



TEEN DIGEST

new Beginnings

fresh Perspectives

FOUNDER'S NOTES

Dear Readers,

January—the month of fresh starts, blank pages, and hopeful beginnings. As the calendar turns, many of us jump into resolutions, eager to embrace change and hit new milestones. But let me share a little something with you: I believe in taking it slow. Before we sprint into the hustle and bustle of a new year, let's take a moment to pause, reflect, and truly connect with ourselves.

This is the perfect time to introspect, to think about what truly matters to you—not what the world expects. Don't let the highlight reels on social media pressure you into comparison or competition. Your journey is yours alone. Let it be authentic and intentional. Focus on the things that nourish you—whether that's physical wellness, emotional balance, mental clarity, or spiritual peace. Growth is not a race; it's a process.

So, as we step into 2025, make time for what genuinely fulfills you. Set meaningful goals, not just resolutions for the sake of it. Celebrate the small wins and forgive yourself for the missteps. After all, the most important growth happens when we embrace our unique rhythm.

As we turn the new leaf over, I invite you to share your



thoughts and suggestions. If you'd like to submit an article, story, or even your artwork, we're all ears! Connect with us at: info.justbeingme.in@gmail.com

Here's to a year of purpose, self-discovery, and joyful beginnings.

Prachi
SACHDEV

Founder and Editor-In-Chief



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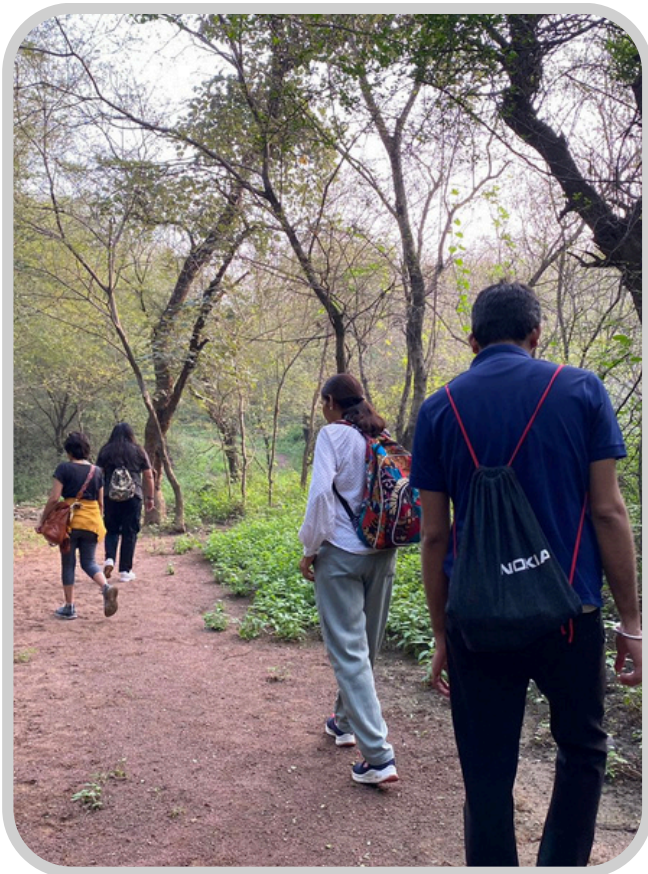
IN THE LIMELIGHT: CHARU GOVIL

FOREST HEALER



Charu Govil is a born Nature lover and trained Forest Healer. She has been conducting Nature Healing Walks for adults and Nature Connect modules for kids in Gurgaon and New Delhi so that more and more people can connect with Nature and enjoy its numerous gifts. She gave up her teaching career of over two decades to pursue her passion for creative work which includes papercraft, patchwork, Kantha, stitching, embroidery, upcycling, etc. She posts her thoughts, experiences and book reviews on her personal blog 'indulgentbystander.home.blog'.

I. What inspired you to become a Forest Healer and guide people through nature-based activities?



There is a simple dictum – “If we connect with something, we do not destroy it!” Going by this I started hosting my Forest Healing Walks. If I am able to make people aware of the benefits of immersing in Nature and especially spending time in forests, then more and more people will be inspired to protect them from further destruction.

Through these walks we not only protect green spaces, but also enhance mental and physical health. In addition to this, these nature-based activities help improve our relationships through group activities.

2. Can you share your journey—how did it all begin, and what led you to focus on forest bathing and outdoor programs?

I grew up in areas near the wilderness. The city life with its share of hustle-bustle never appealed to me. With a regular life I did not have many options; I had a family and job to take care of. But I was always restless and one fine day after working for almost 25 years, I left my job.

It is then that I started looking at the options

within the city and believe it or not, we have many urban forests and biodiversity parks in Gurgaon. I attended a few nature-based activities in these green spaces, and a forest healing session was one of them. I researched the concept and read a few books that provided research-based evidence about numerous health benefits of forest walks. It made me realise that these green spaces could soothe the nerves of people and help heal them.

3. What is the philosophy behind forest bathing?

Forest bathing is the practice of immersing yourself in nature in a mindful way, using your senses to derive a whole range of benefits for your physical, mental, emotional, and social health. It is also known as Shinrin-yoku. ‘Shinrin’ means forest and ‘Yoku’ stands for bathing. The idea took birth in Japan in the 1980’s and proved to be a very effective tool to overcome the ill effects of a hectic life and stressful work environment.

Forest bathing in nature allows the stressed portions of your brain to relax. Positive hormones are released in the body. You feel less sad, angry and anxious. A forest bath is known to boost immunity and leads to lesser days of illness as well as faster recovery from injury or surgery. It improves heart and lung health, and is known to increase focus, concentration and memory.

4. Can you tell us about the different programs you offer, such as forest walks, trekking for children, and sessions for senior citizens?

In the last two years, so far, I have organized many Nature Connect programs for adults, children and even senior citizens; the most popular being Forest Healing Walks.



Message to Teens:

To the teens, I would recommend that sometimes when you go out in nature, go in silence and go slow. Observe your natural surroundings and have a personal connection with the green spaces.

