

SEPTEMBER 2020

A SKY WITHOUT **CLOUDS** IS  
A MEADOW  
WITHOUT FLOWERS

- BY VATSAL PATEL, SEMESTER 5, USLM



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# A NOTE FROM THE DEAN

- BY DR HEMANT C TRIVEDI, DEAN, USLM



Hi Friends,

Greetings of the day!

I am Hemant. Dr Hemant C Trivedi. I have recently joined the UnitedWorld School of Liberal Arts and Mass Communication as Professor and Head – USLM.

Having put in about fifteen years of industry and business experience before entering academics full time in 1994, I have had the pleasure of working with pure government, pure private and a public-private partnership form of academic institutions. And the diversity of the domains of these institutions has accorded me a unique opportunity to understand higher education from different perspectives and operations procedures. I expect this background to help me contribute positively to my new responsibilities.

Today we are living in a unique situation brought upon us by the global pandemic. Many look upon this as extremely negative and defeating in various ways. But, to me, it's just one more environmental variation, a modified version of the erstwhile environment we were so comfortable with. Every change that I have come upon in my life I have seen it as an opportunity to evolve to the next level. Every time I had to learn new ways of conducting myself, new technologies, new processes and above all, new personalities to engage with.

I have loved this newness at every juncture because I firmly believe – if 'the' line on 'that' machine becomes straight, you are dead! And far from that, I have loved every moment of this changing life. Many years ago, in one of my academic pursuits, I got introduced to the term VUCA! An acronym for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous. Since then it has been an interesting journey to explore VUCA that led to our organising last year a conference with the theme – Winning in a VUCA World!

In a way friends, I believe you people to be really lucky to be born in an extreme VUCA World. It will require you to be constantly innovative, superbly flexible, ardently lateral thinkers, and above all outrageously courageous! The humungous opportunities for doing different things in different ways should be looked upon as a positive challenge up for the taking. As has lately become fashionable to talk about the new normal – I say the new normal shall be the abnormal!

This should help you define the scope and approach towards learning for each one of you. We at USLM will make all efforts to make your journey of learning as challenging, invigorating and entertaining as possible. The diversity of subjects available for study over next three years and more will only increase as we evolve and grow as an institution. You will have all the opportunity to explore new areas and ways of thinking – the deeper you will dive the greater shall be the rewards – in the form of information, knowledge and wisdom. At the superficial level, you will be exposed to large amount of information which when internalised and used for actionable pursuits will become knowledge. This knowledge supported by logic drawn from experience shall result in wisdom!

I invite you all to join our journey of lifelong learning for mutual growth and evolution.

With due regards, Hemant

# TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNING

- BY RIVA PATEL, ADJUNCT PROFESSOR, USLM

Learning remotely during lockdown can be draining and online classes come with their own set of challenges. If you prepare well, it is actually much easier than you would think – all your classes are recorded, you don't have to travel to campus, the teacher is always one chat away and pants are always optional!

Here are a few key areas to consider to make sure you get the most value out of your next class.

## SELF CARE

A healthy mind and body is important to your successful learning experience. Convey to your teacher for your learning needs. There are always flexible ways of participating in the class. And don't forget to move – get up, walk around, exercise if you can. There are plenty of apps that remind you to schedule your distractions. Mostly importantly, maintain healthy sleeping and eating habits.

## SET DAILY GOALS FOR STUDYING

Decide what you hope to accomplish in your course each day. The goal should be specific and you should discipline yourself to actually follow through. Minimize distractions in your environment – both physical and digital like closing web browsers not relevant to learning or switching off the TV. This will help with motivation and beat procrastination.

## CREATE A REGULAR STUDY SPACE

Set up a dedicated space for you to attend classes. It is easier to recall details if you are in the same space where you originally learned it. Make it separate from your bed or sofa – set a clear distinction between the space you study where you take breaks. This will also increase your productivity as it will establish a routine. It is important to distinguish what type of environment will work best for you which will help you keep your books, syllabi, forms, assignments etc. organised.

