

SAMVEDAN

MAGAZINE



BROUGHT TO YOU BY PROACTIVE CITIZEN FOUNDATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The publication of Samvedan Magazine has been a rewarding journey made possible through the dedication, creativity, and collective effort of many individuals. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to bringing this edition to life.

Our sincere thanks to the editorial team, whose tireless commitment, attention to detail, and pursuit of excellence have shaped this magazine into a meaningful and inspiring publication. Your hard work and vision are deeply appreciated.

We express our profound gratitude to all the writers, contributors, and students whose thoughtful articles, poems, stories, and creative expressions enrich the pages of Samvedan. Your voices form the heart of this magazine.

A special word of thanks to our mentors, teachers, and supporters for their constant guidance, encouragement, and belief in the importance of creating a platform for expression and learning.

We also acknowledge the invaluable support of the Proactive Citizen Foundation, whose association has added strength and purpose to this initiative. Your continued commitment to community growth and awareness has played a vital role in shaping the magazine. I would like to thank my parents, family, Adwai Krishna, my younger brother, for his support and of course, my beloved nani, Mrs Meera Srivastava for blessing me and supporting me through

Finally, we extend our appreciation to our readers. Your enthusiasm and engagement inspire us to strive for even higher standards with every edition.

With Best Wishes

Editor in Chief
Samvedan

P R E F A C E

When we started the magazine, we wanted to begin a conversation—that mental well-being is an integral part of our overall health and life, and to share the simple truth that none of us are truly alone in our inner world.

What we didn't fully anticipate was how many of you would recognise yourselves in those pages, and how generously you would share your stories in return.

This second issue of SAMVENDAN exists because of your stories, your appreciation, your acknowledgement, and the understanding that mental health is not a one-time discussion, but an ongoing practice of listening, learning, and caring.

This issue explores resilience not as an act of endless endurance, but as something we can learn, embrace, and share. You'll find voices that challenge easy narratives, explore quiet struggles, and remind us that healing is rarely linear. We look at resilience not as a heroic trait, but as something ordinary and human: getting up, reaching out, resting when needed, and trying again.

This issue brings you various stories, articles, and creative works that focus on different aspects and challenges of our society. Each contribution is a reflection of hope and encouragement.

Above all, this magazine is an invitation—an invitation to pause, to reflect, to question the standards we've inherited about strength and success, and to offer yourself the same understanding you so readily give others. Whether you are reading as a professional, a caregiver, a student, or someone quietly figuring things out, you belong here. It is also an invitation to contribute by sharing the hardships you have faced and the resilience you have shown.

Thank you for trusting us with your time and your attention. May this second issue meet you where you are, and gently remind you that growth doesn't require perfection, only presence.

Warm Regards

Dr Rahul Yadav, MD PSYCHIATRY



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Editorial

Samvedan: A Voice for Understanding, Healing and Collective Change

In times marked by rapid change, uncertainty, and constant stimulation, the ability to pause, reflect, and empathise has become increasingly rare—and deeply necessary. Samvedan, which signifies sensitivity and awareness, is born from this very need. It is an attempt to nurture thoughtful dialogue and encourage conscious engagement with the realities that shape our lives and society.

The second volume of Samvedan builds upon the foundation laid by our inaugural edition. It brings together voices that dare to question, reflect, and express with honesty and responsibility. The articles in this volume explore themes of mental well-being, leadership, culture, social responsibility, and contemporary challenges—topics that are not only relevant but essential in today's world.

At the heart of this edition lies a simple yet powerful belief: meaningful change begins with awareness. Whether it is understanding our own emotional health, responding to social inequalities, practicing ethical leadership, or preserving cultural values, sensitivity plays a central role. Through these writings, we are reminded that being aware is not a passive act—it is an active commitment to listen, learn, and respond with compassion.

Samvedan also stands as a testament to collective effort. Each contributor has brought a unique perspective, shaped by lived experiences and thoughtful observation. Together, these voices form a mosaic of ideas that challenge indifference and inspire responsible action.

As readers, we invite you not just to read, but to reflect—to question assumptions, to empathize with diverse viewpoints, and to carry these reflections into everyday life. If even one thought in these pages encourages mindful action or sparks positive change, the purpose of Samvedan is fulfilled.