- The Forest Healing Walk is a guided walk for adults. The session lasts for two and a half hours
- For kids, I conduct Nature Connect programs to engage them in different activities around Nature in my colony or in the forest area of Bhondsi.
- Since one must be very particular about the safety of senior citizens, I organize slow walks for them on the cemented trails of Aravalli Biodiversity Park.
- Gift a Walk – I have introduced the concept of gifting a Forest Healing Walk to the loved ones to celebrate their special occasion. You can also get in touch to organize this walk!

5. How do you customize these activities for different age groups, especially children and teens?

Different age groups have different interests, and it is imperative to cater to their specific needs if we have to engage them in Nature based activities.

- For children, the activities are selected to improve the observation skills while they slow down and spend time in nature. Since the children have lot of kinesthetic energy, so I combine the slow walks with a trek in the rough terrain. Later, they engage in art based activities and nature journaling.
- For teens, the walks are specifically designed to improve their observational skills, enhance peace of mind, learn to accept disappointments, improve creative thinking. These are guided slow walks, with group sharing and creativity modules.

6. What's a typical forest bathing experience like? What can participants expect to do and feel during the session?

Forest Healing Walk is a gentle & immersive mindful walk inspired by the Japanese form of nature therapy. It is a combination of therapeutic leisurely walks on the forest trails with guided activities to help open your senses and experience nature connections as you have never experienced before. Group sharing is done at several points along the

walk which helps participants to be more accepting. Forest Walks draw on your creativity and make you more aware of your inherent talents.

7. What are the mental and physical health benefits of forest bathing and spending time in nature, particularly for teens?

Nature is the biggest teacher, and through guided forest healing walks, the individuals learn important life lessons from it. These help people to confidently steer through their difficult days and calmly make decisions.

Here are some of the benefits of forest bathing meditation for teens:


- Learn to switch off unwanted thoughts.
- Feel less angry, anxious, and sad.
- Increase self-worth and confidence.
- Overcome fear, self-doubt, and a wavering mind.
- Avoid stress and burnout.
- Get better sleep and rest.
- Strengthen the ability to control cravings and give up addictions.
- Find peace and happiness in the present moment.
- Build empathy. Improve relationships.
- Find answers for important questions and decisions.

8. How can teens advocate for environmental preservation and encourage their peers to explore nature?

The first step to environmental preservation is enhancing nature connectedness. This requires spending more time in green spaces, observing them minutely, understanding the role of each creature and species, and witnessing the interplay of each element in nature.

Teens are very tech-savvy and talented. After observing these areas, they can create content that encourages others to connect with the idea. They can click photographs, write stories about environmental preservation, showcase these spaces through their paintings, and make creatives, etc. This way they will be able to encourage their peers to explore nature and avail themselves of the benefits of being in nature. They can also participate in birding activities, volunteer for tree plantations, work in animal shelters, or attend butterfly or tree walks that are conducted in their respective cities.

When one is in love with nature, they tend to embrace minimalism. Minimalism in itself brings peace of mind and promotes environmental preservation.



9. What advice would you give to teens who want to incorporate nature into their busy lives but live in urban areas?

Every city, every town, has invaluable green spaces. The idea is to identify these urban forests, parks, or gardens in your close vicinity. Spend time there, keeping in mind the principles

----Go in silence

----Go slow

Use your senses to find things in nature that bring you peace and happiness. Start with 15-30 minutes in these places once or twice a week. Later, increase the time by incorporating it in your daily schedule. Alternatively, you can indulge in various nature-based activities on the weekends.

Once you start reaping the benefits of improved physical and mental health, they might inspire you to slow down and de-stress.

10. If you could recommend one thing every teenager should do in nature, what would it be?

For the past eight years, I have been trekking in Aravallis on weekends, and they energize me for the whole week, but I benefitted the most when I came across the concepts of forest immersion and forest healing. I learnt to slow down, be silent, and observe while in nature. Over the years, I have realized that forests and green spaces reveal their treasures when we are silent.

To the teens, I would recommend that sometimes when you go out in nature, go in silence and go slow. Observe your natural surroundings and have a personal connection with the green spaces.





THE REAL WORLD

Issues That Matter

PRACHI SACHDEV



Why It's Okay to Not Have It All Figured Out

The clock strikes midnight, the world bursts into cheers, and the new year begins. Along with the fireworks and celebrations comes the inevitable question from relatives, parents, and sometimes even friends: "What's your New Year resolution?" Sounds harmless, right? But for many teens, this question can feel more like a spotlight exposing unfinished resolutions, unachieved goals, or even a lack of clarity about what they want.

Let's be real—January 1st doesn't magically turn us into super-organized, ultra-motivated beings with our lives mapped out perfectly. Yet, the pressure to have it all figured out can be overwhelming, especially when it's followed by teasing remarks like, "So, still working on last year's resolution?" or "What's the point of making one if you never stick to it?" These "harmless jokes" can sting, leaving you feeling inadequate.

Picture this: You're sitting at a family gathering, chai in one hand, samosa in the other, when the conversation suddenly turns to you. "Beta, what's your resolution this year?" You scramble for an answer, feeling every eye in the room on you. Maybe you mumble something vague about studying harder or exercising more. And then comes the laugh: "Let's see how long that lasts!" Everyone joins in, but you sit there, half-smiling, wishing you could disappear. Sound familiar? If yes, know this: you're not alone, and it's completely okay to feel this way.

The Problem with Pressure

New Year resolutions are supposed to be about growth and self-improvement, but the constant questioning and teasing can turn them into a source of stress. Teens already face a mountain of expectations—be it academics, friendships, or just figuring out who they are. Adding the pressure to set and achieve “perfect goals” can feel exhausting. This pressure often stems from the belief that everyone else has their lives sorted out. Social media doesn’t help either, with perfectly curated posts of friends sharing their goals and accomplishments. But here’s the truth: almost no one has it all figured out. Even adults are winging it most of the time.