## DO ONE THING AT A TIME

Once you've established your routine, think about how and when you would like to accomplish your work. Multi-tasking is less productive when you don't have a plan.

Researchers from Stanford University found that "People who are regularly bombarded with several streams of electronic information cannot pay attention, recall information, or switch from one job to another as well as those who complete one task at a time."

## ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE

Participate in your online class. It is very easy to stay on mute, but involve yourself in class discussions and engage with fellow classmates. Focus on what other students are saying and have active debates. Also, taking notes during class will promote active learning and extend your attention span. It is always a good strategy to internalize knowledge. Be proactive in seeking your classmate's or teacher's help – don't wait until the last minute to clear doubts about the assignment or the course.

## COLLABORATE AND LEVERAGE YOUR NETWORK

If you're having trouble with all (or any) of the above, pair up with a friend as an accountability partner! Your peers are the most valuable resource you have – from writing assignments, prepping for exams or just clarifying certain concepts you wouldn't want to ask your teacher. Be proactive and create a virtual study group. Having a supportive online community will be wonderful in the current environment of social isolation.

Online classes pose a unique challenge, albeit only if you are not prepared. If you focus on developing skills for effective learning, you will find that online classes are an excellent way to balance your domestic commitments and studies. The above points are only a starting point, but it is essential for you to figure out what works best for you.



# BLESSED TO BLEED

- BY STUTI BHATIA, SEMESTER 3, USLM

A day comes our way that makes us feel blue  
enough to go numb, The day when a loved one  
becomes a mere memory, a thought and sways  
away.

But all I knew was that family would only see love,  
even conventionality did not come its way.

But then, there stood a relative, far away from me  
and my thoughts, Taking pride in his sternness  
whilst conforming to norms.

His contemptuous eyes brought out my wry  
humour, Left me with no choice but to give him  
the taste of his own medicine.

He then took off from there, all enraged.

That day left me anguished, with a bigger void in  
my heart, Refusing to let go of me, alike that  
stubborn bloodstain on my dress.

When men bleed to death, they become warriors,  
But we are only disgraced, So much so that, our  
ability to create life gets wrapped in newspapers  
every month.

Stop this. I refuse to be seen as a monster  
anymore. I am no less than a goddess myself.  
Period.



# ÀPEIRO: N/ INFINITY

- BY KANISHK TEJURA, SEM 3, USLM

Writing with a flourish is something one can start learning anytime, anywhere. And even a random thought can trigger the drive, which can really turn out well when one is ambitious and especially an explorer.

I don't mean to say one has to be a "Jack of all trades, master of none". But once one keeps on exploring various things, one automatically tends to gain experience, knowledge and eventually express one's thoughts.



One may never know when those experiences will come in handy.

Àpeiro, an upcoming anthology by Writer's Pocket (an Instagram page), is one such opportunity for me. This platform is very special as it is my maiden achievement when my work will be published and will be out on sale. Exciting. Isn't it?

HOW I REACHED HERE?

I would have never known what the anthology is. But thanks to my college mate, Prachi Shah, who encouraged me.

I just had a blog

<https://kanishktejura.blogspot.com/> where I used to pen down my feelings and random thoughts. Even for the anthology, I wrote a poem and submitted it with no hope that it will be selected. But then a mail came —swoosh and pop — in my mailbox stating:

**“CONGRATULATIONS. Your write-up has been selected!”**

And now, here I am, all set and ready for the book Àpeiro which will be published within two months.



It is just the first step. And I believe someday I will have many more publications to my credit.

I really want to thank my college for giving us that professional understanding.

WE ARE FUTURE | WE ARE USLM



# A SLANTING RAY OF SUNLIGHT

- BY TANISHA VYAS, SEM 5, USLM

We are wistful of things that were never ours, to begin with. This world is not yours to keep; we live on borrowed time, in the chaos that envelopes our being, we scramble for comfort in the arms of others who are equally mad. They tell us that madness is art. But what is art if not man-made?