With gratitude and hope,

Sandra Srivastava

Editor-in-Chief

Samvedan – Volume 2

Proactive Citizen Foundation

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Saumya is a counselling psychologist with over 10 years of experience as a school counsellor in the Education Department of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. She conducts sessions on child sexual abuse, safe-unsafe touch, body safety, behavioural issues, and substance abuse. Saumya provides individual counselling to identified cases and their parents, and has received training in the POCSO Act. Additionally, she is trained in career counselling and handwriting analysis.



The Power of Resilience A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

According to the American Psychological Association APA 2014,

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress.” In other terms, resilience is often characterised as the potential to "bounce back" from challenges; it involves more than just regaining previous functioning from a psychological standpoint. It indicated a flexible coping mechanism where individuals deal with, navigate, and accommodate notable anxiety, stress, trauma, or sustained challenges. In a world that is becoming even more intricate and unpredictable, resilience has become a fundamental notion in psychology, offering a significant perspective into human competence, coping mechanisms, and individual growth. In psychological terms, resilience is not perceived as a stable personality trait that individuals either have or do not have. Rather, it is seen as a process that unfolds over time through the reciprocal relationship between an individual and their environment. Early empirical studies on resilience focused on children who demonstrated positive outcomes despite experiencing adversity like abuse, poverty, or having parents with mental or physical health issues. These investigations explained that healthy adaptation is attainable even in adverse circumstances, thus questioning risk focuses approach to mental health.

Contemporary psychology views resilience as a multidimensional phenomenon, which includes emotional management, cognitive flexibility, behavioural coping strategies, and interpersonal support. It demonstrates how people interpret worry, stress, and anxiety, manage their emotions, and use both internal and external assets to preserve their mental health. It is compelling to what extent recent psychological insights significantly align with traditional knowledge, especially as stated in the Bhagavad Gita, which provides enduring guidance on mental well-being, emotional balance, and goal-directed behaviour during challenging circumstances.

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN DAY-TO-DAY LIFE

Building resilience involves enhancing the ability to handle stressful situations, regulating emotions, and maintaining mental health when encountering both regular and unanticipated challenges. Here are some ways to build resilience in daily life:

1 Emotional Regulation:

Managing emotions is a basic aspect of resilience. Daily life events can arouse emotional responses like stress, frustration, anxiety, or sadness. Psychology underscores the relevance of identifying and non-judgmental acceptance of these emotions rather than pushing emotions away. Techniques such as mindfulness, relaxation strategies, deep breathing, and emotional labeling helps individual to act with awareness instead of reflex. With continued practice, this approach promotes emotional equilibrium and builds emotional endurance. According to Southwick et al. (2014), emotional regulation is underlined as a vital component for resilience in both clinical and non-clinical groups.

2 Social Support: In Indian context, there is a notable positive association between perceived social support and both resilience and psychological well-being (Sippel L. M., et al., 2015). Being socially associated is essential for building everyday resilience. Relationships that provide assistance act as a mental safeguard against stress. Involving oneself in conversations with family, friends, or mentors offers empathy and comfort and realising that people are not confronting their problems independently. Significantly, asking for support when required is regarded as an expression of resilience, instead of an indication of weakness.

3 Cognitive flexibility: Fostering resilience considerably depends on cognitive flexibility, which includes acknowledging unfavourable, negative or irrational thought patterns and restructuring thoughts in a more rational manner. Rather than observing challenges as enduring loss, people who have resilience view them as transient and controllable. Integrating balance optimism, validating obstacles while sustaining hopefulness may reduce emotional discomfort and promote effective coping mechanisms.

4 Embracing self-compassion - Developing resilience by treating oneself with kindness and gratitude during tough time, one can reduce self-blame and emotional burnout is very crucial. Appreciating one's own contribution and reflecting on errors without harsh self-evaluation facilitates individual development and psychological resilience.

5 Purpose of life: Studies suggest that people who harmonise their day today task with individual beliefs are likely to manage stress and anxiety with greater effectiveness. Engaging in actions that carry meaning, defining realistic target, and focusing on manageable factors enhance motivation and perseverance. A sense of purpose and meaning of life guides individuals through adversity and allows them to tolerate short-term hardship in pursuit of long-term well-being.

