

Change Your Life!

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Women are daunted by the overwhelming task of handling multiple roles of daughters, mothers, home-keepers, professionals, dreamers and achievers in today's high-pressure world.

Geeta Ramakrishnan, an Ontological coach, studied a philosophy that helps people stay happier in the face of the inevitable change that the world brings with it. The ontological way teaches us to introspect, look within us for the answers, and believes in tapping our intuitive energy.

Her book, 'The Game of Change', will do just that to your life. She likes to call herself 'The Change Catalyst' and offers her experiences demonstrating the balancing act of nurturing success with happiness.

You say that fear and insecurity holds one back from unleashing the ultimate happiness. What, according to you, is the ultimate happiness in life?

We live in a world of fear- of success, failure and rejection. These fears generate doubt in your mind which leads to negative questions which stops you from trying. What do these self-judgements and assumptions do to you? They create anxiety and stress. If you are willing to try, be cautious, trust and push your boundaries a little more, and the same elements that caused you stress will look like challenge and opportunity. You've just made a shift from anxiety to excitement. When you are open to new challenges, you start looking at things in a broader perspective, and try out new ways of

handling what life throws at you. If it works, then you are happy. If not, try another, and if it still doesn't work, accept it and move on without any anxiety. Learn to live in the present, and no matter what life throws at you, adapt to it without stress. I believe this will lead you to ultimate happiness.

A woman is always been a giver; as a mother, wife, daughter, sister or friend. How does she put herself first on a priority list before all the other roles?

Many times, women feel guilty of putting their needs first. But if we do not give ourself the validation, importance and self-respect, how can we expect others to respect and value us? We should nurture ourselves first, and give time to our goals in life, to our physical appearance, hobbies, career and me-time. Once our self-esteem is high, we can contribute to our family, work and also socially. It will help to validate us as a person. Regular parlour visits, weekly coffee time with friends, joining dance or music class perhaps, these things will help us boost our confidence and happiness.

Today, stress has become inevitable. How does one deal with stress creatively?

We have access to a lot of material, information, and facilities, from food to medicine to travel. But more choices lead to more stress and more lifestyle diseases. The incidence of cancer has increased rapidly. We live in a default anxious mode, which puts our brains in a fight-or-flight mode. We have forgotten how it feels to relax or even enjoy our holidays. The first step is realization. What are we running for? Is it money? Does it make us happy? Once we pause, it helps us to relax, and it gives us access to the creative side of the brain. While things around us won't disappear, we develop different ways of looking at life, with much more control over it.

The millennials are losing the meaning of real relationships, and soon, the essence of true relationships might evaporate altogether. Any solutions?

Relationship is a give and take ship between two people. Sometimes equally, and sometimes more than what we bargained for. And this bothers a lot of us. The thought of 'Why should I be the one to always give' crops up in all of us, but the millennials take it to the next level. In a partnership, while it's important to define what 'I' want, it is equally important to keep in mind our partner's perspective, even if we disagree. A relaxed conversation about it allows better access to our creative brain. This avoids the defensive mode we mostly operate from, and help us be more flexible, yet keep our self-



esteem. There is more joy in giving than receiving and it starts with the smaller things. Sometimes that is all it takes to be happy.

Not everybody is good at handling their emotions, especially in new situations. How do you think one should gather oneself?

Despite logical and rational thinking, we have been trained to suppress and ignore our emotions, and have little knowledge on how to deal with them. To cope with stress in this changing world, we need to make friends with our emotions. Our daily lives of stress create negative emotions in our mind, pulling us down and draining us. We sometimes can't even name the emotions we are in. First, acknowledge the emotion and name it, it's okay to be angry or feel sad, to jump in joy or to feel fear and be surprised. But after that, take the time to gather yourself. Just acknowledge the emotion and share the reasons with the opposite person. Try to look at it from their perspective, this allows the other person time and space to explain himself. Our response is more amicable and our anger, in control.

How, and in what dimensions of life will 'The Game of Change', help readers? 'The Game of Change' is a self-help book. I wrote this book especially for women who are juggling multiple roles, and for those who want to be achievers and winners in life. I offer easy-to-use tips and tricks to help people cope with life and its challenges. I want to help people unleash success and be in control of their lives and stay in that ultimate happiness. The book helps people to examine their habits and assumptions, especially those that do not work for them. It offers easy practices to help the brain break old habits and neural connections, to form new ones that work for us. When we practice and increase our awareness, we have taken that step to make the shift in the game of change, to unleash success, happiness and balance.

