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basics **rule**

# Inner calling

In the realm of wishes, desires, passions and adventure, we want to ring in the new year sans the To-do list. Connoisseurs let us in on how to let our inner child be and reign free outside of the proverbial box.

BY GEETMALA SARKAR

## HOW GOOD ARE YOU IN BED? DO YOU SLEEP WELL? CAN YOU ENJOY A JAPANESE FILM?

Are you game for fun or do you think it is a waste of time? Answers to these and similar questions could actually tell you about your state of physical, mental hygiene and motivations. Like classics, these basics never go out of fashion. Of course, we are all on the right side of doing things, anything. But is that the complete truth? At the end of the day, it is you who knows whether or not your day was fulfilling. We talk to connoisseurs who have broken it down for us. The result? We figured that all of them have listened to their inner selves to improve and uplift. That is our cue.



# Rejuvenate, recharge, restart

Use your me-time getting magical massages that leave you feeling better from inside out.

It will take an empiricist to tell you how it was! Yes, the spa experience and serenity that welcomes you at Sawadhee, the traditional Thai spa, is nothing short of a blissful sojourn. The detox water is a pleasant concoction served to you upon entering and it sets the ball-rolling. As you take the steps to your couple spa room you are invited into a zen-like environment. The sight of soft lights, light music, red carpeted stairs, and bronze elements create a soothing impact on your mind. It is followed by a foot scrub after which is the massage you opt for.

There is a wide bouquet of massage therapies to choose from. The lotus signature massage improves blood circulation and it includes application of hot herbal compress that releases blocked bodily energies. The Aromatic massage brings relief to the body and mind using inhouse oils. Hot stone

massage uses volcanic stones to be placed on the body with special strokes that create balance and enhance our energy centres.

Each of the massages call for uniquely trained therapists who receive training from their Thailand masters. I opt for a 90-minute destressing therapy. Ruth, a therapist suggests, "The deep tissue is for ultimate relaxation. You can never go wrong with it." She is right, the massage transforms your mind and body in a way that your soul thanks you for. The slow

*A holistic experience of fragrant wraps, scrubs, facials gives you an invigorated mental space to take on what comes next.*

strokes of the oil-based therapy eases out tension from the tissues and imparts them agility and relief.

This plush spa uses oils, scrubs, wraps, packs and facials made from curated natural ingredients. The facials that are whipped up making use of organic produce and inhouse formulations are not of a lasting nature. Their goodness comes with an expiry period for they are devoid of any preservatives. The massage oils such as Indian rose and Jasmine orange and others that are light on skin and, if wished, one can even go without a bath and still not feel sticky.

The go-to face do is gold facial. It makes you glow your natural glow during and post wedding. Located in the verdure of Delhi, this retreat came up more than six years ago and its founder Vibha Khanna Rastogi, is happy to bring wellness to us all. Dolling up may not be for all but unwinding oneself is natural.



# LOVELESS IN LOVE NEST

If home is where the heart is why are young couples in distress in their fondly created homes?

**W**atching Stanley Kubrick's movie *Eyes Wide Shut*, I did not comprehend why after the sudden death of her ailing father, did Marion Nathanson (Marie Richardson) plant a big kiss on visiting doctor WB Hartford (Tom Cruise). My very talented friend told me, "After you witness something as incomprehensible as death, you need to (psychologically) reinforce your connect with life. Marion kisses Dr Hartford as he is the only living person present in that dark hour of her life."

Fast forward eighteen years since. People need people. They huddle together in nests called families. Contemporary families are mostly nuclear. Ardent bonds of affinity between husband and wife holds it together. But the lack of intimacy is becoming the usual state of affairs.

Enter Dr Mehak Nagpal, Consultant Sexologist and Psychiatrist at Centre for Sexual and Mental Health. She says, "Intimacy between couples is waning. It is a worrisome situation. There is a considerable gap in communication between couples. So much so that they

eventually turn into strangers for each other. Partners complain of not having time for each other while they remain happily glued to their digital, Netflix or Instagram commitments."

"Child-raising is another reason that couples cite for not having time for partner. On hindsight, I see parenthood becoming a socially-fixated straightjacketed role which, at times, parents want to live out of. They want to wing their identities as individuals, first," says the Psychiatrist.

A neglected partner is emotionally aloof. Emotional distance translates into a lack of physical closeness in bedroom too. Rekindle the fire in a loveless marriage one has to begin with communication. "Communications, kinky

*When consenting adults enter into ties of intimacy, it liberates them in ways impossible to be deciphered in theory.*

or otherwise is the best way to connect. It can rouse passion in between the sheets too," says New Delhi based Sexologist, Dr Mehak.

Of course, a balancing act is not an easy one to pull off. However, "If bonding is important, partners will take time out for intimacy. Now, intimacy means different things to different people. It ranges from eye-contact to holding hands, cuddling or partnering during the act of sexual intercourse to going on date nights or second honeymoons. Couple's therapy and sex therapy are also useful."

Act of love and its ways of expression lead to positive affirmations and enhanced sense of belongingness for couples. "It releases neurotransmitters oxytocin and dopamine that buttress feelings of closeness. At physiological level, it lowers blood pressure, cortisol and de-stresses brain, promotes sleep," says an unequivocal Dr Mehak.

The idea of love germinating in our subconscious finds an outlet through the physical. When consenting adults enter into ties of intimacy it liberates them in ways impossible to decipher in theory.