We find slanting rays of sunlight, to bask in, have a couple of hundred pictures taken, compensating resentment of a past that cannot be conquered. The present slips away unnoticed and the future looks bleak for its wistful for a past that will never be. We forget our words, our promises lay shattered. The glamour has been lifted. The world is glitter-free.

Time is up.

The Earth is waking up in rebellion. The lender will come back, borrowed time will have to be returned. When mankind ceases to exist, all that will be left are bits of our soul, looking for a slanting ray of sunlight and find one no more.



# THE HORROR OF RECEIVING EMAILS DURING COVID TIMES

- BY PREETI DAS, ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR, USLM

Life is online. And I hate it. Like most people, I hate to live in the digital space and thanks to COVID, we have no choice.

Anything and everything ridiculous gets passed on as “the new normal”. A few things under this new normal diagnosis that I hate include being told to use empathetic language while sending emails. I mean the last thing on my mind is empathy. I am constantly worried about EMI’s, tired of managing classes and cooking, finding ways to keep my seven-year-old engaged and active, feeling sad about the falling GDP, not getting my full salary, living 24/7 with my husband (why? why? why?), worried about sneezing, getting nightmares about losing my sense of smell, seeing no solution to the COVID crisis in the near future — and I am supposed to use an empathetic tone while sending written communication! Why?

Empathy is overrated and misunderstood by many. The emails that I have been receiving since March this year are far from being empathetic. In fact they are sadist, rude and often macabre!

COVID has changed the language we use in writing emails and if you notice carefully there are a few lines that every email sender proudly (and repeatedly writes). These are the kind of lines that make me want to get inside the computer and pull the writer of the email out and give them a thrashing. (I refrain from using any other words at the moment. Though I am extremely tempted to use better words and expressions). For example, the opening line of most emails nowadays is “In these troubled times...” To me this line is what Arnab Goswami is to journalism. Useless. Stupid. And a reminder of all things grim.

We all know these are troubled times. The most overused writing cliches in the entire world of email writing has to stop. This line has no empathy. It is a reminder about the list of problems I wrote in the beginning (refer to the rant in para 2).





Better opening lines would include – “Hey there, we have cancelled your EMI for the next few months,” or “Hey there, guess what, full salary for working so hard,” or “Hey there, we will take care of your child for a day so you can sip hot tea and breathe.”

In these troubles times, it seems.

Another thing that I have noticed is that people are sending too many emails nowadays. While I know that it is a brilliant way to hide the fact that they are doing nothing sitting at home, these emails are banal descriptions of what they are doing!

I am getting emails from pizza places and gyms explaining how they are taking steps to protect their customers. I am getting emails telling me about the importance of mixing a certain herb in tea to make sure COVID does not get to me (that too from a senior colleague). I am getting emails from people asking me for funds and I get descriptive emails telling me what people have done in the entire day. And mind you these emails do not talk about official work.

Seriously no one cares. The only emails I want are short, to the point and about things that effect my work directly.

I just look forward to surviving my day without getting any symptom of COVID. That is all I want. Writing emails full of empathy is a mojo killer and often I am tempted to be honest and tell people to not expect empathy but learn to be Atmanirbhar. My mail box stares at me. There are 46 unread mails that I dread opening. They are those mails which are perfectly useless and have been written just for the sake of it. Why don't people choose to stay silent and not send mails when they have nothing to tell? Email etiquette for me nowadays is – don't send emails. At all.

Afterall these are troubled times!

# GLIMPSES FROM MY JOURNEY

- BY HETVI DESAI, SEM 5, USLM

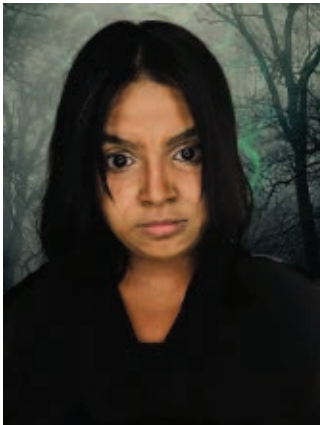
Rivie at the Hoxon Hotel, Paris is a great new restaurant that opened in the summer of 2019. The restaurant is on the hotel terrace. The design is relaxing and fun. The dishes are intriguing and tasty, and they have a wonderful selection of cocktails and boutique beers. It is worth checking the place out for an evening drink.