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CONCLUSION

The study of resilience was first discussed in the 1970s as the capability to sustain health or obtain adaptive outcomes despite having challenges (Garmezy, N. (1974). Resilience is frequently experienced in daily life, for instance, a student who does not pass an important exam. At first, it is natural to feel discouragement, anxiety, and lower self-esteem. A non-resilient reaction of the student might lead to withdrawal from the problem, having harsh self-criticism and abandoning effort. In contrast, a resilient reaction of the student includes identifying the emotional discomfort, reaching out for support from friends, family or teachers, reviewing learning strategies, and setting plans for future success. Despite the failure being adverse, the person adapts psychologically and maintains growth. This example highlights that resilience does not lessen distress but enables adaptive functioning. Gradually, sustained coping strategies in this way enhance self-esteem, emotional regulation, and decision-making skills. Hence, resilience is built through daily difficulties, where reflective reactions transform failure into personal growth and self-improvement.

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Dr. Sakshi Kaul

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Dr. Sakshi Kaul is a Professor of Psychology at IILM University, Gurugram, with an extensive academic background and over 20 years of experience in both academia and industry. She holds a PhD. in Positive Psychology from Delhi University, Masters in Applied Psychology and BA (Hons) in Psychology from Delhi University. She is passionate about lifelong learning and has worked to enhance her skills with additional certifications and degrees. She is a certified NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Practitioner, she has completed additional MA in Development Studies, LLB (Hons), PG Diploma in Environmental Sciences, MA in Media and Communication, Diplomas in Book Publication, Nutrition & Health Education and Disaster Management. Apart from teaching, she serves as a learning facilitator, professional trainer, and coach, working with individuals and groups to unlock their full potential. She has conducted various training sessions and assessment centres for corporates pan India. Recently, she was a facilitator and coordinator for an extensive 5-day capsule training program, “Inspiring Leadership through Emotional Intelligence” for Navy senior officials of CELABS, Kochi at IILM University, Gurugram Oct 2025. Her research interests focus on designing psychological interventions, positive psychology, environmental psychology, counselling, relationship management and narcissism, resilience, optimism, elderly care, and enhancing overall well-being. She has presented research papers at both national and international conferences and has published around 22 research papers and 7 book chapters.

In close association with Rajbala Foundation (NGO), she has conducted sessions and engaged in community outreach programs through community radios and has worked in spreading awareness at grass root level about mental health. She was awarded for her contribution in spreading awareness about Mental Health by WASME on 8th March 2025. During her academic tenure at G.D. Goenka University, she was awarded as the “Best Teacher” (2021). To her credit, she has two books published as co-author, “Contemporary Issues and Discussions in Law and Psychology” (2024) and “Human Values & Other Life Skills: A Holistic Approach” (2022).

She believes in creative expression and has written poems, prose, and inspirational quotes. Her book "Metamorphosis" is a compilation of her poems that explore life, experiences, and various psychological disorders.



Building Emotional Intelligence: Unlocking a Holistic Life

In a world buzzing with distractions and high-stakes decisions, emotional intelligence (EI) stands out as a key to thriving. Popularized by psychologist Daniel Goleman in his 1995 bestseller *Emotional Intelligence*, EI refers to the ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage your emotions and those of others around you. It is not an innate talent or a characteristic rather an ability and a skill set that can be learned. Goleman's EI model breaks it into five pillars: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

EI provides the basis of competencies important in almost any job that one may be in, Cherniss (2000). In the contemporary scenarios of work and expectations, being emotionally intelligent can enable an individual to be successful and be an effective leader. Yale's Center for Emotional Intelligence links high EI to lower anxiety and depression rates. It fosters resilience amid life's upheavals, from workplace conflicts to family tensions. We do see a paradox and a decline in effective abilities such as being emotionally resilient; this would inevitably overspill and impact the social fabric. We need to understand that being intelligent may not be enough; rather, having emotional intelligence is the key to success in life, be it personal or professional.

Cultivating “Self-Awareness” is the key and crucial while one intends to upskill. Self-awareness enables one to identify emotions and triggers that can be learned to be managed effectively. Mastering self-awareness can be linked to the Indian Knowledge System and the learnings of the Bhagavad Gita, where Lord Krishna urges Arjuna to introspection amid battle doubts and makes him realize the essence of not getting emotional on the battlefield and being a skilled warrior as an essential duty to protect his family and loved ones. Emotional intelligence gets reflected by one’s ability to master “Self-Regulation”, that is the ability to respond and not react. Being able to control emotions, reactions, cognitive processes, and behaviours are some of the essential aspects of self-regulation that one can learn and apply, thereby enjoying the ability to control one’s own actions and reactions. Self-awareness involves recognizing one’s emotional states and understanding how emotions influence thoughts and behavior.

