



WHAT DO YOU KNOW FOR SURE?

Conviction is a powerful weapon within us. It is the basis of all thoughts that lead to actions & ultimately how we see the world.

Radhika Kowtha-Rao (rads)

#5NuggetsWithRads

2018

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Introduction

February 2nd 2019

Hey there,

First off, thanks for downloading this eBook.

Secondly, if you are new here, take a seat and let me explain to you why and how this eBook came about.

I think Oprah's amazing. She is gifted with the power of change, being able to influence anyone with her words and actions and she uses that gift effectively. I love her "*What I know for sure*" column in the O magazine where she muses on what she believes in and how it's channeled her beliefs, faiths and helped her navigate life.

2017 has been tumultuous in the United States. The new presidency, the churning of emotions, the highlight on all 'ism's, the blatant unfairness that women (and pretty much everyone except for the white male) are dealing with were all conversations vying for equal time and dialog. I have always believed in speaking up and an advocate of using any privilege that we are born with to raise the bar for others. It is an unsaid duty and responsibility we shoulder. That was the year when everyone started speaking up.

Made me sit up and look around me and that's when the lightbulbs went off.

So many fabulous women doing remarkable things in their lives and place of work while battling demons from within and outside. How do they all do it? What makes each of these women wake up in the morning and put themselves out there? What is it that they believe that gives them the hope and strength to continue to push against all odds? What makes them who they are?

I wanted to share this quest with others and on Instagram. I reached out to many women who (seemed like) had their act together. Different ages, locations, line of work and even ones not on social media. A good part agreed it was a learning exercise. The year was long and upbeat, and the emails far outweighed the replies. Many clapped hands in glee, and many still yet shied away and some refused to see the light that they radiated.

I hoped for 52 women to share, and despite all the good intentions, life took over for some and they fell off the wagon and I fell short. Yet, 34 ladies, primarily of Indian origin was a decent number to have onboard and I was amazed and happy that we were here.

Collating them all into one piece was an idea that came mid-November when I saw the impact this project made on many girls who waited every Tuesday. They related to it, discovered new strong women to follow and emulate, learnt that they weren't alone in what they dealt with, and thus a small community was born.

Below you will find 23 ladies who gave me their permission to reprint their nuggets of wisdom so more of us can benefit from them.

None of us know it all, but all of us know some. Sharing what we know, will only fill the gaps others may have, and through this giving and taking, we will each strengthen and raise each other.

As women, we have come a long way.

As a tribe, we have miles to go.

A single woman can make a difference, but together, we can churn that ocean and move those mountains.

Hope you find strength, solace, confidence and happiness as you read through the next few pages. I also wish for you to build a dialog that will take you and one other sister a little farther than where you stand today.

With love and gratitude,
Rads (Radhika Kowtha-Rao)

ANUSHA PRAVEEN

Food Instagrammer & Chef

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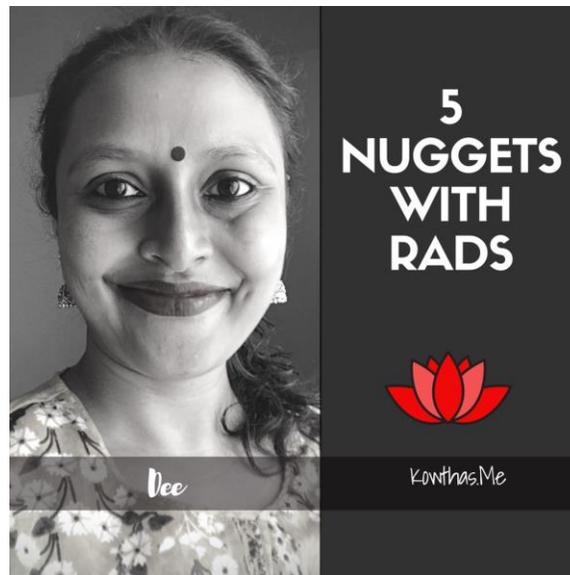
1. Love yourself the most in this world. Someone once said to me, "*You are your own best well-wisher.*" You have one life, and it is not required of you to be apologetic about who you are or your preferences and priorities. Be healthy. Stay fit. And choose your battles wisely.
2. Never allow anyone to make you feel dumb. Empower yourself with information. Read the news. Nothing is more powerful in this world than knowledge. Make learning a new every day item on your to-do list.
3. Give whatever little you can to this environment. Plant a tree. Recycle your waste. Cut down on single-use plastic. Stop wasting food and water. Begin small with no expectations of praise. Bear in mind that by doing this, you are making the world habitable for your children and theirs and theirs.
4. Set realistic goals and work towards them one step at a time. Whether it is the boardroom or the bathroom that you are going to tackle, take it one step at a time and do not be over ambitious.
5. Try being kind whenever you can in whatever way you can, not because kindness will come back to you but because this big bad world can do with kindness every now and then.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Never allow anyone to make you feel dumb..."

