caring for someone, but that’s a trap.

People believe:

“If you really care, you should worry.”

“If you don’t worry, you’re being careless.”

But that belief is a trap. Because real care doesn’t create panic, it brings peace. It shows up as a calm, clear presence. Not restlessness, overthinking, or control.

In reality, worry makes us anxious. Care makes us available.

## **BREAKING FREE FROM THE ENDLESS LOOP**

Vidhi was a young mother, full of love but trapped in an endless loop of worry. Her thoughts raced nonstop – what if her son struggled at school? What if he

got sick? What if his future was uncertain? The questions haunted her day and night, pulling her deeper into a storm of anxiety.

One day, she confided, “If I stop worrying, won’t that mean I’m not doing enough? Isn’t worry a sign that I care?” Her words echoed the struggle many face – confusing worry with responsibility.

But beneath that worry was exhaustion. It drained her spirit and blurred her presence. She was physically near her son but mentally far away, caught in fears she couldn’t escape. Her heart ached, but her anxiety clouded the very love she wanted to show.

Slowly, with gentle guidance, Vidhi began to change. Instead of feeding the endless loop, she learned to pause – to breathe deeply and truly listen. She replaced fear with presence: conversations full of warmth, playful moments filled with laughter, quiet times rich with trust. Her energy softened, and with it, her son’s anxiety eased too.

The worry didn’t vanish overnight – it never does. But it stopped ruling her life. In that space of calm, Vidhi discovered a powerful truth: love does not have to look like panic. Real love can be a steady breath, a patient ear, and a heart open enough to embrace uncertainty.

## **A PERSONAL STORY**

I still remember when my son was little and caught his first fever. I turned into a full-on detective – checking his temperature every ten minutes as if I were on some high-stakes mission. My mind ran wild with all the “what ifs”:

“What if it’s serious?”

“Should we rush to the hospital?”

I swear, I even memorised the fever chart like it was my new best friend.

Looking back now, I can’t help but laugh at how frantic I was. I was exhausted, angry, and completely restless – basically a walking, talking bundle of panic. But over time, something shifted. I started to realise that my racing mind wasn’t helping anyone – least of all my little guy.

Now, when anyone in the family gets a fever or is sick, I take a deep breath, stay calm, and focus on what he really needs: comfort, care, and calm energy. I still care deeply – don’t get me wrong – but I no longer let fear drive the car.

Honestly, it's kind of funny how much time I wasted panicking when what anyone in the family needed most was just me being present.

That calmness? It's magic. It helps both of us heal a little faster – and I get to keep my sanity intact.

**WORRY ISN'T LOVE. WORRY ISN'T STRENGTH. WORRY IS RESTLESS FEAR, EDGY ANXIETY – DRESSED UP AS CONCERN.**

Anxious that something will go wrong. The sense that we won't be able to handle it. Doubts that we aren't doing enough. It shows up in our body, our shoulders, our breath, our sleep. It tightens our chest and makes our days feel heavier than they need to be.

And most of the time? The things we worry about don't even happen.

Yet we still carry them. Why? Because deep down, we're trying to control something we can't. But most of the time? The things we worry about don't even happen. Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles. It takes away today's peace.

And peace is precious. It's what makes life feel light again.

**LET WORRY COME – AND LET IT GO**

Now, when worry arrives, I don't fight it. I simply notice it, like a visitor knocking at the door. Then I take a deep breath, feel my feet on the ground, and bring my attention back to the present moment. If there's something I can do, I do it. If not, I gently let the worry go.

I've learned not to get pulled into every swirling thought. Thoughts come and go like clouds in the sky. I don't chase after everyone anymore.

You don't have to take every thought as truth. You don't need to control them; simply don't let them control you.

This simple practice has gently transformed my life over time. Now, when unease arises, I meet it with calm and openness. And that openness... feels like real freedom.

## **2.6 LIBERATE YOURSELF FROM FALSE ATTACHMENTS**

### **THE TRUE NATURE OF FREEDOM**

I once believed freedom meant living without rules, without limits – doing whatever I pleased. But as I turned inward, I discovered a deeper truth: real freedom isn't about the world outside. It's about the space within, the calm and clarity we cultivate inside ourselves. I was born free. So were you.

I see it in children, the way they laugh out loud without a reason, dance in the middle of nowhere, cry with their whole heart, and then forget it.

That was once me, too. Maybe it was you, too.

We all want to feel safe. We want to feel loved, secure and at peace. But often, we try to find these feelings in the wrong places. We become attached to things, people, ideas or roles that do not truly make us happy. These are what I call false attachments.

### **WHEN ATTACHMENT BECOMES A CHAIN**

A false attachment is something we hold on to because we think we cannot live without it. We believe it gives us love, safety, or identity. But in truth, it does not help us grow. It keeps us small. It keeps us in pain.

True love and true freedom never chain you. They expand you. Anything that makes you afraid to let go is not love – it is attachment.

I read somewhere that love is like a bird; if you hold it with open hands, it will stay with you. If we close our fist and cling, the bird dies. The same is true with life. The more tightly we cling, the more life slips away.

False attachments are like illusions – they look real, but they stop us from living fully.

When we see this clearly, the chain begins to break on its own.

Freedom is our nature. Love is our nature. Letting go is not loss – it is simply making space for what is true.

## **EXAMPLES OF FALSE ATTACHMENTS**

A false attachment is something we hold on to out of fear, not love. It may feel safe, but it keeps us stuck and small.

- Staying in a relationship only because you are scared to be alone.
- Working in a job that drains you, just for the security of money.
- Pretending to be someone you're not, so people will accept you.
- Following traditions or rules that don't feel true in your heart.
- Holding on to old hurts, because you're afraid of who you'll be without them.
- Needing constant approval from others to feel worthy.
- Clinging to material things, believing they define your value.

These are not signs of real love or freedom. They are fear in disguise. Real love never makes you shrink – it makes you bloom.

## **STRUGGLING TO MOVE FORWARD**

We hold on because we are afraid. Afraid of being alone, afraid of being unloved, afraid of losing control. As children, many of us learned that love comes with conditions – “Be good and you’ll be loved, do what others expect and you’ll be accepted.” Slowly, we forgot our own natural innocence. We began to wear masks, to please, to adjust, to pretend.

But anything false can never bring peace. Pretending may keep others happy, but inside it creates restlessness. Real peace comes only when we stop running away from ourselves and look honestly at who we are.

The truth is: we don't need to earn love. We don't need to prove our worth. Life accepts us as we are. The moment we see this, attachments lose their grip. What once felt like chains begin to fall away.

Moving forward doesn't mean clinging harder – it means letting go of what is not true. Then we discover a freedom we never knew we had.

## **CHOOSING TRUTH OVER FEAR**

Letting go of false attachments does not mean becoming cold or careless. It means choosing truth over fear. It means living from the heart, not from fear of rejection.

Here are some steps to begin:

### **1. Be Honest With Yourself**

Ask yourself: “Am I holding on to this because I love it – or because I’m afraid to lose it?”

### **2. Feel Your Emotions**

Let yourself feel the fear, sadness, or anger that comes up. Don’t push it away. Emotions are messages. They guide you back to your truth.

### **3. Take Small Steps**

You don’t need to make huge changes overnight. Just one small, honest step each day is enough.

### **4. Connect With Your Inner Self**

Spend time in silence. Meditate. Journal. Ask your inner self, “What do I truly want?” Listen without judgement.

### **5. Trust the Process**

Letting go is a journey. Trust that as you release what no longer serves you, you create space for something better.

## **THE UNEXPECTED GIFT OF LETTING GO**

When you let go of false attachments, you make room for real connection, real peace, and real joy. You become free. Not because you have everything you wanted, but because you no longer need things that keep you from being yourself.

You’re not here to be a reflection of others’ expectations. You’re here to be fully, unapologetically YOU. That is your purpose. That is your power.

## **THE FREEDOM IN RELEASE**

- Letting go doesn’t mean you stop caring – it means you stop clinging.

- It's a surrender, not of effort, but of control.
- True detachment is born from presence, awareness, and trust in the moment.

Through mindfulness and self-awareness, you begin to unhook from illusions. You stop chasing what was never real – and start living in the clarity of what is.

## **HOW I STARTED BREAKING FREE**

Honestly, I didn't wake up one day suddenly feeling free. It was a slow unravelling. A quiet shift. And if you're on that path too, here's what helped me:

### **1. I Started Noticing**

The first shift happened when I began paying attention – not to what was happening outside, but inside. Every time I felt tight, anxious, or like I wasn't enough, I paused and gently asked myself, "What thought is behind this?"

No fixing, no fighting – just noticing. And even that gave me a little more room to breathe.

### **2. I Stopped Arguing with My Mind**

When my mind would say things like, "You should be doing more," "You're behind," or "They don't really care." I used to believe those thoughts.

Now, I simply watch my thoughts. Like cars passing by – I don't run into traffic. I stay on the sidewalk. The more I watched, the less power those thoughts had. It's hard to explain until you try it, but trust me, it changes everything.

### **3. I Started Accepting Myself**

This can be the hardest one. I had to unlearn years of trying to prove, perform and please.

Some days, you may slip back. Just look at yourself and say, "I am doing okay. I am human. That's enough." Practice the kindness skill.



#### **4. I Loosened My Grip on Control**

I used to have a plan for everything. I needed things to go my way.

But life? Life has its own rhythm.

Now, when things fall apart – or don't go as planned – I pause and say, "Alright. Let's see where this takes me." And weirdly, that trust brings peace.

#### **5. I Stopped Defining Myself by Labels**

For a long time, I thought I was my job, my role, how I looked, or how others saw me.

But those are just pieces – not the whole.

Now I know myself: "I am not just what I do. I am the one experiencing it all." That reminder grounds me.

#### **6. I Started Living a Little Lighter**

Freedom didn't come with fireworks. It came in the small, everyday moments. Laughing at myself. Saying no without guilt. Leaving a message unanswered. Walking without needing a destination.

Each time, I felt just a little lighter – like I was slowly returning home to myself.

### **THE BEAUTY OF DETACHMENT**

Detachment is often misunderstood. At first it may look like not caring, but in truth it is a deeper, calmer way of loving.

When you are detached, you still care, you still feel kindness and warmth — but without the tight grip. It is not cold or distant. It feels free, peaceful, and trusting.

Detachment says: "I care for you, but I don't need to hold on to feel complete." It trusts life. It trusts itself.

In love with detachment, the heart stays open. If someone stays, there is gratitude. If someone leaves, there is acceptance. In both cases, peace remains.

Love never clings. It gives space for the other to be fully themselves.

Attachment, on the other hand, comes from fear — the fear of losing, of being alone. It breeds jealousy, possessiveness, and suffering.

Attachment whispers: “I can’t be happy without you.”

Detachment whispers: “I would love to walk with you, but even if I walk alone, I am still whole.”

The simple truth is this:

The tighter you hold, the more love slips away. The more you let go, the more love can grow.

A Story I Heard

There’s a Zen story that stayed with me.

It says hell is like clinging to fire — holding on too tightly to people, results, or things, hoping they’ll make life complete. But when they change or slip away, that same fire burns. It becomes fear, anger, and restlessness.

Heaven, on the other hand, is simply letting go. Loving without clinging. When the grip softens, the fire cools. The heart feels light. The mind becomes calm.

In the end, heaven and hell are not places. They are states of our own being.

## **LITTLE THINGS THAT HELP KEEP IT LIGHT AND OPEN**

Pause before reacting, because even one breath can change everything. Say “maybe” more often, since what looks bad now may surprise you later. Enjoy your own company through a quiet walk or a simple cup of tea.

Be silent sometimes, because not every opinion needs a response. Give freely without expecting anything back – love, then let go. Watch your inner voice, smile at it, and let it drift by like a passing cloud.

And remember, not everything has to be finished today – rest is important too.

## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #2: BHOLA'S BLUNDERS & BABLI'S BOSSING**

### **1. Who's the Boss?**

Babli: "Bhola, admit it – who makes all the important decisions in this house?"

Bhola: "Obviously, you do, Babli. I only handle the small stuff... like where we live, what we eat, and how we spend our money."

### **2. The Argument**

Babli: "You never listen to a word I say!"

Bhola: "Not true – I listen very carefully. I just choose silence over starting World War III."

### **3. Emotional Cleaning Day**

Babli: "Bhola, do you even understand emotions?"

Bhola: "Of course. I feel sleepy every time you bring them up."

Babli: "Good. You can dream of being single."

### **4. The Wisdom of Letting Go**

Babli: "Don't you care that I yelled at you?"

Bhola: "Of course I care. That's why I decided to forgive you immediately... for my peace."

### **5. Marriage Expectations**

Bhola and Babli weren't speaking for two days.

On the third day, Bhola whispered,

"This is the most peaceful relationship we've ever had... Should we renew it monthly?"

## **6. The Fight Strategy**

Bhola's friend: "How do you win arguments with Babli?"

Bhola: "Simple. I don't. I just nod until she thinks I've agreed... then I silently pray."

## **7. Marriage Logic**

Bhola: "Babli, you always think you're right!"

Babli: "No, Bhola, one time I thought I was wrong... but then I realised I was absolutely right about that too."

## **8. Meditating or Escaping?**

Babli: "Why do you keep meditating when I'm talking?"

Bhola (eyes closed): "I'm not escaping. I'm just watching my inner peace run from your words."

Babli: "So I'm disturbing your peace?"

Bhola: "No, you're inspiring it."

## **PART 3**

### **FINDING CALM – CULTIVATING INNER PEACE**



## CHAPTER 3

### 3.1 LET IT BE – THE ART OF PEACEFUL ACCEPTANCE

There's a phrase I return to quietly, again and again:

**"Let it be."**

At first, it felt too soft. Too passive. Like letting go meant giving up. But over the years, I've learned that letting it be isn't weakness, it's wisdom.

It's not about walking away from life. It's about walking with it, with grace.

Letting it be doesn't mean I don't care. It means I don't fight what I cannot change. It means I stop clinging to every detail and start trusting the rhythm of life even when it doesn't match mine.

It's a soft kind of strength. A deep breath instead of another battle. And truly, it's one of the most peaceful choices I've ever made.

Life often throws challenges our way – unexpected events, difficult people, or situations beyond our control. In these moments, it's natural to feel frustration, anger, or fear. But I've realised that there's a different way to respond: let it be.

To let it be is not about giving up or ignoring life. It is an art – a way of peaceful acceptance. It is about allowing things to unfold naturally, without forcing, controlling, or resisting. When we practice this, we create space for clarity and calm in our hearts.

Peaceful acceptance doesn't mean passivity. It means being fully present with reality as it is, without adding unnecessary suffering through judgment or resistance. It is about trusting life, understanding that some things are beyond our control, and focusing our energy where it truly matters.

When I embrace let it be, I notice a quiet strength arise within me. Challenges become easier to face, relationships grow more harmonious, and the mind finds calm in moments of chaos. Life flows more smoothly because I am no longer fighting against it.

In essence, let it be is not surrendering to life – it is aligning with life. It is the art of moving through the world with awareness, grace, and inner peace. Every moment becomes an opportunity to practice this art, and with time, it transforms the way we live, think, and feel.

## **MY PERSONAL JOURNEY: A MOTHER, A COACH, A HUMAN BEING**

I continued my work wherever I was – coaching clients, holding Smart Living classes, helping others find their peace – all while holding together my own roles and responsibilities.

When my daughter went to the U.S. to pursue her master's degree over a decade ago, my life deepened. The inner work I had long been engaged in continued, unfolding in more creative, subtle, and intelligent ways.

Whenever she needed my support, I wouldn't think twice. I would pack my bags and go to be with her. That's when this back-and-forth life began. A few months in the U.S., a few months in India.

I became someone constantly moving, constantly managing.

A mother. A coach. A human being.

All three parts of me are pulling in different directions, yet teaching me the same lesson again and again:

### **Let it be.**

For the longest time, I tried to be everything to everyone.

The perfect mom. The perfect coach. The perfect daughter, sister, wife, friend, woman.

**Let it be** when my daughter is building her life far away, and I miss her more than I say.

**Let it be** when I sit in a plane again, flying between countries, between roles, between emotions.



**Let it be** when a client is struggling and I don't have all the answers – only presence.

**Let it be** when my phone is full of messages, but my heart just wants silence.

**Let it be** when I cook alone, remembering how full the house used to feel.

**Let it be** when I'm tired, but things still need to get done.

This is not about giving up. It's about making space for life to move – without forcing it. Let it be means I don't have to fix everything. I don't have to have it all figured out. I just have to stay present, open, and honest with what is here.

Some days, the lesson is loud. Some days, it's quiet. But it always brings me back to myself. And that's enough.

## **LETTING PEOPLE BE THEMSELVES**

One of the most difficult – but also freeing – lessons I've learned is this:

**Let people be.**

It sounds simple. But in everyday life, it's not. We all carry quiet expectations – How someone should speak to us.

How they should show love. How they should live their life.

As a mother, I felt it was my duty to guide, correct, and protect – even when my children became adults. I wanted them to make good choices, stay safe, be wise... and yes, at times, I wanted them to see things the way I do. But with time, life softened me.

**Let people be** when my child doesn't take my advice.

**Let people be** when someone handles a situation in a way I wouldn't.

**Let people be** when a friend grows distant, or someone doesn't meet my expectations.

**Let people be** when their love looks different from mine.

Letting people be doesn't mean we stop loving. It means we stop trying to change them.

We give them space. We respect their path. We love them as they are – not as we wish they were. And in doing that... something shifts. There's more peace. More ease. More trust.

I've realised that trying to change people only creates tension. Everyone has their own journey, and it's not my job to control or fix them.

I've learned to care deeply without interfering – love doesn't mean possession, it means freedom. I try to observe without judgment and let people live as they are.

Expectations only lead to disappointment, so I've started releasing them and respecting differences instead. I focus on my own growth and let life unfold naturally.

Listening more and talking less has shown me that sometimes just giving space is the greatest support. And the more I understand that everything changes – people, moods, situations – the easier it becomes to simply let them be.

## **A PERSONAL EXAMPLE: THE DAY I CHOSE PEACE OVER CONTROL**

There was a time when one of my children made a decision I didn't agree with.

They wanted to switch careers, give up something stable to follow a more creative path. As a mother, my fear kicked in instantly. What if it doesn't work out? What if this career path leads to failure?

So I did what I thought was right.

I gave advice. I offered alternatives. I asked questions I thought were helpful. But instead of closeness I felt distance. My concern felt like pressure. One day, I heard gently, "Ma, I just need you to trust me."

That hit me deeply.

That night, sitting alone, I wrestled with my thoughts. My mother-heart was restless, but something inside me whispered,

**"Let the child be."**

Children are not here to live our version of life. They are not here to fulfil our dreams. They have their own path. Their own timings. Their own inner voice. And in that quiet moment, I let go, not of love, but of control.

And I chose trust.

Letting people be who they are doesn't mean you stop caring. It means you stop forcing. It means you start respecting their soul's journey, even when it doesn't make sense to you.

It's an act of real love. Because true love doesn't say: "Be like me." It says: "Be yourself. And I'll walk beside you as you grow."

The moment we allow someone to be fully themselves, even if it doesn't match our expectations, we create space for love to flow in its purest form.

## **RELEASING EXPECTATIONS FOR PEACE**

This lesson applies to children, friends, family, and even at work.

When someone doesn't show up as expected – a missed call, a forgotten birthday, an appointment – it's easy to hold onto pain and let resentment grow.

But pause and ask yourself:

"Am I hurt because they did something wrong, or because they didn't fit the picture I had of them?" Most of the time, it's the picture that causes the pain.

Take a deep breath and remind yourself: **Let it be. Let them be.**

Stop carrying the burden of trying to fix, explain or change others. Offer love and give space. Sometimes, that space will bring people closer. Sometimes it will move them away. Either way, peace follows.

## **LOVE THAT LETS GO**

Sometimes we confuse love with control. We say, "I'm doing this because I love you," but really, we're trying to make someone fit our idea of what's right. True love doesn't control. It watches, supports, and makes space. It lets the other person fall, learn, grow, and become themselves.

This is not easy. It's hard to watch someone struggle when you think you know better. But stepping in too much takes away their chance to grow strong. Letting others be, is a deep act of trust – not just in them, but in life itself.

You don't need to understand everything to love someone. You just need to stop trying to control them, stop advising unnecessarily, and let them be.

## **THE BEAUTY OF ACCEPTANCE**

Most of the time, our suffering comes from trying to change people and situations that are not in our hands. We want our children to be exactly how we imagine. We expect our partner to behave according to our moods. We wish our parents understood us in every way. But life does not move according to our expectations.

A child may be playful when we want silence. A partner may be tired when we want attention. Parents may give advice when we want freedom. In these moments, the mind immediately reacts – it wants to control, correct, or fight. And this creates distance and conflict in the family.

The art of let it be is to simply allow people to be themselves. When the child is noisy, you can smile instead of shouting – because childhood is noisy. When the partner is tired, you can sit quietly together – because love does not always need words. When parents give advice, you can listen with respect – even if you do not follow it.

Acceptance does not mean weakness. It means wisdom. When you let others be, a new peace enters the home. Love becomes lighter, relationships become more natural, and the family begins to feel like a space of freedom, not control.

## **TRY THIS WHEN YOU FEEL DISAPPOINTED**

When someone you love makes a choice you don't agree with, pause. When a friend forgets to reply or doesn't show up as you hoped, take a breath. Allow yourself to feel your emotions fully, without judgement.

Then remind yourself: They are not here to follow your script. They are here to write their own.

**Let them be.**

## **WHERE PEACE LIVES**

When you let others be, you also give yourself permission to be.

### *Chapter 3*

Peace is not found in changing people. It is found in loving them as they are, and resting in that same love for yourself.

People are different – messy, unpredictable, beautiful, and flawed. Letting things be is not something you do once; it is a daily practice.

Return to it again and again –

when you feel tired,

when you are unsure,

when life goes wrong,

or when you don't feel enough.

In those moments, pause. Breathe. And whisper gently, like a prayer:

Muddy water clears best when left alone. This truth carries the heart of “let it be.”

When we stop stirring the waters – trying to control emotions, people, or situations – clarity comes on its own. The more we struggle, the cloudier life becomes.

Sometimes the wisest choice is to step back and let life settle by itself. You don't have to carry everything. Often, the strongest thing you can do is to simply put it down... and let it be.

Letting it be does not mean you stop caring.

It means you care without clinging.

## **3.2 DROP THE DRAMA, NOT YOUR PEACE**

There's something I've come to learn over the years: drama never fixes anything. It only adds noise to an already tired heart.

When we let go of the drama, we don't lose our power – we find our peace. We stop carrying the pain, stories, and struggles that were never truly ours to hold.

Drama often feels like something we need – a way to be seen, to feel alive, or to avoid what hurts deep down. But the truth is, it only adds noise to our lives. It clouds our clarity. It keeps us in a loop of pain.

Letting go of drama isn't weakness. It's strength. It means we're ready to come back to ourselves.

Peace doesn't always come with silence. Sometimes it comes with truth. And when we stop performing, stop proving, and just be, we return to a place of real power, a quiet kind.

Drop the drama. Drop the weight.

You were never meant to carry it.

## **GRACE IN STRENGTH**

In our family, we have faced many challenges – health struggles, personal difficulties, moments that tested both heart and mind. Through it all, I stayed strong, the one who held everything together.

I call it grace, the quiet support that allowed life to move without breaking. And yet, what touched me most was not the strength I showed outwardly, but the peace I discovered inside. Life taught me that true power comes not from effort alone, but from surrendering to the flow and trusting that all is as it should be.

I couldn't always fix things. I couldn't carry everyone's pain. But somewhere inside, I had been preparing without even knowing it – learning to sit in silence, to watch instead of react, to let go instead of control.

Life has its storms. They shake us, they test us. Yet real strength is not in fighting the storm – it is in standing steady, rooted, while it passes.

On the outside, everything felt loud – fear, tension, blame, emotions rising and falling like waves.

But within me, there was a quiet space. I didn't join the noise. I didn't try to control. I simply listened. Stayed near. Stayed calm – not as someone fixing, but as someone fully present.

No complaints. No judgement. No rushing in. Just being there.

And in that presence, I found peace.

## **SOMETIMES, PRESENCE IS ENOUGH**

One thing I've learned is this: When someone you love is in deep pain, the most powerful thing you can do is not panic. Not add to the chaos. Just be a steady, loving presence.

Let them feel your calm. Let them borrow your peace when they've lost their own. Because sometimes, love doesn't need words.

Just stillness. Just presence. Just you.

## **BECOMING THE ROCK**

In difficult times, I didn't get lost in fear or sorrow. I learned to simply witness everything, calmly and clearly. All my spiritual practices came together, almost like magic, and made me steady – like a rock – no matter what was happening around me. I could stay grounded, present, and strong, facing challenges without being shaken, showing that true power comes from inner stillness, not effort.

## **GROWTH CAN'T BE FORCED**

Watching our loved one's go through pain can be very difficult. But it also revealed something beautiful: You cannot rush someone's growth. You cannot save them from their own becoming.

Pain teaches in ways words can't. All I could do is to honour that everyone's journey has its own pace, its own lessons, its own timing. My role wasn't to fix anyone. My role is to love. Fully. Calmly, without conditions. And I did. With presence, quiet prayers, deep breath after deep breath.

People often think, "allowing what is" means doing nothing. But it takes more strength to stay still than to react. It takes courage to breathe while others

are shouting, listen without interrupting, say, “I trust you,” even when the path is uncertain.