Self-regulation refers to managing emotional reactions in healthy and adaptive ways. Motivation includes the ability to harness emotions to pursue goals with persistence and optimism. Empathy enables individuals to recognize and understand the emotions of others, while social skills involve effective communication, conflict resolution, and relationship management. These are the five skills that one needs to acquire if one wants to be emotionally intelligent. These are some micro skills which one can learn and develop so that they are effectively able to maintain healthy associations and relationships. Active listening, understanding others' emotions, and being able to acknowledge them makes an individual emotionally more balanced. Emotional intelligence influences how individuals cope with stress, communicate with others, make decisions, and navigate life's challenges. Building emotional intelligence is therefore not a one-time achievement but a lifelong developmental process that enhances both personal growth and social harmony.

Research consistently has shown that emotional intelligence plays a significant role in psychological well-being and life satisfaction in one's life. Individuals with high EI tend to experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression because they are able to identify emotional triggers and respond more adaptively. In professional settings, emotional intelligence is linked to effective leadership, teamwork, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. In interpersonal relationships, EI fosters trust, compassion, and mutual understanding. The ability to empathize with others and manage emotional conflicts reduces misunderstandings and enhances relational stability. In educational contexts, emotionally intelligent students demonstrate better academic engagement, resilience, and social adjustment. Thus, emotional intelligence is a foundational life skill with far-reaching implications and benefits.

Building emotional intelligence is an ongoing journey that facilitates and sharpens your skills as an individual. Life transitions, stressors, and evolving social roles continually present new emotional challenges. Engaging in lifelong learning, self-reflection, and emotional growth enables individuals to adapt to change with resilience and maturity. Educational institutions, workplaces, and families play a critical role in fostering emotional intelligence.

Integrating emotional literacy programs, promoting open communication, and modeling emotionally intelligent behavior create environments that support emotional development across the lifespan. Emotional intelligence is a powerful predictor of personal fulfillment, mental health, and social effectiveness. By developing self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and social skills, individuals can navigate life with greater clarity, compassion, and resilience. In a world marked by rapid change and emotional complexity, building emotional intelligence is not merely an advantage; it has become a necessity. Cultivating emotional intelligence ultimately leads to healthier individuals, stronger relationships, and more emotionally sustainable societies. Human beings are social animals and we spend much of our time in group settings; thus, the benefits of learning the skill of emotional intelligence and using these skills in our life extend beyond personal advantages to ourselves. These benefits include team-building skills such as social, leadership, and conversational skills and more. Thus, to conclude, it can be said that learning to be emotionally intelligent is not only fulfilling in one's life but is an essential skill for survival and growth in today's modern world, also referred to as 'BANI' — Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible — a term coined by futurist Jamais Cascio (2018) as a new lens for understanding the fractured, unpredictable state of the modern world.

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AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Shaunak Mathur is an experienced leader with a background in the telecom industry and community leadership.



Importance of Meditation

Introduction

Meditation is a simple practice with powerful effects on the mind, body, and overall quality of life, and even a few minutes a day can make a noticeable difference. This article talks about what meditation is, why it is important today, and how it supports mental, physical, and emotional well-being, along with a brief note on key authors and scientific contributors referenced.

What is Meditation?

Meditation is a mental exercise in which a person focuses attention on the breath, a word, an image, or simple awareness of the present moment to cultivate clarity and calm.

The word comes from the Latin “meditatum,” meaning “to ponder,” and the practice has roots in ancient Indian traditions such as Vedic meditation and Buddhism. Over thousands of years, different cultures have developed various forms of meditation, including mindfulness, mantra meditation, loving-kindness, and contemplative practices used in spiritual and secular settings. Today, meditation is widely taught in workplaces, schools, hospitals, and wellness programs as a practical tool for managing stress and improving resilience.

Importance for Mental Health

One of the strongest reasons for the growing popularity of meditation is its impact on mental health, especially stress, anxiety, and depression. Mindfulness-based programs developed by Dr Jon Kabat-Zinn and others have shown that regular meditation can significantly reduce psychological stress and improve emotional regulation. Research summaries from organisations such as the American Psychological Association and the U.S. National Centre for Complementary and Integrative Health report that meditation can help people manage anxiety disorders, mood issues, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress by changing how the brain responds to thoughts and emotions.

Benefits often reported include increased self-awareness, reduced negative thinking, better focus on the present moment, and a greater sense of inner stability during difficult situations.

