

"Understanding the connection between emotions, food, and health is essential."

Gauri Sarin shares with Marie Banu the benefits of living without medicine

Gauri Sarin is a notable social entrepreneur with a diverse journey. After graduating from XLRI in 1992 and gaining five years of corporate HR experience, she ventured into entrepreneurship, specializing in HR consulting and talent management. Around 2012, she shifted her focus to social entrepreneurship, actively participating in projects aimed at creating positive societal change. Her journey began with empowering urban women entrepreneurs and culminated in the founding of "Sahaas for Women" in 2016, dedicated to empowering rural girls aged 14 to 20. Gauri's foray into rural development through Bhumijaa for women foodpreneurs devoted to Organic/natural and local foods broadened her perspective, leading to the creation of the "Living Without Medicine" platform to benefit more people. Now, she has facilitated one LWM platform per city and aims to have one per country very soon.

This platform educates people on holistic living and the therapeutic potential of food. Gauri Sarin's journey exemplifies her commitment to empowering individuals and fostering positive change through innovative social initiatives.

In an exclusive interview, Gauri Sarin shares with Marie Banu the benefits of living without medicine.

Could you explain the concept behind "Living Without Medicine" and how it fits into your social entrepreneurship journey?

Certainly. "Living Without Medicine" emerged from the need to bridge the gap between traditional healing practices, holistic living, and modern healthcare. We wanted to show people that the right food and lifestyle choices could play a significant role in preventing and even reversing non-communicable disorders.

Our approach was to foster a sense of community and trust among individuals who were interested in their own well-being. We created a platform where people could access a wealth of knowledge from experts, non-experts, and individuals who had personal experiences with holistic living. This community-based approach helped people understand the importance of their own health.

We offered programs like "Taking Charge of Health," which guided participants in transitioning from allopathic medicine to holistic wellness practices. We also provided insights into emotional well-being, as we recognised that emotional conflicts and stress played a substantial role in health issues.

Additionally, we launched a program focused on Ayurveda to empower individuals with knowledge about this traditional healing system. Our goal was not to push people away from modern medicine but to empower them to make informed choices about their health.

Now, we're expanding our efforts by building a learning platform that covers various alternative healthcare approaches. Despite limited funding, we're committed to making a positive impact on people's health and well-being through education and community support.

Explain the significance of helping individuals make informed decisions about their health through your initiative.

Absolutely, it's crucial. Many people tend to "hospital shop" or "doctor shop," trying various methods to address their ailments without truly understanding their options. Our initiative aims to provide them with well-informed choices. Now, when it comes to transitioning from conventional treatments like medication or insulin for a long-standing condition such as diabetes to a natural way of life, it's not a one-size-fits-all approach.

There are several factors to consider. Firstly, the stage of the disorder matters; there are different stages of the condition, and reversing it quickly is easier in the early stages. However, in more advanced stages, even the best of Ayurvedic treatments might face challenges. So, the transition depends on the individual's specific circumstances.

There are typically three categories of people in this context. Some quickly embrace alternative methods, while others prefer to try a combination of conventional and alternative approaches. Then there are those who require more time to understand the benefits of alternative medicine fully. It's important to note that Ayurveda and other alternative therapies are highly personalized, as they consider each individual's unique constitution.

Over the years, Ayurveda has faced challenges and changes in its practice and education. However, it's gradually gaining recognition and credibility, thanks to initiatives like ours and support from organizations and leaders in the field. In the transition process, it's essential to become part of a supportive community, understand the various practices available, and select the right approach for your

specific needs. This might include Ayurveda, Siddha, or other forms of natural healing. We emphasize a holistic approach that also includes lifestyle changes, yoga, and pranayama for emotional well-being



because emotions and physical health are closely connected.

Food is another critical factor. Ayurveda teaches us that the food we consume can directly impact our mental state and overall health. For example, consuming hot and spicy foods can affect your mind's focus and lead to aggression. So, understanding the connection between emotions, food, and health is essential.

How can someone in their early twenties transition into a healthier lifestyle?

Young adults today face various health challenges, and it's essential to address them early on. One significant aspect to consider is the impact of modern medicine, particularly on gut health. Many medications, such as pain relievers and antibiotics, can affect the gut microbiome, which, in the long run, can have adverse effects on overall health.

So, if you're in your early twenties and looking to transition to a healthier lifestyle, here are some steps to get started:

Avoid Over-reliance on Medications: One of the first things to understand is that not every ailment requires medication. Sometimes, allowing your body to heal naturally is the best approach. For example, if you have a mild viral infection or other non-serious conditions, consider fasting or consuming light, easily digestible liquids until you recover. This gives your body a chance to cleanse and heal.

Know the Basics: Familiarise yourself with the basics of healthy living, as passed down through generations. Many of the traditional practices, such as those in Ayurveda, have valuable insights. Listen to your grandparents' wisdom and apply it in your daily life.

Avoid Processed Foods: Youngsters often fall into the trap of consuming processed and junk foods, which can be detrimental to health. These foods are typically high in preservatives, additives, sugars, and salts. Instead, opt for whole, unprocessed foods.

Cook Simple Meals: Learning to cook simple, home-cooked meals is an essential skill. Focus on incorporating plenty of vegetables into your diet. Ideally, make half of your plate vegetables, and if possible, choose organic produce. Also, vary your vegetable choices to get a wide range of nutrients.

Incorporate Nuts and Seeds: Regularly include nuts and seeds in your diet. These are rich in essential nutrients and healthy fats. Consuming a variety of nuts and seeds, such as pumpkin seeds and chia seeds, can provide numerous health benefits.

Don't Fear Good Fats: Healthy fats are crucial for your well-being, so don't avoid them. Ghee, butter, and other natural fats can be a part of your diet.

Explore Millets and Local Foods: Millets are nutritious grains that have gained recognition for their health benefits. Explore traditional and local foods, as they often provide excellent nutrition.

Practice Yoga and Pranayama: Incorporate yoga and pranayama (breathing exercises) into your daily routine. These practices can help improve emotional well-being and overall health.

Emotional Well-being: Pay attention to your emotional health. Practices like Sudharsan Kriya and other healing techniques can be incredibly beneficial. Don't underestimate the impact of emotions on physical health.

Avoid Overthinking Achievements: While it's essential to set goals and strive for success, remember that inner well-being is just as crucial. Avoid putting too much pressure on yourself for achievements and focus on leading a balanced, healthy life.