## SILVERSCREEN **MAGIC**

Watching films is not a waste of time. It jets you out of monotony, adds zing to your life and instills in you newer perspectives you did not know exists.

**I**f all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, no one sure wants to become this Jack. Having decided on a funfilled Saturday, I landed myself at the second Japanese Film Festival held in Delhi. The itinerary included watching a Japanese film, enjoying delicious sushi (by Simply Sushi's Executive Chef, Yutaka Saito) and engaging in a tete-a-tete with the invited and acclaimed Japanese film Director of the *Chihayafuru* series, Norihiro Koizumi.

Norihiro believes that entertainment besides being a huge industry is spiralling into other cultures in an unprecedented way. People are eager to learn about different cultures and it is a happy trend. In the spirit of spreading the love of film watching, Kaoru Miyamoto, Japanese Foundation Director, even gets me proffering cues on how to take their films to more number of people.

Koizumi's film, *Chihayafuru Musubi*, brings us face-to-face with the Japanese traditional card game and the aspirations of youth. "If you want to choose one film to know about Japan it could be this. There are many mesmerising moments revealed. There is history, culture, youth,

*Intuitive understanding and listening to oneself is more important than it is made out to be. It is embedded in people by virtue of their birth.*

time, sports, love," says Nori. The director loves working with young talents. And he says, "Youth is energy. It wants to win. And, it is awestruck and questioning in

the face of life's greater truths that unfurl (in the background through poetry.)"

Youth and poetry don't always fit the bill. How do you achieve a semblance? He says, "May be the craft does the trick." Nori is greatly inspired by Steven Spielberg for his originality, versatility and commercial success. "Spielberg switches from making *AI*, *Schindler's List*, or *Munich* like playing symphony."

Nori's film intrigues as voiceover says, "Pay attention to 'hear' opponent's move." The idea that player and opponent do not converse, yet hear each other fascinated me and I enquired Nori on its credibility, "Well, I don't mean it in a supernatural way but, yes, you can hear opponent without being in talks," he says.

Nori's perspective run on in my mind. Inadvertently, I assess my actions, thoughts, holding a mirror to myself (opponent's turn is next time).



## BEAUTY SLEEP

Help your skin cells repair and revive itself by indulging in a siesta. An amped up circulation resets your look and makes it flawless.

I heed not the idea that sleep is essential to beautiful skin. Age block creams make way into my purse. While I mull over what serums I could additionally use to cover up my age, someone from the green room says “how about using some sleep to drive away those blues?” I think, I am not blue. Do I look so? Oh! It could be that! After all, my skin reflects my nights of toil and sleeplessness.

Shahnaz Husain, MD Shahnaz Husain Group who has been engaged in creating beauty products since her youth says, “Of food, exercise and sleep, you must indulge in the latter if you want to have beautiful, glowing skin.”

Sleeplessness can wreak havoc. You could tell by the look people wear that sleep deprivation has strewn them of their natural glow. This reminds me of the afternoon naps we were forced to have as children, which we gleefully gave up growing up.

Buying in, I ask how much sleep do we

*Let the circadian rhythm of your body help you sleep. Listen to it and do not disrupt it. It does more good than you can possibly imagine.*

actually need? Smiling she utters, “Eight hours is a minimum one must clock in. Quality sleep heals your skin, reduces breakouts, harnesses skin tone and prevents eye bags,” she says.

She recommends holding on to traditions of yore that have the kernel to a blossoming looking you. “One can practice regular sleep by unwinding with a warm shower, drinking warm milk before bedtime, reading a light book, becoming disconnected with gadgets and by practising meditation.”

I am convinced that a thing of beauty is a joy forever. As the beams of a soft winter sun fall on the silhouettes of my crumpled quilt, I see myself on the brink of a new romance, this time, with my skin.

## GO NATURAL

Using organic fibres of cotton, silk, wool, jute for clothing is a way-forward to go low on carbon footprints and to craft breathable attire.

The garment we choose to wear defines us. Without a word it tells the world the kind of comfort, style and fitting we love. Today, there are many who proudly put on their predilections for wearing and creating clothing made of natural fibres.

Ramona Singh, designer of Delhi-based eponymous label Ramona Singh Clothes is one such person who loves to design as per the environment she lives in. Ramona is many things packed into one. She is a graphic designer, an ace photographer and now dappling with her own clothing label. She says, “For a city like Delhi, smeared in pollution, one must try remain natural to the core. My creations are minimalistic and organic. My penchant for working with natural fibres is innate and sees the light of the day through my periodic collections.”

Ramona says synthetic fabrics are not healthy for our skin. “One reason I feel dissuaded from using synthetic clothing is because they are made from chemicals. They do not allow the skin to breathe. Our skin has pores. I believe, one must drape in clothing that is comfortable.”

She explains that comfort factor is essential. “Comfortable clothing is necessary as you need to wear clothing for hours on end. It should not make you itch, but, should gel well with

your skin.” Additionally, the winter season spells dryness for people with certain diseases such as diabetes. For such people, to wear synthetic fibres may not augur very well.

Moreover, if we switch to using natural fibres we are also saving planet earth. Biodegradable fibres means reduced stress on the environment by creating minimal carbon footprints. Sustainable clothing is a way for saving the ecosystem necessary for us to thrive. Going natural with clothes is just one-step closer to healthy living.