That’s the real work. The quiet work. The powerful work. And in that stillness, healing began – not just for my family, but for me too.

## **THE QUIET CHOICE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING**

Looking back on that time, I feel proud. Because in a moment where it would have been easy to panic, to control, to fall apart...I chose peace. I choose stillness. And that changed everything. Let it be. Let them be. Let love do its quiet work.

Again and again.

## **WHEN SILENCE SPEAKS LOVE**

We’ve all been there. We slam doors, say sharp things, walk away, and hope someone reads our silence like a story.

But none of it brings peace. None of it heals. Those are just the loud echoes of our inner pain. Our fear dressed as control. Our sadness disguised as anger.

But love – real love – doesn’t raise its voice. It doesn’t demand. It doesn’t control. Real love holds space. Real love listens. Real love stays.

## **WHEN EGO SPEAKS IN DISGUISE**

Drama doesn’t always come with shouting or slamming doors. Sometimes, it’s much quieter. It shows up as silence. As cold distance. As the thought:

“They should’ve known better.”

“I always have to be the one who understands.”

“Why is it always on me to fix things?”

This is ego in disguise – trying to protect us from feeling vulnerable. Because truth is softer.

It sounds like:



- “I’m hurt.”
- “I feel alone.”
- “I needed you, and you weren’t there.”
- “I’m scared.”
- “Can you hear me?”

These words are not easy to say. So instead, the ego builds walls – of blame, pride and noise.

Peace isn’t found in the last word, the louder voice, or the longer message left unread. Peace lives in the pause. The breath we take before reacting. The choice to stay gentle, even when we’re hurting.

It shows up in the moment we ask: “Do I want to be right, or do I want to stay connected?” We’ve all said things we didn’t mean. We’ve all shut down or lashed out.

But healing begins when we recognise it and choose a new way.

## **FROM REACTION TO REFLECTION**

It takes awareness to step out of drama. To catch ourselves before we spiral. To pause and ask, “What’s really going on inside me?”

Often, we’re not truly angry. We’re aching. We’re not distant – we’re afraid of being hurt again. When we name the real emotion, something softens.

We return to ourselves. And that’s when peace returns, too.

## **CHOOSING THE HEART OVER THE EGO**

Next time your voice starts to rise, or your hand hovers over a message you’ll regret, pause.

Ask yourself:

Is this a reaction? Or is it a cry for love I haven’t spoken yet?

Then choose the heart. Speak from honesty, not from habit. Don’t pick up the spoon of drama – even when it’s offered to you.

Smile. Breathe. Respond with grace. Because choosing peace doesn't make you weak – it makes you wise.

It's not giving up. It's staying free.

## **WHAT YOU'RE REALLY LOOKING FOR**

In the stillness after the storm, you'll find what you were looking for all along: Clarity. Connection. Peace.

So next time life stirs the chaos, remember:

Drop the drama. Not the spoon.

Choose presence. Choose softness. And let peace lead the way.

### **3.3 STAY GROUNDED AS YOU GROW**

As life lifts us towards success, love, knowledge, and praise, one thing matters more than all of it: staying grounded.

To stay grounded means staying real, centred in who you truly are, no matter how high you rise. It's not living small or avoiding growth; it's remembering your roots as you grow tall.

#### **THE HIGHER YOU RISE, THE DEEPER YOUR ROOTS MUST BE**

I often think of a tall, majestic tree, standing strong, unshaken by wind or storm. But what we don't see is what lies beneath: roots reaching deep into the earth, anchoring it in silence and strength.

Life is just like that. The more you grow on the outside, more recognition, more love, more responsibility, the deeper you must be rooted inside – in humility, awareness, and inner stillness.

I remember a time when everything in my outer world seemed to be expanding. My coaching practice was thriving, I was shuttling between countries for my family, being called to speak, and invited to celebrations. From the outside, it looked like success.

But inwardly, I could feel it; if I didn't stay anchored, I would float away with the noise. That's when I learned: growth isn't about adding more to your life. It's about deepening your connection to yourself.

#### **STAY ROOTED WHILE YOU RISE**

Your growth should never rise faster than your grounding. Yes, you can rise. You can expand. You can achieve great things. But rise with your feet still touching the earth, your heart still soft, your ego still quiet.

Real success isn't how high you climb – it's how steady you remain while climbing. Because what you water is what will grow.

I've decided to focus on what truly matters, and to be intentional about where I put my energy.

I choose:

- Silence before I speak.
- Surrender before I struggle.
- Awareness before chasing achievement.
- Truth before I try to teach anything.
- Compassion before trying to control outcomes.
- Stillness before jumping into action.
- Gratitude before pursuing ambition.
- Joy before rushing into any journey.

It's a way of slowing down and making sure I'm aligned with what actually brings meaning.

The world will pull you in many directions. There will be praise. There will be pressure. People will expect more. You'll expect more from yourself. But when those winds blow – and they always do – it's not your titles or talents that will keep you standing. It's your inner roots.

Your connection to what is real, what is simple, what is true. So, always take time to return to yourself. Breathe deeply. Move slowly. Stay present.

Don't chase the sky so fast that you forget the ground beneath you. Because peace doesn't come from rising – it comes from rising with awareness.

Stay rooted. Grow gently. And let your success be a reflection of your inner stillness, not your outer noise.

## **LET YOUR GROWTH SPEAK FOR YOU**

There was a time in my life when everything was rising. My work as a coach was expanding. More people were reaching out. There was appreciation, recognition, and even celebration. And yes... it felt good. To be seen. To be valued. To be heard.

But, in the quiet moments, something else began to speak. A soft voice inside my head whispered: "I did this. This is because of me." That's when I paused. Because I've learned – this is where the fall begins. Not when success arrives, but when we start thinking we are the source of it all.

## **SO I CONSCIOUSLY REMEMBERED:**

I didn't create the breath I'm breathing.

I didn't design the love that flows through my heart.

I didn't summon the gifts that move through me.

They were all gifted to me. I am simply blessed. It's all grace.

## **THE REALISATION**

This is the realisation I've come to: All the talents and skills I have – the writing, the songs I sing, the words I speak, the healing I share – even my very breath – none of it belongs to me. I am just an instrument. Life plays through me.

I am not the doer. I am a channel, a vessel, a witness. The more I try to control or hold on, the heavier it becomes. But when I stay open, soft, and surrendered, life moves freely through me.

In that surrender, I feel the quiet miracle of existence. I am not separate from it; I am simply the instrument through which it expresses itself.

To be used by something greater. To be trusted with light. To show up, not as the source, but as the space for the source to move.

I don't need to take credit. I just need to stay clear. Clear of ego. Clear of fear. Clear of the need to control. Because the more I let go, the more flows in. That's the way grace works. Silently. Gently. Fully.

And I'm just grateful to be part of it.

## **THE FREEDOM OF STAYING GROUNDED**

And when we stay close to that truth, we feel light again. We don't need to prove anything. We don't need to protect anything. We just need to be – clear, empty, real.

Now, when praise comes, we can receive it, but we don't cling to it. When success visits, we welcome it, but we don't let it define us.

We let the work speak – not our ego.

Because we've seen what happens when we rise without roots: the smallest wind can shake us. But when we grow from stillness, we can bloom even in the middle of a storm.

**Rise, But Stay Real**

**Rise – but stay grounded.**

**Do – but stay empty.**

**Speak – but stay silent inside.**

This is what keeps us steady.

## **A REAL-LIFE INCIDENT THAT CHANGED ME FOREVER**

I'll never forget that day.

My daughter had just turned eight years old. I had just started at GCA and was teaching at Linda Vista School. Everything felt like it was falling into place.

Then, during class hours, a sudden, loud cry pierced the air:

"Amma!"

It was so loud, so raw, I knew something was wrong.

She had fallen from the slide. When I rushed to her, her leg was already swelling, badly broken. My heart sank. But in that moment, one thought overwhelmed everything else:

"Thank God she's alive. She didn't fall on her head."

I was shaken, but deeply grateful.

With the help of a friend, I gently placed her in the car and drove home. Thankfully, we lived close by, and it was a Saturday, so my husband was home. I handed her over to him and simply said:

"Our daughter fell and broke her leg. Please take her to the hospital."

As much as I wanted to go, something stronger pulled me back to the school. I had a responsibility, not just to finish the day, but to speak to my students about something deeper. Not rules, not lessons, but gratitude.

I told them how life can change in a second. How we take so much for granted, until we can't anymore. I shared what had just happened, not for sympathy, but from the heart. Some might've thought I was overreacting. But I wasn't. I just needed to share the truth of what I felt.

It took four long months of healing, patience, and quiet strength at home. And through it all, I held on to this:

Be grateful. Respect what you have. Life is fragile. Every moment is a gift.

And above all – stay grounded.

I've learned, over time, that staying grounded doesn't mean being invisible. It means living with depth, balance, and presence, grounded, not floating.

## **HERE ARE FEW REFLECTIONS THAT HELPED ME:**

### **1. Don't Get Lost in the Ego**

It's easy to say, "I did this." But success is built with life's support – people, grace, circumstances.

Celebrate praise, but don't let it feed pride.

### **2. Remember: You're Not the Doer**

You didn't invent the breath in your lungs; you're part of something bigger.

When you let go of "I must control everything," you feel lighter. You still act – but don't cling. You flow.

### **3. Live with Awareness, Not Arrogance**

Arrogance says, "I already know." Awareness whispers, "There's more to learn."

Pause, listen, ask – there lies strength.

### **4. Build a Quiet Space Inside**

The world is loud. But inside, find a place that's still – like a calm lake.

Even a few minutes each day of silent breathing anchors your soul.

## **5. Stay True to Your Inner Self**

External roles shift – mother, coach, manager, friend – but your core stays the same.

Remind yourself: “I may be tired, but I’m still here.” “I may succeed or fail, but I know who I am.”

That’s true grounding, not avoiding life, but living through it with calm presence.

## **GREATNESS IN SILENCE**

- Steve Jobs returned to Apple, softer after being removed.
- Oprah trusted her voice after being told she didn’t fit on TV.
- Ratan Tata remained graceful after project failures.
- Nelson Mandela forgave a nation after 27 years in prison.

True greatness isn’t loud. It’s grounded. It speaks in silence. It stands in stillness.

## **THE PRACTICE OF STAYING GROUNDED**

A student once asked the master, “Master, how do I stay connected to what’s real?”

The master replied, “First, sweep the floor.”

The student nodded, “And after that?”

The master smiled, “Then sweep it again.”

At first, the student was confused. But over time, he understood: Grounding isn’t something you reach. It’s something you return to – in the everyday moments. In simple actions done with presence.

In breathing. In being. In coming back to now.

## **THE SECRET TO RISING**

One day, another student asked, “Master, how do I rise above all the noise?”

The master answered, “By remembering your roots.”



The student said nothing, but the words stayed with them.

Because here's the truth: The taller the tree, the deeper its roots must go. You can rise. You can grow.

But only if you stay grounded in truth, in humility, in self-awareness.

## **SIMPLE DAILY WAYS TO STAY GROUNDED**

Begin each morning with a few quiet breaths. End each night with gratitude for the small things — a meal, a smile, a moment of joy.

Do little acts of kindness, asking for nothing in return. Trust that everything changes in its own time.

Remember, nothing is truly ours — not the body, not the thoughts, not the things we hold. Letting go brings peace.

Enjoy happiness fully when it comes, and then gently release it. Life feels free and light when we allow it to flow.

## **THE POWER OF SMALL, QUIET ACTIONS**

Sometimes, grounding isn't about doing big things. It's in the simple, everyday actions: sweeping the floor, answering the call, listening fully, or simply being present. These small moments, done with attention, keep life steady and balanced.

When we focus on what truly matters, we create a calm centre inside ourselves. Staying rooted and real allows our stillness to shine – quietly, gently, but more powerfully than any noise or hurry ever could.

## 3.4 I LET NATURE LEAD ME HOME

**“NATURE DOES NOT HURRY, YET EVERYTHING IS ACCOMPLISHED.” – LAO TZU**

When we returned to California eight years ago, something inside me quietly shifted. In my twenties, I was always in a rush – socialising, making friends, filling every moment. I never really paused to notice nature.

For the first time in a long while, I began to slow down – really slow down – and notice the beauty of the nature around me. The breeze moving through the trees... the leaves letting go with grace... birds singing freely, without needing an audience.

**NATURE BECAME MY MIRROR. MY TEACHER. MY COMPANION. I BEGAN TO FEEL CONNECTED.**

When I see a tree standing tall in every season, I remember that I have strong roots too. I can stay grounded, even when life changes. I may bend, but I don't have to break.

When I watch water move around rocks, I feel my own tension begin to ease. The water doesn't fight, it flows. I don't always have to push. I can move with life, not against it.

When I lie under the open sky in silence, I begin to hear everything. The wind, the birds, the stillness, they all remind me to listen. In the quiet, I hear myself again.

There's a scenic spot high up in the hills, where we live – full of trees, greenery, and wide mountain views. I go there almost every single day. I sit for hours, doing nothing but being. I take my mat and just sit there for hours, doing nothing. Simply watching. Listening to the birds. Feeling the breeze. Putting my feet on the grass. Walking barefoot.

It's the most peaceful place I know. It's an experience beyond words.

Over time, this place has become my sanctuary. I sometimes bring friends here and even book quiet moments for us to simply be. And the trees? They've become my closest companions. Each one with a name – Sruti, Laya... names that feel musical, soulful, alive. There's something magical in how deeply we connect.

In their stillness, I've found a kind of healing I didn't know I needed. It wasn't just a book or a lecture or a quote that brought me back to myself. It was nature – steady, open, and always waiting – that reminded me:

You don't have to rush. You just have to return.

Few days a week, a small group of us goes for a peaceful walk around a beautiful spot nearby called Elizabeth Lake. It's quiet, green, and full of life – trees, water, winding paths... and so many squirrels.

At first, I simply enjoyed watching them. But, over time, they began to teach me something simple yet powerful.

After our walk, we usually sit together on the grass for a mini satsang (being in the company of truth) – just sharing, reflecting, and being.

Nature has become my teacher. Not through loud lessons, but by simply being herself. In her stillness, I've started to remember who I am.

## **LIFE LESSONS I LEARNED JUST BY BEING WITH NATURE**

These are not lessons, I read in books or heard in speeches. They came quietly, as whispers from the natural world, not by studying nature, but by simply being with her.

Over time, just by being with nature, I've learned so many quiet lessons.

- **The lake taught me patience.**

It doesn't hurry or push; it stays calm and still, reflecting everything around it. I've learned to trust my own pace, even when life feels slow.

- **The squirrels showed me curiosity and playfulness.**

They explore, collect, and enjoy life without worry. I try to bring that lightness into my own days.

- **The ducks reminded me to move gently through life.**

They glide over the water, facing currents without struggle. Sometimes, being calm and flowing is stronger than forcing things.

- **The greenery around me teaches me growth.**

Trees, bushes, and grass all grow in their own time. I don't need to rush or compare myself to anyone.

- **The trees whispered about strength and roots.**

Even when storms come, they stay grounded. I've learned to stay steady, even in difficult times.

- **The wind and the leaves showed me how to let go.**

Leaves fall, wind passes, and life keeps moving. I've learned not to cling too tightly, and to accept change gracefully.

Nature has become my greatest teacher. I just needed to slow down, watch, and listen.

## **NOT TO FORGET THE PARK IN HYDERABAD – A LESSON FROM THE PEACOCK**

While California is home now, I'll never forget the beautiful moments I've spent – and still enjoy – when we visit Hyderabad, India – especially near our home in the peaceful green space of KBR Park. It's like a mini forest in the middle of the city.

Every time I visit, it never asks anything from me – no effort, no expectations. Just to be present. And in that quiet, I find a kind of peace I didn't even know I was looking for.

I met one of my favourite teachers in the park – the peacock. The peacock taught me to embrace my true colours. It doesn't try to hide. It doesn't shrink itself to make others comfortable. It opens its feathers when the time feels right – not for attention, but simply because that's its nature.

Peacock doesn't dance for applause. It dances because joy overflows from within.

Watching the peacock, I learned something important: We're not meant to dim our light just to fit in. We're meant to stand tall in our truth – to let our inner beauty be seen, even if others don't fully understand it.

The peacock is a symbol of:

- Celebration without reason
- Living in the moment
- Beauty that comes from wholeness

We too are meant to express, not impress. To let joy, move through us naturally – like a peacock in the rain. Grounded. Graceful. And unafraid to show who we really are when our soul is ready.

## **LET THE SUN AND EARTH DO THEIR WORK: A STORY THAT GROWS LIKE NATURE DOES**

There's a story I once heard – simple, quiet – and it stayed with me like a seed in the heart. It's the story of a clay pot and the earth that formed it.

A potter was shaping a pot from the soft clay of the riverbed – earth, water, and care in his hands. He gently moulded it and placed it outside in the sunlight to dry.

But the clay pot, still soft and unsure, kept whispering, “Hurry, please! Put me in the fire now. I want to be finished. I want to be strong.”

The potter smiled and replied, “Not yet. The sun and air still have work to do. If I rush, you'll crack. You're not ready, and that's okay.”

But the clay pot didn't like waiting. The sun felt slow. The days felt endless. The stillness was uncomfortable.

All it could think about was the fire – the final step, the becoming.

Yet the potter waited, trusting nature's rhythm. The breeze, the warmth, the drying earth – all moved in their own quiet way.

Then one morning, when the clay had fully dried under the sun and wind, the potter placed it in the fire.

Not too soon, not too late. And when it came out, the pot was strong, whole, and beautiful.

It is no longer rushed. It had become what it was meant to be – not through force, but through patience and trust.

Just like that pot, we too are shaped by slow seasons – by the warmth of the sun, the stillness of waiting, and the quiet work of time.

Nature never hurries.

The trees don't rush to bloom. The rivers don't skip steps. The seasons arrive when they are ready. And we – being part of this same nature – don't need to rush either.

Some things take time: Healing. Peace. Growth. They come not through pushing, but through trusting the process.

## **LIVING GENTLY, FROM THE INSIDE OUT**

Let life shape you slowly, like nature does – with patience, softness, and grace. You don't have to rush. You are growing, even when it feels like nothing is happening.

Real growth often happens quietly, in the background, while we simply keep showing up.

Every day, I just do what I feel called to do. I share little reflections. I watch nature. I notice things. I write them in my notes. Sometimes I send them to friends who feel the same way – even if I'm not sure they're reading, or fully understanding.

And that's okay.

Because my joy is not in how people respond. My joy is in sharing. That quiet joy comes from within, and that's enough for me.

Funny thing is, the more I share from this peaceful space, the more people start to feel something too: a sense of calm, a quiet joy. Maybe that feeling spreads.

Maybe when we live with presence and love, others feel it too – even if we don't say much.

I've stopped needing approval. I've stopped waiting for the "right" audience. This isn't a performance. This is life – lived honestly, gently, and with heart.

There's a freedom in doing what feels true, without needing anything back. No one needs to fully understand your path – only you need to walk it.

And when your heart is clear, even the smallest act becomes a kind of meditation.

Life is not a race. We're here to share. To simply be who we are. Fully. Naturally. Without trying too hard. And when we do that, the universe doesn't always give us applause – But it gives us something better: Peace.

## FINDING HOME IN NATURE'S QUIET WISDOM

Life can move so fast. Sometimes it feels like everything is happening all at once – and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But when I pause and really look around, nature quietly reminds me of some simple, powerful truths.

Maybe these thoughts can help you too.

- **Be here now.** Look at the trees – they don't worry about tomorrow. The birds don't keep thinking about yesterday. They are fully here, in this moment. And you can be too. Even when life pulls you in many directions, there is strength in just being present.
- **Go with life's flow.** Flowers bloom when they are ready, not because someone tells them to. Rivers don't fight the rocks; they flow gently around them, following their own path. Maybe we can learn from this – to trust our own timing and move softly with life's current instead of pushing too hard.
- **Find your own home.** Home isn't always a place on a map. It's a feeling inside. I find my home in small moments – sitting quietly by a lake, walking barefoot on soft grass, or lying beneath the stars. In these moments, I feel a deep peace, like I'm coming back to myself.
- **Heal with kindness.** Nature never rushes or judges. It doesn't say, "Get better faster." It holds us gently, like a loving embrace. When life feels heavy, remember healing takes time. Be patient and kind to yourself.

You don't need to travel far to find this quiet wisdom. You don't need a forest or a mountain. Start where you are. Sit beside a small plant. Watch the sky. Listen to the breeze. Breathe deeply.

**Let nature be your mirror** – not the busy, noisy world outside, but the calm, wise world inside you. And as you return to this quiet place, you might notice something beautiful:

You have come home. Home to your own heart..

## 3.5 BUILD YOUR SACRED TIME: MAKE SPACE FOR YOU

Sacred time isn't about religion or strict routines – unless your heart truly desires them. It's a gentle gift you give to yourself: a moment without roles, without noise, without screens, without any need to perform. It's simply space to breathe, to sit quietly, and to just be.

This time can be as short as five minutes or as long as an hour. The length isn't important. What matters is the intention behind it. You're not trying to escape life; instead, you're returning to it with a clearer mind and a peaceful heart.

Sacred time is like a soft “hello” to your soul.

For a long time, I thought taking time for myself was selfish. But now I understand that it's sacred. When I spend time with myself, I come back to the world feeling calmer, more loving, and more truly myself.

As I mentioned earlier, there was a period in my life when I believed that being busy meant I was doing something right. A full calendar made me feel important. I was always moving – socialising, fixing things, achieving goals, planning, performing. I thought this was how I grew.

But deep inside, something didn't feel right.

Even when everything seemed fine on the outside, I'd lie awake feeling disconnected, like I was living beside myself instead of truly with myself. I realised I was showing up for everyone else but had stopped showing up for me.

That's when I discovered something that changed everything: **sacred time**.

I create little sacred moments in my day to feel calm and connected. I start with ten minutes of quiet in the morning, just breathing and letting thoughts come and go. I take phone-free walks, noticing birds and the wind. I enjoy tea without distractions, just sipping and being present.

In the evening, I write in my journal freely, letting out gratitude, doubts, or joy. And my favourite: I sit for five minutes with my eyes closed, doing nothing, just being, and remembering I'm already enough.

Making space for yourself isn't about adding more to your to-do list. It's about giving yourself permission to pause, to listen, and to reconnect. It's in



these quiet moments that you remember who you really are – beyond the noise, beyond the roles, beyond the busy days.

Your sacred time is your way back home to yourself.

## **SACRED TIME CAN BE SIMPLE**

You don't have to go far or do something big to feel calm. Sacred time is simply giving a little space back to yourself. No phone. No pressure. No need to perform. Just a few quiet minutes to be present and breathe.

Whether you're young or old, working or retired, busy or at home – everyone needs time to pause and reconnect with themselves. Sacred time is not just for a certain age or lifestyle. It's for all of us, especially in busy cities like Hyderabad, where life moves fast.

## **HERE ARE FEW SIMPLE WAYS TO ENJOY SACRED TIME:**

- **A Cup of Tea in the Backyard:** Sip your tea slowly. No phone. No rushing. Just enjoy the quiet, the warmth, and the view.
- **A Walk in the Park:** Even a short walk helps. Listen to the birds, look at the trees, and breathe. Walk slowly. Let your mind settle.
- **Driving Alone Without Music:** Turn off the music and phone. Drive in silence. Let the road and the quiet calm your thoughts.
- **Watering Your Plants: Touch the Soil.** Feel the coolness of the water. Watch your plants grow. It's a simple way to feel connected.
- **Watching the Sunset from the Terrace:** Take a few minutes to sit and watch the sky change colours. You don't have to do anything. Just enjoy the beauty.
- **Sitting in a Temple When It's Quiet:** Not for prayer or rituals – just to sit in silence. Let the calmness of the space reach you.
- **Writing in a Notebook at Night:** Write whatever comes to your mind. No need to be perfect. Just express your thoughts freely.
- **Sitting Quietly After Everyone Sleeps:** When the house is still, take five or ten minutes to sit. Close your eyes. Breathe slowly. Let yourself unwind.

## **SACRED TIME FEELS LIKE COMING BACK TO YOURSELF**

When I started giving myself just 10 or 15 minutes a day. Slowly, something began to shift:

- My thoughts started to slow down.
- The tightness in my chest eased.
- A quiet inner voice returned – the one I had forgotten was even there.

And I remembered something simple and true:

**Good Sleep + Silence = Sacred Time.**

Sleep rests your body. Silence rests your mind.

## **SACRED TIME BELONGS TO EVERYONE**

This time is not a luxury. It's not selfish. Sacred time is for everyone. Whether you're young or old, busy or retired, living in a crowded city or a quiet home – we all need moments to be with ourselves.

I spent years simply being with myself. Friends and family would ask, "What are you doing in the U.S.? Don't you get bored?" I would smile quietly. Because deep inside, I knew: I'm not bored at all – I'm in my sacred zone.

When you're truly present with yourself, you don't feel empty – you feel full. You don't feel alone – you feel whole. Sacred time helps us gently lay down all that we carry. It's like wiping a dusty mirror so you can finally see yourself clearly again.

You don't need hours. Just a few peaceful minutes each day. That's all it takes to come back home to yourself.

## **WHAT SACRED TIME HAS SHOWN ME**

The more I gave time to myself, the more clarity I found. Slowly, like fog lifting, I began to see:

- **What truly matters**
- **What drains my energy**
- **What my heart is quietly asking for**

It didn't happen overnight. But each quiet moment helped. Sacred time isn't about escaping life. It's about coming back to yourself –

To your body. To your breath. To your truth.