Why It's Okay to Take It Slow

Life isn’t a race, and there’s no rulebook that says you need to have all the answers by January 1st—or any date, for that matter. Here’s why it’s perfectly okay to not have it all figured out:

- **Resolutions Aren’t Deadlines:** Resolutions are meant to be a guide, not a rigid checklist. They should help you grow at your own pace, not make you feel like a failure if you don’t cross everything off by December 31st.
- **You’re Still Growing:** Your teenage years are all about exploring who you are and what you enjoy. It’s normal to change your mind, try new things, and even abandon old goals that no longer resonate with you.
- **Failure Is a Step Forward:** Not achieving a resolution isn’t a sign of failure; it’s a chance to learn. Maybe you wanted to exercise more but didn’t—ask yourself why. Did you set unrealistic expectations? Were you too busy with school? Use this insight to set kinder, more achievable goals.

How to Respond to the Pressure

When you’re faced with questions or teasing about your resolutions, here are a few ways to handle it:

- **Redirect the Conversation:** If someone asks about your resolutions and you don’t feel like sharing, respond with humor: “Still figuring out how to be awesome—it’s a work in progress!”

- **Set Boundaries:** If the jokes become too much, it's okay to let people know how you feel. "I know you mean well, but these comments make me feel pressured. I'm working on things at my own pace."
- **Focus on the Positives:** Instead of dwelling on what didn't work, highlight what you did achieve, even if it's something small. "I didn't stick to my workout goal, but I got better at managing my time this year."

Make Resolutions Your Way If you enjoy making resolutions, here's a tip: make them personal and flexible. Instead of grand, intimidating goals, try:



- Read one new book every month.
- Spend 10 minutes a day journaling.
- Take up one small sustainable habit, like using less plastic."

If resolutions aren't your thing, that's fine too! Focus on setting intentions instead—broad ideas like "be kinder to myself" or "explore new hobbies." These are equally valuable and less restrictive.



A New Year, A Fresh Perspective

As the New Year rolls in, remind yourself that it's okay to not have all the answers. The beauty of life lies in its unpredictableness and your ability to adapt. Growth doesn't have to start on January 1st—it can begin any day, at any moment.

So the next time someone asks about your resolutions, smile and say: "My resolution is to keep growing, one step at a time. The rest will fall into place." Here's to a 2025 filled with self-compassion, exploration, and goals that truly matter to you.

LIFE HACKS

STAYING PRODUCTIVE WITHOUT **BURNING** OUT

Let's face it—time management feels like one of those impossible skills everyone talks about but no one actually masters. You've got classes, assignments, hobbies, social life, and somehow you're supposed to squeeze in sleep too? It's no wonder so many of us end up procrastinating, rushing at the last minute, or burning out. But here's the thing: managing your time doesn't mean giving up all the fun stuff—it's about finding balance.

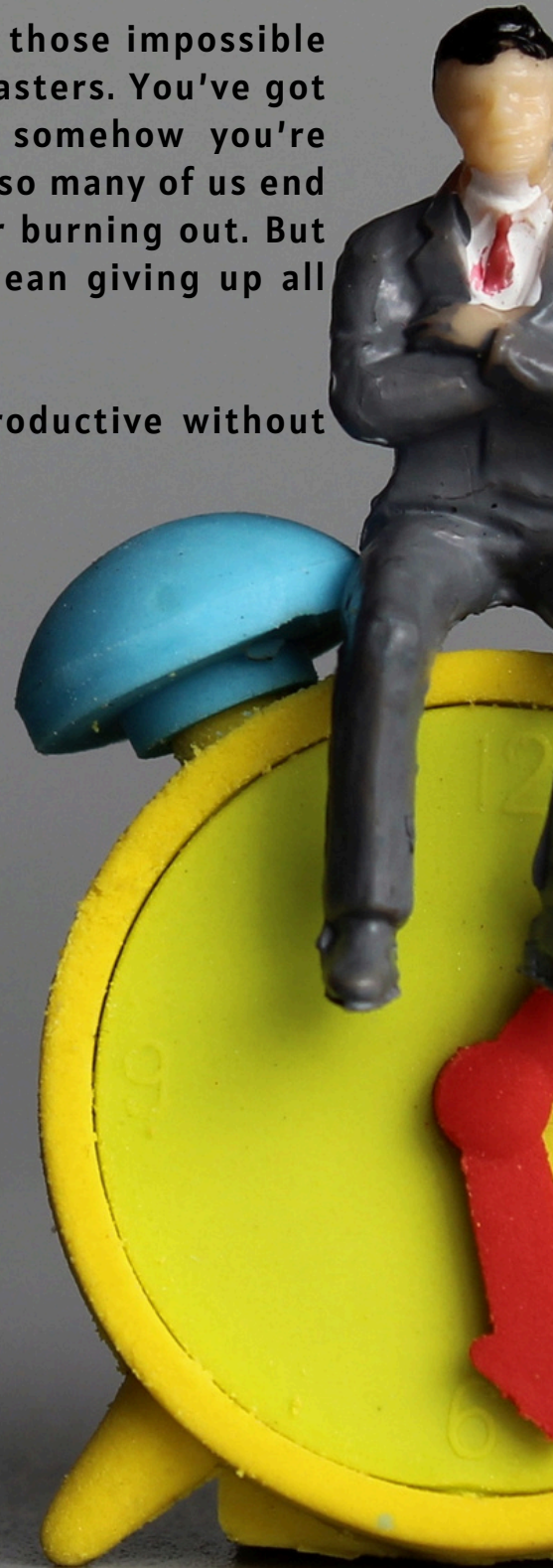
Here are some realistic tips to help you stay productive without feeling like you're constantly running on empty.

1. Start with Small, Realistic Goals

We've all been there: making a giant to-do list, only to realize halfway through the day that you've barely scratched the surface. The key is to stop overloading yourself. Instead, break your tasks into smaller, more manageable steps. For example, instead of "Finish the entire math syllabus," go for "Complete three practice problems from chapter 4." Small wins build momentum, and before you know it, you'll have checked off way more than you thought possible.

2. The Power of a To-Do List (But Make It Fun)

Yes, to-do lists are cliché, but they work—if you use them right. The trick is to prioritize. Start with what absolutely needs to be done today, and leave room for flexibility. Pro Tip: Use sticky notes, colorful pens, or a to-do app to make it feel less like a chore and more like a fun project. Apps like TickTick or Google Tasks are great for tracking tasks and deadlines.



3. Time Blocking: Your New Best Friend

If you've ever spent hours scrolling through Instagram, only to wonder where your day went, time blocking might be for you. The idea is simple: schedule specific blocks of time for each activity.

