

To a greener future

Healing The Planet One Plant At A Time With Rohit Mehra

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“Growing plants is an old belief but healing plants is something unique,” says the Green Man of India, Rohit Mehra, an IRS officer, author, blogger, and motivational speaker. He is a passionate environmentalist and pioneer of vertical gardens in India for which he also holds a world record, having used 17,000 plastic bottles to create the largest vertical garden in Ludhiana. In the last four years, he has planted nearly 7.5 lakh plants, 550 verticals gardens, and founded ‘Panch Tatva’, an organisation which focuses on healing of plants. He speaks to GT about his life and journey.

A life of purpose

I hail from a middleclass business family and have grown up in a joint family set up. My grooming and my nature were majorly impacted by that. UPSC was my father’s dream when I was in Class VII or VIII, but when I failed in Class XI, it was an eye-opener. I realised my touchstone was no one but myself. I put my heart into it and believed that of all the seats, one was definitely for me. Success in life is a mix of 90% hard work and 10% blessings. I grew up believing that purpose of life is a life of purpose. Every moment of life should be your best moment. We shouldn’t feel that we can be happy only when successful, as

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success is a relative concept. We should base our happiness on things we enjoy, rather than the process of winning.

A life of Panch Tatva

All living organisms are made up of five elements which are also the core elements of our planet - air, water, fire, earth, and space. If there is any imbalance between these elements, it can cause a disaster and may inflict a disease on us. This imbalance can be controlled by planting trees and maintaining them. This ideology of the preservation of the five elements inside every living thing around us provoked the name ‘Panch Tatva’. We’ve created over 40 micro-jungles using the principles of Vrikshayurveda and Miyawaki. These principles suggest that we plant various sizes of plants like big trees, small trees, herbs, shrubs, and creepers. Together, these create an ecosystem that is maintained when we water the soil.

A life of action

I believe action is always better than reaction - an anthem we all should abide by. With Panch Tatva, we had a very different starting point, one that imprints the mind.

In 2016, as a father, I was struck with wonder when my son casually mentioned the severity of climatic conditions, especially the excessive pollution levels which had caused his school to shut. I did not let this slip into oblivion and decided to act. I started with small vertical gardens, plastic bottles etc., and then eventually we started training students towards the same. They were trained to make seed-balls, where seeds are rolled into small balls of cotton with little soil and nutrients. These are thrown in the soil randomly and grow into trees whenever they get the right conditions, which is just a little water and air.

A life of inspiration

I want to tell you all that we are made up of our habits. Develop good habits, keep good company, and find a purpose to live. You are the ones who can ensure a better future for the planet as that would also mean a better future for yourselves. Learn to give, as what you give, comes back to you. Go on quantifying your purpose, so it stays forever, and helps to lead a fulfilling life.



Green Man of India & IRS officer, Rohit Mehra

Pic: Aditya Tyagi, AIS Vasundhara 6, XI A



Book Review

The true bravehearts

Synopsis: In Nazi Germany, during World War II, young Liesel Meminger is sent to live with the Hubermans, a kind-hearted foster family in Molching. After her initial distrust and resistance, Liesel becomes attached to her foster father, Hans Hubermann, who patiently teaches her to read, and to her tough but loving foster mother, Rosa. Her foster parents hide a Jewish man, Max Vandenburg, in their basement and he becomes like a brother to Liesel, his stories offering her hope and companionship. Liesel also finds comfort in books, which she begins to steal from various places. When the town holds a book-burning to cele-

Book: The Book Thief
Author: Markus Zusak
Published in: 2005
Genre: Historical fiction, young adult

brate Hitler’s birthday, Liesel steals another book from the flames. Tragically, Max is eventually discovered and taken away, escalating the threat to the Hubermans. As Molching is bombed and the family faces devastating losses, the story reaches a chilling climax.

Why is it worth reading: The story is told from the perspective of a unique narrator - Death. It is a mov-

ing story about the impact of literature, the strength of human bonds, and the resilience of spirit during one of history’s darkest times. The end of the book delivers a profound and unsettling thrill, leaving readers to introspect about the impact of words amidst war. The book is crammed full of irony and humour, but it is also immensely sad. It’s a story that inspires and resonates with everyone on a deeply personal level.

Iconic quote: “Sometimes, you have to give up the life you planned to find the one that’s waiting for you.”

Rating: 4.5/5

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