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Mulji**



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## Start believing in love

I WAS inspired to write this column on a late night flight back from Greece while watching the *Sex And The City* movie. Regular readers of my columns will know that lead protagonist Carrie Bradshaw and her gang have often been an inspiration to me. In the movie, Mr Big jilts Carrie at the altar, and I hope this never happens to me or anyone else I know.

She also says that when the ultimate single girl finds love, she writes about it and this is what my column will focus on from now on. Love! Unless, of course, I hear about something so significant about being single that I am compelled to share my thoughts on it.

If you have read my last few columns, you will know I have been dating someone for around five months. That is a long time in a very frivolous dating world where women, including myself have been ghosted, friend-zoned and stood-up, along with being subjected to the wrath of dating trolls, meeting men who turn out to be married and so on.

One of the early feelings I faced when I got to around month three of my relationship was that fear. Like, absolutely frightened of so many things. A fear of being dumped, losing my independence, not being able to write and not having any time to myself. The thought that I may be settling also crossed my mind. Now, those thoughts have subsided, but not completely.

And this comes from the insecurity women who have dated for a long time have faced day in day out. In fact, until I had conversations with my friend Kirsty on holiday and watching the movie on the flight back, I didn't realise how deep these feelings ran. But I am overcoming them and am doing better in this.

My desi Mr Big knows about my insecurities and this is one of the best things about being in this loving relationship. He tells me every day that he loves me, that I am the most beautiful girl in the world regardless of whether I am wearing makeup or not and that he loves my writing. He encourages me more than anyone. Yet, sometimes I don't believe him and that's wrong, and I know it, but how do we start to believe in love when we have it? When for so many years we have been rejected and subjected to everything I mentioned earlier?

Talk to your partner and be honest about your feelings. Your partner shouldn't be scared of having open conversations about how you feel, the relationship and the future.

Well, there's no simple way, but to believe. Believe in yourself, believe in love and believe in your partner. It's the only way. Only then you will be on the path to a truly loving future with your one and only.

# A window to the world of wellbeing

## MIRA MANEK ON HER NEW BOOK AND THE ART OF BEING HAPPY

by ASJAD NAZIR

**IN HER younger days Mira Manek thought Ayurveda was a destination and benefited immensely from visiting health spas across India. It was only later on that she realised Ayurveda was a lifestyle filled with enriching practices, including cooking with certain spices, rituals and correct nourishment.**

The London-based business entrepreneur and writer embedded these practices into her daily life, which subsequently led her to opening a successful café in Soho's Kingly Court. Then, with her acclaimed first book *Saffron Soul*, Manek was able to rediscover the wholesome nourishing food she grew up eating and ones elders in the family still cook almost daily.

Manek has now followed up that book of simple home recipes with her second offering *Prajna - Ayurvedic Rituals For Happiness*, which brings together her entire journey of wellbeing, including yoga, food, philosophy and spirituality. The book has received a brilliant response and is making a real difference to those who have picked it up.

*Eastern Eye* caught up with Mira Manek to learn about her new book, health and happiness.

**Tell us about your book *Prajna - Ayurvedic Rituals For Happiness*?**

*Prajna* weaves together elements of Indian philosophy, principles of Ayurveda, simple recipes to cook everyday, the power of breath work (pranayama), morning yoga and deep evening stretches. It is interspersed with my own thoughts and journey, bringing India to life through small anecdotes and moments of inspiration. It's a book, a gift to yourself and others of wellness, lifestyle and rituals inspired by eastern traditions.

**What are the key messages you want people to take away from the new book?**

Ayurveda is as much about when you eat as it is about what you eat and how much you eat. It's supremely important to understand your own body and that it's different to another body. I also highlight the benefits of eating seasonally; we come from nature and are attuned to it, so crave warming hearty foods in winter and lighter foods in summer. Having less raw foods generally, especially in the winter months, is important (depending on the climate you live in). Also, the importance of mindfulness.

