



Naturopath Sejal Vora teaches from experience – she lost almost 40 kg in two years using a natural, holistic approach. She now advises clients that they can do it, too.

By Aekta Kapoor

“I had high blood pressure, PCOD – my mother didn’t even recognise me when she came to receive me at the airport.”

At 37, with a spring in her step and a knowing twinkle in her eye, Sejal Vora could easily pass for someone a decade younger. Practising as a naturopath in Mumbai for the past five years after a glittering career in jewellery trade in New York for a decade, Vora believes we all have an ‘innate’ talent that cannot be ignored, and an inner healer that can solve all our emotional and physical woes if only we pay attention to what our bodies are telling us.

Born to a family of ‘pukka’ businesspersons and brought up by a single, entrepreneur mother along with two sisters in Mumbai, Vora

worked in the jewellery business for 10 years shuttling between New York and Bangkok after completing her education. While her company did roaring trade, her waistline expanded along with her bank balance, and by 30 years of age, she weighed 90 kg and had a whole host of physical disorders. “I had high blood pressure, PCOD, rashes, knee problems – and the worst part was, my mother didn’t even recognise me when she came to receive me at the airport,” she recalls. That’s when she decided to sell off her business and move to India to work on her health and wellbeing.

“I had already tried out an umpteen number of diets in the US,” she says, “and



Sejal with her partner DJ Ankytrix



Sejal Vora, the unconventional naturopath

THE LIGHT OF HEALING

According to Sejal Vora, self-understanding can lead you from darkness to light when it comes to weight loss. Here are five ways to get there:

- Awareness is most important – it’s half the battle won. The problem stays a problem as long as the awareness of it isn’t there. Introspect to understand where and when the problem started.
- Take responsibility for your problem, whether it’s overweight or some emotional issue. It doesn’t pay to play the victim.
- Never quit cold turkey. Replace one bad habit with a good one. Once your brain is accustomed to a particular behaviour, such as smoking, it needs a replacement to get over it. If you are aware of this, you can consciously choose a healthy replacement over an unhealthy one.
- Don’t hope for change – that way you only exude the energy of want and lack. Be the change. Then it becomes you.
- We already know what foods are good for us. But habits and disempowering beliefs keep you from making those choices. Change the habits and beliefs, and your food choices will automatically become healthier.

nothing worked. Sugar had become an addiction.” And so she began to read up about the mind-body connection and practised what she studied. She learnt how the body reacts to different stimuli and emotions, and found the answer to her weighty issue through a combination of yoga, mind control and food choices. She lost close to 40 kg in two years, and has been coaching others to do the same since then. “I meet my clients only once,” she explains. “I don’t want them to get hooked to me and see me as yet another lifestyle addiction. I teach them to be their own doctors, to manage their own lifestyle.”

Vora, who says she’s completely against ‘gymming’, spends three hours in the first session with every client, understands every minute emotional and physical issue they have, and then applies a three-pronged approach to help them – changing their mindset, conditioning and physical way of life. As a qualified clinical nutritionist, she says she is only qualified to give them advice on what food to eat or avoid, so she has tied up with doctors and others in aligned therapies for a more holistic approach, such as Shiatsu, hypnotherapy, ThetaHealing, homeopathy, yoga, flower remedies and Craniosacral therapy. “I’m a diagnostic specialist,” she says. “I have the gift of being able to tell you what kind of healing you need, but I can only guide you. Ultimately, you heal yourself.”

Despite promoting ‘alternative therapies’, Vora thinks the term is much abused. “Even

so-called alternative therapies can be used in a negative way, and can do more damage than good,” she says, citing the example of a woman in an unhappy marriage who once came to her after a past-life regression session left her believing that she was ‘destined’ to be in that toxic relationship as it was ‘unfinished business’ from another life. “She ended up feeling even more miserable, and even more trapped in her circumstances, though the idea was to heal and liberate her,” she says.

Unlike the popular image of naturopaths in India, Vora jokes that she will not be seen wearing a big *bindi* or a sari. “I am a free-spirited, hippy child; I live life on the edge, take chances. I enjoy partying and believe that it is precisely due to my youthful lifestyle that I stay young at heart,” she says, advocating a policy of ‘finding what fits you’. Currently in a five-year-old relationship with award-winning DJ Ankytrix, Vora’s lifestyle is laid-back and filled with music. She wakes around 9 am or later, and starts her day with a headstand. Breakfast consists of fruits and juices, and her days are mostly filled with writing on her blog (soon to be a book) or welcoming friends to her Andheri apartment. She meets only three clients a week, usually going to their homes to get a complete feel of their lifestyle. “The top three things in my life are now my partner, my family and my friends. Then comes work, though that’s a huge part of my life as well,” she smiles. “If you’re not having fun, forget it. It’s not worth living then.” ■