



# STUDENT OF LIFE

**Meera Gandhi, author and philanthropist, believes that she learns everyday of her life**



Madame Gandhi, Elton John, and Meera Gandhi

SHRUTI PANDIT

**A** mother to three grown up children, an activist, an author, a divorcee after marrying a childhood sweetheart, a philanthropist... Meera Gandhi has seen it all... and learnt something from every experience.

"My life, in every phase, has taught me a lesson that helped me go forward in more than many ways," says Meera Gandhi, during a tete-a-tete, when she was in India to launch her book — *3 Tips: The essentials for peace, joy and success*.

A thorough bred Mumbai girl; Meera spent her weekends at Mother Teresa's Ashadaan during her growing up years. The seeds of philanthropy were sown then, at an early age. "I played with the children there, shared my books with them, taught them... I preferred doing that rather than hang out with school friends doing nothing," Meera remembers. "Often, friends and siblings wondered why I was doing that... but my mother always supported me. She was very happy that I had found my calling."

Born to Irish mother and Indian father, Meera grew up absorbing the nuances of both the cultures. Her mother ensured that she and her siblings had best of both. She drove them on her Vespa scooter to the nearby church on Sundays. Meera's biblical values of gratitude were engraved.

A born leader, Meera spent college years in India leading her fraternity in myriad activities and introducing them to their 'giving' side.

She aspired to be in Harvard, but was denied admission.

"That itself was a learning experience," tells Meera. "I was shortlisted for the final interview. When I reached there, the area was in dark. I had an issue with my shoe, so I bent down to fix it. And suddenly there was light in the lobby. I looked up and saw an elderly lady enter the lobby. I asked her - 'where is room no. xxx?'. She showed me the way and disappeared. I realized that I was not courteous to her when I saw her in the room as my interviewer! She gave me the toughest interview/scan I have ever faced. She held it against me that I didn't even wish her. That taught me a lesson — one must always smile, wish, and show gratitude."

Meera married her childhood sweetheart at quite a young age and became a mother to three kids soon. Her journey as a mother taught her patience. "I also found out that child like innocence teaches to learn without bias... and I learnt the true meaning of unconditional love!"

Always a spiritual person, Meera was initiated into meditation by Deepak Chopra and TM by a friend. But it was in 2016, after she attended a session Sadhguru, that got her meditating regularly twice a day.

In 2010, Meera's kids were independent and she was rediscovering



Meera Gandhi

herself. Her journeys across the globe had shown her that women and children are the most neglected components of the society in most countries. The need for education, empowerment was unambiguous. Meera founded The Giveback Foundation, which, today, directly funds St. Michael's School in Delhi among many other institutions that educate underprivileged children in various countries and organisations that work for the betterment of women. The profits of the haircare products, candles etc. created by Meera go to the Foundation.

The most turbulent time of Meera's life, probably, was the end of her marriage in 2012. While some saw that as just another divorce, Meera admits that it was one of the most vulnerable phases of her life. "A divorce is a divorce; be it a beggar or a trillionaire. The emotional upheavals are the same. I won't deny that it kind of broke me down and left me searching for myself yet again..." Meera confesses. "People think it is different for affluents from US. But it is not. It is as onerous as it would be for a simpleton housewife from an Indian village. Though I agree that being financially sound does reduce the insecurity."

Meera rose as the legendary phoenix. She took care of her business, growing up children and pulled herself up through the dumps. "I got myself together, found myself again, and launched the The Meera Gandhi Show in 2017 for B4U, US." This show changed Meera's life in more than one way.

She was soon a household name in US. The most popular segment of the show was the shortest segment of the show — 3 Tips! "The producer soon asked me to reduce the time of the other two segments and increase the time of 3 Tips. I realised that there were so many who wanted to know about how to handle life. Everyone wanted a shortcut to happiness."

It was this realization along with her basic urge to giving it back to the Universe, that prompted Meera to write the book, *3 Tips - The Essentials of Peace, Joy and Success*.

"Idea is to make more and more people happy. And if my tips are going to help them regain their peace and happiness, I am more than willing to help," says. "Nothing makes me happier than giving joy and peace to others. I believe that we are to the Universe only as much as we give back to it," Meera concludes.

# Beat the dropping temperature

**Some hot stuff to drink to beat the mercury drop in the country**

**W**ith the mercury dropping below 20°C and forecast promising weather for a few more days, we thought of sharing Toddy recipes with you.

A Hot Toddy is traditionally made with bourbon, honey and hot water; it's the perfect drink to cosy up with this winter season and beat the chills. Not to forget, the health benefits that this drink offers. Equally comforting as a hot cup of tea, this treat is bound to soothe your palates! IANS shares recipes for this popular drink with its finest spirits.



## MAKER'S HOT TODDY

A Maker's Mark Hot Toddy is a pretty nice antidote to sufferers of the cold, even if that's just the cold weather we're talking about. There are a lot of riffs out there on this wintry classic. This one gets spiced up a bit with a delicious cinnamon syrup that you'll find a variety of uses for.