Benefits for Physical Health

Meditation not only helps you feel calmer; it also has measurable effects on your body. Studies indicate that regular meditation can lower heart rate and blood pressure and may assist with chronic conditions related to stress, such as hypertension, pain, and certain metabolic disorders. Scientific reviews show that meditation is linked to positive changes in brain structure, enhanced immune function, and healthier patterns of inflammatory markers and stress hormones like cortisol. Some research suggests meditation might support healthy ageing by influencing cellular mechanisms like telomere length and by promoting better sleep and recovery. Emotional balance and performance. Beyond clinical benefits, meditation is valuable because it fosters qualities essential for modern life: focus, patience, and emotional stability. By practising bringing attention back to the present moment, people often experience better concentration at work, improved decision-making, and a calmer response to daily stresses. Meditation also encourages positive traits such as compassion, gratitude, and tolerance, strengthening personal relationships and leadership skills. For many, it becomes a daily reset that creates a small space between stimulus and response, enabling more thoughtful, values-driven choices instead of automatic reactions. The true benefit of meditation becomes apparent only with consistent practice, even for just 5–10 minutes a day. Beginners are often advised to start by sitting comfortably, focusing on the breath, gently returning attention when the mind wanders, and gradually increasing the duration as the habit develops.

Gender Equality and Women's Rights Awareness

Gender equality entails equal rights, duties, and opportunities for individuals of all genders. Despite the fact that women's rights are fundamental human rights, many women still experience abuse, discrimination, and unequal access to jobs, healthcare, and education.

Why Gender Equality Matters

Stronger societies- Families and communities flourish when women are empowered and educated.

Economic growth- National growth is enhanced when women are equally represented in the workforce.

Social justice- Equality guarantees everyone's safety, freedom, and dignity.

Key Issues Affecting Women

1 **Education Gap:** Due to social standards, early marriage, or poverty, millions of girls continue to drop out of school.

2 **Workplace Inequality:** Women often earn less than men for the same work and are underrepresented in leadership roles.

3 **Gender-Based Violence:** Trafficking, harassment, and domestic violence continue to be serious issues.

4 **Health & Well-being:** Women are disproportionately affected by limited access to mental health services, nutrition, and medical treatment.

5 **Legal & Social Barriers:** Women frequently do not have equal rights when it comes to inheritance, property ownership, and decision-making.

Women's Rights Are Human Rights

Women are entitled to:

1. A life free from discrimination and violence
2. Obtain work and education
3. Get comparable compensation for equivalent work.
- 4 . Take part in social and political decision-making
- 5 .Control their own bodies and decisions

Role of Awareness and Education

Awareness helps to:

1. Challenge harmful stereotypes and patriarchal mindsets
2. Encourage men and boys to become allies
3. Inform women about their legal and constitutional rights
- 4 . Promote respectful and inclusive behaviour

What Can We Do?

Teach others and ourselves about gender equality.

Raise your voice against injustice and bigotry.

Encourage women-led projects and groups

Promote equitable chances in the workplace, at home, and at school.

In your daily existence, strive for equality.

CONCLUSION

Gender equality is a human issue, not just a problem for women. It takes awareness, action, and teamwork to create a society that is inclusive and just. Humanity rises when women rise.

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

"Shailesh Jha is a tech entrepreneur and founder of an IT company, with a deep interest in inner wellbeing. He is also a certified Art of Living meditation coach and has helped hundreds of people experience calm, clarity and emotional balance through meditation. His work spans corporate professionals, young professionals, college students and prison inmates, supporting them in reducing stress and living more joyful, balanced lives."



My Journey with Meditation: Why It Matters More Than Ever

The year was 2008. That was the year I entered the corporate world. It was also the year I was introduced to meditation for the first time, through an Art of Living workshop. I did not go there searching for peace or stress relief. I went out of curiosity. I simply wanted to understand what meditation actually was. What I experienced there surprised me deeply. Within a short time, I noticed a quiet shift inside me. My mind felt lighter. My body felt more relaxed. There was a calmness that I had never experienced before, even though my external life remained the same. The meetings, deadlines, targets, and pressures were still there, but something inside me had changed.

That experience stayed with me. A decade later, I decided to become a meditation coach. My intention was simple: to help more people experience the same inner stability and clarity that meditation had given me.