## **YOUR INNER WORLD SHAPES EVERYTHING**

There's a story I once heard: A man walked into a hall full of mirrors. He was angry, and all the reflections looked angry. He shouted, and every face shouted back at him.

Later, he walked in again, but this time with peace in his heart. He smiled. And the mirrors smiled too. That's how sacred time works.

When you soften inside, the world around you starts to soften too. If you've read this far, I just want to remind you of something simple:

You matter. Your peace matters.

Even five quiet minutes can begin to heal a noisy, rushed life. Don't wait for the perfect time or setting. It doesn't have to be big or dramatic.

Start today. Ten minutes. Just you. No pressure. No need to be perfect. Just presence.

Because when you take care of your inner world, your outer world slowly begins to shift – in quiet, beautiful ways.

You don't have to chase peace. You just need to make space for it.

## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #3: SILENT BATTLES & SARCASTIC MISSILES**

### **1. The Argument**

Babli: “What do you even think about during our arguments?”

Bhola: “Mostly snacks... and survival routes.”

Babli: “Unbelievable.”

Bhola: “Hey, I multitask under pressure.”

### **2. The Silent Treatment Chronicles**

Babli: “Can you at least tell me what you’re thinking?”

Bhola: “If I do, I lose the element of surprise.”

Babli: “So, you’re quietly planning my comeback?”

Bhola: “No, just mentally winning the argument for once.”

Babli: “Cute. Delusion looks good on you...”

### **3. Marriage Math**

Babli: “In this marriage, I give 50% and you give 50%.”

Bhola: “Correction. I give 80%, you give 20%, and then we argue over that 20%.”

### **4. Bhola’s Sacred Routine**

Bhola: “From 4 to 5 p.m., I sit in silence. No calls, no chores.”

Babli: “Wow, meditation?”

Bhola: “No. Just mentally preparing for your next ‘we need to talk’ session.”

## **5. The Secret to Marriage**

Friend: “Bhola, how do you survive marriage peacefully?”

Bhola: “Simple. I just say two words every day.”

“Yes, Babli’, even when I don’t understand what I’m agreeing to.”

## **6. The Real Pillars of Marriage**

Babli: “You know what keeps our marriage strong?”

Bhola: “Love?”

Babli: “No. Two TVs and separate blankets.”

## **7. The Magic Mirror**

Bhola looked into a mirror and said, “You’re smart, peaceful, and good-looking.”

Babli passed by and asked, “Talking to yourself again?”

Bhola: “No. Just talking to the only one who agrees with me.”



## **PART 4**

# **SPEAKING PEACE – CONSCIOUS COMMUNICATION**





## CHAPTER 4

### 4.1 THE QUIET ART OF LISTENING

Listening is not the same as just hearing words.

Most people hear, but their minds are busy judging, comparing, preparing replies, or drifting elsewhere. That is not listening.

To listen is to be fully present.

No opinions. No inner chatter. Just silence inside.

When we listen in this way, we don't only hear words—we feel the heart behind them. We sense the silence between the words. We receive the whole being of the other person.

Listening is meditation. When we listen deeply, we disappear—and only awareness remains. The art of listening is simple: Be still. Be open. Drop all judgments. Listening is about opening a window. In that silence, fresh air of truth flows in naturally. Let every word land gently inside us.

Most of us think listening is just waiting for our turn to speak. But real listening is much deeper. It's about fully being present with someone.

When we truly listen:

- **We are fully there with the other person, without distraction.**
- **We hear what is said, and sometimes even what is left unsaid.**
- **We allow the other person to express themselves completely, without interrupting.**

Listening is a way to understand life itself. The more we listen, the more we understand people, situations, and even ourselves. Real listening creates connection, calm, and insight.

There was a time I believed listening just meant hearing words. Someone speaks, we nod, we reply. Done. But real listening isn't with the ears, it's with the heart.

In the noise of everyday life, everyone wants to talk, to be heard. But very few people actually listen. To listen well, we don't have to do anything; just stay calm and be open.

Be fully present – with our mind, heart, and attention. Not planning our reply, not giving quick advice. Just... being there.

One day, I was with a friend who was sad about a personal issue and crying. I didn't know what to say. So, I didn't say anything. I just sat beside her and listened quietly.

Later, she whispered, "Thank you... I feel lighter." It showed me something important: You don't always have to fix someone. Sometimes, our quiet presence is enough.

## **LISTENING BEGINS WITH YOU**

True listening starts within. Before we can really hear others, we need to learn how to listen to ourselves. This means noticing how we feel, being honest about what's happening inside of us, and not judge our own thoughts or emotions. It means allowing oneself to feel our emotions instead of pushing them away or ignoring them. Accepting whatever arises within us without guilt or shame.

When we sit with ourselves in this way, we become calmer, clearer, and kinder – not just to ourselves, but to others too.

To practice the art of listening, try these steps: be fully present and stop thinking about what you will say next. Let go of opinions and judgments. Observe deeply, not just with your ears, but with your heart. Allow silence inside, because true understanding grows in quiet moments.

When you learn this quiet art, communication becomes richer, relationships grow stronger, and life feels more peaceful and harmonious.

When you give yourself kindness and the space to understand your own heart, you naturally become more open and ready to really hear what others have to say.

## **LISTENING IS A FORM OF LOVE**

Love lives in listening. When you truly listen to someone, you're saying: "You matter to me." "I'm here with you." No big speech. No advice. Just attention. Just care. Just presence. And presence is love – without saying a word.

I've felt this in small, ordinary moments.

One evening, my cousin sister was telling me a memory from her childhood. It wasn't a big story, just a small one. Normally, I would've nodded and moved on. But that day, I paused. I kept my phone aside. I gave her my full attention.

I asked questions. I stayed with her words. At the end, she smiled and said, "No one listens like this anymore."

That one sentence stayed with me. It reminded me: people don't always want advice. They just want to feel heard.

## **JUST BEING THERE CAN HEAL**

Another night, a friend called me – upset and emotional. She said, "I don't want advice... I just need to talk."

So I let her talk. She kept on going for hours. I listened. I stayed quiet. She cried, paused, spoke, went silent. And then she said, "Thank you. I feel better already." Not because I said something wise. But because I didn't interrupt her pain. I didn't give any advice. I simply listened.

## **EVEN STRANGERS WANT TO BE HEARD**

One day at the temple, an old man started talking to me about his grandson who works abroad. He kept asking questions. I could've walked away. But I stayed. I listened.

After ten minutes, he smiled and said, "You've got a soft heart, beta. You actually listen."

That simple line touched me deeply.

## **LISTENING IS A GIFT**

We often think we need big words or perfect advice. But sometimes, all someone needs is your quiet presence. To listen is to love. To listen is to hold space for someone's soul.

No noise. No judgement. Just you – fully present. That, in itself, can be healing.

So today, try listening – not just with your ears, but with your heart. You might not have all the answers... but your presence might be all someone needs.

And sometimes, that's everything.

## **THE LESSON IN QUIET**

A few months ago, I was visiting a dear friend in the neighborhood. It was a calm, sunny afternoon. Birds were chirping outside, a soft breeze floated through the open windows, and the smell of fresh herbs filled the kitchen.

My friend was making my special curry, stuffed brinjal also called eggplant or aubergine) – my favourite. She moved slowly and carefully, filling each brinjal with the spice mix, her hands steady and patient. I walked in, phone in hand, halfway through replying to a message.

She looked up, smiled, and said, “You know, cooking this is a little like listening.”

I laughed. “Listening? To brinjal?”

She chuckled. “Yes. You can't rush it. You have to be patient. Let the spices settle, let the brinjals soften... if you hurry, it falls apart. Listening is like that too. If you rush someone's words, you miss their meaning.”

Something in her voice made me pause. I put my phone aside and just watched her work, noticing the care and presence in every movement.

Yes I got the lesson, to simply listen is to be present. Only when we are completely silent inside can we hear what life or another person is saying.

That day, I realised: listening isn't just hearing words – it's being fully present, giving space for life to unfold.

That moment shifted something in me. My friend didn't give me a lecture. She didn't tell me to stop scrolling. She simply lived the lesson – through calm action.

Since that day I've started listening differently. To people. To myself. Even to silence. Sometimes, the most ordinary moment becomes our greatest teacher – if we're willing to stop, breathe, and truly listen.

## **THE POWER OF LISTENING**

She had been feeling restless for weeks. Life wasn't loud – but her mind was. Too many thoughts. Too many roles to play. At work, she smiled. With friends, she laughed.

But in quiet moments, a strange heaviness would rise.

Who is she? She could be you. She could be me. She could be anyone. Your sister. Your friend. The woman in the next room. The one smiling on the outside but holding it together inside.

She wakes up tired. Feels everything deeply but says nothing. Keeps going, keeps giving... even when she's running on empty. Noise feels louder these days. Small things feel heavy.

And even in a room full of people, she sometimes feels completely alone.

She doesn't need fixing. She just needs space. To breathe. To pause. To feel.

To be heard – even if it's just by herself.

One evening, she sat in her room with the lights off. No music. No phone. Just stillness. For a while, it felt uncomfortable – like being in a room with someone you've been avoiding.

But that "someone" was herself. So, she breathed. Slowly. Gently. And listened. Not to the outside world, but to the storm inside. The tightness in her chest. The sadness in her belly. The tension in her jaw.

She didn't run from it this time. She just stayed. And something surprising happened. The emotions didn't get louder. They softened. They began to speak – not in words, but in sensations, in quiet understanding.

## **LISTENING ISN'T JUST WHAT YOU DO WITH YOUR EARS**

It's what you offer with your presence. It's sitting with discomfort and not trying to "fix" it. It's saying to yourself, "I'm here. I'm listening. Even if I don't know what to do next."

Your pain doesn't want to be healed first. It wants to be heard. And that's what she finally did. She heard her own pain.

## **THAT MOMENT CHANGED THE WAY SHE LISTENED TO OTHERS**

Not long after, someone else opened up to her – tired, emotional, overwhelmed. This time, she didn't interrupt. She didn't give any advice. She didn't say "It'll be okay" or "Just be positive."

She didn't try to solve anything. She just sat there – soft, open, present. And when the other person finished speaking, they looked at her and said, "I don't know why... but I feel lighter."

That's the power of true listening.

## **SIMPLE LISTENING PRACTICE**

- **Pause** – Stop what you're doing and become present.
- **Breathe** – Take a deep breath to centre yourself.
- **Feel** – Notice what's happening inside you.
- **Listen** – Whether it's another person or your inner voice, listen without judgement.
- **Hold space** – Don't rush. Just stay with the emotion or the person.

When you learn to be fully present —without fixing, forcing, or escape —

you will discover that listening isn't a weakness. It's presence. It's strength without noise. It's love in its purest, most powerful form.

And sometimes, the person who needs it the most... is you.

## **A Funny Listening Test: (Husband's Listening Skills)**

One day, I decided to test my husband's listening skills – just for fun.

He was reading the newspaper, phone next to him. I started talking. He nodded and said, "Yeah, yeah..." but wasn't really listening.

I stopped. He didn't notice.

I said, "You're not listening!"

Then I calmly told him, "I'm going to leave and come back. We'll start again."

I walked out and back in, talking as if it were the first time. This time, he put down the paper and phone, saying, “Okay... tell me.”

Usually, he jumps into problem-solving quickly, but this time, he listened.

No distractions. Eyes on me. But then, he rushed me to finish!

I laughed and said, “If you rush me, I forget what I’m saying!”

We played this back and forth, and finally, he relaxed.

“I am all ears, no phone, no paper, just me,” he said.

I smiled and said, “Good morning,” and left the room.

I didn’t have anything else to say. He laughed too – he got the message.

Listening heals, connects, and helps us grow. People have a deep need to be seen, heard, and understood. Most pain comes from feeling disconnected – not heard by others or even by ourselves.

When we listen deeply, we open the door to love and true understanding.

## **WHY LISTENING MATTERS:**

When you truly listen, something beautiful unfolds:

- **People feel safe and respected.**
- **Relationships grow stronger.**
- **You understand yourself better.**
- **Peace begins to fill your heart and your world.**

Listening isn’t about having all the answers. It’s about making space for someone’s story, and for your own feelings too. When life feels overwhelming, pause. Listen. Not just to others, but to the quiet voice inside you. This doesn’t solve everything, but it brings calm and connection.

- **Listening creates space, not pressure.**
- **People often don’t want solutions; they just want to be heard.**

Since I started listening this way – to others and myself – I’ve learned something simple but powerful: Sometimes the best gift is just silence filled with love.

When you listen deeply, you say: “You matter. I’m here.” And often, that’s more than enough.

## **HEALING THROUGH LISTENING**

Whether we are listening to a friend or a partner, true listening brings healing.

**It creates:**

- **Connection**
- **Clarity**
- **Compassion**
- **Inner peace**

And, most importantly, it reminds people (and yourself) that they matter. You create space for real healing and love.

And sometimes, that’s all someone really needs.



## 4.2 ASK, DON'T ASSUME

Life becomes complicated when we assume too much and ask too little. We assume what others feel, what they mean, or what life should give us. When reality doesn't match our assumptions, we feel hurt, frustrated, or disappointed.

Instead, ask and listen. Why live with conclusions made up in our mind and suffer? Is it worth it? Isn't simple and easy to ask and be done?

Of course, asking opens doors and assumptions close them. Questions create understanding; assumptions create confusion. In relationships, asking brings clarity. At work, it prevents misunderstandings. With yourself, asking – “Why am I feeling this?” – brings awareness and peace.

I didn't always realise how quickly my mind used to make up stories. A pause in a message, a quiet look, or someone not replying, suddenly, I felt uneasy, hurt, or distant. My thoughts would say things like:

- “They must be upset with me.”
- “Maybe I did something wrong.”
- “They're ignoring me on purpose.”

But slowly, I understood something important: **Thought creates the pain.** The pain you feel isn't always from what actually happens. It is from what you think would happen.

Meet each moment with curiosity, not with old conclusions. Pause, ask gently, listen fully, and let clarity replace confusion. Life becomes simpler, lighter, and more joyful.

### ASSUMPTIONS ARE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

An assumption is when your mind tells you a story...without knowing the full truth. All stories are just guesses – usually coming from old wounds, fear, or past pain.

### WHY WE ASSUME

The mind is scared of not knowing. Silence, a short reply, a change in energy – it feels uncomfortable. So, instead of sitting with that discomfort, the mind

creates a story to feel in control. But that story often comes from pain, not reality. Behind every assumption is a part of you that feels unsafe and unseen.

## **THE DAMAGE IT CAUSES**

When we believe our assumptions, we stop seeing people clearly. We speak from defence, not love. We react to our fear, not to what's truly happening.

That's how misunderstandings grow. That's how distance is created – over something that may never have been real.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO INSTEAD**

1. **Notice when a story begins.** Ask yourself: “Is this true, or just something I’m afraid is true?”
2. **Pause. Breathe.** Sit with the unknown. Don’t rush to explain it away.
3. **Be curious.** If it matters, ask. Not out of fear, but out of care.
4. **Give space.** Let others be where they are. You don’t have to make it about you.

## **TRUE AWARENESS BEGINS WHEN WE QUESTION THE MIND**

When you stop letting your fear speak for you, you create space for truth, connection and softness. Assumptions come from disconnection. Listening, presence and curiosity create healing.

Next time you feel unsure, try this instead: Stay present. Don’t close the door with a false story. Open it with presence, and let the truth come to you.

Not everything is about us. Not every silence means something bad.

Don’t believe every thought your mind tells you. Pause. Look deeper.

## **ASSUMPTIONS BUILD WALLS**

*She Was Always Assuming... Until She Saw the Truth*

One of my close friends had to work with assumptions. She was kind-hearted, gentle, and very sensitive, but her mind was always busy guessing things.

If someone didn't reply to her message, her thoughts would start spinning:

"Maybe they're upset with me."

"They're ignoring me on purpose."

If a friend posted pictures from a small gathering she wasn't part of, she wouldn't ask. She would quietly pull away. She wouldn't express how she felt; she just assumed. And over time, her heart got heavy with stories she had made up in her own mind.

She once told me, "I just know when people are distant. I can feel it." But what she was really feeling... was her own fear, not always the truth.

Her assumptions-built walls, slowly, silently. She stopped checking in with people. She avoided conversations. She carried pain that was never even real.

One day, during a long chat, I gently asked her, "Do you know for sure that they feel that way? Or is it something your mind is telling you?"

That one question paused her thoughts. She admitted she had never actually asked. She had only assumed. She decided to try something different.

She reached out to a friend she had distanced from. She said softly, "I felt a little hurt... but I also realised I never asked. Can we talk?"

The response surprised her: "Hey! I've been so stressed with work, I didn't even realise I was distant. Thank you for asking." And just like that, the wall she had built with her thoughts... began to fall.

My friend finally began questioning her assumptions gently. She started pausing, asking instead of guessing:

"Are they really ignoring me, or just busy?"

"Is there another side to this I haven't seen?"

"Can I ask, instead of assuming?"

She learned something so simple, yet powerful: "The mind creates stories. But the heart opens when you ask."

And this, I've come to see, is true for many of us. Not every silence means rejection. Not every short reply means someone is angry. Not every change in tone is about you.

So next time your mind says, “They don’t care...” Take a breath and ask, “Is that really true? Or is it just a thought?” Because when you assume, you carry pain. But when you ask, you make space for peace.

Sometimes clarity isn’t found in thinking more. It’s found in asking gently. And listening with love. Let the truth come from presence, not fear.

Over the past few years, I noticed how quickly people jump to conclusions without checking the truth. When I started paying attention, reading, observing, and reflecting, here’s what I found out, and maybe it’ll help you too.

## **A WIFE SEES HER HUSBAND QUIET**

She thinks: “He doesn’t care anymore.” But maybe... he’s just stressed about a work deadline or something on his mind he hasn’t shared yet. His silence isn’t rejection, it’s worry.

## **A FRIEND ISN’T INVITED TO A DINNER**

She feels: “They left me out on purpose.” But maybe... it was a quick plan, someone forgot to add her, or they assumed she was busy. Not everything is intentional.

## **SOMEONE DOESN’T WAVE OR SMILE**

We think: “They’re ignoring me.” But maybe... they genuinely didn’t see us. Or they were lost in their own thoughts. It wasn’t personal; we just made it personal in our minds.

## **A SHORT REPLY OR SEEN MESSAGE ON WHATSAPP**

We feel: “They don’t want to talk.” But maybe... they were in a rush, tired, or distracted. Our mind turns it into rejection, but in reality, it could be nothing at all.

The Truth? Most of our pain doesn’t come from what actually happens. It comes from what we think happened. Our mind fills in the blanks with fear, not facts.

Instead of believing every thought, try this approach instead.

## **NEXT TIME, YOUR THOUGHTS SAY:**

- **“They’re avoiding me.” → Try: “Let me check in with them.”**
- **“I think I upset her.” → Try: “Can I ask her if something’s wrong?”**
- **“They don’t care.” → Try: “Maybe they’re going through something I don’t know.”**

These small changes bring so much clarity and kindness, too. Everyone is carrying something. Not everything is about us. And not every silence means something bad. Ask. Don’t assume.

Connect. Don’t conclude.

## **A STORY THAT TAUGHT ME ABOUT ASSUMPTIONS**

A young boy used to wait every day for a letter from his father, who had gone away for work.

But the letters never came. As time passed, the boy began to feel hurt. He thought, “Maybe he forgot me... Maybe he doesn’t love me anymore.” His heart quietly filled with pain and distance.

Years later, his father returned, holding a bundle of letters. Each one was full of love. Every word carried care. But none had reached the boy.

Why? Because his father had written and posted every letter – but without the correct address. He didn’t realise the mistake. And the letters never arrived.

The love was always there. But one small error led to years of silent sadness.

This story stayed with me. It shows how easily we suffer, not because of the truth, but because of what we believe when we don’t know the truth.

Truth is simple. Assumptions are many. And every assumption takes you more away from love. We assume because we’re afraid to ask. But asking brings closeness. Assuming only brings distance.

Before you believe the painful story, your mind creates... pause. Breathe. Ask. Clarify. Don’t let silence turn into a wound.

Because often, love is still there – we just didn’t receive the message.

When you stop assuming, something beautiful happens:

- **You feel lighter**
- **You become more open**
- **You start hearing people better**
- **You feel more at peace inside**
- **You build real, honest relationships**

Assumptions often come from unhealed wounds. When you bring awareness to them, you stop reacting blindly and start responding wisely. Real connection requires real understanding, and that only comes when we stop guessing and start listening.

Real love, real connection and real healing come when you choose clarity over assumption, truth over guessing and presence over reaction.

Let us let go of all assumptions, reality starts where conclusions end.

## **4.3 THE GENTLE POWER OF “NO, PLEASE”**

### **SAYING NO IS ALSO SAYING YES – TO YOURSELF**

Many of us find it hard to say “no.” We smile and agree... even when we’re tired, overwhelmed, or simply not ready. There’s a quiet fear of letting someone down.

We don’t want to seem selfish or unkind. But deep inside, something begins to feel heavy. We ignore our own needs. We stay available for everyone else...and slowly, we begin to drift away from ourselves.

You’ve felt it too, haven’t you?

One day, I whispered: “No, please.” It was a simple request. Nothing big or urgent. But I was already stretched too thin.

My body said no. My heart said no. So gently, I spoke the truth: “No, please. I can’t right now.” There was no guilt. No long explanation. Just calm.

That moment changed something. It felt like the first time I truly honoured myself. And it brought a quiet kind of peace.

Saying no isn’t rejection. It’s redirection – back to your own well-being.

You’re allowed to rest. You’re allowed to protect your energy. You’re allowed to choose you. No one is saying yes to you.

Saying no doesn’t mean pushing people away. It means coming home to yourself. It means choosing rest over rush. Clarity over confusion. Peace over pressure. When you say no to something that doesn’t feel right, you are saying yes to your energy, your values, your time and your well-being.

A no spoken with kindness is a yes to your inner peace.

### **SAYING NO IS A WAY BACK TO YOURSELF**

Sometimes we say “yes” – not because we want to, but because we’re afraid of what will happen if we say “no.”

Afraid of hurting someone. Afraid of being judged. Afraid of losing love. So we stay available, even when we’re exhausted. We give more, even when our own cup is empty.

But deep down, the soul feels the cost. A quiet heaviness builds. The body starts whispering: “This doesn’t feel right.” The heart starts asking: “Where am I in all this?”

When you say yes to others while saying no to yourself, you’re no longer in alignment with yourself. That inner conflict creates a split – and that split becomes pain.

One quiet day, the truth comes forward. A soft “no.” No anger. No apology. Just honesty.

“No, not today.”

“No, I need rest.”

“No, I’m not available for that right now.” And surprisingly... the world doesn’t fall apart. In fact, something inside begins to heal.

You’re not here to abandon yourself in the name of love. You’re here to love yourself, too. Saying “no” can be the most loving thing – for everyone involved.

Because when your energy is clean and your boundaries are kind, your presence becomes real. And in that space, love grows deeper, not less.

## **EVERY ‘NO’ THAT HONOURED MY TRUTH**

- 1. I Skipped a Party to Sit With Myself:** Everyone expected me to go. But after a week full of noise, work, and family duties, I was drained.

Instead of dressing up, I made tea, sat on the floor, and listened to soft music. It wasn’t exciting – but it felt like peace.

Rest isn’t laziness. It’s presence. Your soul knows when it needs stillness.

- 2. I Declined a Call to Be With My Child:** A friend called. I care for her deeply. But my child had just come back from a trip and had stories to share. I gently said, “Can we talk tomorrow?” We sat together, ate snacks, laughed, and simply connected.

Saying no to one moment can open the door to a more meaningful one.

- 3. I Stepped Back From Extra Work:** I was helping a friend with her daughter’s wedding. She asked me to take on one more task. Dinner needed to be made.



## HOW TO SAY NO WITHOUT GUILT – AND WITH GRACE

There will be times when your heart says no, but your mind feels pulled to say yes – just to please others or avoid discomfort.

But here's something to remember: You can say no – with kindness, with calm, and with love. And it can still be a full sentence.

Here are a few gentle ways to honour your truth, without hurting anyone else:

**To a Friend:** “Not this week... I really need some rest.” (When someone invites you out, but your heart just wants a quiet evening.)

**To a Neighbour or Relative:** “I'd love to help, but I can't today.” (When you're asked to assist with something, but your mind feels full and tired.)

**To a Family Member at Home:** “Thank you for thinking of me, but I'll pass this time.” (When there's a plan to go out or host someone, but all you want is peace and stillness.)

Every time you say no with honesty and softness, you say yes to your own well-being. Most people understand – because when you speak with calm truth, they feel the respect behind your words, even if they're a little disappointed.

Saying no gently is not rejection. It's a quiet way of saying: “My peace matters too.”

## WHEN DEEPIKA FINALLY SAID “NO” TO SAY YES TO HERSELF

Deepika grew up as the “good girl.” Always polite. Always helpful. Always saying yes. From childhood, she feared that saying no would upset people.

So she kept pleasing others, even when it hurt. In her twenties, she entered a relationship that slowly became controlling.

He questioned her choices, her time, her freedom. She stayed because that little voice inside still said, “Be nice. Don't hurt him. Don't say no.”

But over time, she felt drained. Anxious. Lost. Like she was vanishing from her own life. During a quiet counselling session, she finally whispered, “I don't know who I am anymore...” That was her turning point.