Ask questions. The more you own what you know, the more in control you feel. If you are hesitant about asking “what is that?” then read up. Learning has never been easier! Google it and spend a few minutes getting the grasp of what is going on. There is no trophy to win, but there is that smug satisfaction of knowing that will take you a long way in your life. Confidence in one area spills over in other areas of your life, and that can only be a good thing.

DEE CHRONICLES
Assertive Mom & Instagrammer
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1. I know that self-love is not an overrated concept. It’s an empowering tool, for everyone. Loving yourself is probably the best gift you could give yourself. I’ve found by loving myself, my heart is open to love more people - my children, my family, my friends. I find the kindness and sympathy also come more naturally and my cynicism is MUCH lower when I love myself. It’s still a work-in-progress process for me, and I have my good days and I have my terrible days, but I am trying and that itself makes a huge difference.
2. That I love my children. I never wanted to have kids. I am truly not a kid-friendly person. But my children, the ones I was very reluctant to have, are my world. I don’t remember a life without them, and I miss them even when they sleep.
3. That having it all means different things to different people.
4. That I need to let go of my personal issues for me to be happy. Personally, I am fairly laid back, but I have a difficult time letting go of situations. I forgive, but I just cannot forget. Now, am being honest that I am “in the process” of getting over it and I need time.

5. That weight on the scale is just a number. Somewhere along the line, physical health is given far more importance than mental health.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“That having it all means different things to different people.”

*In the broad sense, women are made to feel guilty and pressured to “having it all” – Among other successful amazing women, Oprah and Indra Nooyi have also declared that a woman can have it all, **just not at the same time**. Where they limiting us? Not at all, they were being as realistic as possible. Their context of “**having it all**” meant a woman could have a career, marital bliss, parenthood and all else but each phase in her life, she must make a choice on what takes precedence.*

What Dee says is also true. What she means by “having it all” may not be what I want at all, and the next woman may disagree with what I want. Each of us are powered by our own strengths, dreams, and experiences and so it’s unfair to judge or reprimand another woman coz she has or doesn’t aspire what you want. Different things make different women complete. Honor it.

HARINI KUMAR

Artist

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1. There is no substitution for meticulous work - when you want to compromise on that last bit after putting in so much effort - resist that urge and plod on. The result is complete satisfaction
2. Never stop believing in yourself
3. If you do what you enjoy the most, you will discover that the process itself is rewarding, never mind the result
4. Always visualize your plan of action before plunging in - but never get lost in the details. You will discover that every step is an indicator of how to proceed next
5. Every bit of work that you undertake need not be perfect. Sometimes it can be just practice.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Every bit of work that you undertake need not be perfect. Sometimes it can be just practice”

Most women and girls have been raised with the expectation that we should look and behave put together. Our work must be clean. We must tidy up behind us. The bar is so high that it's not always visible for even the most observant of us. Give yourself the permission to not overwhelm and stress yourself on perfection. That doesn't mean we do shoddy work or give less than what we can, but it means to take stock of the situation and the importance your results to know how much effort and time you must put in. Loosen up a bit.

I used to work with spreadsheets a lot. Most of the times, I had a female boss who marveled at the colors and formatting. One project, I had a male manager and one day I was fretting over and staying late working on making my sheet look pretty. He walked in and in an amused voice said, “As long as the numbers add up, I really don't care what color they are!” – It's just an example of losing sight of what's important for the job and knowing where to put in that extra effort. Perfection is relative.

KAAVYA RAO

IT consultant & Director of Saaya Dance Co.

IG: Kaavyarao



1. Stop seeking validation from others - women tend to seek approval from society, men, parents, etc. The second we stop; a larger realm of possibilities opens!
2. We're too young to be unhappy! If something or someone is causing you to feel even a little bit unhappy, just move along. It might suck at first, but it will be amazing later.
3. Be nice and smile more. It doesn't matter how smart, successful, or accomplished you are if you're unapproachable. People will remember you as a person, not as a resume.
4. Don't settle. Keep pushing yourself! If you feel like you deserve better, there's a 95% chance you do. If you feel like there's more that you can do in a day, there's also a 95% chance you can.
5. Stay weird. Be comfortable around those you surround yourself with. Putting on an act is exhausting, so just yolo and stay true to your real self.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"We're too young to be unhappy! If something or someone is causing you to feel even a little bit unhappy, just move along. It might suck at first, but it will be amazing later."

Regardless of your age, none of us should be unhappy. Despite popular belief, most unhappiness is stemmed from expectations and our own needs not met. So, generalizing it all, yes, happiness is internal, and we have the power to be happy and content once we reign it in. However, not all unhappiness can be solved such and that's when we must make choices. Easier said than done

when the person or situations are up close, but it is a choice. 2019 is the year I pull the plug on “being nice” and allowing disturbances in my day because of what will happen next. It may be awkward initially, but if the irritant won’t make a difference to you in 5 years, pull that plug and walk away.