For example:

4:00 PM- 4:30 PM: Finish English homework.

4:30 PM-5:00 PM: Take a snack break (yes, breaks are important!).

5:00 PM-5:45 PM: Study for the science quiz.

By giving each task its own time slot, you're less likely to get distracted or feel overwhelmed.

4. Learn to Say No (Even to Yourself)

The FOMO is real, especially when your friends are making plans while you're stuck with an assignment. But saying "no" doesn't mean you're boring—it means you're putting your priorities first.

This applies to distractions too. Next time you find yourself mindlessly scrolling, ask yourself: Is this helping me, or is it just a time filler? Being mindful of how you spend your time can make a huge difference.

5. Breaks Are Non-Negotiable

Contrary to what hustle culture might tell you, working nonstop is not the answer. Your brain needs breaks to recharge. Try the Pomodoro Technique: 25 minutes of focused work, followed by a 5-minute break. It's a simple way to stay productive without burning out.

During your break, do something that relaxes you—stretch, grab a snack, or even watch a quick YouTube video (but set a timer to avoid getting sucked into the algorithm).

6. Ditch the Multitasking Myth

We've all tried to watch Netflix while doing homework, and let's be real—it doesn't work. Multitasking makes you less efficient because your brain is constantly switching between tasks. Instead, focus on one thing at a time. You'll finish faster and with better results.



7. Celebrate the Wins (Even the Small Ones)

Finished your reading assignment? Crossed off everything on your to-do list? Celebrate it! Reward yourself with something you love—a snack, a quick game, or even just a few minutes of downtime. Recognizing your efforts keeps you motivated.

N O W



L A T E R

8. Accept That Some Days Will Be Messy

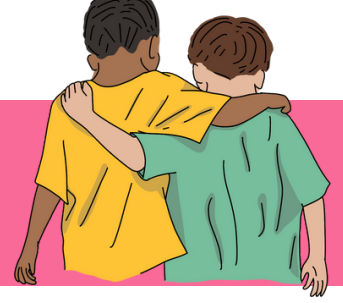
No one's perfect, and no time management system works 100% of the time. Some days, you'll miss a deadline or spend hours procrastinating, and that's okay. Don't beat yourself up about it—just reset and try again the next day.

Time management isn't about cramming your day with non-stop productivity; it's about creating a balance that works for you. Start small, be consistent, and remember to give yourself grace when things don't go as planned.

After all, life's about enjoying the ride, not just ticking off tasks. Now, go tackle that to-do list—and don't forget to add "relax" to it! You've got this. 🎉

SOCIAL SKILLS & PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Managing Conflicts and Fostering Healthy Friendships



Friendships are some of the best parts of being a teenager. From sharing secrets to laughing over memes, your friends often feel like your chosen family. But, like any relationship, friendships can have their rocky moments—disagreements, misunderstandings, or simply growing apart. Learning how to manage these conflicts while nurturing healthy friendships is an essential skill that will benefit you far beyond your teen years. Let's dive into how you can handle those tricky moments and build friendships that last.



WHY CONFLICTS HAPPEN

First off, conflicts are normal. Even the best of friends don't agree on everything—and that's okay! Arguments often arise because of:

- **Different perspectives:** Maybe you see a situation one way, and your friend sees it another.
- **Miscommunication:** A misunderstood text or tone of voice can quickly escalate into drama.
- **Unspoken expectations:** For instance, expecting a friend to always text first but never communicating that.

Conflicts don't mean your friendship is doomed. In fact, working through disagreements can strengthen your bond when done right.

How to Handle Conflicts Like a Pro

When you find yourself in a disagreement with a friend, here are some steps to manage it calmly and effectively:



- **Take a Breather** - When emotions run high, it's easy to say something hurtful you'll regret later. If you're angry or upset, step away for a moment to calm down. Take deep breaths, go for a walk, or listen to music before addressing the issue.

- **Communicate Openly** - Instead of bottling up your feelings or letting them fester, have an honest conversation. Start with "I feel" statements instead



- of pointing fingers. For example: "I felt hurt when you canceled our plans without telling me." Avoid: "You never care about me!" This approach reduces defensiveness and makes it easier to resolve the issue.

- **Listen Without Interrupting** - It's tempting to jump in and defend yourself, but listening is just as important as speaking. Let your friend explain their side, even if you don't agree. Sometimes, simply understanding where they're coming from can diffuse tension.

- **Apologize When Needed** - If you're in the wrong, own up to it. A genuine apology can go a long way: "I'm sorry for snapping at you earlier—I was stressed, but that doesn't excuse my behavior." Apologies show maturity and a willingness to prioritize friendship over pride.

- **Agree to Disagree** Not every conflict has a perfect resolution, and that's okay. Sometimes, it's enough to acknowledge your differences and move on. After all, no two people are exactly the same.



FOSTERING HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

Managing conflicts is only part of the equation. Building and maintaining healthy friendships requires effort and intentionality. Here's how to nurture those bonds:

- **Be a Good Listener** - Friendship isn't just about sharing your stories; it's also about being there for your friends when they need to talk. Show empathy and interest in their lives—it's a two-way street.

- **Set Healthy Boundaries** - Even in close friendships, it's important to respect each other's space and time. Boundaries help prevent burnout and resentment. For example: If you need alone time to recharge, communicate that instead of ghosting your friend.

- **Celebrate Their Wins** - Whether they aced a test or got the lead role in a school play, genuinely celebrating your friend's achievements strengthens your bond. Avoid falling into the trap of comparison.
- **Check In Regularly** - Life gets busy, but a quick text or call to ask how your friend is doing can mean a lot. These small gestures show you value their friendship.
- **Handle Jealousy and Insecurities** - It's natural to feel jealous sometimes, but don't let it poison your relationship. Instead, focus on what makes your friendship special and remind yourself that there's room for everyone to shine.



WHEN TO LET GO

Not all friendships are meant to last forever, and that's okay. If a friendship becomes toxic or one-sided, it's important to prioritize your well-being. Signs of an unhealthy friendship include:

- Constant criticism or negativity.
- Feeling drained or anxious after spending time together.
- Lack of respect for your boundaries.