**The book also conveys the benefits of mindful practices. Tell us about that?**

Listening to your thoughts, practising being present with wherever you are and whatever you are doing goes hand in hand with

healthful practices. Mindfulness and healthfulness create a package of happiness and wellbeing.

**How would you describe a ritual for happiness?**

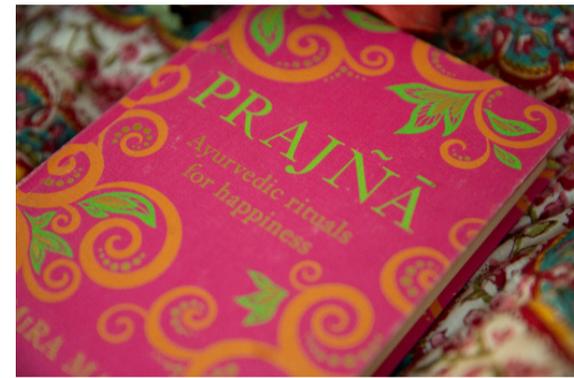
Individuals are unique and will have rituals unique to them. For me on a cold rainy London day, warmth, chai and playing a melodic tune come to mind. (I also give morning, afternoon and evening playlists in *Prajna*). So it could be pouring chai into your favourite mug, sitting on the sofa, taking a few deep breaths, writing down a few things you're grateful for, or anything else that comes to mind. Moments like these, even if it's just half an hour, can reset you, infuse a sense of calm, spread warmth through the body and energise you for the day.

**How would you define the feeling of happiness?**

Being as present as possible in every moment. It's difficult to do this all the time, but practising this more will help. Also a gentle reminder or momentary nudge will make you more aware of how the mind drifts and how you can bring it back.

**How much is happiness connected to health?**

Health is as much about the body as it is about the mind. We are realising this more and more as mental health has become a bigger issue. Both are intrinsically linked. Movement, exercise and yoga all release



endorphins, which are the happy hormones. Anything that generates a better state of health and wellbeing promotes happiness.

**Why does an ancient system like Ayurveda remain popular today?**

Ayurveda, as well as other systems of wellbeing and medicine, have suddenly regained popularity. Part of the reason is that science is now able to prove the mind-body connection that these ancient systems of medicine have taught us. People are realising that one-size-fits-all remedies, medicines and diets don't work, and that understanding our body is key to our health and wellbeing.

**What can we expect next from you?**

I have a café in Kingly Court Soho in London called Chai by Mira. For now, I'm focusing on that, expanding the Chai with online orders and working with larger cafes and hotels across London, promoting my new book and doing day retreats and wellbeing events. I also have a supper club coming up, along with a yoga and food retreat in Oxfordshire this December!

**What inspires you?**

Creating recipes, being creative, writing, bringing people together, and, of course, lots of *chai* (tea).

**Why should we pick up your new book?**

It's a beautiful gift-worthy book with practical tips, nuggets of ancient wisdom and meditative practices. It brings India to life, has simple delicious recipes for morning to evening and allows you to create your own playlist of rituals.

**'We are attuned to nature'**



**HEALTHY PRACTICES:** Mira Manek; and (top inset) her book *Prajna - Ayurvedic Rituals For Happiness*

### MIRA MANEK GIVES QUICK HEALTH TIPS

- Having ginger powder in hot water first thing in the morning or during the day can help reduce inflammation in the body and gives inner warmth.
- Try having your biggest meal at lunchtime as this is when our *agni*, digestive fire is at its strongest (I explain this in detail in *Prajna*), but work according to your lifestyle, so for example, if you're extremely busy and eat that big meal at your desk, not

chewing properly, this defeats the purpose entirely.

- Be aware. Making small changes will bring about greater awareness and bigger changes in the future.
- Do one thing every day that makes you happy and connects you to nature, like a walk through the park, yoga class, spinning, a quick meditation while sitting outdoors, painting or drawing. A short passage of me-time creates a state of daily happiness.