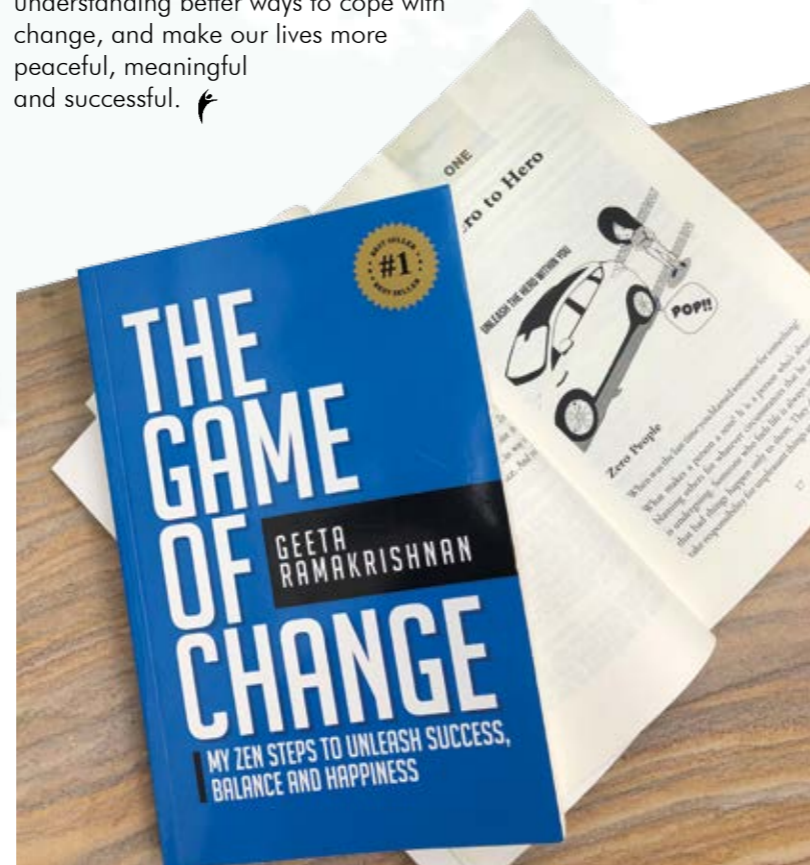
How should one adapt to change, regardless their age?

Age has nothing to do with the change. Yes, we limit ourselves, telling stories that we are too old to change. Once we stress on the word 'adapt', age is just a number, it is everyone's perspective. If things work for us, no need to change as we might have mastered doing some things right with age. One can call it maturity. If things do not work, then it is time to revisit our assumptions and look for what can make it work. It leaves us in an open creative and flexible space, with the ability to push our boundaries a bit more to try out things that can work. It adds excitement to life and keeps us in an optimistic and positive frame of mind.

How have you been balancing the act of nurturing success with happiness since 50 years? Is that what your workshops focus on?

In the first few decades of my life, I definitely did not get it right. That's also why I wish to share my experiences with people. If even a small point resonates with someone and they are able to make that shift, they need not spend years in the quest of happiness, not knowing the direction to take. I value and practice gratitude everyday in my life now. It helps me stay grounded, allows me to look at different perspectives, to recognize when my ego gets the better of me, and to access my creative mind for solutions that work in my life. I practice deep breathing and meditation, it helps me stay in the moment, and gives me the pause to stay proactive rather than reactive. I try and appreciate nature and the people around me. It helps me to connect with people, and learn from them and my surroundings all the time. It keeps me humble. I take this as quality time to set my goals, prioritize, and focus on putting my efforts in what is important and what works. It increases my self-esteem and I am able to be more present and add value professionally, and to my family. That is my balancing dance, and the more I practice, happiness and success seem to come dancing to me.

My workshops focus on change management, examining our multiple roles and how we usually cope with it and at what cost. They also focus on understanding better ways to cope with change, and make our lives more peaceful, meaningful and successful. ↩



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