Letting go of a friendship doesn't have to be dramatic. A gradual distancing or honest conversation can help you move on peacefully.

Friendships, like any relationship, take work—but they're worth it. Conflicts don't have to be the end of the story; they're opportunities to grow and strengthen your bond. By communicating openly, respecting each other's boundaries, and celebrating the good times, you can build friendships that stand the test of time.

So, the next time you and a friend hit a rough patch, remember: it's all part of the process. Handle it with care, and you'll come out stronger on the other side. After all, a healthy friendship is one of the best gifts you can give yourself.

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION

THE POWER OF GENERAL KNOWLEDGE WHY STAYING CURIOUS WILL SHAPE YOUR FUTURE

By Sandeep Kumar | UPSC Coach | Motivational Speaker



Albert Einstein famously said, "I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious." This simple yet powerful statement emphasizes that curiosity, not innate genius, is the driving force behind great achievements. Einstein's curiosity propelled him to explore the natural sciences outside formal education, eventually revolutionizing physics.

In today's world, where knowledge is the ultimate currency, staying curious has become essential for success. The 19th century thrived on muscle power, the 20th century revolved around money power, and the 21st century belongs to knowledge power. Cultivating curiosity and expanding general knowledge are not just intellectual pursuits; they are vital tools for navigating and thriving in a complex world.

Curiosity in Action: Learning from Great Lives

History shows us that curiosity can lead to extraordinary accomplishments. Take the example of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who left formal schooling at the age of 12, rejecting what he called "bread-winning education." Despite this, his relentless quest for spiritual understanding and wisdom transformed him into the revered guru of Swami Vivekananda, one of India's greatest thinkers. Ramakrishna's story reminds us that learning is not confined to classrooms—it is about seeking deeper truths.

Similarly, Einstein, who struggled with traditional schooling, cultivated his brilliance through relentless inquiry and self-study. By questioning the principles of physics, he paved the way for groundbreaking discoveries. Innovators like Elon Musk continue this legacy, demonstrating how curiosity can lead to transformative advancements in fields such as space exploration, artificial intelligence, and sustainable energy.

Why General Knowledge Matters

1. Empowers Decision-Making

General knowledge equips individuals to make informed choices, whether in career decisions, understanding global issues, or even daily problem-solving. For example, knowing about sustainable practices can influence personal habits and career paths.

2. Builds Confidence & Connection

Being well-informed allows individuals to engage in meaningful conversations and express their views confidently. It fosters connections across diverse cultures and perspectives, making one a global citizen.

3. Prepares for the Future

Competitive exams, job interviews, and leadership roles often require a broad understanding of the world. General knowledge serves as a foundation for lifelong opportunities and success.

4. Encourages Critical Thinking

Knowledge encourages questioning, analyzing, and evaluating information. This skill is crucial in an era of misinformation, helping individuals discern truth from falsehood.

5. Sparks Creativity

Exposure to diverse topics fosters innovation. For instance, Steve Jobs blended his interest in calligraphy and technology to create Apple's iconic designs, demonstrating the power of interdisciplinary curiosity.

Practical Ways to Cultivate Curiosity

1. Ask Questions - Curiosity begins with asking "why" and "how." Whether it's exploring why leaves change color in autumn or understanding space missions, inquiry drives learning.

- 2. Read Widely - Books, articles, and credible online resources expand knowledge horizons. Platforms like Flipboard, Coursera, and Khan Academy make learning accessible and engaging.**
- 3. Engage in Discussions - Conversations with friends, family, or teachers about diverse topics foster critical thinking and open new avenues of understanding.**
- 4. Explore Beyond School - Like Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Einstein, seek knowledge beyond textbooks. Dive into hobbies, attend workshops, or watch documentaries to learn in unconventional ways.**
- 5. Leverage Technology - Podcasts, educational YouTube channels, and apps provide free and interactive content to feed your curiosity.**
- 6. Set Daily Learning Goals - Make it a habit to learn something new daily. It could be a fact about a historical event, a scientific phenomenon, or even a new skill.**

Curiosity Shaping the 21st Century

The 21st century's challenges and opportunities demand curious and informed minds. From tackling climate change to embracing technological innovations, staying updated is critical for progress. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, those who understood global health trends adapted faster, demonstrating the importance of being informed.

General knowledge also fosters empathy and cultural understanding. Learning about diverse cultures and histories bridges gaps between communities, creating a more unified and harmonious world.

Why Teens Should Stay Curious

For teenagers, cultivating curiosity is life-changing. At 13, a child's mind is like a blank canvas, ready to absorb vibrant knowledge. Learning about different countries, cultures, and fields acts as the paintbrush, shaping their worldview. Curiosity sparks creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, turning them into adaptable and confident individuals.

Imagine a 13-year-old learning about space exploration. This knowledge could inspire them to dream of becoming an astronaut, engineer, or scientist. The early cultivation of curiosity plants seeds for lifelong passion and success.

General knowledge and curiosity are keys to unlocking potential and shaping a meaningful future. The stories of Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Einstein, and innovators like Elon Musk show that curiosity is the foundation of greatness.

As the world moves further into the knowledge-driven 21st century, staying curious empowers individuals to adapt, innovate, and excel. Whether it's critical thinking, creativity, or confidence, curiosity enriches every aspect of life.

As Einstein wisely said, "Curiosity has its own reason for existing." Let this curiosity guide you to explore, question, and discover, turning every challenge into an opportunity and every moment into a learning adventure.

MANIFESTING CONFIDENCE: STARTING 2025 STRONG BY OVERCOMING PROCRASTINATION

By Rupanshi Kalra | Counselling Psychologist



A Relatable Start: The Last-Minute Struggle

Imagine, you've got an important exam coming up or a project due next week. You promise yourself you'll start studying or working on it today. But instead, you end up scrolling through social media or watching another episode of your favorite show. Before you know it, time has slipped away, and you're scrambling at the last minute. Sound familiar? You're not alone. Procrastination is a challenge many of us face, especially when starting fresh in a new year.

Why Procrastination Happens

Procrastination is the habit of putting off tasks, often until the pressure of a deadline forces us to act. For teens, procrastination is especially common because of distractions, feeling overwhelmed, or even a lack of motivation. According to research, over 80% of students admit to procrastinating in some way, whether it's delaying homework, studying, or getting started on assignments.