KUPPULAKSHMI KRISHNAMURTHY

Soft skills Trainer & Speaker

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1. Any change that is worthy and important to be brought about, either in ourselves, or around us, can be brought about ONLY with love. Love, even when you can't. Love, even when it isn't worth it.
2. Grow at least one portion of your food. Grow it yourself -- anything from tomatoes to green chilies to spinach. Use any space around you and the abundant sunlight.
3. Swimming. Driving. Self-defense. Learn all three. And more. We truly understand what "empowerment" means only when we strengthen ourselves with new skills. Skills are liberating; life-saving.
4. ALWAYS live one layer deep. Be intense. Enjoy the frequent goosebumps that you involuntarily experience. LOOK--when most others just see.
5. Imagine we have antennae. Let's use them to keep throwing our thoughts and feelings to The Universe. Only when we tune-in to the true feelings of our heart can we also listen to its warnings. And then, we PULL the right people into our lives.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Grow at least one portion of your food. Grow it yourself”

This is a challenge for many. When you read it for the first time, it may seem about gardening, the pride and the self-sufficiency that comes with it, but there's a lot more that goes into it. For the longest time, I believed that I had two black thumbs. I would literally kill any plant that I brought home and when everyone around you is showing off their spoils and the gorgeous fruits of labor it's hard to admit defeat.

Only recently, I took it upon as a challenge and it taught me a few lessons. Ultimately, it is about being mindful. The plants don't grow by themselves, they need the basics and they are looking to you for them, so it kicks in a responsibility in you, and the rewards are the fruits of your own mindfulness and labor. Raising your own garden, a vegetable garden is the closest you can come to your natural grounded self. Ingesting those makes you one with nature.

LAKSHMI IYER

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1. If you believe in a thing long enough, it will fall into place.
2. Giving always brings more happiness than receiving.
3. Faith moves mountains only because not to have faith means giving up.
4. You must love yourself before others will.
5. Beauty truly lies in the eyes of the beholder.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Faith moves mountains only because not to have faith means giving up.”

Only over the past few years I’ve paid attention to ‘faith’ and how it affects our actions and behaviors. What I realized in retrospect is that most of us have tons of faith, as a human being it seems to be the default space, we live in. Until an event or person comes along and smashes our faith and belief system and then it takes incredible effort and work on our part to bring ourselves back to faith from cynicism. Yet, faith is that strong anchor we hold on to. Our faith is much stronger than anything tangible that we know. Sticking to it will take us on a path of hope. Sticking to it with our radars tuned to our hearts will bring us home.

LAVANYA MOHAN SUHRITH

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1. Never compare yourself or your life with anybody or anybody else’s. It’s a surefire way to feel terrible about yourself - someone is always going to be smarter, richer, thinner or better off than you in some way or the other. Your only standard should be yourself. .
2. Money can buy happiness. Don’t let anyone tell you otherwise. .
3. Success and skill take time, so don’t give up.
4. Relationships can and will work if you both hate the same things. .
5. FOMO will be the end of us all! Instead of thinking about what other people are doing at

Other

places take a minute to soak in your own surroundings and make the best of the situation - it can be something as simple as taking a walk, or a signing up for a class.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Relationships can and will work as long as you both hate the same things."

I remember the café where we sat across each other when Lavanya declared this. When articulated such, and when you apply it to all your successful relationships, you realize this is mostly the basis of why you click. Who would have thought "hate" would bring people together, but it does. Look all around you, how women have banded across ages/career/lifestyles to come together coz we will not tolerate and hate the patriarchy and the unfairness we, as a gender and community face. Hate is the other side of love anyway, so I suppose it's possible to imagine that in a parallel world, this emotion can work the same way.

MANVIT (nikki) KOHLI

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1. If you play safe in life, you have decided you don't want to grow anymore. Lifting light is being safe, sticking to the LBD is being safe. Once in a while blow your own damn mind
2. Being a detailed exaggeration of beauty is my priority.
Unfiltered, brazen and unapologetically me comfortable in my perfect imperfections.
3. Motivation comes and goes but obsession keeps you working, and discipline keeps you moving even when it doesn't make any sense.

4. I know when they talk of BossGirl they will always say She was strength wrapped in beauty. She was the type of woman who struck fear in the hearts of weak men.
5. I know that there is no wound or stitch on my body that travel shan't heal. Because the wound is probably not my fault, but the healing is my responsibility.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Motivation comes and goes but obsession keeps you working, and discipline keeps you moving even when it doesn't make any sense.”

We all get inspired when we see someone owning their work and get motivated to do better or emulate whom we look up to. What we do not realize is, that is just the spark. To keep that flame going, we need internal combustion. The fire of becoming obsessed with our results, our goals and the discipline needed to keep us obsessed with our goal, so we become what we dream and aspire of. So be inspired, be motivated, after that, the responsibility for you to become disciplined enough to stay obsessed is all you.