# RECREATING CLASSICS

- BY RIA RAJ, SEMESTER 3, USLM

I'm not saying that putting on make-up will change the world or even one's life. But it can be the first step in learning things about oneself one may never have discovered otherwise. At worst, one can make a big mess and have a good laugh.



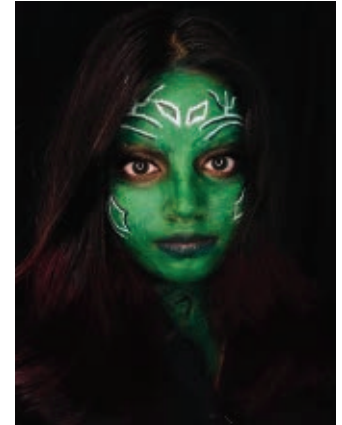
Recreation of the famous character-Professor Severus Snape - from the Harry Potter series.



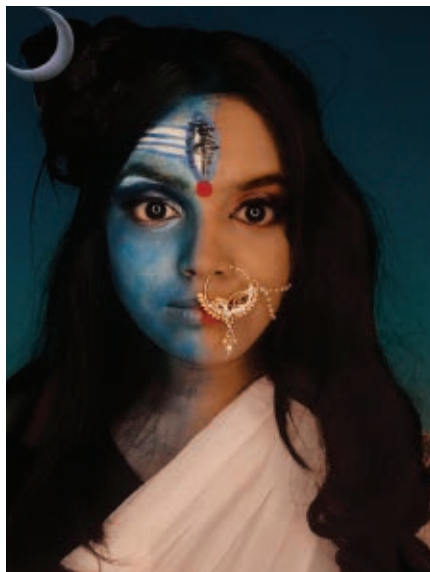
Dripping of Coca Cola over the face through face painting



Half-and-half makeup - Half Red Riding hood and half Wolf from the stories of The Little Red Riding Hood.



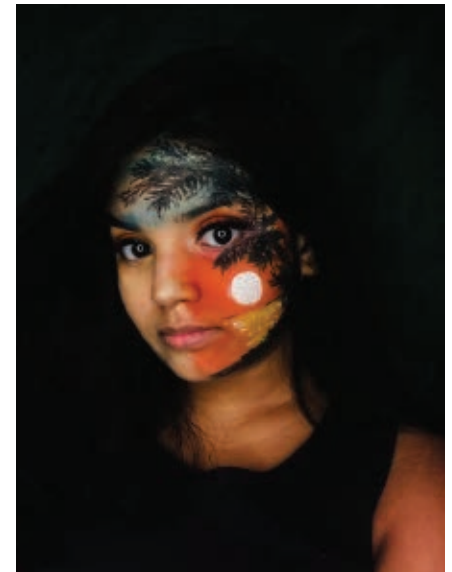
Recreated the famous character from The Avenger and The Guardians of Galaxies GAMORA through face painting



ARDHANARISHWAR - The power of Shiv and Shakti united. Lord Shiva granted the left side of his body to Parvati and the form Ardhanarishwar came into existence. Therefore, Ardhanarishwar is the fusion of Prakruti (Parvati or matter) and Purusha (Shiva or energy) or the masculine and feminine energies of the universe.



Recreated the Dali Mask from the famous Spanish show MONEY HEIST or LA CASA DE PAPEL, which defines resistance from the corruption in society.



Created the Sunset on beach on the face by painting.