She began saying small no's. "No, I can't talk right now." "No, this doesn't feel okay." "No, I need time for myself." And with every no, she reclaimed a piece of herself. She wasn't being rude.

She was being real. Today, Deepika still shows up with love. But not at the cost of her peace. Because now, she knows: Saying no isn't rejection, it's self-respect.

It's not harsh, it's healing. And sometimes, the gentlest way to love yourself... is to simply say, "No, please."

You don't need to disappear to rest. You don't need a reason to pause. You don't have to be exhausted to deserve peace.

Sometimes, saying "no" to others is how we finally say "yes" to ourselves. You matter too.

## **SAYING YES TO YOU IS NOT SELFISH. IT'S SACRED.**

You're not here to please everyone. You're here to live honestly, gently, and fully. Saying yes to yourself might look like:

- Leaving a group chat that drains you.
- Skipping a wedding to be with your inner peace.
- Saying "Not now" to protect your energy.
- Choosing silence over small talk.

These aren't selfish acts – they're sacred choices. The more we honour our own feelings, the more we teach others to honour theirs. Every heartfelt no is a yes to something true within us. We don't owe anyone an explanation. Just stay calm ... and trust your truth.

## **4.4 THE POWER OF SPEAKING TO THE POINT**

I used to believe that speaking more meant I was being helpful or wise. But slowly, life taught me otherwise. When my mind was busy, my words would wander. I'd talk in circles, repeat myself, and try to sound smart. But inside, I felt scattered. My words were just noise.

Over the years, I've come to see something quietly powerful: how a few simple words, spoken with care, can carry more weight than a thousand rushed ones.

Then, I met people who didn't speak much, but when they did, it felt like the whole room paused. Their words had presence. They were clear, gentle, and direct. I wondered: What makes their words feel so real?

The answer was simple. Clarity.

### **SPEAK TO THE POINT: THE HEALING POWER OF CLEAR WORDS**

To speak to the point means:

- Saying what you honestly feel.
- Asking for what you truly need.
- Not hiding behind small talk or soft, unclear words.
- Being clear without being cold.
- Being honest without being harsh.

You don't need to say more. You just need to say what's real – with love, with clarity, with purpose.

### **WHY CLEAR SPEECH HEALS**

Words carry energy. They can soothe or stir. They can open someone's heart or shut it down. When we speak clearly, we create peace – for ourselves and for others. There's no confusion. No guessing. Just truth. And that kind of truth creates safety.

## **CLARITY STARTS WITHIN**

You can only speak clearly when your mind is calm. When you're fully present, you don't need big words or long stories. You say what's true and let the rest fall away.

Silence isn't awkward – it's sacred. Most people fear silence and fill it with noise. But the most powerful words often rise out of stillness.

## **ASK YOURSELF BEFORE YOU SPEAK:**

- Is this needed?
- Is it kind?
- Is it true?
- Is it now the right time?

If the answer is yes, speak. If not, wait.

## **WHY WE HOLD BACK**

We often avoid direct words because we are scared:

- Scared to hurt someone.
- Scared, they'll walk away.
- Scared, they won't understand.
- Scared to face our own truth.

So, we talk around the truth, hoping the other person will just “feel” what we mean. But healing doesn't happen in hints.

It happens in honesty.

## **LET YOUR VOICE BE A MIRROR**

Your words carry the light of who you are. When you speak with authenticity, you bring truth to what's been quietly buried. Speaking to the point is not a weapon. It's a gift – when done with presence, love, and intention.

The truth is, speaking with clarity brings connection. Speaking with confusion creates distance. This simple line holds a deep truth.

Most people speak to fill the silence, not to share understanding. Words should be few, meaningful, and honest. Speak only when you have something worth saying.

Don't speak to impress others. Speak to express truth. The fewer the words, the stronger the impact. Empty words create noise; clear words create connection.

## **LISTEN MORE, SPEAK LESS**

Listening is more valuable than talking. When you truly listen, your words naturally become wiser and more precise.

## **SILENCE IS POWERFUL**

Sometimes, saying nothing is better than speaking. Silence is a space where clarity, calm, and insight arise.

When you're clear with your words, your needs, your feelings – people know where they stand with you. There's no guessing. No mixed signals. No fear of misunderstanding.

That kind of clarity builds emotional safety. Why? Because:

- People feel they can trust what you say.
- They don't have to read between the lines.
- They can relax and be more honest in return.

Clarity is like light in a dark room. It lets others see you, and it allows you to see them too.

## **LACK OF CLARITY CAUSES CONFUSION**

When you avoid directness, even with good intentions, confusion creeps in. You may think you're protecting someone's feelings, but actually:

- They may feel uncertain or anxious.
- They might not know how to respond.
- They start filling in the blanks with their own fears or assumptions.

This is where distance begins. Not because anyone means harm, but because the connection is no longer grounded in truth.

Confusion makes people feel unsafe. And when we don't feel safe emotionally, we start to pull away, even from those we love.

When we keep saying "I'm fine" while feeling something very different inside, we slowly create a distance between ourselves and others. Over time, people may stop trusting our words because they sense the gap between what we say and what we feel.

Avoiding to speak our true needs quietly feeds resentment inside us, like a small fire we ignore until it grows. And when we try to express our feelings in unclear or vague ways, others often misunderstand us. Their reactions, based on this confusion, can unintentionally hurt the connection we value. The simple truth is: honesty in expressing what we feel, gently and clearly, nourishes trust and closeness. Pretending or hiding only blocks the natural flow of love and understanding.

## **EMOTIONAL SAFETY IS BEING HEARD, RESPECTED AND SUPPORTED.**

It's the freedom to be vulnerable without fear of rejection. You feel valued and understood.

It looks like:

- Saying, "I feel hurt," instead of hiding behind silence.
- Saying "I need more time" instead of ghosting or avoiding.
- Saying "This matters to me" clearly and calmly.

This doesn't mean being blunt or cold; it means being honest with care. Truth and connection are not opposites; they go hand in hand. Clarity doesn't mean you always have the perfect words.

It means you're willing to be real.

And being real, gentle, honest and direct is what helps relationships grow strong, safe and deeply connected.

## **SPEAKING WITH AWARENESS: A DAILY PRACTICE**

Be aware of why you speak. Avoid speaking from habit, fear, or ego. Speak from understanding and presence.

**Pause before speaking.** Even a single breath can create space for clarity. Silence isn't empty – it's often where the right words are found.

**Speak only what adds value.** If the words don't uplift, clarify, or heal, perhaps silence is the higher choice.

**Avoid repeating just to be heard.** One sincere sentence, spoken with intention, carries more weight than three said for reassurance.

**Know when to stop.** The ego may want to keep going, but wisdom recognises when the message has already landed. Trusting silence can be a deeper form of communication.

It's not about proving how much you know. It's about being fully present, speaking with honesty, calm, and care. Sometimes, the most intelligent thing to say... is nothing at all.

Because presence carries more weight than performance. It's not about being right, it's about being real.

**TRUE INTELLIGENCE IS NOT JUST ABOUT KNOWING A LOT OR SPEAKING IN CLEVER WORDS. IT IS ABOUT UNDERSTANDING HOW TO SPEAK, WHEN TO SPEAK, AND WHY TO SPEAK.**

**When you speak with awareness,** your words become meaningful. You are not just talking to fill the silence or to impress others. You speak because there is something true and valuable to share.

**How you speak shows your sensitivity.** Are your words kind, clear, and respectful? Do they bring peace or create conflict?

**When you speak, it shows your awareness.** Sometimes, silence is more powerful than words. Speaking at the right moment can heal, guide, or protect.

**Why you speak shows your inner clarity.** Are you speaking to help, to understand, to express love – or just to show off, argue, or control?

Real intelligence is silent inside, calm like a still lake. It doesn't rush to speak. It waits, watches, and then says what is needed – no more, no less.

Such speech comes from the heart, not the ego, and that is true wisdom.

## **KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THOUGHTFUL WORDS AND MINDLESS CHATTER.**

Not all talk is the same. Some words come from a noisy, restless mind; others come from stillness and awareness.

Mindless chatter comes from reacting, showing off, or trying to control. It happens when we speak just to fill silence, to prove we are right, or to impress others. Signs include:

- Talking too much without listening.
- Using big words or facts to look smart.
- Speaking to control or manipulate.
- Words that feel cold or disconnected.
- Reacting from anger, fear, or jealousy.

Thoughtful words come from presence, clarity, and heart. They are gentle, meaningful, and aware. Signs include:

- Speaking with care and compassion.
- Knowing when to stay silent.
- Sharing only what truly matters.
- Words that come from inner stillness.
- Saying deep things simply.

I want to say this one more time.

**Mindless chatter is like noise – loud, confusing, and often unnecessary.**

**Thoughtful words are like music – clear, calm, and uplifting.**

True intelligence isn't about how much you talk, but where your words come from.

Here Are Few Examples:



- **Mindless:** “Why are you always late? You never respect my time!”  
**Thoughtful:** “I felt a little let down. Can we plan better next time?”
- **Mindless:** “You were rude yesterday. What’s your problem?”  
**Thoughtful:** “I felt something was off yesterday. Are you stressed?”
- **Mindless:** “This is a waste of time. No one’s listening.”  
**Thoughtful:** “Can we pause and see what really needs attention?”
- **Mindless:** “Who are you to judge me?”  
**Thoughtful:** “I hear your view. I may not agree, but I’ll think about it.”
- **Mindless:** “You never understand me. I’m always blamed.”  
**Thoughtful:** “Let’s take a break and talk when we’re calmer. I want to understand.”
- **Mindless:** “You’re so stupid. Why did you say that?”  
**Thoughtful:** “That didn’t go well, but I’ll learn from it. Let’s try again tomorrow.”

Words are powerful. Speak from awareness, not from noise.

It’s not about using fancy words or sounding clever. It’s about being present with your words, knowing when to speak, what to say, and when silence says more.

A quiet, thoughtful word can calm storms. A loud, clever one can create noise. True intelligence is not in how much you speak, but in how deeply you listen first to yourself, then to others.

Before speaking, especially in difficult or emotional moments, it helps to pause and reflect: Ask these questions.

- **Am I speaking from fear, or from inner calm?**
- **Am I trying to win, or trying to understand?**
- **Is this helpful, or just adding noise?**

Wise communication isn’t about saying more. It’s about saying what matters with honesty, simplicity and love.

Talk smart, not loud. Talk from awareness, not reaction.

That’s real intelligence.

## **SMART COMMUNICATION FORMULA**

**Talking Smartly = (Speak Less + Listen More + Use Silence) × Speak with Awareness & Kindness**

Let this be the formula guide for you to respond in meetings, relationships, or in any tough moment.

Fewer words. Deeper listening. Kinder presence.

## **TEJA'S REALISATION**

Teja came for counselling, feeling frustrated that people seemed distant. He couldn't understand why invitations had slowed down, why conversations felt one-sided, why he was being left out.

As he spoke, something became clear – he was filling every silence with words. He admitted he hated pauses, so he talked and talked, often without noticing if anyone else had space to speak.

Gently, I asked him to sit in silence for a moment. At first, it felt strange. Uncomfortable. But slowly, he realised – “I've been talking so much to feel important... but I haven't been listening. Not to others. Not even to myself.”

That moment shifted something in him. He didn't stop speaking altogether, but his way of speaking changed. Now, he pauses. He chooses words with care. He allows silence to breathe.

And the difference? People feel more at ease around him. Conversations flow naturally. There is space, respect, and warmth.

He told me later, “I used to think people noticed me because I was loud. Now I know, real presence shines even in silence.”

Sometimes transformation doesn't happen with big declarations.

It begins quietly – with one moment of awareness.

Let your words be like a perfume – soft, intentional, and unforgettable. You don't have to fill every silence. Let your stillness speak first.

And when words follow, let them bring peace.

Because, in a world full of noise, a quiet voice that speaks the truth is the most powerful sound of all.

## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #4: CHATTERPATTER, CHAOS & CHAI**

### **1. Bhola's Shortcut**

Babli: "Why did you reply just 'OK' to my 5-paragraph message?"

Bhola: "Because I believe in speaking to the point. It's called effective communication. Learned it in a workshop."

Babli: "Cool. You are about to experience effective consequences, also known as the silent treatment."

### **2. Speak to the Point, Advised Babli**

Interviewer: "Bhola, tell us about yourself."

Bhola: "I need this job."

Interviewer: "That's all?"

Bhola: "Speaking to the point, sir."

### **3. Marital Peace**

Babli: "Bhola, why do you never listen to me?"

Bhola: "I do listen, but I choose to selectively forget – it's called marital peace."

### **4. The Assertive Offer**

Relative: "Beta, will you sing at the wedding?"

Bhola: "No, please. I love the family too much."

### **5. No Without Guilt**

Bhola: "I've started saying no calmly and respectfully."

Babli: "To whom?"

Bhola: "My cravings. Not you. I'm not that brave."

## **6. The Silent Drama**

Babli (fuming): “You didn’t even notice I was upset!”

Bhola: “I thought you were just practicing your ‘resting angry face’ again.”

Babli: “Wrong guess. That face means ‘run for your life!’”

## **7. Bhola’s Emotional Moment**

Babli: “Why are you quiet?”

Bhola: “I assumed if I spoke, I’d get in trouble.”

Babli: “Correct. Some assumptions are wise.”

## **8. Bhola the Listener**

Babli: “Did you even listen to what I just said?”

Bhola: “Of course! You said... something... with feelings.”

Babli: “Congratulations. You’ve mastered the art of surviving without listening.”

## **PART 5**

### **EMOTIONAL WISDOM – RESPONDING, NOT REACTING**



## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 FROM FIRE TO FORGIVENESS – TURNING ANGER INTO INSIGHT

Anger is not the enemy; it is a messenger, a signal from within. Anger arises when something in life is denied, ignored, or misunderstood. It points to unmet needs, hidden fears, or suppressed desires. It is not meant to be acted upon blindly, but to be understood, observed, and transformed.

When you see anger as a guide rather than a foe, it becomes a doorway – a doorway into self-awareness, deeper understanding, and inner freedom.

Anger is like a small child inside us that needs understanding, love and not punishment. Anger is often seen as something to fight or hide, but it is really a signal from within – a part of us that is hurting and needs attention. When anger rises, instead of pushing it away or letting it explode, we can pause, breathe, and look closely at what is causing it. Naming the anger and feeling it in our body helps us understand its roots.

When we approach anger with awareness, it stops controlling our actions. We can simply say to ourselves: “I am angry. This is part of me, and I will take care of it.” In this way, anger becomes a teacher, showing us where we are hurt and guiding us toward understanding and healing. Instead of creating harm, it opens a path to calmness, clarity, and compassion.

I’ve come to see that anger, at first, feels like fire, hot, sharp and hard to handle. It can take over our mind and body so quickly. But when we pause, try to understand and look at it with awareness, something shifts.

Instead of reacting to or pushing it away, if we just stay present with it, we start to hear what it’s really saying.

Anger can teach us a lot about ourselves. It often arises when something inside us is hurt, frustrated, or unmet, pointing to areas of pain or

misunderstanding we might otherwise ignore. It also reveals our attachments and expectations – showing where we are holding too tightly to how we think things should be.

If we notice anger without immediately reacting, it becomes an opportunity for mindfulness. We can pause, breathe, and see clearly before responding. Understanding our own anger also helps us see the suffering in others, opening our hearts to compassion. In this way, anger is not just a negative emotion – it is a signal, guiding us toward patience, self-care, and the chance to respond with awareness instead of reaction.

The more we push it down or hide it, the louder it gets.

But when we sit with it, breathe through it, and really listen, without judging ourselves, it becomes softer. We begin to understand what's underneath.

Slowly, forgiveness becomes possible.

Not because we force it... but because we no longer feel trapped in the anger. The weight starts to lift; instead of being burned by that fire, we feel a quiet strength inside us.

Now, anger doesn't control us. It helps us grow. It shows us what we need to heal. It even helps us forgive when we are ready.

We don't have to fear anger. We just have to meet it with kindness and awareness. Then, it stops being our enemy and becomes our guide.

## **A TRUE MOMENT: WHEN MY ADULT DAUGHTER CALLED IN ANGER**

One evening, my phone rang. It was my daughter calling from California. She didn't say hello, she didn't ask how I was. She jumped right into it.

"Amma, I'm so done! My boss's remark made me feel uneasy. For something that wasn't even my fault!"

She was furious. Her voice was shaking. I could feel the storm through the phone. For a moment, I wanted to jump in with advice, "Calm down, don't take it personally, just let it go..." But I stopped myself. I just listened.

I said gently, "I hear you, and I can tell this really hurts."



That one sentence opened the floodgates. She talked for 30 minutes straight about being overworked, unseen, and judged unfairly. Not just by her boss, but by life lately.

At the end of the call, she sighed and said, “Thanks, Amma. I just needed to say it out loud.”

Anger is often just a signal. Not something to fix, but something to feel through. That day, I saw that my daughter didn’t need advice.

She needed space. Space to feel. Space to be human. Space to not be judged for being upset.

## **GENTLE TRUTHS TO HOLD IN ANY RELATIONSHIP**

- When someone is angry, it’s often pain in disguise.
- You don’t need to fix the feeling – just be with it.
- Your steady presence brings more healing than the “right” words ever could.

Over time, I’ve come to see this clearly: Yes, anger isn’t the enemy – it’s a messenger. If you listen with compassion, you’ll hear the pain, fear, or longing behind the fire.

Now, when someone calls me in anger, I don’t rush to give advice or calm them down. Instead, I remind myself: They’re not asking me to solve their life. They’re asking – “Can I feel this with you and still be loved?”

And my answer, always, is: Yes, you’re safe here.

Anger isn’t always loud. It doesn’t always come with shouting, sharp words, or slammed doors. Sometimes, it walks in quietly – dressed as concern, coated in silence, hidden behind control or sadness.

## **ANGER: A HIDDEN MESSENGER**

I’ve noticed that anger doesn’t always show itself clearly. It often hides in small ways, quietly pointing to things inside us that need attention. Anger is not the enemy – it is a messenger, helping us understand our feelings, fears, and unmet needs.

Here are ten ways anger often hides, and what they can teach us:

1. **Unspoken Expectations** – A message goes unanswered, and your mind starts telling a story: “They are ignoring me,” or “Maybe they don’t care.” The anger usually comes not from what others did, but from the story we create in our heads.
2. **Old Wounds, New Triggers** – Sometimes a small comment hurts more than it should. That’s because it touches an old wound from the past. Anger here is a signal: “Something inside still needs healing.”
3. **Wanting Control** – Wanting things to go exactly your way can cause frustration and irritation. Underneath, there’s often fear – of uncertainty, of being let down, or of losing control. Letting go may not make everything perfect, but it can bring peace.
4. **Ego’s Fight** – A small disagreement can feel like a big attack. This anger comes not from the words themselves, but from feeling unseen, unimportant, or disrespected.
5. **Irritation Over Small Things** – Little annoyances can actually be signs of deeper, unresolved feelings inside.
6. **Silent Withdrawal** – Going quiet may look peaceful, but sometimes it hides anger. Silence is a chance to notice what we’re avoiding.
7. **Sarcasm or Passive Remarks** – Jokes or sarcasm can hide real anger. Even if it’s quiet, anger is trying to be expressed.
8. **Overthinking Events** – Constantly replaying situations in your mind keeps anger alive. It shows there’s still something unresolved inside.
9. **Rigidity** – Insisting that everything follows your way often hides frustration or anger toward reality not matching your expectations.
10. **Quick Judgments** – Judging others harshly often reflects inner dissatisfaction or hidden anger. It points to where we need self-awareness.

Anger is not a villain. The real problem starts when we ignore it. But when we pause and ask, “What is this really about?” anger begins to soften.

Anger can change – from fire into light, from a weapon into a message. Instead of creating more pain, it can become a doorway to understanding ourselves better. Sometimes, the most healing thing we can do is not fight anger, but listen to it and understand what it is trying to tell us.

## **CARRYING RESENTMENT? BEEN THERE, DONE THAT**

In my early twenties, I stayed angry over very silly things. I was angry for a few days because someone very close to me forgot my birthday. Did I even mention my birthday? No, I didn't. Later, I realised maybe they simply forgot. I was holding onto that hurt until I understood it wasn't anyone's fault. Forgetting happens, and that's okay.

Now, I laugh about it. I used to take birthdays so seriously – waiting, hoping, that my friends to wish me on time. Now I just laugh at the whole thing. In fact, I've taken it to the next level: I send out a message a day early, reminding everyone to wish me tomorrow! It's no longer about whether they remember or forget – it's just pure comedy. Honestly, nothing says "celebration" like me wishing myself first and giving everyone else a homework. It's really hilarious.

## **I HEARD A BEAUTIFUL ZEN STORY, AND IT STAYED WITH ME.**

A master hands his student a giant bag labelled "All Your Old Regrets." The poor student carries it all day, totally sweaty and grumpy.

Finally, the master asks, "Why are you still holding that?"

Student: "You told me to!"

Master: "I told you to carry it. I never said not to let it go."

The student drops it, sighs, and feels at ease.

Sometimes a grudge stays for weeks, quietly sitting in the heart. Then one day, it disappears... and there's laughter. Everything feels light. And it all seems so small, almost funny.

Dealing with angry people can be really hard. If you're going through this, here's something for you to remember: You're not alone. Your feelings matter.

## **FINDING PEACE THROUGH ANGER**

Even in the middle of anger, it is possible to stay calm. Anger shakes us, tests us, and sometimes hurts us. But if we look deeply, it can also guide us toward understanding and healing.

## **ANGER IS A CRY FOR HELP**

Anger often hides pain. It can cover fear, sadness, or loneliness. When we see the pain behind anger, compassion naturally arises.

## **OUR OWN WOUNDS ARE AWAKENED**

When someone else's anger touches us strongly, it usually reflects our own unhealed hurt. Instead of blaming, we can gently ask: "What inside me still needs care?" These moments invite inner healing.

## **ANGER CAN BE QUIET**

Not all anger shouts. It can hide in silence, sarcasm, or distance. Noticing it is already a form of understanding. Even a gentle question, like "Are you okay?" can open a door.

## **THE NEED TO BE SEEN**

Most anger comes from feeling unheard or invisible. Often, people don't know how to say, "I am hurting." Listening with presence can be more powerful than arguing or trying to fix things.

## **COMPASSION INCLUDES BOUNDARIES**

Understanding anger doesn't mean accepting harm. We can care deeply for someone and still say, "I need to step back when things become too harsh." Protecting our peace is also an act of love.

## **AWARENESS BRINGS FREEDOM**

When we notice anger without reacting, it loses its power over us. We don't need to fight it or push it away. Simply observing with calm awareness helps us stay free.

Anger is not an enemy. If we listen to it with kindness, it becomes a messenger. It shows us where care is needed – within ourselves and around us. In time, anger can guide us to peace, compassion, and wisdom.

## 5.2 EMOTIONAL AGILITY – FLOWING THROUGH LIFE CHANGES

Emotional agility, is the ability to stay present with our emotions without being trapped by them. It is the art of holding our feelings gently – like we would hold a small child – while allowing them to move, shift, and flow naturally, instead of clinging to them or pushing them away.

Emotions are like clouds passing through the sky of our awareness. They come, they change, and they go. When we try to resist them, they become heavy. When we chase them, we become lost. But when we simply breathe, smile, and observe, emotions flow freely without leaving deep scars.

To live with emotional agility is to walk through life like water flowing around stones. We don't have to fight with anger, sadness, or fear. We acknowledge them, we take care of them, and then we let them move on. In this way, emotions become teachers instead of prisons.

Flowing through life means we are not rigid, not stuck in one reaction or identity. We can bend like bamboo in the wind. We can adapt, respond, and stay light even in difficult situations. Emotional agility gives us freedom – the freedom to love, to forgive, and to stay at peace no matter what storms may come.

There was a time in my life when even small changes felt hard to accept. If things didn't go the way I had planned, it would trouble me for days. I thought being in control gave me peace, but slowly, life began to show me another way.

That's how I started learning emotional agility:

The ability to move through life's changes with softness, without breaking inside. The ability to let go, trust and still stay open to joy.

### **REAL LIFE STORY: A CHANGE I DIDN'T EXPECT**

This was in 2015, my husband and I, along with our kids, had planned a beautiful family trip to Spain and Portugal. We were so excited; tickets were booked, the itinerary was ready, and we were all set to fly out from Hyderabad. It was meant to be a long-awaited vacation, something we had put a lot of love (and money) into.

Just two days before the trip, I slipped and fell. I heard a sound in my leg, a snap. I got up and tried to act normal. I told myself, "It's nothing. I'm fine."

But my leg started to swell. The pain grew. A visit to the doctor confirmed it; my leg was fractured. He looked at me and said, gently, “You’ll have to cancel the trip.”

And just like that, everything changed.

At first, I was taken aback. Yet, strangely, I wasn’t overwhelmed. I didn’t cry or complain – I simply allowed myself to feel it, sit with it, and then quietly let it go.

The trip was too expensive for everyone to cancel, so my husband and children went ahead. I stayed back in Hyderabad alone in an empty house, in a wheelchair, with a broken leg.

And yet, a quiet peace settled within me. I was not abandoned, not bitter – simply present. Something deeper was unfolding. I was learning the art of sitting with myself, with life, with everything exactly as it is, without resistance, without judgment.

## **THIS IS EMOTIONAL AGILITY.**

That experience showed me what emotional maturity really feels like.

