

Ritu  
Malhotra



Ritu Malhotra is an experienced Hatha yoga trainer specializing in CLINICAL (CUSTOMISED) YOGA, a concept she has evolved, and she is extremely passionate about this practice and wants to spread the bliss of yoga among everyone. It's her firm belief that yoga not only helps to cure physical ailments but also purifies the mind. Thus helps in achieving both physical and mental strengthening and wellness to all irrespective of age, sex, and shape. Ritu Malhotra the founder of YOGRITU (season of yoga in Hindi) has her studio in Noida. She has certifications from reputed yoga schools, is a part of a well-known health channel on YouTube and has testimonials on her site where people are sharing their benefits that they are accruing by



practicing under her guidance. She has written articles for and collaborated with UNICEF, Indian Express, Femina, Meri Saheli and Hindustan Times. She has won an award by World PHD Chakra Awards and a certification for her contribution to importance of mental health. She has yoga students attending her classes from all across the globe.





'Never say never' is what I have learnt in my 52 years of life. Just when I thought life had taken its course, it threw a bouncer at me. My husband passed away at the age of 48. It was something which seemed so unreal, like, what can never happen, happened to you. Both my children were still studying, and I felt the sky had fallen on my head (trust me it's an understatement). I had never worked all my life, worked, as in, financially earned.

The challenge was definitely, a lot of grief and also how to get food on the table as my husband had not left any business that I could get into or manage.

Death brings with it strange emotions; it shakes your soul. There were bouts of grief, helplessness, anger, fear, regret, non-acceptance, a constant sinking feeling, and so much more.

'She is a woman who, though ordinary, somehow stands out and has a beautiful story to tell.' Sure all women have stories, but my story of struggle started very late in life when I was 48. With my confused state of mind and with the help of my close family and friends [amazing support I have had from them], I tried to figure out what I could do to get financially



productive. There were not many options as this was the age when people were planning their retirement. One thing was clear to me; that I had to run the show. I am not someone who allows the victim zone to take over, even mentally.

I remember, when I used to step out of my house, my neighbors had that 'we don't know how to react' look on their face [to talk or not to talk look]. But I went up and greeted them. I had messages saying 'we don't know what to say', and I wrote back saying 'I don't know what to hear'. After all the formalities which happen in our communities had been done, my family refused any more visitors who came to mourn as we didn't want to talk about it continuously.

The challenges we faced were so many. There was so much paperwork (which is very unfortunate in our system). Every bank or authority you go to, you need to talk about the death over and over. People look at you with mixed emotions and that is just what you don't want [that constant reminder; the bechari look]. Every corner of your house, every song, every dish I ate took me back to something or the other in my more than 30 years of association



with my husband. Every morning I had to shake myself mentally and remind myself that this tragedy had struck us. The terrible memories from the hospital and those flashbacks were traumatizing even while sleeping. And then, there were challenges of my children; they were fighting their own demons. I felt guilty that they didn't have their father around, an irrational thought, but the mind was irrationally thinking at the time. To prefix, late... before his name or to receive an invite with only my name on it is still so unbelievable. I just couldn't open his *almirah* or do away with things, there was a hope...a kind of feeling that this nightmare will just get over.

But reality check took over and I understood that situation needs to be controlled. I needed to be strong and take charge of everything especially our mental and physical health. I had been practicing yoga for 20 years and was super passionate about it. I attended a lot of courses, and acquired certifications from different schools. And even then, during the most challenging phase of my life I realized that yoga had given me a lot of resilience at all levels; physically, mentally, emotionally. So I decided to take it up professionally. With the



help of my family, friends, and exceptional support of my children, I set up my studio and started taking yoga classes. I gave it my best with all sincerity and backed it up with a lot of research. I had that clarity that yoga cannot be common for all. It has to be clinical as in, each one to his own needs and specification.