Why Meditation Is So Important

The quality of your life depends on the state of your mind. You can be in the most comfortable situation, good job, good income, supportive family, but if your mind is restless, anxious or disturbed, you will not feel happy. On the other hand, you can be in a difficult or chaotic situation, but if your mind is calm and clear, you can respond wisely and find a way forward. Your outer world does not decide your happiness. Your inner world does. And yet, how much time do we spend taking care of our minds? Most of us spend years building our careers. We invest time in learning skills, upgrading knowledge, earning money, and maintaining our bodies. But when it comes to the mind, the very place where stress, fear, anger and happiness arise, we do almost nothing. Isn't that strange?

Ancient Wisdom, Modern Science

In India, meditation has been practised for thousands of years. It was never seen as something religious or mystical, but as a practical tool for living well. Today, modern science is finally catching up with this ancient wisdom.

Research from Harvard Medical School shows that just 8 weeks of regular meditation can reduce stress-related brain activity and improve areas linked to learning, memory, and emotional regulation. Another study published in JAMA Internal Medicine found that meditation can reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression by nearly 30–40%.

According to the American Psychological Association, mindfulness and meditation practices significantly lower cortisol levels, the hormone responsible for stress. In simple words, meditation actually changes your brain, your nervous system, and your emotional responses.

A Few Minutes Can Change Your Day

You do not need hours of practice. Even 15 - 20 minutes of daily meditation can bring noticeable calmness to the mind. This calmness prepares you to face the day with clarity and balance. When situations around you become tough, chaotic, or emotionally charged, a calm mind helps you respond instead of react. And this is very important. Most of our problems do not come from situations. They come from uncontrolled reactions. A calm mind allows you to pause, think clearly, and make intelligent decisions. This ability alone can change the direction of your life.

Learning to Handle Emotions

We have all been told since childhood:

“Don’t get angry”

“Don’t worry so much”

“Don’t be anxious”

But no one ever taught us HOW. Neither parents nor teachers explained how to manage emotions or thoughts. As a result, we grow up trying to suppress our feelings or fighting with our own mind, and that never works.

Here is an important truth:

You cannot control the mind at the level of the mind.

Whatever you resist, persists.

If you try to force your mind to be calm, it becomes more restless. Meditation works differently. It helps you go beyond the constant noise of thoughts. Through meditation and breathing techniques, the mind naturally settles down. This is not theory. This is experience.

Meditation Is Simple and Practical

Many people think meditation requires leaving everything behind and going to the Himalayas. That is not true. Meditation is simple, practical & designed for people living active lives.

When I learned *Sudarshan Kriya* meditation from an Art of Living teacher, it took just a long weekend. That was enough to experience deep rest, clarity and emotional balance. The practice easily fit into my daily routine. Meditation is not about escaping life. It is about living life wholeheartedly.

Becoming a Source of Joy

With regular meditation, something beautiful happens. Your happiness no longer depends so much on people, situations or events around. You start feeling more centred. You become less reactive. You feel lighter inside.

Over time, you become a source of joy rather than someone constantly seeking it outside. This does not mean problems disappear. It means you handle them better.

Research shows that long-term meditators have higher levels of emotional resilience and lower emotional reactivity. They recover faster from stress and are less affected by negative situations.

Meditation and Action Go Together

Meditation does not make you lazy or inactive. In fact, it does the opposite. A calm and joyful mind has more energy, creativity, and focus. When your mind is not constantly fighting stress, you perform better at work, build better relationships, and move towards your goals with clarity. Many successful leaders, entrepreneurs and athletes practice meditation, not to slow down, but to perform better.

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

A tech industry veteran and Gold Medalist in Computer Applications (MCA), Rashmi brings 24 years of experience navigating the complexities of the IT world. With a strong academic foundation from Delhi University and post-graduation from Devi Ahilya Vishwa Vidyalaya, Indore, she has spent over two decades in leadership roles, breaking barriers and setting new standards. As a mother of two, Rashmi's perspective is shaped by the unique challenges women face in balancing high-stakes careers with the demands of home.



Where is She Gone

For twenty-four years, I have navigated the corridors of the corporate world, primarily within the male-dominated sphere of Information Technology. Over more than two decades, I have reached milestones, led projects, and influenced strategies. Yet, there is a staggering statistic that haunts my professional history: I have never once had a female manager or a female leader to look up to. In an industry where birth data suggests an equal start for both genders, women seem to vanish before reaching the summit. This is not merely a "pipeline problem"; it is a social crisis fueled by a quiet, insidious barrier—the internalised mandate of female sacrifice.