- It’s not about forcing yourself to be “positive.”
- It’s about being fully with what is, without panic or resistance.
- It’s about feeling your emotions and then gently letting them pass.

Here’s the quiet truth I learned:

**Emotional Agility = Feel + Pause + Flow**

It’s a way of staying steady without becoming hard. It’s learning to accept life’s sudden turns, while still staying open and kind.

## **WHEN PLANS CHANGE, PRESENCE MATTERS**

Yes, I missed a beautiful trip. Yes, I was alone and in pain. But strangely, I wasn’t suffering.

I read, I reflected, I healed – slowly, from within and outward. I noticed the light dancing in the house, the silence, the stillness. I observed myself, how calmly I was meeting everything. And then I realised: This is new. This is beautiful. This is growth.

## A QUIET REALISATION

Sometimes, joy comes from dancing with life. And sometimes, it comes from sitting still with grace, with a broken leg, an empty house, and a peaceful heart.

Plans may fall apart. But you don't have to. You can still smile, still breathe, still trust. Because when I stopped holding on to the plan, I discovered a deeper kind of freedom.

And in that stillness...Peace found me.

## EMOTIONAL AGILITY: FLOW. ACCEPT. WITNESS.

Life doesn't always go the way we expect. Feelings rise. Plans fall. Words hurt. But we suffer most not because of what happens...We suffer when we resist what happens. The shift comes when we stop reacting and start witnessing. Not as angry. Not as the fear. But as the one who sees it.

**This is emotional agility.**

**Feel it. Accept it. Witness it.**

Here are a few real-life moments where awareness can soften everything:

- 1. When a Child or Partner Talks Back:** A sharp tone. A defensive look. The ego rises: "How dare they?"  
Instead of reacting, pause. Ask: Am I hearing the pain behind their words? What is this really triggering in me?  
Witness: Watch the heat rise... and let the heart respond, instead of the ego.
- 2. When a Friend Grows Distant:** They don't reply. They cancel plans. You feel pushed away.  
Instead of assuming, stay open. Ask: Am I making up a story about this? Could they be going through something I can't see?  
Witness: See the discomfort, but don't feed it. Choose softness over story.
- 3. When Plans Suddenly Change:** A trip is cancelled. A day goes off-track. You feel let down. Instead of spiralling into frustration...  
Ask: Can I let go and flow with this moment? Is life asking me to pause and listen?  
Witness: Let go of how it should've gone. Rest in how it is.

- 4. When Someone Hurts You:** A comment, a forgotten message, a dismissal. Instead of blaming or withdrawing...

Ask: Can I speak of this hurt without blame? What does this moment need: honesty or silence?

Witness: Feel the emotion fully. Let clarity speak, not resentment.

When you can see without clinging or pushing away... You become steady. Clear. Free. Let life flow through you.

## **UNDERSTANDING OF EMOTIONAL AGILITY**

Emotions aren't problems to fix. They don't need to be fought or forced away. They come and go, like the weather. Just because we feel something doesn't mean we have to believe it. Just because a thought shows up doesn't mean we have to follow it.

Emotional agility is this: To feel fully, but not get stuck. To stay aware, not reactive. To give emotions space without becoming them.

You are not your sadness. You are not your anger. You are the awareness that notices them... and stays still. Being emotionally strong doesn't mean being calm all the time. It means being real. Soft. Spacious. Free.

Just be a witness. And that's how you can return to peace.



## **5.3 NOT EVERYONE WILL LIKE YOU – ACCEPT BEING MISUNDERSTOOD**

There came a point in my life when I had to quietly accept something: Not everyone will like me. Not everyone will understand me. And that's okay.

I've entered rooms and felt the shift; some smiled, some whispered, some turned away. I spoke with care, honesty and love... but still, not everyone received it that way. Some misunderstood me. Some judged me.

Some just kept their distance. In the beginning, it hurt. I kept asking myself, "Did I do something wrong?" Especially when I knew my heart was clean.

But slowly, I understood, this is just how life is, and I stopped fighting it. I made peace with being misunderstood.

Not everyone will like you, and not everyone will understand you – and that's perfectly natural. A flower blooms simply because it is a flower, without waiting for admiration. We, too, can live in our truth without needing universal approval.

Being misunderstood can hurt, but much of that pain comes from wanting everyone to see and accept us. People view the world through their own experiences, wounds, and perspectives. Sometimes, no matter how kind or clear we are, others may misinterpret us – and that's not a failure; it's human.

Our peace does not depend on others' opinions. When we return to ourselves, we remember that our worth isn't measured by agreement or praise. Accepting misunderstanding frees us from the endless struggle of proving, defending, or pleasing.

Instead of fixing how others see us, we can focus on being true, compassionate, and present. Some will come to understand us; others may never – and that's okay. Like clouds drifting across the sky, misunderstanding will pass. What matters is staying steady in our own peace.

True freedom comes when we no longer need everyone to agree with us – and can smile even while being misunderstood.

## **WE'RE TAUGHT TO PLEASE**

From the time we are little, we are told: "Be good." "Don't upset anyone." "Make everyone happy." So, we learn how to adjust, smile when it hurts, and nod even when we want to say no.

And one day, without noticing, we're carrying the heavy weight of everyone's approval. Trying to please everyone becomes a habit and a quiet prison.

But here's what changed me: I'm not ice cream. I'm not here to please everyone. Even ice cream has people who say, "Too sweet!" You can be the ripest mango and still, someone will say, "I don't like mangoes."

Everyone has their tastes, opinions, wounds. And it's not your job to fit into all of it.

There was a time when I used to explain everything – why I felt the way I did. Why I said something. Why I stayed silent. Why I chose a different path.

But now, I've stopped.

You don't owe your truth to everyone. Your soul is not a public story. You don't have to justify your truth to people who are committed to misunderstanding it.

Some people won't understand you – not because you're wrong, but because they're not yet able to see beyond their own ideas.

## **YOU DON'T NEED TO EXPLAIN YOURSELF ANYMORE**

Not everyone is meant to see you clearly – some only see you through the filter of their own wounds, fears, and stories.

That's not your responsibility. Your soul is sacred, not a debate. Your boundaries don't require permission. Your choices don't need approval.

Let them think you've changed. Let them call you distant, cold, selfish. Let them leave. When you start honouring your inner truth, you will trigger those who don't honour their own. That's part of the path.

Don't shrink for comfort. Don't bend to fit someone else's version of love. It's better to disappoint others than to abandon yourself.

Again and again – choose yourself. Not out of ego, but out of self-respect. Not to punish, but to protect. You are not here to be understood by everyone.

You are here to be whole.

## **WHAT HELPED ME UNDERSTAND**

A small reflection from my journey... There was a time when I wondered,

"Why don't they get me?" I wasn't angry – just confused.

I'd speak from a quiet place inside me, but people would either interrupt or misunderstand. They thought I was being distant, or too slow, or too deep.

But I was just being honest. Present. Real.

And slowly, I began to see...and got the clarity.

1. **I speak from stillness: They're used to noise.** I noticed that I no longer felt the need to speak quickly or to prove a point. There was peace in my words – even in my silence.

But most people weren't used to that.

They live in a world of loudness. Quick replies, fast opinions. They listen just to respond, not to understand.

So when I spoke from a deeper space, they couldn't meet me there. And that's okay. Stillness can feel uncomfortable when you've lived in noise.

2. **I began to move slowly: They're rushing everywhere.**

I started walking through life differently. Not lazily, but with awareness. I didn't rush to fill every silence or chase every next thing. I paused. I reflected. I felt.

But the world around me was always in a hurry – busy proving, chasing, partying, scrolling, reacting. So, my silence and slowness made them uncomfortable. They didn't know how to sit still with themselves, so they couldn't sit still with me either.

This used to hurt. But now, I understand. Not everyone is meant to walk beside you when you begin living with more presence.

It's not personal.

Some people aren't avoiding you – they're avoiding their own stillness.

So let them be. Let them think you've changed. Let them misunderstand.

You didn't come here to be understood by everyone. You came here to live awake.

And that, is more than enough.

## **I CREATED A 'RHYTHM' THAT FELT NOURISHING.**

Each morning, I write a few pages for my book. I read. I sing – not for an audience, but for my soul. I cook, clean, and care for my home. I take long

walks and sit by a nearby lake, watching the trees, squirrels, and birds glide across the water. Sometimes, I watch movies alone. I guide people through life coaching and smart living tools, helping them feel grounded, make better choices, and live with less stress and more ease. I learn, I grow, I breathe.

My days feel full, not with noise, but with meaning. There's no space left for gossip, small talk, or unnecessary drama.

Because of that, many people thought I had disappeared. They said, "You've gone quiet." "Out of sight, out of mind." Some even believed I had become cold or distant: "She's in her own world now."

And they weren't wrong. Yes, I was in my own world. But it was a world built on peace, depth, and honesty. Not everyone could understand it.

My social life, in the usual sense, became almost zero. But I didn't feel alone.

Only a few childhood friends, the ones who truly knew me, never doubted my heart. They didn't need constant messages or calls. They felt me, trusted me, and stood by me without questioning my silence.

That's when I understood: Real connection doesn't need constant contact. It just needs truth. And once you taste that kind of presence, you stop needing to explain your stillness to those who only understand speed.

### **3. You live from your heart. They live in their heads.**

You trust your feelings. You speak openly. You cry when something moves you, and you laugh with your whole being when joy comes. Your heart is open not for attention, but because it feels natural to live that way.

But many people are afraid of emotions. They've been taught to hide their feelings, to stay "strong," to keep things inside. So when they see your softness, your honesty, your natural way of expressing, they don't know how to handle it.

Your openness may feel uncomfortable to them, not because you're wrong, but because they've forgotten how to feel deeply.

I've seen this in my own life. Many times, I was honest and direct with my close friends, not to hurt, but simply because I cared. But they sometimes took it the wrong way. Someone thought I was rude. Some felt I was blunt. Some thought I was stupid.

In reality, I was just being myself, open, sincere, heart-led.

My mind had cleared out a lot of unnecessary clutter. I didn't feel ashamed to ask questions or speak my truth. I wasn't holding back, overthinking, or walking on eggshells anymore. But others were still stuck in hesitation, carrying old fears and insecurities. They couldn't laugh as freely. They couldn't speak as easily.

So naturally... they couldn't fully understand me.

And that's okay. Not everyone will meet you at the depth you're willing to go. Be honest anyway. Love anyway. Live anyway.

#### **4. You're becoming free. They're still in chains.**

You no longer wait for approval to be who you are. You've begun to live more lightly, not taking things personally, not overthinking every word or look. You're moving from a different energy now, more ease, more flow, more trust.

To some, this may look like you've stopped caring. Your carefree nature, your calm way of handling things, might confuse or even unsettle people who are used to drama or control. And yes, some thought I was careless. Some even said I was egoistic.

But the truth is, I was just learning to be at peace. I wasn't reacting the way I used to. I stopped defending myself, stopped chasing approval.

I was living from a deeper space, and not everyone could understand that.

Your freedom might challenge others not because you're wrong, but because they're still trying to figure out how to set themselves free. Let them think what they need to. You keep choosing peace.

And so... they misunderstand. And that's okay, too.

### **THE FREEDOM OF LETTING GO**

One day, I simply smiled and thought, "I don't need everyone to understand me. I understand myself." That was the beginning of true peace.

When I stopped trying to be understood by everyone, I began to feel genuinely free. Accepting that some people will judge no matter what I do made my heart lighter. In that space, I started noticing those who truly see me – who listen without trying to fix, love without conditions, and stay even when I don't have all the answers.

And most importantly... I became that person for myself.

## **I AM REMINDED OF THE CLASSIC KISHORE KUMAR SONG:**

Kuch to log kahenge, logon ka kaam hai kehna...

I realised – people will always talk, and that is their nature. Their words are theirs, not mine. Life becomes lighter when you stop taking every opinion seriously. Laugh, live, and remain untouched. Your peace is not up for debate.

## **HERE IS AN OLD STORY I AM REMINDED OF.**

A wise man and his student were walking with their donkey. At first, the teacher rode while the boy walked.

Bystanders ridiculed, “How selfish of him!”

So they switched. The boy rode. “How disrespectful!” people whispered.

Then both rode together. “Poor donkey!” came the cries.

So, they both walked. Now, people laughed, “Fools! Why bring a donkey at all?”

The master smiled and said, “No matter what you do, someone will always have something to say. So, do what feels right in your heart.”

That’s the lesson.

You are not here to meet everyone’s expectations. You are here to live truthfully, kindly, and freely – as yourself.

## **QUIET REMINDERS I KEEP CLOSE**

- Let people misunderstand you. That’s their path, not yours.
- Let opinions pass like clouds. Don’t hold on.
- Let your truth guide you – not their approval.
- Stay soft, even when the world feels sharp.
- You’re not strange. You’re just finally becoming yourself.

You don’t have to explain every part of your soul. You’re here to live it – gently, honestly, fully. Some will understand. Some won’t. Keep walking anyway.

## *Chapter 5*

If the world doesn't clap, that's okay. You're not here to perform. You're here to be. A quiet presence. A steady light. And that is more than enough.

You don't need everyone's approval to be yourself. Your truth is meant for you – not for them. Not everyone will see your light, but that doesn't mean you should stop shining.

You're not here to fit in. You're here to be real. Peace comes when you stop trying to be what others want. Like a tree, stand tall – even if some walk away. True calm begins when you no longer need to be understood by everyone.

Keep growing. Keep shining. In your own time. In your own way.

## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #5: EMOTIONS, EGO, & EYE ROLLS**

### **1. Bhola's Dream**

Bhola: "I dreamed I was the ruler of a great empire. Rich, powerful, admired."

Babli: "That's nice. I dreamed I was married to a hardworking, generous, kind, romantic man."

Bhola: "Looks like we both had unrealistic dreams."

### **2. Password Problem**

Babli: "Bhola, what's the Wi-Fi password?"

Bhola: "I forgot."

Babli: "What kind of husband forgets the password?"

Bhola: "The kind who was emotionally hacked last night."

### **3. Babli's wish**

Babli: "I wish I were married to someone smarter!"

Bhola: "So do I. But what's done is done."

### **4. The Argument**

Babli: "Every time we argue, you get sarcastic!"

Bhola: "Oh, really? I hadn't noticed. What a shock!"

### **5. The Doctor's Advice**

Doctor: "Your husband needs complete rest. No stress. Be gentle. Don't talk about money. And definitely no nagging."

Bhola: (On the way home) "What did the doctor say?"

Babli: "He said you're going to die soon..."



## **6. Truth or Silence**

Babli: "Tell me honestly: How do I look?... She asked again, "Well??"

Bhola: "I'm just deciding whether to be honest or alive."

## **7. At the Fortune Teller**

Fortune teller: "Babliji, you'll live a long, peaceful life."

Babli: "How about Bhola?"

Fortune teller: "Oh... he'll live too. But... maybe not peacefully."

## **8. The Silent Phase**

Babli: "I've decided to talk less."

Bhola: "Spiritual journey?"

Babli: "No, just tired of being misunderstood... especially by you."

Bhola: "Awesome. Let the healing begin."



## **PART 6**

### **EMPOWERMENT LIVING – FROM RESISTANCE TO FLOW**



## CHAPTER 6

### 6.1 TAKE ACTION NOW. MY JOURNEY FROM DELAY TO DOING

For many years, I've been writing.

Reflections. Lessons. Stories from my own life. Deep truths I've lived and learned. I've filled pages, sometimes late at night, sometimes between daily chores, pouring my heart into words. But I kept them to myself.

I told myself, "One day, I'll publish a book."

But that "one day" kept moving.

"Now is not the right time."

"I'm too busy with my family."

"I am traveling, back and forth."

"I'll do it next year, when things settle."

And so the writing stayed in folders, quiet and waiting.

As I mentioned in the earlier chapter, years ago, I worked as a Life Skills Trainer at an International School in Hyderabad. During that time, I created a book called "Life Skills for Teens." It was filled with stories, lessons, and simple tools to guide young minds. I used it in my sessions with students. It worked beautifully, and the children connected with it deeply. But I never published it. I told myself again:

"Time hasn't come yet." And years passed by.

What Changed? One day, something shifted inside me. I was postponing my own calling. There was no "perfect" time coming. I just said to myself:

“Now.” Not next month. Not after the housework is done. Not after the kids settle down. Right now, is the right time. It felt like a calm breath. Like a door opening. And I stepped through.

I didn’t have a big plan. I didn’t have everything figured out. But I had had enough. And, more importantly, I had stopped waiting. That changed everything.

## **PROCRASTINATION: A SIGNAL, NOT A STRUGGLE**

Procrastination is often misunderstood. We label it as laziness, lack of discipline or failure. But it’s not true. Procrastination is disinterest.

People don’t really procrastinate when it comes to what truly matters to them. For example, if you love watching a movie, you don’t delay it – you do it right away. But if it’s something you don’t enjoy or don’t find interesting or meaningful, you keep postponing it. It’s about lack of involvement.

Delay arises when your heart is not involved, when clarity is missing, or when the task doesn’t align with your inner truth. If you see the purpose clearly, if you feel the meaning deeply, action comes naturally.

You don’t need motivation, you need clarity. If you see clearly why something is important for you, you won’t postpone it. Clarity brings energy. Confusion and lack of purpose bring procrastination.

Sometimes we delay because it simply feels too big. We don’t know where to start. We worry about support, timing, or our own abilities. Sometimes it’s a quiet inner voice saying, “Maybe I’m not good enough.” Other times, it’s a subtle call for rest, reflection, or clarity.

Instead of treating procrastination as the enemy, we can see it as a guide. It signals what we need: attention, understanding, or gentle encouragement forward. When we listen, honour ourselves, and act from alignment rather than force, movement flows effortlessly.

Procrastination is not about laziness. It’s about fear, doubt, or misalignment. It’s life’s way of asking: “What do you truly need before you begin?” Once we respond with awareness and compassion, action no longer feels heavy – it becomes natural, inspired, and right.

Don’t fight procrastination. Instead, find clarity about what truly matters to you. If you care, if you are inspired, you’ll act immediately.

## ONE TINY STEP IS ENOUGH

I didn't finish my book in one day. But I wrote something every day. I rewrote one article at a time. One small paragraph at a time. And that was enough to bring energy back. That one step made the next one easier. The weight started lifting. The flow returned. I felt light again.

## WHAT HELPED ME LET GO OF DELAY

Here's what I learned through my own journey:

1. **Start before you're ready:** I didn't feel completely ready. I just began.
2. **Take a small step:** One page. One voice note. One honest post. That's how it began.
3. **Let go of perfection:** I reminded myself, "This doesn't have to be perfect. It just needs to be true."
4. **Act with peace, not pressure:** I moved slowly. Softly. I didn't rush. That made all the difference.
5. **Remember why you want it:** I asked myself, "Why do I want to write?" And the answer pulled me forward: To share. To connect. To serve.

Reminds me of the small story I love and follow

## PEACE BEGINS WITH CLARITY

A student once said to his teacher, "I keep postponing my meditation."

The teacher smiled and said, "Then postpone everything else. Just sit for five minutes today."

And so he did. The next day? He again postponed everything except that small practice – and I followed his example. That's how peace finds us – not in grand gestures, but in simple, clear beginnings.

Once I stopped delaying, I noticed a shift inside me:

- I felt lighter.
- I felt clearer.
- I felt proud that I finally showed up for myself.

This wasn't about discipline or pushing through resistance. It was about clarity and alignment – knowing what truly matters and taking one small step toward it.

You don't need a perfect plan or a mountain of effort. You just need one honest step, taken with awareness, right now. That's where transformation begins – not from pressure, but from presence.

Clarity shows us what to act on and what to pause for. When we honour that, procrastination is no longer a block – it's a guide, pointing us toward what we truly need before we move forward.

Not to prove anything, but to meet ourselves more deeply.

I heard a story that goes this way: "First I'll earn money, then I'll travel, then I'll meditate... and only after all that, I'll start really living." Many of us keep waiting for the "right time." The truth is, if we keep waiting, life just passes by. It's like saving the best part of a meal and then forgetting to eat it.

This is my life and your life. Start living it now, not later. Begin gently. Begin today. You'll thank yourself for showing up.

From someone who waited for years... and finally decided to begin. So, no more waiting for the "right" moment or delaying what you want to do. Life moves only when you move. Waiting too long creates fear and hesitation.

The secret is to start small, to take one step without overthinking. Action brings clarity, energy, and joy. When you begin, the path appears. Doing frees you from the trap of delay and brings life into flow. The moment you decide to act, you become alive.

Doing doesn't mean rushing or forcing. It means showing up with presence. With trust. When you act from awareness, even simple tasks feel alive. One quiet decision can shift your whole energy.

Delay creates distance from life. Doing it brings you back to it.

## **THE END OF PROCRASTINATION**

### **Awareness + Playfulness – "Should" = Flow**

- Awareness means watching your mind without judgment.
- Playfulness means bringing joy into whatever you do.



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- “Should” is that inner voice of pressure and guilt – drop it.
- Flow is effortless doing – action without force, born from presence.

When you are aware and playful, and you let go of inner pressure, action happens naturally.

No struggle. No delay. Just doing – like a river flows, like a bird flies.

## **6.2 NO COMPETING – JUST CREATING.**

For a long time, I found myself caught in a race I didn't even sign up for. Not a race with others, but with myself. I kept pushing to be better, smarter, faster. I chased perfection like it was the only key to happiness. But all it brought me was anxiety, exhaustion, and a feeling that I was never enough.

I've realised something simple yet powerful: the need to compete and perfect everything is not rooted in joy; it's rooted in fear.

From the time we're young, we're trained to compare: grades, jobs, looks, lifestyles – there's always someone "ahead." And so, we begin this endless race to catch up or be "the best." I've lived that way. Maybe you have too.

But here's what I understand now: competition and perfectionism create restlessness. They pull our attention outward, away from ourselves. We start measuring our worth through someone else's highlight reel. And when we do that, we lose sight of our own path. We forget who we are.

### **LOOKING INWARD CHANGED EVERYTHING**

The turning point came when I stopped looking outward and started looking inward. I realised I'm not here to copy, compete, or prove. I'm here to grow into myself.

When I let go of feeling a lack, I found peace. When I stopped chasing perfection, I found progress.

I now know that the only real competition worth engaging in is with our own inner darkness, fear, confusion, doubt, and impatience. Our goal is not to be better than anyone else but to be kinder, clearer, and more grounded than we were yesterday.

### **THE ART OF BEING PRESENT**

In our fast-moving world, we often forget the simple gift of now. We rush from one task to another, carrying the weight of yesterday's regrets and tomorrow's worries. Yet, life is always happening in this very moment. To miss it is to miss life itself.

Being present is not about escaping the past or controlling the future. It is about embracing what is here, what is real, what is alive. When we breathe

and walk mindfully, even the smallest actions – washing dishes, drinking tea, listening to a friend – become acts of meditation.

Pain and discomfort will come; they are part of life. But when we meet them with awareness, without judgment, we begin to see their true nature. Pain is not permanent; it shifts, transforms, and eventually passes. By observing it gently, we open a space of understanding and compassion within ourselves.

Peace is not something we find outside ourselves; it is cultivated within. With every mindful step, every conscious breath, we return home to our own hearts. Life flows more freely, and we discover that happiness does not depend on circumstances – it blooms naturally when we are truly present.

Let us remember: each moment is a doorway to life. Walk through it with calmness, with clarity, and with gentle attention. This is the art of being present.

## **FROM PRESSURE TO PEACE: A REAL STORY OF RETURNING TO SELF**

A college girl once came to me. She was close to breaking – tired, anxious, and quietly drowning in the feeling that she wasn't good enough.

She had big dreams but lived under the heavy weight of needing to be “perfect” all the time.

She told me, “I try so hard, but it's never enough.”

I didn't give her advice. Instead, I simply listened. I asked gentle questions, and I helped her remember a truth we often forget: You already have the answers inside you.

I became a mirror, just reflecting what was already there.

As she began to speak, something softened. She realised she didn't need to be perfect. She only needed to take one small, honest step at a time.

That shift changed everything.

She always loved fashion design, but fear had held her back. Bit by bit, she started giving herself permission to explore what she truly loved.

Now?

She's learning with joy. Creating freely. Trying, failing, laughing – and trying again. She feels full instead of lacking.

That's the beauty of letting go of perfection and choosing presence. Not flawless. Just real.

Progress over perfection. Awareness over pressure. Trust over fear. You don't need to fix yourself. We just need to come home to ourselves. Our inner guidance is always there, patiently waiting.

Ask yourself the right questions, and you'll find your way.

You don't need to be perfect. You just need to begin.

Real growth takes time; it's a journey, not a race. It's not loud. It doesn't come from pressure. It's quiet, patient, and often messy. And that's okay. Slow down and honour the process. There's no need to rush. A seed doesn't bloom overnight.

## **CREATING, NOT COMPETING**

Something beautiful begins to happen when we stop competing and start creating.

When I create – whether it's writing, singing, composing, cooking, dancing, teaching or simply sharing a thought on WhatsApp – I feel alive.

There's energy in it. Peace in it. A deep sense of joy that no competition can give.

Creation isn't a race. It's not about being better, faster or more perfect than someone else. It's about being present.

It's about pouring a little piece of your soul into what you do.

When you create, you return to yourself. You stop chasing and start becoming. It's not loud or dramatic. It's quiet, honest, and real.

One step at a time, build something meaningful, something that reflects who you truly are.

Stop comparing. Stop rushing. And, in that stillness, you feel more alive than ever.

Create to express, not to impress. Create to connect, not to compete.

