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**How to live a better life
Reviewed by D. S. Chema**

**Be. Do. Live
by Rajeev Dewan.
Rupa. Pages 260. Rs 295.**

TODAY, we are living in a world of uncertainties which are shaping our lives. These are wonderful but difficult times to live a life with our values and belief systems firmly in place, because we are powerful as well as vulnerable at the same time. In such times, self-development skill books, which provide practical ready-to-apply wisdom, can become a person's best friends.

Rajeev Dewan believes that there are people with passion, energy, talent and humanity, who deserve to move to a higher plane of a better life. His clarity of the very purpose of life integrated with insight into human emotions is incredible. He uses his personal experience and keen observation of human nature to distill universally applicable practical wisdom. The beauty of his techniques lies in touching a person's inner chord and awaken him to the level of "a man must be what a man can be".

Be. Do. Live. is a special book which can help the reader achieve success and happiness through the journey of physical, emotional and intellectual experiences. In the context of the fact that one is in constant pursuit of peace and happiness, this book offers a blueprint for an exceptional life. The author, with decades of experience as a consultant and coach, has his hand on the pulse of the reader. The book is divided in four parts, with 56 two- to three-page chapters. Each chapter begins with a carefully selected, one-page "words of wisdom", from different sources, including the Bhagwat Gita.

The author uses a four-step programme to reveal his plan for transformation of life. Part I is about creating a compelling vision

through reflection on individual mortality and experiencing what people want in their lives but fail to achieve because of lack of clarity and urgency. One must learn to be the architect of one's own life and live by design rather than living by default. Rajeev brings out very effectively, that it is the feelings one is really after and not the things. People respond differently to the same stimulus or trigger because they attach different meanings or feelings to it. The reader can find usable answers to questions like "How are you living at present, is it intentional or life is just happening to you?" "Do you have solid foundation on which good quality life can be built?" "What is stopping you from leading a more successful life?" and "Who are you?" The author supports Napoleon Hill's view: "Every adversity carries within it the seed of equal or greater opportunity".

Handling various problems created by ego, compulsive thinking, the deadly cycle of "desire, expectation and attachment" and "knowing-doing gap" are explained with such clarity that it is easy for the reader to relate his personal life experiences with the ideas and techniques recommended by the author. The author urges the reader to "re-imagine your philosophy" by asking relevant questions and suggests that life should be accepted as a paradox of confusing choices to realise the powerful force of living in the present

Part IV of the book shows how to "optimise your practices". Rajeev identifies communication with self and others as the most powerful skill in life, and gratitude as the strongest muscle. The book recommends the reader to spend more than 80 per cent time in personal greatness zone, i.e., getting the best results by using whatever one is good at and what one loves to do. Another chapter emphasises that loving oneself completely reveals one's true divine nature which helps induce love for others and leads to forgiving, a powerful tool to filter out negative emotions. The last chapter is about reassuring oneself that "I am better than I think I am" to have powerful, positive self-reinforcing effect.

Though it may not be possible to plan a perfect life, it is possible to learn to lead a purposeful life through the four-step process suggested in the book. It is said that life does not come with an instruction book and living is the art of drawing without an eraser. Rajeev provides an "instruction manual" and an "eraser" to help paint as perfect a "rainbow" as possible by using the various tools as colours. Indeed, a great book definitely worth reading and revisiting every single day throughout the wonderful journey called life.