But why do we do this? Often, it's not because we don't care, but because we're overwhelmed or unsure where to start. It's easier to avoid tasks that seem tough, boring, or uncertain.

Common Triggers for Procrastination

Several factors can trigger procrastination in teens:

- **Social Media:** Scrolling through Instagram, TikTok, or Snapchat is a quick way to escape, but it can easily steal hours of precious time.
- **Fear of Failure:** The idea that you might not do something perfectly can lead to avoiding it altogether. The pressure to succeed can feel paralyzing.
- **Lack of Structure:** Without a clear plan or routine, tasks can feel ambiguous or difficult to approach.

The Impact: Academics, Mental Health, and Growth

The effects of procrastination extend beyond missed deadlines. When we delay tasks, we often experience heightened stress and anxiety as the deadline looms. Missing deadlines or cramming at the last minute can hurt your academic performance, as you don't have enough time to study effectively or complete tasks thoughtfully. Over time, this can damage your self-esteem and create a cycle of stress, guilt, and frustration.

It also affects personal growth. Procrastination makes it harder to develop key skills like time management, discipline, and self-confidence. The longer you avoid challenges, the harder it becomes to face them head-on.

Let's take a typical example: Kiara has a big research paper due in two weeks. She tells herself she'll start in a couple of days, but before she knows it, the paper is due tomorrow, and she's rushing to write it overnight. She ends up submitting something rushed and incomplete, which leaves her feeling disappointed in herself. This experience might reinforce her belief that procrastination is the way to deal with big tasks, even though it harms her in the long run.

The Emotional Toll

The emotional impact of procrastination can be overwhelming. Teens often feel a mix of guilt, stress, and frustration when tasks pile up. This emotional weight not only affects schoolwork but can seep into other areas of life, lowering overall self-esteem and mental resilience.

Practical Tips to Overcome Procrastination

- 1. Break Tasks into Smaller Chunks:** Instead of thinking about a massive task, break it down into small, manageable steps. This makes it feel less overwhelming and easier to get started.
- 2. Set Specific Deadlines:** Instead of waiting until the last minute, set your own deadlines for each small chunk of the task. This helps create a sense of urgency and structure.
- 3. Create a Productive Environment:** Minimize distractions by turning off notifications on your phone or using apps that block distracting websites. Find a quiet, well-lit space to focus.
- 4. Use the "5-Minute Rule":** Commit to working on a task for just 5 minutes. Once you begin, it's easier to keep going.
- 5. Reward Yourself:** Celebrate small victories. When you complete a task or reach a mini-deadline, reward yourself with something you enjoy, like a break or a treat.
- 6. Embrace Imperfection:** Fear of failure can cause procrastination, but remember that progress is more important than perfection. Just get started and improve as you go.

As we head into 2025, it's the perfect time to reset and develop healthier habits. Overcoming procrastination doesn't mean eliminating all distractions or always being perfectly organized, but it does mean taking control of your actions and starting with small, consistent changes. By building resilience and tackling tasks head-on, you'll not only boost your academic performance but also strengthen your mental toughness and self-esteem.

Manifesting confidence starts with believing you can take control of your time and your future. The way you approach challenges today sets the tone for how you'll succeed tomorrow. So, let's start 2025 strong by embracing each opportunity and pushing past the habit of procrastination—one small step at a time.

BACK TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE 2025

Study Tips and Organizing Tricks

Holidays are over, and let's be honest—getting back into study mode feels like trying to jumpstart a dead car battery, right? But don't worry, you're not alone! With a few simple tricks, you can transform that 'back-to-school' dread into your most productive semester yet. Ready to make 2025 your year of academic wins?

Here are some practical study tips and organizing tricks to help you ace your semester without the stress.

1. Start with a Solid Study Plan

One of the best ways to kick off the new semester is by setting up a study plan. Break your syllabus down into manageable plans and set daily or weekly goals. This approach will help you avoid last-minute cramming and keep stress at bay. Use a planner or a digital app like Google Calendar to track important dates, assignments, and exams.

Pro Tip: Set aside specific time slots for each subject or task. This way, your study schedule feels more like a routine, and you avoid multitasking, which can be less effective.

2. Declutter Your Space

A cluttered space often leads to a cluttered mind. Before diving into your studies, take some time to organize your desk or study area. Keep only the essentials—books, notebooks, pens, and perhaps a motivational item like a plant or photo. This not only creates a more focused environment but also sets the tone for productivity.

Pro Tip: Try the two-minute rule: If it takes less than two minutes to organize or tidy up, do it right away. This helps you maintain a clean space without letting things pile up.



3. Use the Pomodoro Technique

The Pomodoro Technique is a simple yet effective method for staying focused. Set a timer for 25 minutes and work nonstop during that time. After 25 minutes, take a 5-minute break. After four Pomodoro sessions, take a longer 15–30 minute break. This technique improves concentration and ensures you're not overworking yourself.

Pro Tip: During breaks, move around! Stretch, hydrate, or take a quick walk to refresh your mind.

4. Get Organized with Digital Tools

In today's world, digital tools can be game-changers when it comes to staying organized. Apps like Google Drive for document storage, Evernote for note-taking, and Trello for project management can make your academic life much easier. You can access everything you need on-the-go, from your phone or laptop.

Pro Tip: Keep your notes organized by creating separate folders for each subject or class. You can even color-code them to visually separate topics.

7. Stay Connected and Seek Help

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Whether it's from your teachers, classmates, or friends, support is essential to your success. Online study groups or forums can also be great resources to clarify doubts and stay motivated.

Pro Tip: Set up regular study sessions with friends or classmates—accountability partners can make studying more productive and fun.

Heading back to school or college doesn't have to be stressful. With the right tools, mindset, and organization, you can create a routine that works for you. Start small, stay consistent, and remember that balance is key. Here's to a productive, successful 2025—your best year yet!

5. Prioritize and Stay Flexible

It's important to recognize that not everything will go according to plan—and that's okay. Prioritize your tasks, focusing on the most urgent assignments or exams. Make sure to give yourself grace when things don't go perfectly. Flexibility is key, so adjust your study plan when needed.

