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Retreat within to discover answers



THIS JEWELLERY DESIGNER PROVIDES A RINGSIDE VIEW INTO THE COMPLEX LIVES AND CHALLENGES OF ACHIEVERS WHOM SHE ENCOUNTERS

Queenie-tessential

Today stress is one of the biggest killers of our race. There is no doubt that modernisation of society has brought with it more choices and therefore more decisions to make. I still feel that my childhood was less complicated than my children's and shudder to think what their children would be faced with.

Sometimes I see my son constantly with an irritable look on his face and when I ask him, he says that he has a lot of work to do.

Their schoolwork is pretty much the same course that I went through but it's the race against time and the incompleteness of his work that stresses him. Where did we have laptops, Blackberrys, 100 channels on TV, PS3 and so on? Competitive spirit has taken on a new dimension. A 75 per cent is no longer considered a great score — not until you hit a 90 per cent are you considered for any admission programme. Tuition teachers are laughing to the bank. Crores are the new lakhs and lakhs are the new thousands. "Lifestyle" is no longer a luxury but a necessity. Struggle and stress is an everyday routine.

I often get into conversations with my yoga teacher Samanta. The other day she explained the importance of a retreat. Samanta had just finished teaching in three retreats in Europe, her destination being Spain (Ibiza), Italy and Greece. "You retreat from

the environment into your own space," she said. "To get out of the daily humdrum and focus on self, de-clutter and empty out the garbage," she explained, adding, "So much gets collected that you work out of a crowded space in your mind. How can clear decisions be made anyway?"

She talked about the importance of spending time with oneself; to move more into your own skin, to drop judgments and be clear of any social pressure or drama.

Countries in the West have suffered due to mechanisation and loneliness and now are striving to attain spirituality through *kriyas* and *pranayams*. "In our urban cities people are now taking spirituality for granted and putting it on a back burner because it has always been prevalent in our country from time immemorial. In our country we go for holidays only to come back, need-

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ing another one. The concept of retreat is still alien here," she laughed.

Samanta told me how a transformation is inevitable during a peaceful time away doing a form of yoga practice. "Sometimes even a simple one like when people cannot sit still for five minutes, can do so for an hour later." One discovers a new aspect within themselves.

"Transformation is a relative term but it takes a person from point A to point B depending on where they are in their lives. Everyone is in different places at any given point," she said.

I was convinced. More so after she reiterated that everyone in Mumbai needs to go on a retreat from time to time. "You transform externally

due to fresh air, food habits, physical exercise, discipline and being close to nature. And internally you let go off stress, being in one's own meditative space." Wise words for one to follow in our urban lives: "Don't look for peace out there, look within. Don't look for love outside, look within.

Then you are more likely to find it and you will."

