

A SERVING OF GRATITUDE

Today, India is at the cusp of a paradigm change. Women, often called the mothers of a nation, play a pivotal role in the growth of a country. Dr Roopal Patel, a dentist and yoga instructor asserts that if every woman has #She-ForHer, then incredible things can happen. Encouragement, appreciation and acknowledgement make life richer. Gratitude is the most powerful and positive virtue which unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order and confusion into clarity. It turns problems into gifts, failures into success, the unexpected into the expected, and mistakes into important life learnings.

Here, Dr Patel talks about the trials, victories and learnings of her own life:

I have always been vocal about the contribution of my father, Dr R S Patel in raising me as a strong woman. He taught me how to give wings to my dreams and fuel to my passion, with an understanding that there is no substitute in this world for persistence and diligence which is the key to success. Today, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the unsung heroes of my life: My mother Bharti Patel and mother-in-law Meena Patel. Acknowledging their efforts, I have penned down a thank you note.

My mother taught me that the best thing a woman can do for herself is to love herself and be independent in life. I have adopted this as the mantra of my life. I'm blessed with amazing inner strength because a strong woman raised me. I hope that one day, I am at least half the wonderful woman she is. I can never reach her gargantuan status, but her example fuels me everyday. Whenever I need a listening ear or sound advice on my personal or professional life, she has always been there for me. She motivates me to succeed, and elevates me to reach my goals and paints a vivid and tangible picture of success in my mind. She is my guiding light, like a lighthouse at the end of a seashore. I have the deepest reverence and approbation for her.

Besides her, my mother-in-law



MOTHER-IN-LAW



MOTHER



DR ROOPAL PATEL

too, plays a pivotal role in my success. People often portray the typical mother-in-law as a scheming, provincial character. But it's not always the same. In fact, I can claim that because of her support, I have it all: a phenomenal career trajectory and a happy married life. I am extremely grateful for her unflinching support all through these years. She is a person who has always put others before herself. I'm not sure if it's the way she gracefully handles any situation life throws at her, or if it's her ability to love each and every member of the family unconditionally, regardless of their flaws, but there's something about her that makes her so special. Her presence radiates warmth. I am incredibly blessed to have her in my life. Mother taught me to dream high, while my mother-in-law helped me turn those dreams into reality.

Pursuing my career, visiting 56 countries so far, leaving my mark at Mount Everest base camp and many more would not have been possible without the impeccable support of my in-laws because while I lived my dream, I was relieved knowing my son was in best hands, those of his grandparents.

Women sometimes think that kids would be a stumbling block on the way to excel in their respective fields. They feel it would be extremely incommensurate. But if one is really passionate about work, then kids are surely not an obstacle. It's important for women to challenge this perception. Pursuing work and passion while raising a baby is surely hard. But the good news is: it's possible.

In the beginning, I found it unnerving to pursue a career as a yoga instructor and follow my passion of travelling, leaving my toddler back

home. I knew I would be judged by the standards of societal norms, but still I followed my heart and ventured into an arena where I could excel and display my real talents. After tasting its real joy, I knew if I take a deeper plunge into this field, I will definitely taste success, especially when I have the positive attitude to contribute something really meaningful to society at large. I firmly believe life is an expression of blissfulness. Live and spread *bliss*. If I'm able to inspire at least one life, it would be a great achievement for me.

My thank you note would be incomplete without appreciating my biggest strength — my husband Harshad, and my biggest asset — my son Shiven. Harshad takes pride in my success and is always there by my side when the challenges of motherhood and life converge. This says a lot about his upbringing, and for that I thank my mother-in-law. She raised an emotionally intelligent and loving man.

A happy married life is a bulwark against all odds as it provides an environment that is devoid of despondency and apprehensions. Life is about ups and downs and it's during these tedious times that my son's presence is like a zephyr, his smile is like a panacea and his hugs act as an anodyne for me. He is my greatest blessing.

Life is too small to be envious. Have no space for hatred and leave no chance to express gratitude. Appreciate abundantly, motivate enormously. The miracle of gratitude shifts your perception to such an extent that it changes the world you see — *Choose to be grateful. It will make you happier.*

Mumbai-based Dr Roopal Patel is also the Administrator of a yoga institute and is a globetrotting adventurer