Let your heart lead. The rest will follow.

## **SIMPLE WAYS TO CREATE AND STAY HAPPY**

We all have creative energy inside us. We don't need to be perfect. We don't need to impress. We just need to express.

Creating something – even something small – can bring joy, peace and a deeper connection to ourselves.

### **HERE ARE SIMPLE WAYS TO CREATE EVERY DAY:**

**Love cooking?** Try making a new dish. Give it a fun name. Start your own recipe book. Share it with family and friends – it's a gift from your heart.

**Love painting or drawing?** Paint every day. Don't wait for inspiration – just begin. Draw your feelings, dreams, people, or the sky outside your window. Let your colours speak for you.

**Love to sing?** Sing from your heart. Even a soft hum can lift your spirit. Your voice is powerful – share it. Let it heal you and others.

**Love stories or writing?** Everyone has stories inside. Write them down. Short poems, thoughts, little memories. Tell stories out loud. It's deeply healing.

**Love hands-on art like knitting or embroidery?** These slow, mindful crafts bring peace. Every stitch is a moment of presence.

**Love taking photos?** Capture moments that make you smile. Look for beauty in the ordinary. Let your photos remind you of life's simple joys.

**Love to dance or move your body?** Dance for 10 minutes a day. Feel the music. Even stretching or gentle yoga is a form of creation – it's energy in motion.

**Know something well?** Teach it. Share what you love. Passing on knowledge is a powerful act of creation.

You don't need to “win” or “be the best.” Just create – for the joy of it. For the peace. For you.

The more you create, the more you return to yourself. The more you create, the more alive you feel.

## **WHY DO PEOPLE COMPETE AND CHASE PERFECTION?**

I've asked myself this question many times. And each time, the answer is the same:

People want to feel accepted. They believe that if they win – if they become perfect – they will finally feel like they are enough. They think that then, maybe, people will see them, recognise them, love them.

I know this because I lived it. There was a time in my life when I couldn't relax unless I was achieving something. I was always doing, performing, proving. My value felt tied to how productive or impressive I was.

Even when people praised me, it didn't sink in. It was like pouring water into a cracked cup – no matter how much came in, it always felt empty.

Then came the burnout. A long, silent stretch where I couldn't push anymore. One day, I sat with myself – no goals, no title, no one to impress.

Just me.

And honestly? It felt strange. Almost uncomfortable. Because I realised I didn't really know how to be with myself, I had spent so much time trying to be “enough” for the world... that I had lost connection with the one person I needed the most – me.

Since then, I've been learning to slow down. To create for joy, not approval. To rest without guilt. To exist without needing to earn my worth.

In that quiet space, I have begun to feel whole again.

You are not here to prove anything.

You are here to know yourself.

Not to impress others – just to be. That's where the peace lives.

## **LET GO OF PERFECTION, RETURN TO PRESENCE**

We all need something deeper than achievements. A quiet connection – to life, to stillness, and, most importantly, to ourselves. This connection grows in the small, quiet moments.

In early mornings, honest reflection, letting go of the need to always be “on.” That's when something inside us begins to shift. Peace doesn't come from

perfection. It comes from presence. From being here. From knowing that even when no one is watching, you are still enough.

Perfection can feel safe. It gives the illusion that we are in control. But it's only an illusion. Life isn't meant to be controlled. It's wild, real, sometimes messy – and always changing.

But here's the truth: Growth happens in the mess. The lotus doesn't bloom in clean water. It rises from the mud. The river doesn't wait for anyone. It flows freely. And we learn to flow with it.

We don't have to fix everything. We just need to feel, to trust, and to stay present through it all. Now, I feel the connection.

To my breath. To the silence around me. To the truth within me.

I don't feel lost anymore. I feel calm. I feel real. I feel here.

## **A SHIFT IN FOCUS**

He had everything – cars, travel, parties, success. From the outside, it looked perfect. But inside, he felt empty. Always comparing, always performing, always trying to prove.

He never stopped to ask, “What do I really want?” Eventually, it caught up to him. Even when things were going well, he felt tired. He was busy, but not fulfilled.

One day, he paused. He asked himself a simple question: “What am I really doing this for?”

And that changed everything. He took a break from social media. He spent time in silence. He stopped trying to follow someone else's path. He listened – to himself, to nature, to real friends.

Now he says, “It wasn't a big achievement that changed my life. It was a shift in focus. I chose my own path.”

## **CONSISTENCY IS THE KEY**

As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, I follow a gentle rhythm in my life. Every day, I write a little and share it with a group of friends on WhatsApp. I practice singing, or teach semi-classical music and bhajans to a small group. I

offer online sessions – Smart Living classes and Bhagavad Gita classes. I share stories with seniors at a nearby old-age home. I also host weekly book club sessions.

These may seem like small acts, but their power lies in consistency. I don't do them to impress anyone; I do them to express joy. And it was through this simple, steady rhythm that life truly began to shift for me.

Not through big changes or sudden achievements, but through small actions done with presence – again and again. Real change happened not in stress or effort, but in awareness. Not in doing big things, but in doing small things with devotion.

That's what I've found. When I began to do small things regularly, everything became clearer. There was less noise in my mind. Less confusion. Less guilt. Just a soft rhythm – holding me, guiding me.

When I fixed a few routines, life felt more settled. Creating became easier. Resting became easier. Showing up felt natural – not forced, but peaceful.

Consistency doesn't mean control. It means choosing a path – and walking it slowly, with awareness. It means doing small things with love, again and again, until they become part of who you are.

That is where real growth happens. Not in chasing, but in showing up with presence.

I read a quote that says: Discipline is not about control. It is about direction. A small river can flow everywhere, but when you guide it, it becomes a stream, and then a strong, steady force.

That's exactly how it feels, not tight or rigid – just calm, steady direction.

## **TRY THIS IF YOU FEEL LOST**

Choose a few things you love. Fix them gently into your week. Start small. Stay steady. When you give rhythm to what matters, life flows. And when life flows, peace returns.

## **THERE'S ONE MORE STORY I ALWAYS COME BACK TO.**

Two potters lived in a village. One chased perfection, racing to make flawless pots. The other simply enjoyed the craft, learning and growing each day.



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A storm came. The perfectionist lost all her prized pots. The other potter remained calm. Her creations, though imperfect, had soul.

That story is mine and probably yours too. It's many of us. I used to be the first potter. Now, I'm learning to be the second. To create from love, to live life from love, not from fear.

We are not here to be better than anyone else. Just be you, and I'll be me. We are here to grow. To feel. To create. To mess up. To laugh. To try again.

## **6.3 ASK FOR HELP – IT SHOWS STRENGTH, NOT WEAKNESS**

Real strength isn't about doing everything alone. It's about knowing when to ask for help. I thought strength meant handling it all without needing anyone.

And asking? It's not a weakness. It's wisdom. It's a connection. It's love in motion. That voice in our head that says, "I should be able to handle this," that voice doesn't come from the truth. It comes from pride, fear, or old stories we've carried for too long.

A strong person can look someone in the eye and simply say, "I need help."

It takes courage to speak up, to be seen, to admit we're struggling. But when we do, something begins to shift inside. The walls we built around our hearts start to soften. We begin to feel lighter, more human, more real.

### **ASKING FOR HELP IS STRENGTH**

Many of us believe that needing help is a sign of weakness. We carry our burdens alone, thinking we must be strong at all times. But true strength arises from courage – the courage to be honest, to reach out, and to allow others to support us.

When we ask for help, we are not surrendering; we are connecting. We are acknowledging our humanity and creating space for compassion, understanding, and love to flow. To lean on another, even briefly, is an act of bravery.

In the same way, offering help is not just kindness – it is a recognition of our shared journey. We are interdependent, like waves in the same ocean. To ask, to receive, to give, is the rhythm of life itself.

In asking, we awaken strength. In receiving, we awaken peace. And in both, we awaken the gentle truth that none of us walks alone.

### **WHY WE HIDE OUR PAIN**

We hide our pain behind a smile. We say, "I'm fine," even when we are not.

Not because we are strong – But because we are afraid.

Afraid to be seen. Afraid to be judged. Afraid to be vulnerable.

But when we keep everything inside, the pain grows. The loneliness deepens.

## **REAL STRENGTH IS BEING REAL**

Real strength is not in silence. It is in openness. To feel is human. To ask for help is wisdom. To be seen is freedom.

Let someone in. Let yourself be real. That is when healing begins.

There is a quiet peace in letting go of old beliefs – The ones that say, “I should do this alone,” or “If I cry, I’m weak,” or “If I ask for help, I’ve failed.”

These beliefs feel strong on the outside, but inside, they keep us stuck, tired and disconnected.

I used to believe I had to be strong all the time. I thought being vulnerable made me small.

But I’ve learned something deeper: Tears can heal. Asking can connect. And you don’t have to be perfect – you just have to be real.

That’s where healing truly begins.

## **THE POWER OF OPENING UP**

There’s something powerful about saying, “This is hard. I need some help.”

It’s not a weakness. It’s honesty. It’s strength in a softer form. I’ve had moments when I finally opened up to someone, and I could literally breathe easier. Not because they fixed everything, but because they listened.

It felt like opening a window in a room that’s been closed too long.

Suddenly, light comes in. Fresh air fills the space, and your heart feels a little lighter. Even a caring conversation can calm a storm inside.

When we ask for help, we give others a chance to love us. We give ourselves permission to rest. We remind each other: we are not alone.

## **INSTEAD OF WAITING WHY DON’T WE JUST ASK?**

Sometimes it’s pride. That voice that whispers, “You should be able to handle this.”

Sometimes it's fear, afraid of being judged or misunderstood.

Sometimes it's a shame, or simply not knowing how to start.

But I've learned this: The people who truly care won't think less of you. In fact, they'll respect your honesty more.

You are not a burden. Your feelings are valid. And asking for help doesn't make you weak – it makes you human.

## **LET YOURSELF BE SEEN**

Every time I've opened up with truth, someone else felt safe to do the same. That's how connection grows. That's how love deepens.

And that's how we heal – together.

So if you're holding something heavy today, say it out loud. Ask for a hand. Open a window. Let the light in.

If you are not sure how to ask, you don't need fancy words. You don't need to explain everything. Sometimes all it takes is: "Can I talk to you?" Or even: "I'm not okay, and I don't want to be alone in this. I need help."

Even if it's just a whisper, it's a start. And that whisper can grow into healing. The people who truly love you, the ones who truly know you, will listen. They will care. They will show up. They may not always have the perfect words, but their presence will remind you: You're not alone, and you never have to be.

Here are two little stories that stayed with me.

## **STORY 1: DID YOU USE ALL YOUR STRENGTH?**

A father watched his son trying hard to lift a heavy box. The boy struggled and tried again, but couldn't lift it.

The father asked, "Did you use all your strength?"

The son said, "Yes, Dad. I tried my best."

The father smiled and said, "You forgot one thing."

The boy looked confused.

The father said, "You forgot to ask for my help."

The son smiled, and together, they lifted the box easily.

Sometimes, we try so hard to do things alone that we forget the support that's right there for us. Using all our strength doesn't just mean our own power; it means knowing when and whom to ask for help.

## **STORY 2: KNOWING WHEN TO ASK**

A man struggled with a door that wouldn't open. He pushed and pulled, getting more and more frustrated.

An old woman walked by and gently asked, "Want some help?" He resisted. "I should be able to do this."

She smiled and said, "Even stuck doors don't always need force. Just the right touch." With a soft push, she opened the door.

And then she said: "Struggle isn't always strength. Sometimes strength is knowing when to ask." This stayed with me.

## **YOU'RE NOT MEANT TO CARRY IT ALL ALONE**

In everyday life, it's easy to believe we have to handle everything on our own, especially at home. But the truth is – you don't have to wait until you burn out to ask for help.

Even small moments of honesty can open the door to more peace. Saying, "Can you help with dinner?" or "I'm feeling overwhelmed today" isn't a weakness. It's connection. It's care.

And it's not just about family. Sometimes, even a gentle ask or a kind word to a stranger can bring unexpected support. People surprise you when you give them a chance to show up.

I've lived this truth again and again.

I've reached out to so many people – my parents, teachers, husband, children, brothers and brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, cousins, co-sisters, friends, my driver and house help in India, my neighbours... even strangers.

Once, I almost reached out to my enemies too – just kidding! I don't have any; I've retired that drama. These days, I'm shameless in the best way: if I need help, I ask. And if anyone judges me, well... I ask them too!

Because honestly, why struggle alone when love is just a conversation away? Each one, in their own way, gave me their time, their presence, their strength.

I could not have made it through so many moments without them. Their love held me up, and I am deeply, deeply grateful.

Even the strongest people need support. Especially them. So, if you're carrying something heavy – emotionally, mentally, spiritually, please don't wait until everything falls apart. Speak. Reach out. Ask. Let love in before the weight becomes too much. You were never meant to carry the whole world. Only your part – and even that, with others beside you.

Asking for help isn't falling. It's rising – together. Let others walk with you. That's how we stay human. That's how we stay whole.

## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #6: PROCRASTINATION & PROUD CHAOS**

### **1. The Procrastinator's Diet**

Bhola told Babli, "I've decided to start a diet... from tomorrow!"

Babli: "You've been saying that for a year!"

Bhola: "Exactly. I don't want to rush into something life-changing."

### **2. The Final Word**

Bhola: "In my house, I always get the final word." (He proudly said.)

Friend: "Really? What do you say?"

Bhola: "YES, Babli..."

### **3. Meditation or Marriage?**

Bhola: "I was going to go on a silent meditation retreat to let go of my ego."

Friend: "What happened?"

Bhola: "I married Babli instead. Same lesson, just louder."

### **4. Wise Bhola**

Babli: "Bhola, why don't you argue back like normal husbands?"

Bhola: "Because I enjoy watching you lose the argument all by yourself."

### **5. Kitchen Philosophy**

Babli: "You never compliment my cooking!"

Bhola: "That's because spiritual growth begins with silent suffering."

## **6. Financial Planning**

Babli: “We need a vacation.”

Bhola: “Sure, let me check our finances.” [Looks into empty wallet.]

Destination: Balcony.

## **7. Romantic Disaster #1**

Babli: “You used to write me poems...”

Bhola: “I still do! It’s just...they rhyme less and complain more now.”

### **Romantic Disaster #2**

Babli: “You never look at me like you used to.”

Bhola: “I do! Now I look with fear now... I never know if it’s hug time or war-time.

## **8. Cooking Compliment Trap**

Babli: “How’s the food?”

Bhola: (thinking) One wrong word, and I sleep hungry.

Bhola: “Delicious! Just like my mom doesn’t make it!”



## **PART 7**

### **SURRENDER & ACCEPTANCE – EMBRACING LIFE AS IT IS**



## CHAPTER 7

### 7.1 SAY YES TO LIFE – WHATEVER HAPPENS, WELCOME IT

There was a time when I believed peace would finally arrive once everything at home was in perfect order, when the house stayed clean, meals were planned ahead, everyone was happy, and I didn't feel pulled in ten directions at once.

I kept thinking, "If I could just stay on top of everything, then I'd finally feel calm."

But no matter how much I tried to control the day, the dishes, the moods, the schedules, something always popped up: a spill, a late delivery, a sudden tantrum (sometimes mine!). And slowly, I began to realise: peace doesn't come from control. Life doesn't work that way. It comes from allowing life to be what it is.

It doesn't pause for our schedules or show up exactly how we want. It spills milk right after you clean the floor. It brings tears in the middle of what was supposed to be a joyful day. It cancels plans and rewrites our stories when we least expect it.

And somewhere in the middle of all that, I began to understand something simple but quietly powerful: Saying yes to life isn't about liking everything. It's about letting everything belong.

That's when I started to say yes, not because everything was easy, but because resisting it all the time was exhausting.

Life comes in many forms – joy, sorrow, surprise, and challenge. To live fully is to say yes to it all. Whatever happens, welcome it without resistance. Let each experience teach you, each moment touches you, and each difficulty deepen your understanding.

Saying yes does not mean passive acceptance; it means openness. It is the willingness to be present, to feel, to learn, and to transform. When we embrace life as it is, without pushing or fleeing, we find peace in the flow of existence and discover the gentle beauty hidden in every moment.

## **FROM RESISTANCE TO OPENNESS**

Most of us, including me, spend years silently fighting life. Not always out loud, but in the mind:

- “Why is this happening?”
- “This isn’t fair.”
- “Things will be better once I have more time, money, or help.”
- “I shouldn’t feel this way.”

So much of our suffering doesn’t come from life itself, but from the exhausting inner fight to make everything feel okay all the time. We try to fix, control, or explain away every uncomfortable moment – as if being human is something we’re supposed to manage perfectly.

But what if we didn’t have to win the argument with life?

What if, instead of forcing things to make sense or feel better right away, we simply paused... took one honest breath... and whispered to ourselves, “This too.”

Not as a way to give up, but as a way to soften – to let life be messy, imperfect, and still worth living, one breath at a time. Allow life to flow.

That’s when things started to shift for me. Not through effort or forcing positivity, but through quiet awareness. A soft opening. A moment of trust.

I realised that saying yes to life doesn’t mean agreeing to everything or pretending everything is fine. It means accepting the struggles, the pain, the mess – and still choosing to move forward. It’s about facing reality with open eyes and an open heart.

Real strength comes from choosing what truly matters and letting go of what doesn’t.

This is the deep art of saying yes.

Saying yes is not about agreeing with everything or being passive. It is a spiritual practice, a way of opening the heart to live exactly as it is: raw, uncertain and imperfect.

It means embracing sadness without shame, welcoming failure without calling yourself a failure. It means allowing confusion to be present and gently saying, “It’s okay not to know right now.”

In this openness, something deeper awakens, not surface happiness, but a quiet peace within. A calm that holds steady through storms. A gratitude that does not depend on things being perfect.

This is not forced positivity or pretending everything is fine. It is true presence, true trust in the flow of life.

When I discovered how to say yes, resistance dissolved. Life began to move through me, not against me. Every moment opened like a gift, received with love and acceptance. And in that openness, I found the greatest miracle – to be fully alive.

## **EMBRACING LIFE BEYOND THE MIND’S RESISTANCE**

It means to choose “yes” when the mind says “no.” The restless mind often says “no.” It craves control and certainty, holding on to ideas like:

- “I’ll be happy only when they finally understand me.”
- “Things were better before.”
- “I’m falling behind.”
- “I can’t handle this.”

But true joy does not wait in the future or depend on perfect conditions. It lives here, in this very moment, beneath the noise of worry and fear.

Happiness begins not when life becomes flawless, but when the mind’s battle quiets. When we gently accept: “This is life as it is now... and I am ready to meet it with an open heart.”

Saying yes to life, even when the mind says no, is a deep spiritual strength. It frees us from suffering and allows peace to grow inside. This is the art of living fully beyond resistance, beyond fear, simply present and awake.

I came up with a little prayer that may help you, as it did for me:

## A PRAYER OF SAYING YES

Today, I choose to say yes to life. Not because I agree with everything, not because it is always easy or joyful, but because I no longer wish to resist what is.

I say yes to the beauty, yes to the struggle, yes to the confusion and the mystery.

I open my heart to each moment – even when it feels messy, uncomfortable, or unexpected.

In saying yes, I find peace. In saying yes, I find love. And in saying yes, I discover the miracle of being alive.

### Here's what that kind of quiet “yes” might look like in everyday life:

- When someone criticises you, instead of immediately thinking, “They just don’t get me,” try gently noticing, “This hurts... but maybe there’s something here I can learn.” You don’t have to agree – just stay open.
- When a plan you were really looking forward to falls through, rather than feeling like everything’s against you, consider, “Maybe life is giving me a pause. Maybe today is about rest, not rushing.”
- When difficult emotions show up – anxiety, sadness, confusion – instead of trying to “fix” yourself, just breathe and say, “It’s okay to feel this. I don’t have to push it away.”
- When you fail at something that mattered deeply to you, resist the urge to declare, “I’m not good enough.” Instead, remind yourself: “This hurts right now... but maybe this is part of how I grow.”

Saying yes to life isn’t about pretending to be fine or forcing yourself to grow. It’s about allowing each moment to be what it is – and choosing to meet it with patience, presence, and just a little more kindness than before.

That kind of yes? It changes everything – slowly, gently, and for real.

### “This Too Shall Pass”

There’s a simple phrase I hold close to my heart: **This too shall pass.** Nothing in life is permanent – no feeling, no situation, no moment.

Like clouds drifting across the sky or waves rising and falling in the ocean, everything moves and changes.

Joy passes, pain passes. Confusion fades, clarity returns. Life is always shifting, even when it feels like it never will.

There was a time in my life, when I used to hold on tightly. If something good happened, I'd feel anxious, afraid of losing it. If something painful showed up, it felt like it would never end. I lived in a constant tug-of-war with change.

But slowly, life began to teach me. Through good and not so good experiences, through heartache, through moments of unexpected peace, I learned to pause, breathe, and gently whisper to myself:

**“This too shall pass.”**

Now, when I'm overwhelmed or upset, I don't resist the moment as much. I don't try to fix everything instantly. I remind myself: This is just a part of the story – not the whole book.

It will pass. It always does.

Even when something beautiful is unfolding, I try to stay humble and grateful – not clinging, just receiving. Holding things lightly doesn't make them less meaningful. It makes them more real.

**There's a Zen teaching that says: “Observe life like a river – what comes, comes. What goes, goes. Let it come, let it go. Just be the witness. In acceptance you are free.”**

That's the realisation now: whether it's discomfort or delight, I meet it with awareness, not control. And in that openness, a deep relaxation arises within. Stillness happens on its own – not because life has become perfect, but because I've stopped trying to make it so.

I feel calmer, more grounded, more trusting of life's rhythm.

“This too shall pass” isn't about denial. It's not about pushing emotions away. It's about remembering that nothing is final – not the bad days, not even the best ones.

And in that truth, there's a quiet kind of freedom. That's what surrender feels like: Not giving up, but allowing life to be what it is – with love, with patience, and with presence.

## **LONG AGO, I HEARD A STORY OF A MUSICIAN.**

There was once a young man who dreamed of becoming a musician. He practised every day, saved up for his first guitar, and even planned to audition for a big music school.

But just a week before his audition, he broke his arm in a small accident. The doctor said he couldn't play for months. At first, he was angry and frustrated. "Why now? Why me?" he thought. He felt like life was unfair.

But instead of staying stuck in anger, he decided to stay open. He said to himself, "Maybe life is asking me to slow down. I'll say yes to this moment, even if I don't understand it."

During his recovery, he started writing lyrics – something he had never focused on before. Day by day, the words began to flow. By the time his arm healed, he had written enough songs to record an entire album. That album later opened more doors than he ever expected.

Looking back, he realised: the setback wasn't the end – it was a hidden beginning.

## **THE POWER OF SAYING YES TO LIFE – A REAL STORY OF TRUST AND SURRENDER**

Life has a way of slowing us down – not always gently, but always with purpose.

Very recently, in April 2025, I broke my right wrist in a fall. What followed was surgery, rest, and a long pause I hadn't planned for. I couldn't do simple things, let alone move forward with my usual plans. But something within me whispered: "Slow down. Let life lead now."

And so, I did.

And in that stillness, something unexpected began to take shape. A book I had carried quietly inside me for so long...began to come to life.

The ideas, the words, the clarity – they flowed not in spite of the pause, but because of it.

All the writing I had done before, all the silent hours of journaling, of searching, of shaping thoughts in the dark – they were not wasted.

They were seeds. And now, in this stillness, it was time to begin.

Not with effort, but with ease.

Not with force, but with flow.

Because when you stop chasing life... life begins to write through you.



Just like the story of the musician who found his songs during recovery, my own creative work found its way through a season of stillness.

Not through struggle, but through surrender.

Saying yes to life doesn't mean we always enjoy what's happening. It means we stay open to it – even the parts we didn't ask for. It means trusting that every moment, even the hard ones, might carry something meaningful inside it.

When we stop saying “Why me?” and start saying “Okay, what now?” – we grow. Because life doesn't always go as planned. But sometimes... it goes even better.

Looking back, I see now: the fall didn't break my path – it revealed it. And that's the quiet power of saying yes to what is.

## SEEING LIFE AS A GIFT

In Telugu, there's a beautiful word – **‘Prasāda Buddhi’** It means a mind that accepts everything as a gift, even the things we don't understand yet.

Prasāda Buddhi means having a grateful mind – a mind that accepts even the hard moments. It is the art of saying “thank you” to life, not only when things go well, but also when they don't. It is about trusting that everything happening is for our growth, even if we don't understand it right now.

This attitude brings peace, joy and a deep sense of surrender.

When the mind is full of Prasāda, it stops complaining and starts appreciating life just as it is. It's the voice inside that says: “Thank you. I may not understand now, but I will accept it with gratitude.”

This is where peace begins, not waiting for life to be perfect, but meeting it with an open heart and a quiet “yes.”

## **7.2 OPEN TO WONDER – EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**

Life is always full of surprises – some small, some big. When we stay open, we begin to see beauty in ordinary moments and joy in the simplest things.

Expect the unexpected, not with fear, but with curiosity. Each moment carries a lesson, a gift, if we're willing to receive it. Life doesn't move according to our plans. It has its own mysterious flow. The mind wants certainty, but the real path is not control – it's openness.

To be open to wonder is to look at life like a child seeing it for the very first time. Wonder is not something we create; it naturally arises when we are fully present.

To expect the unexpected is to let go of fixed outcomes. It's trusting life to surprise and teach us in ways we never imagined.