The Vanishing Act and the "Hunter-Gatherer" Blueprint

Statistically, we enter the world in equal numbers. Educational enrollment is often balanced. Yet, as the climb toward leadership steepens, women begin to disappear. Where do they go? The answer is rarely found in a lack of talent or drive. Instead, it is found in the weight of a prehistoric blueprint. Since the era of hunters and gatherers, physical limitations necessitated a division of labour where females remained at the hearth to care for the home. Today, those physical limitations have evaporated, but the mental architecture remains. No matter what position or designation a woman reaches, she is still held primarily accountable for the basic household chores and the emotional labour of the family. This was famously illustrated by Indra Nooyi, the former CEO of PepsiCo, who recounted that when she went home to announce her historic promotion to her mother, she was told to "leave that crown in the garage" and go out to buy milk first.

The Weight of Self-Inflicted Blame

I remember the gnawing stress of my own journey—the constant, buzzing anxiety that my children weren't getting "proper" care because I was busy with an ambitious job. In our society, if a child gets a bad grade or a mishap occurs, the mother is the person to be blamed. More tragically, she is the person who blames herself.

I don't believe it is only the outside world that creates this pressure. Often, it is a self-inflicted wound. Women are socialized to want everyone around them to be happy and fulfilled, often at the direct expense of their own ambitions. This "caring attitude" is instilled in female children from a young age, teaching them to prioritise the well-being of others over their own self-actualization.

The Anatomy of the "Guilt Gap"

In my travels across various countries and cultures, I have found one universal constant: working mothers everywhere are complaining about how "bad" they are at parenting. They carry a narrative of guilt as if it were a professional credential. Conversely, I have never once—in any part of the world—heard a father share a "bad dad" guilt story in the same way.

This "Guilt Gap" has real-world consequences. I once had a brilliant young woman reporting to me who was ready to resign. Her reason? She felt she didn't have enough time to clean her house or serve food to her husband in a "timely fashion." What was most striking was that her family wasn't complaining; they weren't making a fuss. She was her own judge, jury, and executioner. Most of the time, women declare themselves guilty of "crimes" they never committed and proceed to hand out the most stringent punishments to their own careers.

The Ripple Effect: From the Home to Artificial Intelligence

This long-term suppression of women—enforced by our own thoughts and social conditioning—is now being encoded into our future. Even Artificial Intelligence (AI) treats women with bias because it learns from our skewed reality.

Because we have historically resigned women to roles of support and men to roles of leadership, AI models are now significantly more likely to associate the word "doctor" or "scientist" with a man, while defaulting to "nurse" or "teacher" for a woman. We are teaching our machines the same prejudices that have kept women out of boardrooms for decades. If we do not change the mindset of the female species today, we are effectively automating our inequality for tomorrow.

A New Vision: Strategy for the Self

To change the outlook of society, we must first change the internal dialogue of women. We must become the change we wish to see by prioritizing our own needs, ambitions, and thought processes.

1. **Develop a "Self-Vision":** Women are masters at creating visions for their children, their husbands, and their organizations. It is time to create a vision for ourselves. This vision should explicitly state how we want to grow and care for ourselves alongside our families.
2. **Zero-Tolerance for Self-Guilt:** Guilt is a wasted emotion that serves no strategic purpose. In our personal growth plans, "self-guilt" should be strictly prohibited.
3. **Persistence over Resignation:** We must remove "giving up" from the list of options. I think of women like my primary school teacher, Savitri Mam, who loved teaching so much that her passion drew her students to her even after school hours. She didn't sacrifice her impact; she expanded it.
4. **Challenging the Son/Daughter Double Standard:** I recently saw a woman resign to care for her ailing mother. I couldn't help but wonder: if she had been a son, would she have resigned? Likely not. Society would have told him to hire help or "bring home a wife" to do the caregiving. We must challenge these assumptions at the root.

CONCLUSION: STAYING IN THE INDUSTRY

In life, we will always face good and bad times. But instead of giving up when the household pressure mounts, we must stay in the industry. We must work hard and move to the next level, not just for our own paychecks, but to ensure that the next generation of women doesn't have to look up and see a vacuum where their leaders should be. Every human being is sent to this earth to take care of their own potential. It is time for the female species to remember that message. By dropping the burden of unnecessary guilt, we make the world a more beautiful, equitable, and livable place for everyone.