## इक बात छिड़ी

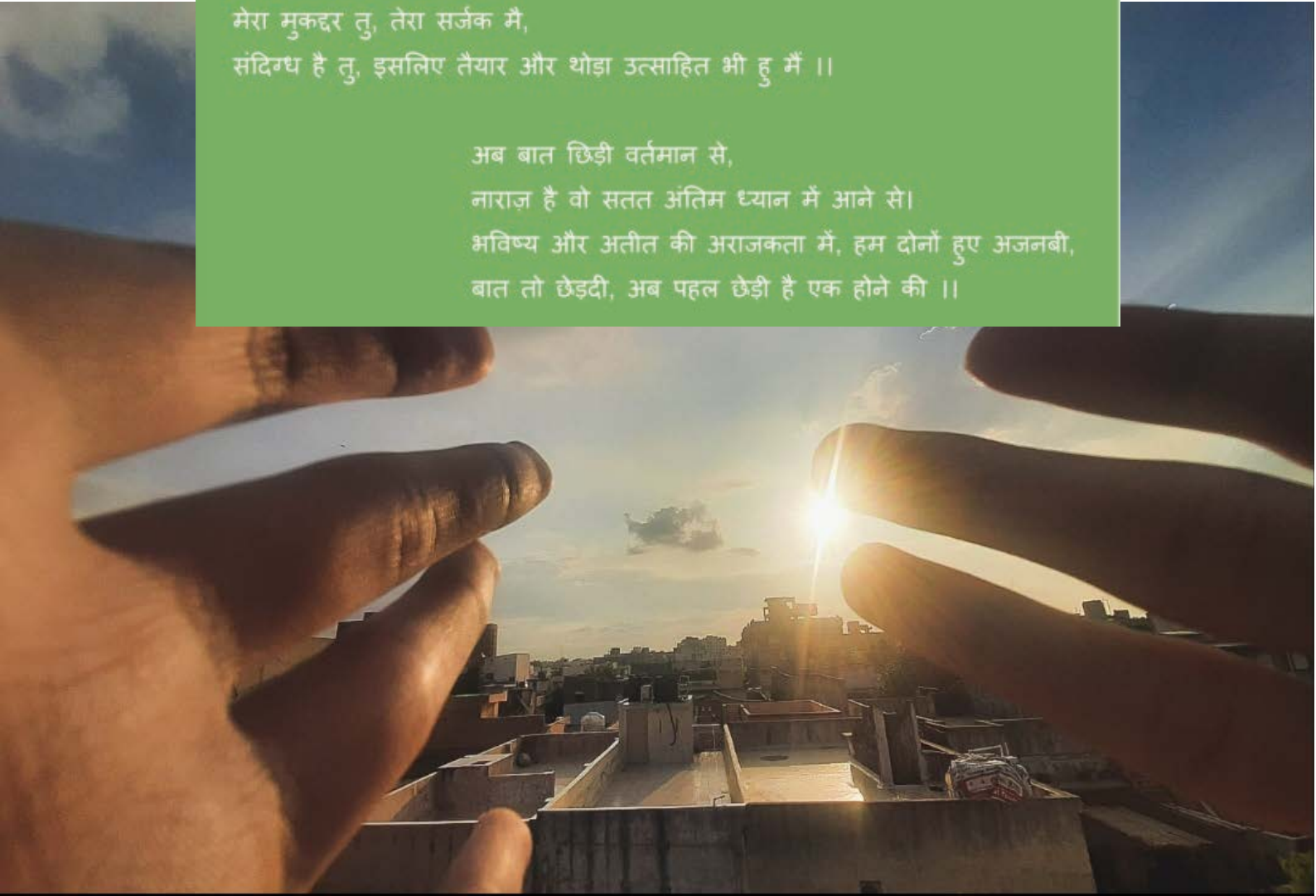
-Vivek Luhana, Semester 3, USLM

इक बात छेड़ी अपने मन से,  
नाराज़ हुआ जान के वो, कि क्यों माँगी रिहाई खुद से।  
दम ऐसा घुटा अतीत की चादर में, कि परिवर्तन का हाथ थामा,  
इसी में रिहाई हम दोनों की, नादान मन क्यों नहीं समझ पाता॥