Pro Tip: When you're feeling overwhelmed, tackle the smallest task first. Completing it will give you a sense of accomplishment and motivate you to keep going.

6. Maintain a Balanced Routine

A balanced routine is essential for maintaining your mental and physical health. Make sure you're eating well, staying active, and getting enough sleep. Exercise can actually improve your focus and reduce stress, while good sleep helps with memory retention.

Pro Tip: Incorporate a few minutes of mindfulness or deep breathing into your day. Even a quick 5-minute session can calm your nerves and improve concentration.

FUTURE FORWARD: SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Environmentally Aligned Resolutions for New Year Small Act for Big Impact



By Sameera Satija | Sustainability Coach



Climate change is a reality now, and as the situation worsens, today's youth will bear the consequences of the present actions and inactions. Data revealed by the Stockholm Environment Institute implies that a child born in 2020 is likely to experience 2 times more wildfires, 2.6 times more droughts, 2.8 times more river floods, and a staggering 6.8 times more heat waves than someone born in 1960. And as 16 percent of the global population is comprised of youth, they tend to be the driving force in advocating for a climate-resilient future.

Their growing involvement in climate change initiatives has showcased their power of advocacy and action. Youth-led movements like "Fridays for Future," the Global Youth Biodiversity Network, and "Save the Beach" have succeeded in placing climate change issues at the table of global policy discussions and in bringing tangible changes at the grassroots level. Arab Youth Council for Climate Change is another initiative that aims to support youth climate action and engage young Arabs in developing innovative and sustainable solutions to the climate change challenge. In light of the climate change threat and their power of shaping the policies, the role of the youth is imperative in individual environmental action as well as in collective action to build a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future. Additionally, they can act as essential watchdogs, scrutinizing government activities, ensuring they meet their environmental commitments, and pushing for enhanced transparency and inclusivity.

While we agree that collective action plays a pivotal role in transforming global policies, fixing the answerability of the government, and ensuring action, we also can't ignore the individual's responsibility and behavioral change that stimulate the social transformation process required for effective collective action. As it is very effectively stated by Anne Marie Bonneau, Zero Waste Chef, "We don't need a handful of people doing ZERO WASTE PERFECTLY. We need millions of people doing it IMPERFECTLY." In other words, small efforts,



when multiplied, will lead to meaningful change. As per fundamental duties enshrined in the Indian Constitution, it is the duty of every citizen to protect and preserve the environment [Article 51 A(g)]. One can protect our planet and create a better environment by adopting simple steps. You may start your journey by adopting a few of the steps that seem easy and doable and can gradually progress towards making tougher yet better choices.

1. Segregating the Waste - Segregation of household waste into two main categories, wet and dry, is mandated by SWM Rules 2016. E-waste should also be given separately to any authorized recycler. Segregating waste ensures better handling of waste and reduces stress on landfills, which generate methane gas. Less waste ending up in landfills means less generation of methane.

Example Resolution: This month I will research authorized plastic and e-waste recyclers in my city and, in the future, start giving them to recyclers.

2. Embrace Plant-Based Eating - Transitioning to a plant-based diet or incorporating more plant-based meals into your routine can help lower your carbon footprint and promote a more sustainable food system.

Example resolution: I will have x number of meat-free days per week.

3. Conserve Water - Be mindful of your water usage by fixing leaks, taking shorter showers, and turning off the tap while brushing your teeth. Conserving water is crucial for the environment.

Example resolution: I will keep my shower time under 5 minutes.

4. Reduce Single-Use Plastics - Pledge to cut down on single-use plastics. Try to develop a habit of carrying cloth bags, water bottles, and handkerchiefs while going to market. Choose the food joint/café which serves reusable food. This small change can have a significant impact on reducing plastic pollution.

Example resolution: I will refuse plastic bags, disposable coffee cups, or plastic straws (choose one).

5. Choose Sustainable Fashion - Support ethical and sustainable fashion brands, or explore thrift shopping or swapping to reduce the environmental impact of fast fashion.

Example resolutions: I will not buy any new clothes for x months.

6. Go Paperless - Embrace a digital lifestyle by opting for e-bills, e-tickets, and e-books. Minimize paper usage to save trees and reduce the demand for paper production.

Example resolution: I will switch all my bills to e-bills.

7. Practice Eco-Friendly Transportation - Choose walking, cycling, carpooling, or public transportation over personal vehicles to reduce air pollution and decrease your carbon emissions.

Example resolution: I will switch one car trip to walk/cycle/public transport once per week.

8. Create a Green Space - Dedicate a corner of your living space or start a small garden to grow your own herbs or vegetables. This not only reduces your carbon footprint but also provides fresh, homegrown produce.

Example resolution: I will keep a plant alive for the whole year.

9. Waste Less Food - Plan meals, store food properly, and compost kitchen waste to minimize food wastage. Home composting is easy and many tutorials are available on YouTube. This not only conserves resources but also reduces methane emissions from decomposing food in landfills.

Example resolution: I will plan my meals each week, including plans for the leftovers, or I will compost my wet waste at least one day in a week.

10. Support local farmers and small businesses - Choose local products to support local farmers and reduce the carbon footprint associated with the transportation of goods over long distances.

Example resolution: I will visit local farmer's market whenever possible and buy from them

11. Practice Mindful Consumption - Before making a purchase, consider the lifespan and environmental impact of the product. Opt for quality over quantity and choose items that are durable and repairable.

Example resolution: I will wait 24 hours to purchase an item after first seeing it to make sure I have properly considered its necessity. I will try to repair and refurbish the item instead of buying new one.

12. Use Eco-Friendly Cleaning Products - Make the switch to environmentally friendly cleaning products that are non-toxic and biodegradable, reducing the impact of harmful chemicals on ecosystems. Bioenzyme-based products are natural and can be purchased locally.

Example resolution: I will swap to at least one natural cleaning product this month. Start with natural floor cleaner.

13. Contribute to Wildlife Conservation - Support organizations working towards wildlife conservation or take part in local initiatives to protect and preserve natural habitats for biodiversity.

Example resolution: I will volunteer with or donate to a wildlife conservation organisation.