When we stop insisting that life follow our script, its deeper beauty is revealed. Every moment becomes a teacher. Every encounter becomes a mirror.

The universe is alive, dynamic, full of mystery. To walk with awareness is to remain open to endless possibilities.

So breathe. Stay present. Allow life to unfold.

In its surprises, you will find freedom.

There's something truly magical that happens when we stop trying so hard to figure everything out.

When we let go of the need to have all the answers... To always be right... To stick tightly to every plan... That's when life starts to breathe again.

I used to live in my head – full of conclusions, assumptions, constant planning. I thought if I could just organise everything, I'd feel safe. But anytime something didn't go as expected, it felt like life had betrayed me. Like it had broken some silent promise.

But slowly, life has taught me something softer, something wiser.

It's this: we don't have to know everything to trust the journey. In fact, when we stop trying to control it all – that's when the real magic shows up.

Not just in big, dramatic moments... But in the small, quiet ones, too.

Like a kind smile from a stranger on a day when we feel completely unseen, or a plan falling apart, only to lead us somewhere better – maybe to a new friend, a new path, or a version of ourselves we haven't met yet.

Sometimes, even the “wrong turns” are part of how we're gently being redirected.

But this kind of wonder only arises when the mind becomes quiet. When we stop trying to predict, explain, or manage every moment. When we allow space for curiosity instead of conclusions.

Because the truth is – life isn't something we have to figure out. It's something we get to experience, with open hands and an open heart.

So, if things don't go your way today, or if you feel lost in the unknown – Pause. Breathe. And remember: you don't need to have all the answers.

Sometimes, just staying open is more than enough. Because when you remain silent about the mystery, life has a beautiful way of surprising you.

## **LET LIFE BE A MYSTERY – AND LET YOURSELF BE MOVED**

Life is a mystery we're meant to live. The more we stop trying to control every outcome... The more alive we begin to feel.

We stop chasing perfection. We start noticing beauty in the ordinary – in the things we once rushed past. A small shift in how we see the world, and suddenly, even the simplest moments shine.

Life does not need to be solved or controlled. It is alive, ever-changing, and full of surprises. When we let life be a mystery, we release the need to understand everything and allow ourselves to simply be.

Mystery invites curiosity, wonder, and presence. It reminds us that not knowing can be as beautiful as knowing, and that peace comes when we stop resisting what is. To embrace the unknown is to embrace life itself – with openness, trust, and a gentle heart.

Like...

A slow auto-rickshaw ride with no hurry.

A grandmother's gentle hand resting on your head.

The sound of rain dancing on a tin roof.

A kulfi melting too fast under the summer sun.

A stray dog wagging its tail, asking for nothing.

The first breeze after a long, hot afternoon.

It's not that life suddenly became better. It's that you became more open. More present. More willing to see what's already here.

## **WISDOM ISN'T HAVING ALL THE ANSWERS**

I used to think being smart meant knowing everything. Now I am clear. Real wisdom is soft. It says: "I don't know... but I'm here. Let's see."

That simple shift – from control to curiosity – brings peace. It brings freedom. You don't need to figure life out. You just need to be awake to it.

Let it move you. Let it surprise you. Let it teach you – moment by moment.

## **MY OBSERVATION ON MYSTIC ENERGY.**

The Mystic is in all of us. We're all mystics... we just forget.

A mystic isn't someone floating above life. A mystic is deeply rooted in life.

Mystics lead simple lives. Mystics find God in the dishes, the traffic, the daily chaos. They don't preach about truth; they live it. Not as a belief, but as a presence. In stillness. In action. In the in-between.

**The more I relax into this mysterious flow, the more I notice the mystic in me. And I'm sure, if you feel this way, you'll see the mystic in you too.**

- I live more in the now, not trapped in past regrets or future fears.
- I smile more, laugh easier, not because life is perfect, but because I've stopped fighting it.
- I've become okay not knowing. There's a softness in not having all the answers.
- I speak less, and listen more. I trust silence.
- I love without needing to hold tight. There's strength in gentle love.
- I see joy everywhere, in tea, in birdsong, in eye contact.

- I follow my gut. Even when it doesn't make sense.
- I feel connected to all. There's no more "me vs. them."
- I'm more spontaneous, cool, relaxed, light, and real.
- And there's a quiet joy inside, not loud, but steady.

There's nothing to become. Only something to remember.

To be present. To be real. To be open. Let the moment hold you. Let the mystery guide you.

Because when you stop needing to control life...life finally starts dancing with you.

## **A STORY I LOVE: THE FARMER'S GIFT**

There's a story that always brings me back to this truth.

A farmer named Hari lost everything in a storm: his crops, his routine, his sense of control. But instead of falling into despair, he got curious.

He started paying attention.

He noticed fish swimming in the flooded fields. He saw that the broken soil had become rich again. New weeds appeared, and some were healing herbs. He adapted, listened, and tried new ways. And in time, his farm became more abundant than ever. His loss had led him to a deeper wisdom. One he never would have found if life had gone "as planned."

That story reminds us to stop clinging to our old habits, expectations and ideas of how things should be. Because sometimes, life has a better plan.

## **HERE ARE A FEW GENTLE PRACTICES THAT MAY HELP.**

1. **Stop trying to control everything:** Control feels safe, but it shuts the door. Trust opens it.
2. **Stay curious:** Ask, "What else could be possible?" Wonder lives in open questions.
3. **Embrace detours:** What looks like a mistake may be your greatest teacher.
4. **Practice stillness:** In silence, you'll hear life whispering. It always is.

5. **Celebrate small miracles:** A breeze, a kind word, a warm cup – these are not small.
6. **Be willing to change your mind:** Flexibility is freedom. A rigid heart can't dance.

It's not something you do. It's something you become. It's waking up and saying: "I don't know what today will bring... but I'm here for it." It's soft. Presence.

When you carry that energy, life starts to meet you there, with signs, serendipities, and sweetness. Not always in the way you expected, but often in a way that's better. So today, open your hands. Loosen your grip.

Let life flow through you, surprise you, reshape you. You don't need to know what's next. You just need to be here now, curious, trusting, open.

And that... is where the magic lives.

## **7.3 SEEK BALANCE IN ALL THINGS**

### **A QUIET RETURN TO OUR CENTRE**

Balance is not a fixed place – it is a living rhythm. It is not perfection, but presence. When we are present, we stop swinging between extremes of holding on and letting go. We find the middle ground, where life flows naturally.

When we push too hard, we lose energy. When we hold back too long, our spirit feels heavy. Both are out of tune. Balance comes when we begin to listen – to our breath, our body, and the silence within.

There are days when everything feels in harmony: we move without effort, speak with calm, pause with ease, and allow life to move through us. In those moments, balance reveals itself – not as something we control, but as something we enter.

Balance is not about strict control. It is about awareness. It is noticing when we are giving too much, when we are clinging too tightly, or when we are forgetting to care for what nourishes us. Each small act of awareness brings us back to centre.

When we honour this rhythm, life shifts. We carry clarity instead of confusion, strength instead of strain, peace instead of restlessness. Balance teaches us that life is not a battle to win, but a dance to join.

### **BALANCE ISN'T A TIGHTROPE WALK**

Balance is more like standing barefoot on the earth, steady, rooted, yet free to move. It's not about being passive or rigid. It's about being aware, knowing when to rest, when to act, and when to simply be.

It's when we stop chasing some ideal and come back to ourselves, just as we are. Not in the past. Not in the future. But here, now.

### **THE MIDDLE PATH: ANCIENT TRUTH, EVERYDAY WISDOM**

The Buddha once said that real freedom isn't in extremes, not in overindulgence or in constant denial. It's found in the middle path. And this ancient wisdom still speaks clearly today.

We don't need to do everything. We just need to return to our centre, again and again. Gently. Like a string on a sitar, too tight, it snaps. Too loose, it makes no music. But tuned just right, it sings.

## **BALANCE ISN'T CONTROL**

This was a big shift for me: realising balance doesn't mean holding everything tightly in place. It's not about controlling outcomes. It's about listening to what each moment asks for. Sometimes that means stepping forward. Other times, stepping back.

A river doesn't crash through rocks; it flows around them.

## **WE MUST BE AWARE OF WHAT TAKES US AWAY FROM HARMONY.**

Here are few habits that pulls us off balance:

- Always thinking, never resting.
- Always talking, rarely listening.
- Saying yes to everyone, no to ourselves.
- Eating mindlessly or skipping meals altogether.
- Living on screens but forgetting the sky.
- Helping others while quietly burning out inside.

These don't always look dramatic, but over time, they leave us feeling off, like we're drifting from our own rhythm.

## **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL SIGNS YOU MIGHT BE OUT OF BALANCE**

- You're always tired, even after sleep.
- You feel overwhelmed or numb.
- You're easily irritated or restless.
- You've forgotten the last time you laughed or sat in silence.
- You feel like you're doing everything, but nothing deep.



These are not problems to fix. They're signals, gentle nudges to return home to yourself.

## **THE PEACE OF THE MIDDLE**

When we live in balance, something soft awakens inside. We feel clearer. Lighter. More present. Not because life is suddenly perfect, but because we've stopped fighting it. We're no longer swinging between extremes. We're walking a little slower, breathing a little deeper. And it feels... like coming home.

## **THE PAUSE THAT MAKES IT PERFECT – A STORY ABOUT RHYTHM AND PRESENCE**

There's a story I carry with me – soft, simple, and wise.

A traveller once visited a quiet town in the hills, known for its tea. Locals spoke of an elderly tea master whose brew had something special – not just flavour, but a kind of calm.

Curious, the traveller asked, "What makes your tea taste so different?"

The tea master smiled gently and said, "It's not just the leaves. It's the pause."

"The pause?" the traveller asked.

"Yes," the tea master nodded.

"When I pour hot water over the leaves, I don't rush to serve it. I wait."

Just a moment – long enough for the leaves to open, for the flavour to bloom.

If I rush, the tea is flat. If I wait too long, it turns bitter.

But if I pause at the right moment... the tea is full of life."

That quiet moment? That's where the magic is. The pause is not the absence of doing – it's the presence of listening.

In life, we're always pouring ourselves into something – work, family, healing, dreams. But not everything needs to happen at once. Not every moment needs to be filled.

We don't lose time by pausing. **We find rhythm. We let things settle.** We give life space to unfold the way it's meant to.

The tea reminds us: Balance isn't about doing more. It's about doing things with care, with timing, with presence.

So don't rush the process. Take your pause. Let the flavour come through. Let life steep.

During this period, I realised there is a **rhythm** in everything...

1. The Earth Moves Slowly

It spins without haste, or pause – night follows day, and day follows night. No rush. Just **rhythm**.

2. The Ocean Breathes

Waves rise and fall like breaths. The tide comes in, and goes out – a perfect, ancient **rhythm**, guided by the moon.

3. Trees Grow Silently

A seed becomes a tree not by striving, but by surrendering to time. Roots first, then leaves, then fruit – each in its own season. Perfect **rhythm**.

4. My Heart Beats

Without my doing, my heart follows its own silent drum. When I'm calm, it is steady. When I'm in fear, it races. It speaks – in **rhythm**.

5. Breath Comes and Goes

I inhale... there is a pause... then I exhale. The breath is life's own metronome. When I follow it, I find peace. Breathing – the most unnoticeable **rhythm** of life.

6. The Moon Waxes and Wanes

Darkness does not fight the light; it takes its turn. Even the moon is not full all the time – and that's perfectly in **rhythm**.

7. Seasons Change Without Conflict

Spring never argues with winter. Summer never competes with autumn. Each comes when it is meant to. That's **rhythm**.

8. Even Pain Has a **Rhythm**

It comes, it peaks, it fades. No feeling stays forever. Happiness, too, comes in waves.

9. Silence Has a **Rhythm**

Between two sounds, there is silence. Between two thoughts, there is stillness. Even nothingness moves.

10. Life Itself Flows

From birth to death, from sunrise to sunset – life is not a race, it's a **rhythm**. A divine, mysterious dance.

Balance is a vibe. It's not a fixed formula. It's a feeling of being rooted but flexible, calm but alive, kind but clear. It's when we don't need to chase peace... because we're already sitting in it.

We don't need to get it perfect. We just need to come back to the middle... again and again... like a breath. That's where peace lives. That's where we live.

## **7.4 YOUR ENERGY SPEAKS LOADS**

We rarely notice it, but before we speak a single word, before we explain who we are, our energy has already introduced us. It is the silent language of the soul – and it speaks louder than the voice.

Many Zen masters say “You are energy. You are light.” To understand ourselves is to understand this vibration that radiates from us. Every thought, word, and action carries energy. It moves beyond what is said and touches those around us. When we are mindful, our energy radiates calm, compassion, and clarity. When we are restless or agitated, that too is felt.

Awareness of our inner state allows us to choose the energy we offer to the world. By nurturing peace within, we naturally spread peace outside. Remember: it is not only our words, but the quality of our being, that communicates most deeply.

People may hear our words, but they feel our energy first. Our energy speaks before we do. Long before words come out, people can feel us.

If our energy is restless or heavy, it spreads that feeling around. But when we’re calm and balanced inside, we bring peace just by being there.

It’s not about what we say or how we act – it’s about how we are within ourselves. When we are clear, grounded, and still, our presence says everything that needs to be said.

### **OUR ENERGY IS OUR SIGNATURE**

Every thought we think, every emotion we feel, every choice we make – all of it shapes the field of energy around us. Some people enter a room and lift it; others enter and the air becomes heavy. This isn’t accident – it is energy speaking.

So, let’s take time each day to check in with ourselves.

Are we in balance?

Are we present?

Because when we are aligned inside, our energy speaks love, peace, and strength – without a single word.

Over time, I’ve come to see something quite simple, yet powerful: You don’t need to say much to be felt. Your energy often walks into the room before you do. It speaks in your silence, your eyes, your presence.

You may say you're fine... but if your energy is tense, people will feel it.

You may smile... but if it's forced, it won't land.

You may try to inspire... but if your energy is heavy, others may shrink around you.

This doesn't mean we need to be perfect or always cheerful. Not at all.

It simply means that our inner state matters more than we think.

When your self-awareness deepens, our energy refines. Mindful living is the path to this. In stillness, the noise of the world fades, and the inner light becomes clear. A person who is mindful daily carries a presence that no mask can imitate.

## **GAURD YOUR INNER GOLD AND FEED YOUR SENSES WISELY**

Our energy is precious. It can be drained by negativity, by gossip, by restless environments, and by inner habits of fear. Wacth carefully what you feed thought your senses — avoid seeing, hearing, talking, or eating anything that pollutes your mind and heart. It's important that we treat our energy like gold – to spend it wisely, to guard it from theft, and to continually renew it through meditation, silence, nature, and solitude.

Energy isn't some mystical thing. It's our mood, our tone, our attitude, the way we enter a space. It's how we make people feel without trying. Some people feel calm, even if they barely say a word. Others carry stress like static; we can sense it even when they're smiling.

Think of someone who always makes you feel safe.

Now, think of someone whose presence makes us anxious.

The difference isn't in their words, it's in their energy. We just feel it.

## **ENERGY CREATES REALITY**

Our career, our relationships, our creativity – all are influenced by our energetic state. If we radiate doubt, we attract confusion. If we radiate clarity, we unclutter noise. If we radiate joy, we find companions on the path of joy. The world reflects our energy back to us.

## **THE SILENT TEACHING**

More than words, our life itself is teaching. Our silence, our smile, our calmness, or our restlessness – they are all expressions of our energy. Without knowing, we are always transmitting.

## **OUR ENERGY SPEAKS LOADS**

We don't need to convince, argue, or prove. Refine our inner light, and the world will feel it before we say a word.

## **POSITIVE ENERGY: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS**

Positive energy doesn't mean walking around pretending to be happy all the time. It doesn't mean ignoring pain or pasting a smile over stress.

Positive energy is much quieter. More honest. Genuine. It's the peace that comes when we're okay with who we are.

When we're not rushing to impress, not trying to control everything. When our mind is clear and our heart is open, even if we're not having a perfect day. We can feel this in someone who is gentle, grounded, and present.

They may or may not talk much. They don't try too hard. But being around them feels like a soft exhale. A quiet yes. A relaxation.

## **AND WHAT ABOUT NEGATIVE ENERGY?**

Negative energy – anger, fear, resentment – arises in all of us. It is not a sign of failure, but a signal that something within needs attention. To push it away or deny it only makes it stronger.

Instead, acknowledge it gently. Observe it with mindfulness and compassion, without judgment. By bringing awareness to these feelings, we allow them to transform rather than control us.

Negative energy can be a teacher: it shows us where healing is needed, where boundaries must be set, and where understanding can grow. When handled with care, even our darkest emotions can lead to clarity, peace, and deeper connection – with ourselves and with others.

You've probably felt it before:

- Someone says kind words, but you still feel a weird tension.
- A room goes quiet when a stressed person walks in.
- You feel drained after talking to someone who only complains.

That's negative energy in action. It doesn't need to shout. You just feel it.

## **HERE ARE FEW DAY TO DAY LIFE EXAMPLES**

One day, a flower seller in India smiled at me. It wasn't a forced grin, just quiet warmth. I don't remember what flowers, but I still remember the smile. That's positive energy.

Someone older once patted me and told me, "You're doing great," but something felt off. They said the right words, but I walked away uneasy. Why? Because their energy didn't match their message.

We don't always remember what people say. But we always remember how they made us feel.

Peace doesn't need to speak. Some of the most powerful moments I've experienced weren't when someone gave me advice or tried to fix my problems, but when they just sat with me, fully present, calm and steady. No pressure. No expectations. Just presence.

There's something healing about being around someone who isn't in a rush. Someone whose energy is soft, grounded, and calm. It's as if their peace reaches out and says, "You can relax now." And without trying, you do.

## **YOUR PEACE IS FELT – EVEN IN SILENCE**

We often think we need the right words, the right timing, the perfect response. But sometimes, the greatest gift we can offer another person is our calm presence.

It's like this quiet message that says: "You don't need to hurry. You don't need to impress me. You can just be."

And that kind of peace? It's contagious.

Just like the scent of a flower doesn't push its way into the room, your inner calm fills the space around you without trying. It softens sharp edges, slows down busy hearts, and invites people to breathe again.

**Stillness is Powerful.** Inspiration doesn't always come like fire. It often comes like a soft breeze, through stillness, not effort.

There were days when I thought I had to do more, say more, fix more... until I realised: the quieter I became inside, the more life began to flow naturally. Just like muddy water clears when left undisturbed, your own clarity and wisdom rise when you sit still.

You don't have to force the answers. Just be calm and let peace grow inside you. The answers will come on their own, like flowers slowly opening in the morning sun.

## **WHEN YOU'RE PRESENT, OTHERS FEEL SAFE**

I've noticed something interesting; maybe you've felt it too. You're talking to someone, and even though they're smiling and nodding... you can tell they're not really there. Their mind are somewhere else.

And you feel it. There's a gap. A kind of quiet absence.

But when someone is fully with you listening, not rushing, not planning their reply, their attention becomes a gift. You feel seen. Heard. Safe. That's presence. And it's rare. But it changes everything. We clean our energy not by forcing fake positivity, but by getting real, gently.

## **SMALL THINGS THAT SHIFT YOUR ENERGY (AND PEOPLE FEEL IT)**

Energy is always speaking – even when we're silent. It's not about being perfect. It's about being real, present, and open.

Here are small everyday things that can quietly shift your energy – and yes, people do feel it.

- **Admit how you feel.**

Feeling low? Tired? Overwhelmed? Notice it. Even just saying "I'm not okay right now" to yourself can bring relief. Honesty with yourself softens the weight, and your energy lightens.



- **Watch your thoughts.**

When your mind is busy, try not to get lost in the noise. Just pause, breathe, and watch the thoughts come and go like cars passing by. You'll return to the present – and others can sense that calm.

- **Move your body.**

Feeling stuck? Walk around the block. Stretch your arms. Even a 30-second shake-out in your room can change your energy. Your body holds on to emotions – movement helps them move through.

- **Write it out.**

When your mind feels heavy, write whatever's there. No structure, no filter. You'd be surprised how much lighter your energy becomes when your thoughts have somewhere to land.

- **Spend time in nature.**

Open a window. Look at the sky. Stand near a tree. Nature clears energy in a way screens never can. Even five minutes outside can reset something inside.

You don't need to do big things to feel a shift. Tiny choices, made with care, change your energy – and people can feel that shift, even if you say nothing. When your energy softens, your presence speaks peace.

And that's something the world needs more of.

## **TEND TO THE GARDEN WITHIN. AN INNER STORY WE CAN ALL RELATE TO**

There's a quiet kind of strength some people carry – not through words or titles, but through the way you feel when you're around them. Their presence calms you. Their silence comforts. Their energy feels like home.

Once, a traveller climbed a hill to visit a well-known monk.

People spoke of how just sitting beside this man brought peace – even without a single word exchanged.

Curious, the traveller asked, “Why do people feel better just being near you?”

The monk smiled gently and replied, “Because every morning, I tend to the garden inside me.”

The traveller looked around, confused. “But... you have no garden.”

The monk placed his hand on his heart and said, “Oh, but I do. Each day, I pull out the weeds of anger and impatience.

I plant seeds of compassion. I water joy with gratitude.

I sit quietly with sadness when it visits – I don’t rush it away.

And when storms come, I let them pass without blaming the sky.”

“My inner garden grows quietly,” he continued, “and over time, it has started to bloom on the outside too. People may not see the garden, but they feel its scent in my presence.”

We all carry a garden within us. Some days it’s wild. Some days it’s dry. Some days it’s blooming. But it’s always there, waiting for a little care. We don’t have to be perfect. We don’t have to have all the answers. We just have to show up for ourselves – gently, honestly, consistently.

So, when the world feels loud, pause and take a deep breath. Check in with our inner garden.

Maybe it just needs a little water, a little light, or simply our attention. Then step into the day. And let your energy speak for you – softly, naturally, like the scent of a flower carried on the wind.

## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #7: ZEN MOMENTS, EMOTIONAL BALANCE, INTERRUPTIONS & MOOD SWINGS**

### **1. Emotional Weather**

Bhola: "Living with you is like checking the weather."

Babli: "Why?"

Bhola: "Sunny in the morning, stormy in the afternoon, earthquake at night."

### **2. The Remote Battle**

Babli: "Bhola, give me the TV remote!"

Bhola: "No, emotional balance... you watch one channel, I watch another... we are equally unhappy."

### **3. Bhola's Zen Shattered**

Bhola (sitting cross-legged, eyes closed): "Nothing disturbs me now. I've found inner peace." [Babli switches the TV from cricket to a cooking show.]

Bhola : "WHAT KIND OF MONSTER DOES THAT IN THE 19th OVER?!"

Babli : "The kind of monster who lives with the guy who promised 'nothing disturbs me now' ten seconds ago."

Bhola : "Inner peace is a scam..."

### **4. Sleep Struggles**

Bhola: "Marriage is about teamwork."

Babli: "Exactly. You snore, I stay awake. Perfect team."

### **5. Emotional Balance**

Friend: "Bhola, how do you stay so calm?"

Bhola: "Easy. I cry a little, laugh a little... then nap a lot."

## **6. The Surprise Gift**

Babli: “Close your eyes, I’ve got you something unexpected!”

Bhola (excited): “A gadget? A trip? Can’t wait!”

Babli: (hands him a mop)

Bhola: “What is this?!”

Babli: “Your surprise chore. Be open to life!”

## **7. Spiritual Awakening**

Bhola: “Today, I meditate to be open to the universe.” (20 minutes later)

Babli: “How was it?”

Bhola: “I reached a deep state of peace.”

Babli: “You snored for 18 minutes.”

Bhola: “Exactly. It’s soul-breath. Very advanced.”

## **PART 8**

# **RETURNING TO JOY – A LIFE ALIGNED**



## CHAPTER 8

### 8.1 WALK WITH GRATITUDE – EMBRACE EVERY BLESSING

Life offers countless blessings, often in ways we overlook. When we walk with gratitude, each step becomes a celebration, and even ordinary moments shine with meaning.

I've always tried to notice and cherish even the little blessings, and it makes me feel so blessed.

I embrace every blessing, no matter how small – the warmth of the sun, the laughter of a friend, the simple act of breathing. Gratitude opens the heart, softens the mind, and allows joy to flow naturally.

By practicing mindful appreciation, I've learned to truly live, seeing life itself as a gift to be cherished in every moment. Gratitude isn't just a word or a feeling – it's a way of seeing the world.

The more I slow down and pay attention, the more I notice how much there is to be thankful for. Not in big, dramatic moments, but in the small, everyday things: a quiet breath, a passing smile, the chance to try again.

It's about moving through life with wonder, not entitlement. It's about recognising that simply being alive is reason enough to feel grateful. We are supported by so much – by the earth, by time, by family and friends, by people we don't even know – and most days, I don't even notice. But when I do, it changes everything.

Even when life feels uncertain or messy, I pause and find one small thing to be thankful for. That one thing can shift my whole perspective. It brings calm, clarity, and a quiet joy.

Now, I live in gratitude, step by step. And as I do, I feel more grounded, more open, and more at peace. That, to me, is grace.

I used to think gratitude was just about remembering to say “thank you.” But I’ve realised it’s much more than that. Gratitude is a way of being. It’s when my heart whispers thank you before my mouth ever says it. It’s feeling full, even when everything isn’t perfect.