MICKIE MENON

Blogger & Super Mom

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1. Discover your passion. Whether it is an activity or an interest, find something that is all yours and make space in life for it. Similarly, find your people. Always make time and hold on to those who never fail to put a smile on your face and add value to your existence.
2. Every person has a story. Observe, listen, understand, empathize. Be there when someone needs you, do good as often as you can, in any way you can, as quietly as you can.
3. De clutter and simplify. In a fast-paced life with so much on the plate, it is easy to feel stifled and overwhelmed. Rid your physical space of material things you no longer need and your emotional space of issues that have no solutions.
4. When you find Love, hold on, though it changes form and definition as you travel through life. Don't 'fall' and don't 'lose' yourself in love! It takes some effort and patience but it's worth it to be joyfully and fiercely uplifted in love
5. Be relentless in asking questions. Let every choice you make be completely yours. When in doubt about right and wrong, let your heart be the guide. That's how dogs get allowed on couches. 'To thine own self be true' and there will almost certainly be no regrets.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"De clutter and simplify. Rid your physical space of material things you no longer need and your emotional space of issues that have no solutions."

Clutter has a way of creeping up on you, and one day there you are, barely about to breathe! Starting with the physical is easier and sets the precedence and mindset for you to do similar with emotions and people. Any habit (and lifestyle) is a conscious decision that you make. So, set aside a time and day when you declutter. Plenty methods of doing so, and it's easy to add sentiments to tangibles and hold on, but there are ways to conquer that once you realize the value of reducing clutter around and within you.

It paves the way to see yourself clearly without any distractions and gives you the rightful opportunity to become the best version of ourselves.

NANDINI VISHWANATH

Vocal feminist & Avid Reader

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1. This too shall pass.
2. Take a deep breath, make a list of what needs to be done and get going.
3. If you really want to do something, you will find the time and energy to do it. Keep learning all the time.
4. Being kind and empathetic is everything. Show through a welcoming smile, overcompensate with warmth and always be open to others and their choices.
5. Doing the right thing matters the most, as underrated as it is.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Take a deep breath, make a list of what needs to be done and get going.”

Women tend to wallow. We are so tuned with our emotions, hormone driven and conditioned, that we tend to spend a little more time than necessary in wallowing in what hits us. Spending time with our disappointments, our failures and unfairness doled out to us is important. The grieving is important, and through that process, we must train our brains to the “what’s next” to strengthen and to rise from our depths, because that is how we continue to rebuild and innovate ourselves. Writing that to-do down and throwing yourself into your work is the quickest and efficient way to charge ahead.

NIRATHI RAO KALAVAPUDI

Director & CEO at Rhythmaya

[IG: Ninrao](#)



1. *"Let's get together sometime"*, don't use this phrase if you don't mean it, and if you do mean it, get it on the calendar and commit. Flaking on people will make you flake on your goals. Relationships are everything. Take time to reach out.
2. Long Commutes to work can be very taxing. A good music playlist can change your day and your whole life. Some of my best ideas come while I'm in the car listening to an inspirational tune!
3. Jealousy is the end of mankind, learn to be genuinely happy for others. I've seen that the happiest people are the ones that know how to admire others and live their own life simply.
4. Women are known for multi-tasking, but we put way too much pressure on ourselves. Take your schedule and prioritize and make categories. Oprah says it's best, *"You can have it all, but you can't have it all at once."* If you dropped the ball on cooking and your kids' activities last week, put it at the top of the list this week, short term goals and one step at a time.
5. Take your girl trips, your girls' nights, your date nights, your club nights, Puja Hops, Netflix binges, get rejuvenated, and come back and work harder!

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Flaking on people will make you flake on your goals. Relationships are everything. Take time to reach out."

Integrity is everything. Once we become self-aware and know our limitations and prowess, it is imperative we stick with our promises. If you say you will be there for someone, be. If you say

you will buy them ice cream when she is down and out, do. If you can't do, then don't promise. Stick to your appointments, running late is like saying that you value your time more than theirs. It's that sense of duty towards your word, and by extension your dependability and reputation. Pay attention to the relationships, sure, they are work, but nothing comes free in life.

PRATHIMA SINGH SAVALIYA

IT professional & Baker

IG: @raindroprose



1. If it won't matter in 5 years, it shouldn't bother you now.
2. Be a voice, not an echo. Define and own your journey, wherever it may take you.
3. Speak your mind. Inspired? Hurt? Moved? Loved? Use a little tact, a lot of words and tell others how you feel.
4. It's rewarding to choose comfort above trends, thoughtfulness over extravagance and quality above quantity.
5. Believe in chocolate. Chocolate understands. Chocolate will never break your heart.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"If it won't matter in 5 years, it shouldn't bother you now."

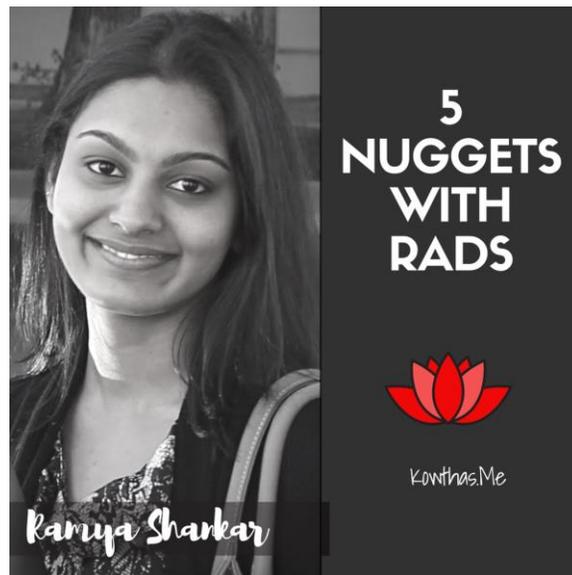
This is a tricky one, especially considering we do not know our future or who or how we become down the road. Many small events and skirmishes in our lives and days can be quickly slotted into ones that will make a difference and ones that will still affect you down the road. But ones

that really will have an impact on you today are the ones we have to pay attention to and decide. It takes a fair amount of awareness and confidence in our own selves to judge and make that choice. It's a learned skill in my opinion, but one of value to be mastered when it comes to relationships.