Key Statistics: The Gender Leadership Gap (2025)

Metric	Current Reality
Global Leadership	Women hold only 28.8% of leadership roles globally, despite being 41% of the workforce.
The Care Burden	708 million women remain outside the labor force due to care responsibilities, compared to only 40 million men.
The Guilt Gap	Mothers report 3x higher "work-family guilt" than fathers, even in dual-income households.
India's C-Suite	Women occupy only 17% of board seats and roughly 5% of CEO roles in major firms.
AI Bias	AI image generators are 4x more likely to render "CEO" as a man than a woman.

Sources: WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2025, ILO, and UNESCO

AUTHOR INTRODUCTION

Disha Saxena is a corporate citizen passionate about resilience, continuous learning, and empowering people to thrive in change. She blends technology with human potential to create impactful strategies and believes in building workplaces where adaptability and growth are second nature.



Resilience at Work: How to Bounce Back Stronger

“Just like nature adapts to storms, resilience helps us thrive through challenges

How fascinating it is to draw parallels from nature to human potential. Resilience is nature’s secret-and it can be yours too

What Is Resilience?

Resilience (Hindi: लचीलापन), comes from the Latin word *resilire*, meaning “to spring back.” It describes how people, things, or systems can withstand stress, shock, or change and return to a positive state.

Historically, resilience referred to material sciences-wood that withstands weight or rubber that absorbs energy and springs back. Today, it’s a psychological concept: why some individuals thrive despite adversity. This ability to adapt and recover is what we call psychological resilience.

Do you think it matters in today’s fast-changing world?

Absolutely, resilience matters more than ever in today’s fast-changing world-and here’s why:

- **Constant Change:** Technology, markets, and workplace dynamics evolve rapidly. Resilience helps individuals adapt without burning out.
- **Uncertainty & Stress:** Economic shifts, global crises, and organisational changes create pressure. Resilient people manage stress better and maintain performance.
- **Innovation & Growth:** Resilience fosters a growth mindset, enabling people to learn from setbacks and innovate rather than fear failure.
- **Leadership & Team Dynamics:** Leaders who model resilience inspire confidence and stability, which is critical during change.

In short, resilience isn’t just a “soft skill”-it’s a survival skill for thriving in complexity. Let’s visit some practical strategies to Build Resilience -

- Mindset shifts (growth mindset)
- Daily habits (journaling, gratitude, mindfulness)
- Social support and networking

Mindset shifts (growth mindset) -

The “3-Question Growth Mindset Check”

Take a few minutes and honestly answer these:

DAILY HABITS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Resilience isn't built overnight-it's cultivated through small, consistent habits that strengthen your mental and emotional flexibility. Here are three powerful practices:

1. Journaling for Clarity

Writing down your thoughts helps you process emotions and identify patterns in your reactions. A simple habit like noting three challenges you overcame today or three things you're grateful for can shift your mindset from stress to strength. Over time, journaling becomes a mirror that reflects growth and resilience.

2. Practising Gratitude

Gratitude rewires the brain to focus on positives rather than setbacks. Start or end your day by listing three things you appreciate, big or small. This simple exercise reduces stress, boosts optimism, and reminds you that even in tough times, there's something to value.

3. Mindfulness and Breathing

Mindfulness isn't just meditation-it's about being present in the moment. Taking five minutes to breathe deeply or observe your surroundings can calm your nervous system and improve focus. These micro-breaks help you respond thoughtfully instead of reacting impulsively under pressure.

Bonus: Physical Well-being

Exercise, sleep, and nutrition play a huge role in resilience. A brisk walk or a short workout can release endorphins, improving mood and energy levels. Remember, resilience starts with a healthy body and mind.(Now, once you are back from a brisk walk,

Social support and networking

Resilience isn't a solo game; it grows when you lean on your circle. Having a strong support system and a network you can count on makes bouncing back so much easier. Surround yourself with people who lift you up and remind you that you're not alone.

RESILIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Stress and uncertainty are inevitable at work, but resilience makes all the difference. Leaders who model resilience inspire confidence, and teams that support each other bounce back faster and stronger. When a sudden market shift hit, the team felt the pressure. Deadlines tightened, uncertainty loomed, but the leader stayed calm, reframed the challenge, and rallied everyone around a clear plan. That resilience didn't just steady the ship; it inspired the team to innovate and deliver beyond expectations. In the workplace, resilience isn't about avoiding storms; it's about leading through them and helping your team bounce back stronger.

CONCLUSION

Call to action: Start small, build consistently. Just like a tree bends with the wind yet stands tall after the storm, resilience helps us adapt, recover, and grow stronger through life's challenges. Start small, nurture your roots, and watch yourself thrive no matter the weather.