इक बात छेड़ी अपने अतीत से,  
बेचैन हुआ मैं, कि बेखबर है मेरा बचपन मुझसे।  
ना शोर, ना हँसी, याद तो बस वो सीख, वो पाठ है,  
क्योंकि मेरा बचपन, मेरे बचपने में खोया है ॥

इक बात छेड़ी अपने भविष्य से,  
भले ही अस्पष्ट, मगर परिचित है एहसास से।  
मेरा मुकद्दर तु, तेरा सर्जक मैं,  
संदिग्ध है तु, इसलिए तैयार और थोड़ा उत्साहित भी हु मैं ॥

अब बात छिड़ी वर्तमान से,  
नाराज़ है वो सतत अंतिम ध्यान में आने से।  
भविष्य और अतीत की अराजकता में, हम दोनों हुए अजनबी,  
बात तो छेड़ी, अब पहल छेड़ी है एक होने की ॥





# MY MUSICAL MYSTERY

- BY YASHSWI DAVE, SEM 5, USLM

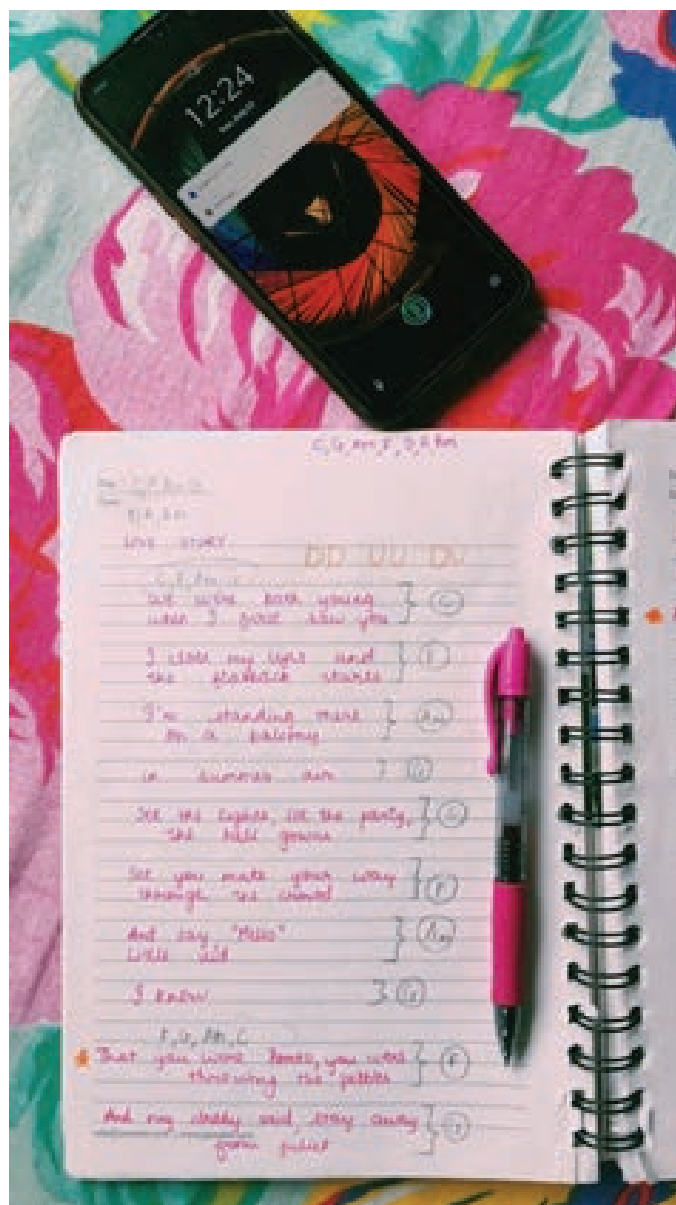
All of a sudden, we got the news of lockdown back in March. There was ample time to debate on what to do and what not to? Nobody went out because there was a fear of death in everyone's eyes. Being a student, it was very difficult for me to actually do something productive, as even our classes came to a halt briefly.