RAMYA SHANKAR

Software Engineer & Fitness Enthusiast

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1. Don't dwell in the past, learn from it and move on.
2. The higher you go, the more grounded you must strive to be.
3. Believe in yourself, even if no one else does.
4. This too shall pass.
5. No matter how exhausted you are, take your makeup off before bedtime

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“No matter how exhausted you are, take your makeup off before bedtime.”

Not enough is said about the need to wash and cleanse your face, teeth and hair before we call it a night. At the end of the day, makeup is chemicals and they are wonderful for our grooming but not so much for letting them sleep on our skin and not allowing the skin to breathe. Cleansing and having a bed time skin/hair routine is an indulgence and I believe must be taught to all from childhood. Our skin is the most visible organ we have and taking care of it just seems the right thing to do.

RASHMI KRISHNAPPA
IT Engineer & Self-Taught Artist
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1. I know to count my blessings instead of my troubles, things we take for granted can be someone else's unfulfilled dreams. Treasure what you have.
2. I know that adversity and troubles in life only makes you stronger. Count your blessings instead of troubles - things we take for granted can be someone else's unfulfilled dreams - treasure what you have.
3. I know that self-motivation is the best motivation. Look for it in you and motivate yourself. Self-motivation is what pushes you to achieve any goal.
4. I know that one should never stop learning - school/college might end but never stop educating yourself from the world around you. Change is scary but necessary.
5. I know that with every year I age, the less I care about people's opinions, trying to please everyone is mission-impossible so don't try.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"I know to count my blessings instead of my troubles, things we take for granted can be someone else's unfulfilled dreams. Treasure what you have."

I am a huge believer in gratitude. Since the last 5-6 years I have slowly gravitated towards being mindful of what I have and focus on the positive energy that comes from spending time in those thoughts. There is so much around us that we can be thankful for. Many of us are privileged to take a family, a home, our next meal, the choice of what to wear next day, the freedom to travel

etc., but because of the ease at which we are given all these, we tend to focus on what we do NOT have. Easiest and most effective way to get started is to write in a journal. Maintaining a gratitude journal and writing in it, will over time, create a lasting impression and a positive habit to take your forward in your life. Positive people have a lot going for them physiologically, psychologically and they stay resilient.

REKHA SHIVAKUMAR
Food Blogger & Instagrammer
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1. In any relationship giving space to each other is important. Suffocating others in the name of affection may strain the relationship in the long run.
2. Most of the time we lose our peace of mind imagining the worst. Once we let go of that thought and start things on a positive note, the result will be positive too.
3. Be true to yourself - It is difficult to please everyone and be nice to everyone all the time. If others are disappointed by our action that we didn't do on purpose, then it's better not to worry too much about it.
4. Count your blessings. Though our mind and heart know that everyone is different, and everyone's life is not picture perfect, being human it is natural to compare with others when feeling low. But a gentle reminder on what we have in our hands will help us to be cheerful.
5. "Kedaikiradhu kedaikkaama irukkaadhu. Kedaikama irukuradhu enikume kedaikkaathu"
This is Super Star Rajinikanth's punch dialog and my most favorite one. If something is meant to happen it will happen no matter how hard the obstacles are.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

".. . If something is meant to happen it will happen no matter how hard the obstacles are."

That's the faith I speak about. Trust your 6th sense, your inner voice. We all have it. Some hear that voice louder than others and it just means you are intuitive. Pay attention to that voice and have faith in your work and know that you deserve the goodness that's rightfully yours. This is also about surrendering your faith into this invisible force that guides us all, it can be God for some, and some the Universe. Just do your bit, keep at it, and if it's meant to be, things will fall into place.

RUKSANA TALASKI

Pediatric Dentist

[Facebook:](#)



1. If I can't serve others, there is no purpose in my life.
2. Never stop learning. For knowledge is power.
3. Live theater, whether at an elementary school or on Broadway, creates a lump in my throat. A good voice has the same effect. I don't need to understand the language. Song, dance, and music transcend all cultures and languages.
4. Being in the great outdoors is nourishment for the soul.
5. Try new things. Step outside your comfort zone. You'll be amazed at what you learn about yourself!

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Try new things. Step outside your comfort zone. You’ll be amazed at what you learn about yourself!”