Gratitude has a quiet magic. It softens something inside. It turns ordinary moments into treasures: a simple hug, sunlight touching my face, a cool breeze, a random smile from a stranger. It shifts my focus from “what’s missing” to “what’s already here.” And once that shift happens, joy flows more naturally.

Since I embraced gratitude, so many things in my life have changed. I’ve stopped blaming, judging, criticising, gossiping, and complaining – not because everything is perfect, but because I’ve begun to see life differently. A grateful heart doesn’t deny life’s challenges, but it refuses to let them blind me to the beauty that still surrounds me.

Gratitude doesn’t require grand gestures. It asks only that we walk through life with open eyes and an open heart. Step by step, moment by moment – this is how we return to what really matters.

## **WHAT CHANGED?**

Nothing outside had to change. Just the way I see, feel and notice.

Gratitude didn’t arrive with a grand announcement; it entered quietly through presence. Through humility. Through enough quiet moments where I could finally hear life whisper: “This is it. This is a miracle.” And now, the smallest things... move me the most.

## **GIFTS THAT DON’T COST A CENT – A GENTLE REMINDER TO WALK WITH GRATITUDE**

Some of the greatest gifts in life come quietly. They don’t come wrapped in boxes or with price tags. They

don’t cost a cent – and yet, they have the power to soften the heart and steady the soul.

A deep breath.

A genuine compliment.

A moment of sunlight warming your skin.



A genuine smile.

A laugh – free and full.

A message from someone who thought of you.

A sound of rain tapping gently outside.

A rich and grounding smell of the earth after rain.

A look into someone's eyes, filled with love.

A kind word when you needed it most. Gratitude is what allows us to receive these gifts fully. It's not about having more – it's about seeing more.

When we walk with gratitude, we begin to recognise the richness of what's already here. We stop overlooking the everyday miracles. We begin to feel nourished by the little things – because we finally see them for what they are: gifts.

No cost. No noise. No conditions. Just life, offering its quiet blessings, moment by moment. All we have to do is notice... and give thanks. Every day, make a note of these gifts that don't cost a cent.

Moments of presence that ask for nothing, but give everything. The more we notice them, the happier we feel. Because these small, invisible gifts carry the deepest value. And they're always available... to give and to receive.

## **THE INNER SHIFT: FROM LACK TO LIGHT**

There comes a time in life when something changes – not outside, but within. At first, it may feel like something is always missing. There's a quiet sense of lack, a feeling that life should be more fulfilling, more exciting, more something. It's easy to assume the problem lies in the world or in the things we don't have.

But often, it's not about the world at all. It's about how we're seeing it.

When gratitude is absent, even the good moments can feel empty. Blame game begins. Comparison creeps in. Attention drifts towards what others have and jealousy takes over. And slowly, the beauty in one's own life starts to fade into the background – unnoticed and unappreciated.

But something powerful happens when we begin to notice the simple things: a roof over our head, daily meals, clean water, a kind word.

These small gifts – so often overlooked – begin to open the heart. And in that quiet recognition, something shifts. Life starts to feel... enough.

This inner shift – from lack to light, from wanting to noticing – is one of the most important transformations we go through. It brings peace, presence and a deep appreciation for what already is.

And the truth is: This shift is available to anyone, at any moment. It begins with awareness. It deepens with gratitude.

## **EVERYDAY WAYS TO PRACTICE GRATITUDE (THAT ACTUALLY WORK)**

**Saying “thank you,” often and sincerely.**

To the people in our family. To the one who prepared the food. To the stranger who held the door. When gratitude is spoken with awareness, it softens the moment – and the heart.

## **WRITING DOWN THREE THINGS TO BE THANKFUL FOR.**

A good laugh, a beautiful smile, a quiet moment. This practice trains the mind to notice the good, and over time, the good begins to expand.

## **HELPING SOMEONE JOYFULLY.**

Hold the door. Offer a snack. Send a message to check in. Acts of giving, done with presence, uplift both the giver and the receiver.

## **SMILING GENUINELY.**

At a stranger. At a loved one. In the mirror. A real smile is silent gratitude made visible.

## **TAKING CARE OF WHAT’S ALREADY YOURS.**

Water the plants. Tidy a room. Repair something worn. Tending to what you have is a quiet way of saying, “This matters to me.”

Speak with kindness. Offer a compliment. Thank someone just for being who they are.

## **WORDS CARRY ENERGY, AND KIND ONES BECOME VESSELS OF GRATITUDE.**

Gratitude doesn't just stay in the heart. It moves through our words, actions, and presence, and in doing so, it transforms the ordinary into something sacred.

### **A LESSON IN GRATITUDE**

There was a man who always complained. He complained about his work, his family, his meals, and the difficulties in life. No matter what he had, he always felt something was missing. He was often angry, unhappy, and restless.

One day, a wise Sufi teacher invited him for a walk. They walked quietly through the streets, until they reached a small shelter for elderly people. Inside, many could not see or walk well. Some were weak, some sick, and some had no family. Yet their faces were calm and peaceful. The teacher said softly, "Many here would give anything for just one healthy day, one free step, one moment of comfort."

Next, they went to a school for children with disabilities. Some children could not speak; others could not walk. Still, they laughed and played with joy. The man was surprised, and the teacher said, "Even in their challenges, they find happiness in little things that most of us take for granted."

Finally, they sat in a quiet garden. The birds sang, the flowers swayed in the breeze, and the sunlight warmed their faces. The teacher asked, "What do you notice?" The man looked around and realised he had been so focused on what he lacked that he had never truly seen the beauty around him.

That night, the man thought about the day. He remembered his own life – the roof over his head, the food on his table, the friends who cared, the ability to breathe freely. For the first time in a long time, he said softly, "Thank you, life." His heart felt lighter. He smiled more, gave more, and found peace slowly entering his life.

From then on, he kept a small notebook. Each morning, he wrote down three things he was grateful for. Slowly, his complaints became quieter, his anger softened, and his mind felt calmer. He began noticing the beauty in

small things – a warm meal, a smile from a stranger, the sound of birds, the smell of rain.

He learned that gratitude was not about forcing himself to feel happy. It was about seeing life clearly, appreciating the ordinary, and understanding that every moment, even the hard ones, held a gift. Gratitude became his way of living. It changed his heart, his mind, and the way he experienced the world.

## **HOW TO SHARE GRATITUDE WITH OTHERS (GENTLY)**

The most powerful way to inspire gratitude in others is to quietly embody it. No need for grand gestures or big speeches – just everyday presence, mindfulness, and care.

Writing this book has been a journey of gratitude. Every idea, every word, every insight came through the support, love, and inspiration of so many. I am deeply thankful to all who contributed in ways seen and unseen.

## **ASK SOFT, INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS.**

Try asking, “What made you smile today?” or “What felt good about your day?” These small questions open space for reflection – and often uncover the unnoticed joys.

A simple reflection can open hearts, remind us to pause, and make gratitude feel more natural.

Not every moment needs to be filled. Sometimes, the deepest gratitude arises in stillness, when there is room to simply feel and notice.

## **GENTLY REMIND: SOMETIMES, ENOUGH IS MORE THAN PLENTY.**

Gratitude grows when we remember that what we have, right now, can be more than enough. It shows up in how we speak, how we listen, and how we love. It turns an ordinary moment into a quiet blessing. It softens the heart – ours and others’.

And often, that’s all it takes.

## **GRATITUDE FORMULA (JUST FOR FUN AND REFLECTION)**

Gratitude = Presence + Trust + Enough – (Expectations × Complaints)

= Joy + Inner Peace

Let this become a gentle daily reminder:

Today, I subtract my expectations, complaints and worries.

I add awareness, multiply kindness and divide joy with everyone I meet.

## **8.2 LAUGHTER HEALS – NURTURE YOUR PLAYFUL HEART**

Life can be heavy, filled with worries, challenges, and responsibilities. Yet even in difficult moments, laughter has the power to lighten the heart and bring us back to the present.

Nurture your playful heart. Allow yourself to smile, to laugh, and to find joy in simple things – a child’s curiosity, a gentle breeze, the warmth of the sun, or a shared joke. Playfulness is not silly; it helps us see the beauty in life and reminds us that joy is always available, even in small doses.

When we laugh, we release tension, open our hearts, and invite peace into our being. Laughter is medicine, not just for the body, but for the mind and soul. Let it flow freely, and let your playful spirit guide you back to presence and lightness, no matter what life brings.

### **REMEMBERING THE JOY OF BEING A CHILD**

I’ve realised something that has changed the way I look at life: children are naturally joyful. They laugh without needing a reason. They run just because their legs want to move. They sing silly songs, even if no one else likes them. They jump in puddles after the rain as if each splash is magic. They smile at the sky simply because it’s blue.

A child doesn’t ask, “Should I be happy?” They just feel happiness. They don’t think about how to enjoy life – they are the joy.

But as we grow up, we forget. We get busy being “grown up.” We become serious, responsible, and careful. We stop playing in the garden. We stop making silly faces in the mirror. We stop jumping in puddles. We start carrying ambition, deadlines, worries, and comparisons. Slowly, joy fades, and we hardly notice.

Simple everyday examples to remember childhood joy:

- A child building a sandcastle on the beach, not caring if it will fall, just enjoying the feel of sand.
- A child dancing in the living room to a favourite song, even if the steps are all wrong.
- A child giggling at a funny face in the mirror or making their own shadow dance in the sunlight.

- A child eating an ice cream and getting it all over their hands, but not worrying about being messy.

Life becomes beautiful when we allow ourselves to be playful again. We don't have to wait for a reason to smile. Happiness isn't somewhere outside – it's already inside, waiting for us to remember.

So, let yourself laugh like a child. Sing when you feel like it. Jump in puddles of life. Look at the sky and just smile. Your joy doesn't need a reason – it only needs you.

## **WHAT I REALISED ABOUT PLAYFULNESS**

For a long time, I thought being playful meant being immature, like it meant you weren't serious or responsible enough. But now I see it differently. True playfulness isn't about escaping life. It's about being fully present in it.

When I'm playful, I'm more alive, more open. I notice the little joys, the breeze, a funny moment, even a small mistake that turns into laughter. I respond to life, instead of reacting from stress.

For me, simple and playful again felt strange at first. I had spent years trying to be the "mature" one. When I used to hear things like "act your age, be responsible, don't be silly, and so on." I heard these things so many times, I began to believe that being serious meant being wise.

But deep down, it felt so tiring. Seriousness felt like a fake and rough mask. Wearing this mask, life felt heavy, to be honest, even a little dull.

What helped me change wasn't learning something new; it was unlearning. It was about letting go of the belief that being serious means being deep. I realised that seriousness is very boring and felt stupid.

Honestly, I've met a lot of serious people, and they're not much fun to be around. I find the vibe of serious people repulsive. There's no spark in them, no real smile. They seem stuck, lost, mostly angry, as though they've forgotten how to live.

I'm sure you, too, have met people like that, the ones with tense faces and forced smiles, who treat every moment like a task or problem to fix. They rarely laugh, and life feels heavy around them.

## **SERIOUSNESS VS AWARENESS: WHY LIGHTNESS IS WISDOM**

There's a big difference between being serious and being aware. Seriousness feels heavy, tight and controlling. Awareness feels light, alive and playful.

You can be fully present and still laugh at yourself. You can be wise and spontaneous. In fact, there's something deeply spiritual about being playful and in the moment.

Start watching children or nature closely. A child doesn't try to be impressive. They just play, laugh at silly things, and live fully in the now. That's real wisdom. That's freedom.

And that playful, curious child? It's still inside you. Not to take over – but to remind you how to live with heart.

Now, I understand a few simple truths:

- Presence is real maturity.
- Joy doesn't need permission.
- Laughter can heal more than logic ever will.

Some of the wisest people I've ever known are also the most playful. Not because they don't feel pain – but because they've stopped fighting life. They've started living it. Fully. Freely.

Let Go. Lighten Up. Live Fully. Letting go wasn't one big moment – it was a slow, everyday choice. Now I dance around the house for no reason. Laugh at my own mistakes. Watch cartoons. Tell jokes that make no sense and laugh anyway.

And you know what? Life feels lighter. More fun. More real.

I stopped overthinking. I stopped trying to impress anyone. I just started being me, and that was enough.

Sure, not everyone understands. Some people see my energy and say I'm "too much" or "crazy." But I've realised... that's their discomfort, not mine. I'm not trying to hurt anyone. I'm just alive – authentically and unapologetically.

And this way of living? Yes, it's healing. It softens the heart. It calms the mind. It makes you feel at home in your own skin.



## **THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF PLAYFULNESS AND LAUGHTER**

Let's talk about something often overlooked on the spiritual path:

### **PLAYFULNESS. MISCHIEF. LAUGHTER.**

Not the kind that hurts or disrespects – but the kind that makes your soul smile. It's dancing barefoot in the kitchen while cooking. It's telling a joke so bad, you laugh until you cry.

No audience. No purpose. Just joy. Just presence.

In those moments, the mind relaxes. The ego softens, and something real wakes up inside. This is the magic of playfulness.

It cracks open the tightness of the mind, so light can get in. It reminds us: we don't have to take life so seriously to live it deeply.

And laughter? Laughter is more than a reaction – it's a release.

It's medicine. It calms the body, clears the mind, and softens the heart. When you laugh – really laugh – there's no past, no future, no performance.

Just presence. And in that moment, you're free. You feel lighter. More connected. More alive. Laughter brings people closer. It melts stress.

It reminds us who we are beneath all the overthinking – Joyful. Simple. Human. So, when life feels heavy or too serious, let yourself laugh. Play a little. Be unpredictable. Do something silly just because it feels good.

Because laughter isn't the opposite of spirituality – It's a sign of it.

It says:

"I trust life, even when it's messy."

"I don't need to control everything to be okay."

"I can be light and still be wise."

Let joy in. Let laughter lead. That, too, is a sacred path.

## **CHOOSE JOY OR STATUS: WHICH ONE DEFINES YOU?**

What kind of person do you want to be?

A joyful person or an important person?

The world teaches us to chase importance – titles, roles, recognition. Sometimes importance can feel heavy. It often comes with pressure, masks, and the need to prove yourself.

Joy is different. Joy is light. It's honest, open, and relaxing. It doesn't need to impress anyone. It simply is.

When you let your playful heart come alive, you stop trying to be "somebody." You just be. And in that space – without effort, without pretending – something sacred begins to rise.

Maybe God isn't hiding in temples. Maybe God is hiding in your laughter.

There's a story of a man who asked his master: "Should I meditate for ten years, or learn to laugh first?"

The master replied, "Laugh first. That might save you ten years."

Another seeker asked, "Is there a shortcut to enlightenment?"

The master smiled and said, "Yes. It's called laughing at yourself."

If there's one thing worth remembering, it's this:

Go back to play. Playfulness isn't childish – it's alive. It's forgiving. It's curious. It makes room for joy, even in the middle of healing. It lets you laugh at your mistakes instead of carrying them.

So be silly. Dance with the wind. Tell a joke, even if no one laughs. Smile, even when things aren't perfect.

And maybe, just maybe, in one of those light, free moments, you'll feel something inside you quietly awaken.

And you'll laugh, because it was always this simple.

## 8.3 JOY FOUND ME

For a long time, I was searching for joy everywhere – through achievements, possessions, and the approval of others. But no matter what I gained, joy always seemed just out of reach.

One day, I stopped running and simply noticed the world around me. stopped chasing. I wasn't even sure what I was looking for at the time.

I felt the warmth of the sun, heard the birds singing, and noticed the gentle rhythm of my own breath. In that quiet attention, somewhere along the way, quietly, without warning, **joy found me.**

Not the loud, over-the-top kind. Not the one tied to achievements, approval, or applause. But a soft, steady kind of joy. The kind that arrives when you stop trying so hard to be someone else.

It didn't come through success or a perfect plan. It came in small, ordinary moments I used to overlook.

A deep breath after a long day.

A cup of tea that made me pause.

A song I danced to in the kitchen – alone, barefoot and free.

A silly joke shared with someone who gets me.

For so long, I thought joy was something I had to earn.

That I had to be “good enough,” “healed enough,” or “important enough” to deserve it.

But I've come to understand:

Joy isn't a reward. It's a companion. It walks with you the moment you begin walking lightly.

Joy found me when I stopped needing to be serious all the time.

When I gave myself permission to laugh at my own awkwardness.

When I let go of the pressure to be impressive and chose to be present instead.

The more I softened, the more I smiled.

The more I let go, the more alive I felt.

And now I see: Joy isn't loud. It's not waiting at the finish line. It's in the now. In the pause. In the permission to just be. I didn't need to chase it.

I just needed to make space for it.

And the most beautiful part?

Joy was never missing. I just wasn't still enough to notice. But now that I see it, feel it, live it – I let it find me again and again.

I realised that joy is not something to chase. It is already present when we are mindful, when we open our hearts, and when we appreciate the simple moments of life. Joy finds us when we are present, grateful, and aware.

## **JOY ISN'T A DESTINATION**

Joy isn't something you earn. It's not a reward for healing, or something that waits at the end of a perfect life. It doesn't arrive when everything is figured out.

Joy comes in quiet, unexpected moments. Not after the struggle, but sometimes right in the middle of it. It can show up on a random day – when you're simply too tired to keep trying. Too tired to fix, perform, or carry everything.

So, you pause. You don't do anything special. No big ritual. No breakthrough. You breathe, simply exhale. You let your shoulders drop.

You let the moment be what it is.

And that's when joy slips in.

Not loud. Not dramatic. Just soft – like light through a window you didn't even know was open.

You stop chasing. You stop waiting. And joy finds you – right where you are.

## **JOY WAS NEVER GONE**

Joy isn't hiding. Not in a distant place, a mountaintop, or the next big achievement. It was never gone – it was simply covered. Covered by overthinking, by self-doubt, the noise we carry every day.

So often, we think we have to become “better” or “more” to feel joy. That we need to earn it, fix ourselves first, or get everything perfectly in place.

But the truth is simpler: Joy doesn’t wait for you to be perfect.

It waits for you to be present.

Like the blue sky behind the clouds, joy is always there. Even when life feels heavy. Even when the mind is loud, it hasn’t left – you just forgot how close it is.

You don’t have to search far. Just pause. Come back to the moment you’re in. That’s where joy lives.

## **JOY IS NOT ALWAYS LAUGHTER OR EXCITEMENT**

Sometimes it’s a soft sigh in your chest. A tear that catches you off guard. A quiet moment where you suddenly realise, “I’m okay.”

Joy is cooking a simple meal and serving your family.

Joy is cleaning up your closet and making it clutter-free.

Joy is eating pani poori and actually tasting it.

Joy is hearing a favourite song at the right moment.

Joy is sharing funny jokes with friends on WhatsApp.

It’s simple. But we complicate it.

## **INNER SHIFT**

Something in me shifted when I stopped forcing life to go a certain way. I started asking softer questions, like:

- **“What feels good right now?”**
- **“What brings me peace?”**
- **“What if I let joy lead today?”**

And the answers didn’t come from a self-help book or some grand realisation. They came from the quiet parts of me I’d been ignoring.

Letting joy lead didn't mean I avoided hard things. It meant I stopped carrying extra weight I didn't need. I stopped pleasing people. Stopped chasing what didn't feel true. Stopped measuring my worth by how productive I was.

And in that clearing... life started to feel lighter. I started to feel more myself.

Joy taught me that I don't need to earn rest. That I'm allowed to feel good even when life isn't perfect. That I can choose peace without needing permission. Joy doesn't knock harshly. It waits quietly. And when I finally slowed down enough to listen... it was right there.

## WHEN JOY TAKES THE LEAD

There's a softer, kinder way to live. I didn't always know that. But the day I let joy guide me instead of stress or fear, everything began to change. It wasn't a loud change. It was quiet, gentle. But deep.

1. **I started speaking more kindly:** Not just to others, but to myself. I stopped saying, "What's wrong with me?" and started asking, "What do I need with love right now?"
2. **I chose curiosity over pressure:** Instead of forcing things to happen, I began to ask simple questions: "What feels good right now?" "What's the smallest joyful step I can take today?"
3. **I picked love over fear:** Even when fear felt loud, I paused and chose softness. A smile instead of a sharp word. A deep breath instead of panic.
4. **I stopped rushing:** I stopped running towards "the next big thing." Instead, I walked with life, its pace, grace.
5. **I sang. I danced. I laughed more:** Not for a reason, just because I felt alive. And in those moments, I remembered the child I once was. The one who didn't need a reason to be joyful.

Letting joy guide me didn't make life easy. But it helped me be kind to myself. I stopped fighting inside and found peace. Joy is not about big moments; it's in small things: a smile, a breath, a kind word.

Try letting joy lead you today. Not in big dramatic ways, but in one small moment at a time. A sip of tea. A smile in the mirror. A step with lightness.

That's joy. That's your compass. Let it guide you home.

## **WHEN THE NOISE QUIETS, JOY NATURALLY RETURNS.**

It's not the world that steals our joy.

It's the constant noise inside our own minds.

There's a storm within us – thoughts comparing us to others, old wounds whispering we're not enough, voices from the past repeating stories that no longer serve us.

Worries about the future pile on. Regrets about the past keep circling. Even in moments of peace, the mind finds a way to stir restlessness.

This noise is what stands between us and joy.

But the moment we become aware of this, not judging it, not fighting it, something magical begins to happen. The mind slows down. The heart softens. And in that space... something quiet and beautiful appears.

Joy. Not the joy of excitement or success, but the joy of being. Not chasing. Not fixing. Just sitting. Breathing. Noticing.

Here's the truth: joy is never really lost. It is simply covered – hidden beneath layers of noise and self-doubt. When we learn to pause, to breathe, and to gently step back from these voices, the storm begins to quieten.

And in that quiet, joy returns. Not from outside, not from achievements or approvals – but from within, where it has always lived.

The mystics have always said: Joy isn't something you find by adding more to your life. It's revealed when you subtract. Less noise. Less pretending. Less holding on.

What remains is your original nature, which is calmness, silence, and radiance. So now you know: You don't need to create joy. You only need to remember who you are beneath all the noise. Because joy doesn't live in achievement. It lives in awareness. Not in doing more, but in being fully here.

Next time your mind feels heavy, don't rush to fix it. Just pause. Watch. Let the noise pass like clouds in the sky. And beneath it all, you'll find a quiet joy... waiting to be seen.

## **A GENTLE GOODBYE, GUIDED BY A ZEN STORY**

A seeker once asked a joyful monk, “What do you do after enlightenment?”

The monk smiled and said,

“When I eat, I eat.

When I walk, I walk.

When I sleep, I sleep.”

The seeker said, “But everyone does that.”

And the monk replied, “No – they don’t. Most people eat while lost in thought. They walk while dwelling on the past. They sleep while worrying about tomorrow. Be where you are. Joy will find you.”

As this chapter closes, I’m carrying that with me. Not as an ending, but as a return – To presence. To simplicity. To joy.

No big plans. No dramatic farewell. Just a quiet thank you. A full breath. And the wisdom to walk on, one simple, honest step at a time.

Goodbye – for now. And may joy find you, wherever you are.



## **BHOLA & BABLI BREAK #8: FINAL ROUND – JOY, JOKES & JUGGLING LIFE**

### **1. Bhola and the Genie**

Genie: “Bhola, I’ll grant you one wish.”

Bhola: “I want eternal joy.”

Genie: “Sorry, I can’t interfere with marriage contracts.”

### **2. Bhola’s Therapy**

Friend: “Bhola, why don’t you go to therapy?”

Bhola: “I do! It’s called... group laughter with friends who are equally broke.”

### **3. Bhola at the Park**

Bhola (watching birds): “Look at them flying, so free... so full of joy...”

Babli: “You want to fly too?”

Bhola: “No, I just want to go home alone for once and not feel like I’m in a reality show called ‘Married and Monitored’.”

### **4. Bhola’s Biography Title**

Friend: “Bhola, if you wrote a book about your life, what would you call it?”

Bhola: “From Joy to Joint Bank Account – A Survival Story”

### **5. Bhola at the Wedding Anniversary**

Bhola: “Happy anniversary, Babli.”

Babli: “Aww! You remembered!”

Bhola: “Of course. How can I forget the day joy packed its bags and left quietly?”

## **6. Holiday Plans**

Babli: “You promised me a holiday.”

Bhola: “Yes, and every Sunday I let you visit your mother. That’s a Joy-day (holiday)... for me.”.

## **7. Bhola at Couple Therapy**

Therapist: “Describe your marriage in one word.”

Bhola: “Joy-less.”

Babli: “Excuse me?!”

Bhola: “I mean... JOYFULLY COMPLICATED.”

## **8. Bhola’s Quote of the Day**

Bhola (writing in diary):

“Joy is free. Marriage comes with laundry, in-laws, and endless arguments about curtain colours. Joy just happens. Marriage needs Google Calendar.”

## A MESSAGE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

Thank you for picking up *Joy Found Me*. This book is not about me, it is about a journey we all share – moments of laughter, pain, silence, and gentle awakenings.

I lived in California, then went back to India, and later returned again. Moving here and there taught me one thing: no place gives joy, no situation gives peace. When the heart is clear, joy follows you like a shadow.

I grew up in a home where love and kindness were natural, like breathing. From early on I saw that joy is not something to be achieved – it is already here, waiting when you become still.

I don't carry any labels – not a teacher, not a counsellor – only a simple human being who decided to live joyfully, no matter where life placed me.

This book was written many years ago, but only now it wanted to be shared. If it has come to you, perhaps joy itself has chosen the moment. May these pages remind you of what is already within – the quiet flame of joy that never leaves.

Love & Best Regards,

Sudha Rao