14. Educate Yourself - Stay informed about environmental issues and solutions. Educate yourself on sustainable practices and share your knowledge with others to inspire collective action. Follow sustainability blogs and influencers to learn new information and ideas while you scroll.

Example resolution: I will read one article about environmental issues per month.

15. Reduce Energy Consumption - Turn off lights, unplug electronics when not in use, and use energy-efficient appliances to reduce your

overall energy consumption at home. Energy efficient appliances are commonly called star rating appliances Example resolution: I will reduce my energy bill by 10%. (This one will save you money too!)

16. Switch to Renewable Energy - If possible, invest in renewable energy sources for your home, such as solar panels or wind energy, to reduce reliance on non-renewable resources.

Alternatively, reduce your energy consumption by shifting towards energy efficient appliances. These are also called star rating appliances.

Example resolutions: I will install solar panels this year or convert lighting of my courtyard/garden area into solar powered lights. These are easily available on e-commerce sites.

17. Participate in Clean-Up Initiatives - Join local clean-up events to help keep your community and natural spaces litter-free. Taking action on a grassroots level can have a positive impact on the environment.

Example resolution: I will pick up rubbish when I see it and dispose of it thoughtfully.

18. Learn to Repair - Instead of discarding broken items, learn to repair them. Whether it's clothing, electronics, or furniture, extending the lifespan of products reduces waste.

Example resolution: I will learn basic sewing skills.

Lastly, small acts can transition to big impacts if done consistently and collectively.

Happy Transitioning New Year!

19. Host Eco-Friendly Gatherings - When planning events or gatherings, choose sustainable options for decorations, tableware, and catering to minimize the environmental impact of the occasion.

Example resolution: I will not use balloons for decorations this year.

20. Inspire Others - Lead by example and encourage your friends, family, and colleagues to adopt eco-friendly practices. Collective efforts can bring about positive change on a larger scale.

Example resolution: I will share my eco-friendly resolutions with others.

21. Support Renewable Energy Policies - Advocate for and support policies that promote the development and use of renewable energy sources at local and national levels.

Example resolution: I will write to my local government representative to ask that action is taken on transitioning to renewable energy.

22. Embrace minimalism - (even just a bit) Declutter, donate, and "give" experiences instead of buying presents.

Example resolution:

- This year I will visit/take my friends to a nature walk, animal's shelter home, or elderly shelter home on my birthday.
- This year, on my friend's birthday, I will donate on his behalf instead of giving any gift.

NUMBER STORIES

2025-YEAR AT A GLANCE

By Sh. Arun Sachdeva | Numerology Expert



Numbers don't lie—but they do have secrets! Discover the magic your number holds, as decoded by our expert Numerologist.

1, 10, 19, 28



Numerology Number 1 – The Trailblazer

If your life path number is 1, 2025 is set to be a year of bold decisions and leadership opportunities. This number's energy is all about taking initiative and stepping into independence. Embrace your pioneering spirit, take on new challenges, and make confident choices that set the stage for success.

2, 11, 20, 29



Numerology Number 2 – The Harmonizer

For those with the numerology number 2, 2025 highlights the importance of relationships and partnerships. This year is ideal for building connections, fostering harmony, and strengthening bonds in both personal and professional spheres. Communication, collaboration, and empathy will be your greatest strengths.

3, 12, 21, 30



Numerology Number 3 – The Visionary Creator

With a life path number of 3, 2025 will be filled with creative energy and opportunities to showcase your talents. Whether through art, writing, or other forms of expression, let your imagination flourish and explore activities that bring you joy and fulfillment.

4, 13, 22, 31



Numerology Number 4 – The Builder of Foundations

If you resonate with the number 4, 2025 is all about creating a solid foundation for the future. Focus on stability, discipline, and hard work to achieve long-term success. Dedicate yourself to what truly matters and build a structure that supports your aspirations.

5, 14, 23



Numerology Number 5 – The Explorer

2025 is a year of adventure and transformation for those with the number 5. Embrace change with open arms and step out of your comfort zone. This is your chance to explore new horizons, break free from routine, and discover exciting possibilities.

6, 15, 24



Numerology Number 6 – The Caregiver

Number 6 is centered around nurturing relationships and creating a sense of harmony in 2025. Focus on fostering unity within your family and community, and balance caregiving with self-care to build a warm and supportive environment for yourself and others.

NUMBER STORIES

7, 16, 25



Numerology Number 7 – The Introspective Seeker

For those with the number 7, 2025 will be a year of deep self-reflection and spiritual growth. Dive into your inner world, trust your intuition, and seek meaningful insights that align with your higher purpose. This is a time to connect with what truly fulfills you.

8, 17, 26



Numerology Number 8 – The Power Player

With the number 8, 2025 promises a year of achievements and recognition. Set ambitious goals, work with determination, and let your leadership skills shine. Focus on strategic planning to unlock financial growth and personal success.

9, 18, 27



Numerology Number 9 – The Altruistic Humanitarian

2025 calls on number 9 individuals to lead with compassion and service. Engage in projects that uplift others and create meaningful change. Your empathy and actions have the potential to inspire those around you and contribute to the greater good.

Thank You For Reading!

Dear Readers,

As we turn the page on another issue, I want to take a heartfelt moment to say thank you. Creating Teen Digest is truly a labor of love, but it's your support, enthusiasm, and curiosity that breathe life into these pages. Knowing that we've connected, inspired, or even sparked a smile along the way means the absolute world to me.

Each article, feature, and story is crafted with you in mind—your dreams, challenges, and aspirations. I am deeply grateful to our incredible contributors who have generously shared their wisdom, creativity, and expertise to help teens navigate through life's many facets. Their insights on growth, well-being, and self-discovery make this magazine a meaningful companion for you.

As we step into 2025 together, I am excited to continue this journey of sharing stories that make you think, laugh, and feel understood. And remember, Teen Digest is as much yours as it is ours. Your voices, ideas, and feedback shape what we do. So, if there's something on your mind—an idea, a thought, or a story—please reach out. I'd love to hear from you at info.justbeingme.in@gmail.com.

Here's to a year of inspiration, growth, and joy! Thank you for being part of this growing community.

With gratitude and excitement,


SACHDEV

Founder and Editor-In-Chief