I cannot recommend this enough! In the age of the Internet and YouTube, there is absolutely no reason why anyone cannot learn a new skill. If you aren't, it's because you do not want to. Learning something new has so many pluses that it can be a chapter by itself. Not only does it fire those synapses, creating new connections this keeping you younger, it also opens a door to your social network, not to talk about a culture and history and more! Not every skill or new avenue must be of value or bring you profit. Just engaging in what it has to offer, being a wide-eyed noob learning how to crack open a new domain is incredibly empowering!

SANDHYA RAMESH

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1. There will never be a world without religion because humans need faith to survive, no matter how much progress science makes.
2. The food you eat and the exercise you do affect your mood, productivity, and even relationships daily. It's important to understand your body well to be happy.
3. You cannot multitask your way to success.
4. There is no perfect person for each of us, there is only a well-oiled working relationship that we put time and effort into every single day.

5. The more our lives evolve to give us exactly what we want, the more we need to be consciously aware that a growing number of conveniences we experience every minute of the day are at the expense of other species' survival. It is imperative for all of us to make our daily contributions towards an eco-friendly way of living.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

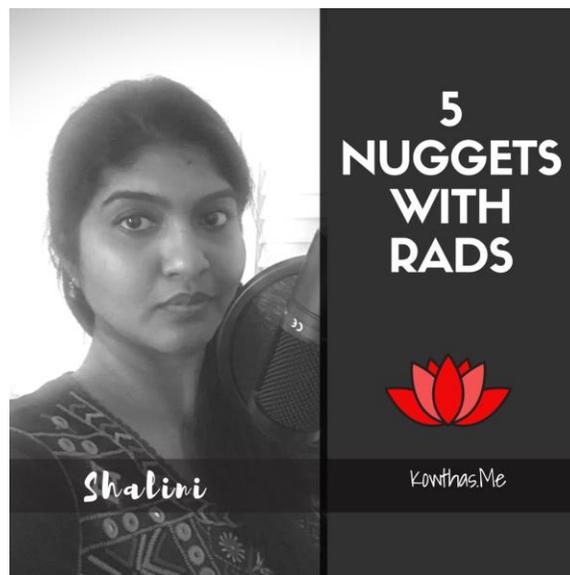
"You cannot multitask your way to success."

This is a tough lesson to learn for some of us. As girls, we are conditioned to multitask. Feed the kid, as we cook dinner as we watch our favorite soap, as we text a grocery list to the husband while the laundry is running. Familiar, right? Just because we are good at something and we can do it well does not mean that it is the best thing for us. Not saying, we shouldn't do it if it comes naturally and easily, but when it comes to things like career and personal goals, focus and single-minded focus is what will take you further. Learning to say NO, despite however tempting and exciting the distraction is, to continue to put in your 100% towards your work with blinders on is a guaranteed shot at success. It's a hard thing to do, but with practice, anything is possible.

SHALINI JKA

Singer at South Indian Film Industry

[IG: @singershalini](#)



1. Happiness that is deep, peaceful, guilt-free, lasting, comforting and full of contentment is really the whole point. No one person, object or event can give it to you. You need to define it for yourself, make your own pathways and rules, and find a way to get in that happy place inside of you. It is your birthright to be happy. I was not a happy person until I finally taught myself to be one.
2. Money is power and power always gives you better options. Financial security frees up your physical and mental resources to be used on the real problems.
3. Your time here is extremely finite. Use it wisely on people and activities that deserve it.
4. The day we don't care what others think of us is the day we attain Nirvana. I've accepted that I am never getting there. But I get closer every day. You should too.
5. Nurture, renew and protect your marriage. It tends to sneakily rot from the inside out if you don't.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

“Money is power, and power always gives you better options. Financial security frees up your physical and mental resources to be used on the real problems.”

*Despite my ambitious self, growing up wanting a career and despite my father teaching me the nuances of money and giving me a 1st row seat to working hard for money, I failed for a long time as an adult in recognizing the value it brings. My dad's words ring loud in my ears as I write this **“Knowing that you have the numbers in the bank, gives you the confidence to take risks to learn and grow.”** It's only recently have I started paying attention and regret lost time. Just like anything, the attitude towards it determines your receiving. If you want love, be loving. If you want money, love money, visualize it and channelize it. Money is important, not at the cost of anything else in life including relationships, ethics and family, but it's the steady crutch we need to buy us happiness.*

SHMRUTHI GOWRISANKAR
Global Consultant & Saree Advocate
[IG: @brazenlybrown](#)



1. Love yourself unconditionally- not for your brain or beauty, but for just being YOU.
2. Find someone who loves you for the same. No compromises there. Your life will be more fulfilling if you surround yourself with the right people.
3. Don't judge people based on how they look, dress, walk or talk! You never know what they go through until you are in their shoes.
4. When you are judged for your choices, do not care! If you believe in them, nothing else matters.
5. Fill your life with happiness & positivity. If that's through material things or healthy living or philanthropy or what not - you define it.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Love yourself unconditionally"

If you are raised in a typical Indian family and environment, this will be a hard challenge for you to win over. I say this because of the inherent assumption that critique and advise are masked as tough love and it harms more than helps our self-esteem. Once you do though, you realize that this will be the benchmark and measure by which you will run the rest of your life's decisions. Confidence, Graciousness, Giving, Strength, Humility and Love take on a healthier role and meaning in your day once you believe you are worthy of love and that you like and