So my studio YOGRITU was born, and it took off amazingly well. I started with 1 person and in the same month, I reached double-digit of students. And subsequently, there has been no looking back. It has been more than three years, and now YOGRITU has students from all over the world. I try my best to help people with yoga and live a painless, happy life. My way of handling yoga is different. I feel we need customized asana to address to our internal and external organs, so I evolved the concept of CLINICAL YOGA. I got extremely busy with my work. In my sessions, it is not just the same standard yoga that everyone in the batch is doing, everyone has different regime. My work involves consultation, research, customization, and reviews. The results are amazing. People overcome their health issues, and I can keep myself very productively busy, both mentally and financially. I also picked up a weekend job



with a coaching center which again was such an amazing learning. A pampered girl, that I was, to a single parent of 2 was something I never thought I could handle. But I could feel the strength emerge, people were amazingly supportive. Apart from my immediate family, everyone was encouraging, my children's schools, and tuition teachers' also extended unconditional support.

One thing I learnt was that when you decide to stand with your head high, the whole universe also abides with your decision and supports you. I have my meltdowns, but I rise each day with the hope to be better than yesterday with my work. Also, managing the house, children, and the enormous paperwork is a task. Till last year, I was working seven days a week. Somewhere the guilt of not being able to be with my kids as much I should be bothers me. But my kids have been so wonderfully independent in this journey.

I am trying so hard to play the part of both parents that my son actually wished me on father's day and said that maybe I am so busy playing the father that he misses his mom. So we have had a journey. Still, instead of being



bitter, we choose better...life has not been the kindest, but it has been a learning.

Now, when I look back, I partly understand God's plan... he has given me strength, courage, and confidence to evolve, to maybe create my niche in the world.

I feel blessed that I can make my passion, my profession and add value to others' lives also. Every message or call that I get to thank me makes my day; that appreciation is my earning. It is a great sense of achievement to help people become painless and expand their lives at all levels. I always feel if I could handle my life in difficult times with yoga, it can help others as well. I also get to connect with like-minded people.

These four years have been a journey of immense learning where I started from scratch. I started from thinking of my brand name to now taking it at an international level. I have learnt to handle finances, home, kids and social responsibilities. And at the same time, constantly keeping myself together.

I feel more confident now and aim to keep growing in every which way. The void in my life will always be there but then who said life is easy?



My one message to all girls and women is to never get into a comfort zone and always keep yourself financially and emotionally equipped. You never know when you need a plan B. That time, what worked for me, was the faith people had in me. Their unconditional, emotional support and always being there for me when I needed them was what helped me sail through. My amazing kids, sisters, friends, and I have to mention my super wonderful in-laws, especially, my mother in law [who did more for me than my own biological mother could have done had she been alive]. Despite the pain of losing her own son, she stood by me and kept pushing me forward and encouraging me. We all need to take responsibility of our lives and move with a smile on our face. Writing this story has not been easy, I was stalling it, but if it can help or encourage someone the purpose is solved. I know I still have lot of challenges in life [picture abhi baaki hai] but I am prepared to take it head on. My loss is irreparable but I somewhere want to change the image of single woman in society that she can still be strong and live her life without being a victim or bechari. And I HAVE MILES TO GO BEFORE I



SLEEP AND I WILL ENSURE THE JOURNEY IS MEANINGFUL.

To sum up, I have penned down a few lines in Hindi,

Ek arsey baad kalam uthayi hai maine,  
Bahut ghehrai se zindagi jee hai meine.  
Sahi ya ghalat taye nahin kar paayi,  
Sharafat poori ki hai maine.  
Anjaam ka pata nahin hai mujhe,  
Raste pe thokrein khaayi hai maine.  
Safar jaari hai mera,  
Humsafar kho gaya hai lekin.  
Safar jo dono ka tha,  
Ab akele taye karna hai.  
Par irada mazboot hai mera,  
Sar utha ke jeena hai.  
Koshishon mein kami nahi hogi,  
Baaki uspe chhoda hai.  
Jeeyungi aise ki rab bhi kahe,  
Teri himmat bani rahe!