### Ingredients:

- 2 parts Maker's Mark Bourbon
- 1/2 part lemon juice
- 1/2 part cinnamon simple syrup
- 1/4 part honey
- 2 dashes Angostura Bitters
- Top with hot water
- Lemon wheel and cinnamon or nutmeg for garnish

**Method:** Add all ingredients to a mug and stir well. Garnish with lemon wheel and fresh grated cinnamon or nutmeg. To make cinnamon syrup, mix equal parts sugar and water with one broken-up cinnamon stick per 1/2 cup. Bring to a boil. Once sugar is completely melted, remove the pan from heat and let sit for at least 30 minutes. Strain out cinnamon.

**Glassware:** Double walled glass

**Garnish:** Lemon wheel and fresh grated cinnamon or nutmeg

## BLACK HOT TODDY

Chase away winter chills with your new favourite hot toddy recipe. Extra-aged bourbon adds full-bodied richness, with flavours of vanilla, toasted oak, and baking spice. Perfect for cosy holiday celebrations or quiet nights by the fire.

PCIS IANS



### Ingredients Required:

- 2 parts Jim Beam Black
- 1 part Honey
- 2 parts Fresh Lemon Juice
- 1/4 cup Hot Water
- Lemon Peel

**Method:** Put bourbon, honey, and lemon juice in a 6-ounce mug. Top off with hot water and stir until honey is dissolved. Garnish with a lemon peel (optional).

**Glassware:** Rocks glass or Tea cup  
**Garnish:** Lemon Peel

PRIYANKA CHANDANI

# THE GUARDIAN OF THE SEAS

**Ahead of The Indian Coast Guard Day (February 1), FPJ shines the spotlight on those who serve one of the longest and busiest coastlines in the world**

Advanced Light Helicopters, phase-wise inducted to boost maritime surveillance, ICG continues to serve seamlessly to enforce the nation's water security. The force aims to have 200 ships and 100 twin-engined aircraft in 2023 in its fleet. The evolution of the Coast Guard has been remarkably cost-effective. With the Navy's help, its manning and training have been extremely economical. Its anti-smuggling operations, its anti-smuggling assistance to the Customs, its pollution-control operations, its protection of endangered marine species like the Olive Ridley turtles on the Orissa coast, its Search and Rescue Operations, its sustained round-the-clock surveillance in the shallow waters of the Palk Bay between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka, all have been invaluable.

## Commendable Search and Rescue operations

The ICG in the last few years has apprehended over a hundred smuggling vessels, over eight hundred foreign poaching trawlers and over 8,000 of their crew. It has responded to over 50 oil spill incidents and has undertaken over 30 oil spill operations and interdicted over 20,000 illegal immigrant infiltrators.



So far, the ICG has flown over 1,100 Search and Rescue sorties and saved over 1,500 lives at sea in over 750 missions since its formation.

One of the historic operational successes of the ICG was in October 1999, with the recapture on the high seas of a Panamanian-registered Japanese cargo ship, MV Alondra Rainbow, hijacked off Indonesia. Her crew were



rescued off Phuket, Thailand. The ship had been repainted as MV Mega Rama and was spotted off Kochi, heading towards Pakistan. She was chased by ICGS Tarabai and INS Prahar (K98) of the Indian Navy and apprehended. It was the first successful prosecution of armed pirates in over a century.

During the Kargil War in 1999 and during Operation Parakram in 2002, Coast Guard vessels and aircraft provided invaluable support to the Navy's operations in the Arabian Sea. In December last year, the ICG in a joint operation with Anti-Terrorism Squad, ATS Gujarat, apprehended a Pakistan fishing boat with 10 crew members smuggling arms, ammunition and 40 kg of narcotics worth Rs 300 crore. "The operation was conducted during the night of December 25-26 on specific intelligence input. The ICG deployed its ship ICGS Arinjay near the notional.

In 2017, ICG was lauded for anti-piracy operations at a conference in Singapore. "There was also a remarkable decrease in the number of incidents of armed robbery in Indian waters," said Lee Yin Mui, assistant director for research at the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP). "The real-time quick action has resulted in on-site apprehensions of the culprits thus making the Indian waters a safe place for the mariners," she had said.

## THE INDIAN COAST GUARD STRUCTURE

Coast Guard HQ is in New Delhi.

Three Regional Headquarters at Mumbai, Chennai and Port Blair of the Western, Eastern and A&N Regions respectively.

Each regional headquarters has under it district headquarters, Coast Guard Stations, Coast Guard Air Stations and Coast Guard Air Enclaves, Refit and Production Teams, Store Depots, etc-

The Western region comprises the coastal states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, and the union territories of Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep.

The Eastern region comprises the coastal states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Bengal.

The A&N Islands region comprises these two groups of islands. The Regional Headquarters at Port Blair has under it the District Headquarters at Diglipur in the Andaman Islands and at Campbell Bay in the Nicobar Islands.

The Coast Guard Air Station (West) is located at Daman, Coast Guard Air Station (East) is located at Chennai. There are Coast Guard Air Enclaves at Mumbai, Goa, Kolkata and Port Blair.