SHWETHA GANESH KUMAR

Author & Columnist

IG: [@timesofamma](https://www.instagram.com/timesofamma)



1. I know that life has the strangest way of fulfilling your dreams. As a little girl, I wanted to travel the world and learn to speak many languages. But when I had my first child in 2011, there were many who told me that my travel dreams were over. But here I am at the beginning of 2018, 26 countries under my belt and counting with two young kids in tow. I know that life will yield if you persevere.
2. I know that I have my own definition of success. Thanks to the Times of Amma, rarely does a day go by without someone sending me a private message on how my post inspired them and that to me is a success. Every comment or sentence sent by someone who was moved to do so by my writing is how I count my successes now.
3. I know that the only way to rise is by bringing up others along with you. Life is not a rat race.
4. I know that I am an Indian Malayali and that no matter where I live or what I do, my roots are my heritage.
5. The less I own, the less I need. Minimalism and taking an effort to make sustainable choices has been one of the most positive lifestyles changes I made.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"I know that the only way to rise up is by bringing up others along with you. Life is not a rat race."

The environment we live and work in has become competitive. The first to release, the ones with large following, the most sought after and so on. None of that really matters if you haven't

shared your knowledge or raised another person up with all that you have gained. We are all in this together. Yes, be fiercely competitive with YOURSELF, always look to be better than what you were yesterday, stay silent till you achieve the next goal if need be, but sharing and acknowledging ones who helped you, and ones who you pulled up just a bit is what life is all about. It becomes your duty to send the elevator back down once you've risen higher. It's a chain of events and honestly, the journey's a lot more fun when you have others alongside of you.

SRUTHI RADHAKRISHNAN

Journalist

IG: @sruthirk



1. I never thought I would be capable of all I am today — family, work and dance. But it took time, learning and patience to get here. I'm a lot more at ease with myself now.
2. A routine is everything. Without a routine, I'm at sea. Knowing that each part of the day is accounted for makes me feel a little less anxious about how things go. I don't plan down to the minute. But I do have a routine every day, and following it makes me feel energized.
3. Take some time for yourself every day. It's the easiest way to keep everything together. Honestly, this is something I learned only after I had a child. That's when me-time got even more precious. All I do is make sure I take one nice shower at the end of the day, followed by a skincare routine that lasts for about 10 minutes.
4. A little kindness goes a long way. I'm now taking the time to understand how and why other people behave the way they do and try and rationalize things before I get too angry or emotional. And this is something I hope to teach my son too.

5. Take things a little easy. I tend to put too much pressure on myself, and then drown in a sea of sorrow when things don't go according to plan. I'm now learning that if I ease up a little, expectations (both my own and others) are more manageable.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Take things a little easy."

I cannot stress this enough. As women, we are constantly asked to raise the bar, push ourselves to do more, achieve more, while balancing all that we are conditioned to do. It's hard work. Let no one tell you otherwise. Every now then, taking a step back and assessing everything on your plate helps put things in perspective and forces us to evaluate on what is important for you. Time is finite, and to a large extent so are our resources. So, take it easy every now and then, write your list down and then remove things that are not necessary to get done. At the end of the day, you will feel accomplished completing the important ones, and not guilty that you scaled back.

SUMI RAO

High Schooler & Multi-Style Dancer

[IG: @dancingsumi](#)



1. The most important thing about high school is responsibility. Teachers in elementary and middle care way more, they remind you every day, and they give you second chances. In high school everything is your responsibility, and you must be on top of all your work for it to be as least stressful as possible. I recommend always having a

planner with you or even just use the reminders app on your phone to make sure you are turning everything in on time.

2. If you and your best friend are going to a different high school, in the beginning, it sucks but you'll find ways to maintain that relationship as well as make new ones.
3. Dance is one of the hardest things you could do. And it's not because of the steps, it's because of the training. I've trained in Kuchipudi, Bharatanatyam, jazz, tap, ballet, and contemporary. Learning all of them at the same time is in no way shape or form easy. You only get stronger by pushing yourself. You must learn to manage your time, so you finish your homework and go to dance class.
4. Another thing is performances. If this is one of your first performances by yourself, it's natural to feel nervous. I still get nervous! But you can't let your anxiousness get the best of you. The more you practice the more you feel comfortable.
5. Nothing happens overnight. It always takes time.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"... You have to learn to manage your time."

Time management. Another vital life skill that's sorely not taught to us consciously. The education system in the US reiterates whenever possible and especially in high school on managing school work and activities and all else and maintain their grades. The day is so packed that unless you are on top of every task that needs to get done, there's a good possibility that you will scramble, and the result may not be as good as you would like. Extrapolating this, it's expected that most women and girls are whiz at management, both of time and tasks. However, efficient time management is a learned skill. It takes some conscious learning to project and to use our time as effectively as we can.

UPASANA GOVINDARAJAN

Illustrator

[IG: @upasanagovindarajan](#)



1. Independence is a myth. Interdependence is the truth.
2. You don't become great by just putting another person down.
3. I strongly believe in the manifested power of thought and emotion. Fill your mind with thoughts that give you strength, confidence and make you feel powerful. For this, I believe, the vast collection of consecrated chants, hymns and poetry (from all faiths) preserved through centuries, acts as a catalyst. "Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe." - St. Augustine.
4. Everything happens for a good reason. The universe is not obligated to give us answers immediately. Learn to look for signs and connect the dots.
5. The more you give thanks, the more reasons you'll get to be thankful for!

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Everything happens for a good reason. "

This is a hard lesson and belief and mostly learnt as an adult and under duress. We mostly do not question any of the good that happens to us. We may wonder and marvel at the fortune, but we do not question it. We most certainly question the misgivings and the unpleasant stuff that we are hit with. A lucky few get their answers quickly, but most of us are left with dissecting our days and thoughts and karma to analyze and get to the bottom of the WHY. It is during these times that life also teaches us a lesson in humility, knowing that we cannot control every event that happens to us, but the only "bearable" way forward is to believe that everything happens for a reason. Holding onto that faith and trusting that perhaps the path we wished for was not meant for us, or that we weren't ready for it, is the right thing to do. The Universe sends signs, we must to train ourselves to look for them, mindfully.

VIRUPA KANTAMNENI

Architect

[IG: @virupakantamneni](https://www.instagram.com/virupakantamneni)



1. Don't wait for miracles to fall into your lap. They're needy bitches and expect you to go to them.
2. Those who say they have OCD (I was that person) haven't had a kid or lived with a kid under one roof.
3. Marry a guy who will help you spot and cut the grey hairs when they start to pop out.
4. Mothers are always right. Except when they say, "what will people think of you?!"
5. Hugs are divine. Hug your family randomly, don't wait for the right time. Hug them even if you're angry with them. Hugging should be mutually exclusive to any situation.

Rads' Personal Favorite:

"Hugs are divine."

Hugs are indeed divine. Research has shown that a 30 second hug with a close one can help build strong bonds with them. It's the touch that triggers the hormone, Oxytocin, which is the "love" hormone and helps reduce stress and brings on a smile. I love to hug, and I believe in the touch and the warmth that comes from the contact that helps build trust, confidence and the assurance most of us could use.

THE OTHER AMAZING WOMEN:

Also profiled on my 'gram:

[Sailaja Talkies](#): A childhood friend of mine who's doing some great work in comedy.

[Chinmayee](#): A graceful Kuchipudi dancer and a policy advocate

[Suprajha](#): A doctor and a minimalist

[Swathi Rishi](#): A Blogger and Fitness enthusiast

[Andaleeb](#): A prolific author and writer

[Kayadoodles](#): A young artist

[Maalvika Manoj](#): Singer

[Harini Rao](#): Hindustani Singer and Telugu Playback artist

[Amulya Malladi](#): Author and Artist

[Malvika Iyer](#): Disability Rights Activist and Motivational speaker

[Michelle](#): Educator and Fitness Coach

[Kristi](#): Nikon Ambassador and Wildlife Photographer

[Kay](#): Pharmacist and Healthcare Management Consultant

[NamefieldMT](#): Global Traveler and Consultant

You can find all the above profiles by following the [Hashtag #5NuggetsWithRads](#) – as there is also interesting conversation and feedback from other readers under each profile.

For 2019, #5NuggetsWithRads will continue, and it will be an insightful collation of Women & Careers. Do follow along if you are on Instagram.

Radhika Kowtha-Rao

Multipotentialite

[IG: @Rads02](#)



1. I know throwing yourself headlong into whatever you do is the only way to do. The journey is more than the destination.
2. I know that if you stick with something for a long time, you can't help but become good at it.
3. I know that life always gives you what you NEED, more than what you want.
4. I know that low carb lifestyle is the answer to all things that are plaguing us nutritionally.
5. I know that relationships ultimately thrive on a balance of space, attention, and kindness.

About the Author:

Radhika Kowtha-Rao (rads) is a multipotentialite and has worn many hats.

Br education, she is an Optometrist and still considers medicine and the study of the human body her true calling. After her two older children, she switched paths from a practical standpoint and earned master's in information systems which enabled her to be a Data Analyst and Project Manager for 8 plus years.

Writing has remained her mode of expression through childhood and she started her blog – Tunneling Thru – when her third child was a year old. Her writing has won her awards, opportunities at high profile online magazines and the widening of her network. Her blog has paved her path into social media: Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram and her footprint is prominent. She has a creative eye and enjoys Photography, making jewelry and such, and enjoys dance. A trained Kuchipudi dancer, she now lives vicariously through her two daughters and by organizing dance events in the DC area

A dynamic Toastmaster, she is now establishing herself as a health and life coach and aspires to make a difference in the community.

You can find and reach her at:

[Blog – Tunneling Thru – Kowthas.Me](#)

[Instagram - @rads02](#)

[Twitter - @rads](#)

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[Pinterest: @rads](#)

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