So, one day I was just surfing on Instagram when I got to know about how a girl ordered a musical instrument — Ukulele — online and started practising at home. We know that there are two types of people — those who like to hear music and those who like to play music. I am definitely the latter one. So, after a few days, I ordered one for myself too because I so wanted to learn an instrument. I am all for music.



I started playing it daily. Initially, I was like, "It is really hard". Later I came to know about my mistake that one should never start an instrument by directly jumping on to learning songs because the artistes you are learning from already know both the deeds and the manner on how to play.

Therefore, I started playing it again and this time from the basics. I started watching videos on 'Sayali Tank's YouTube channel. She is just amazing and she only makes videos particularly on Ukulele. I began by learning chords first, then how to use those chords, switching from one chord to another, strumming patterns and finally learned a whole song. Sayali says one must always learn the song which one already knows because picking up a song out of the blue will make it really complicated



What also helped me was taking notes where I wrote lyrics, chords and the strumming pattern of various songs. I have finally learnt many songs on Ukulele. I also realised that learning anything takes a lot of patience because the result does not come within a single day.



It returned home dejected and filled with negative thoughts. How I felt that I can't learn what I always wanted to learn. All of a sudden, I was about to give up. But, "Rome was not built in a day" and I started learning again. I learnt and shared my renditions on Instagram. Now, I know how not to give up. Playing a musical instrument helps build muscle memory, reduces stress, and infuses patience. To get an excellent outcome, one certainly requires effort. Playing any musical instrument uses almost every part of your brain.

My other favourite instrument is keyboard. I couldn't pursue it diligently as a school student due to my studies. Recently, I visited my grandfather's home and got overwhelmed. I saw the keyboard he owned and how he played it with great aplomb. I tried my hand on it and deep down found it extremely difficult to learn.

Once people know you can play an instrument well, they want to hear you play and you should certainly showcase your talent to your friends and family.



# ALL BY MYSELF

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- BY SMIT SONI, SEM 3, USLM



Lying here all by myself,  
I wonder where else I could be?  
With whom I could be,  
Here I am myself,  
But with whom I can be myself?  
Here I am all fearless & vulnerable,  
Where else I can be that?  
I may not be surrounded by people,  
But I am surrounded by myself,  
All the things are in my hands,  
Where else can all be in my hands?  
I am happy that I am here with me.



# SELF-PORTRAITS

- BY SUNAINA CHOPRA, SEM 5, USLM

A self-portrait is when a person paints or takes a photo of his or her own self. The first self-portrait was taken in 1500AD which set the phenomenon of self-depiction.

I started taking self-portraits recently. Earlier, I liked getting my photos clicked by my friends or my brother. But soon, I had to find another way — my brother was frustrated! That's when I decided to click self-portraits.

Often, people get confused between selfies and self-portraits. There is a difference though. We usually take selfies to remember some fun moments of our lives, to remember and show that we've visited that particular place. One is connected to the place, moments, and people around us. Self-portraits, on the other hand, carry a certain meaning and idea of a picture. They carry a message that is described by the person through himself or herself. They're connected more towards the attitudes and feelings of the person.

Selfies do not require preparation or planning of any sort except for the expressions on one's face.

They're taken on the spot without giving a second thought. Self-portraits require preparation and planning. I usually sit back and prepare on how am I going to shoot, the background, the outfit, among others. I use natural light, wait for the best hours of the day, and then decide the angles.

Unlike selfies, self-portraits don't necessarily only include a face.

One may feel that it is difficult to take pictures without proper equipment but I do not even have a tripod nor a really high-quality camera. I use a basic camera on my phone. Instead of a tripod, I use whatever I find, such as boxes, sticks, or stands, at home for support. And then, just click.

One can create their own background using different bed sheets and blankets. It's a very good idea to use props. It could be anything that you find at your home. One can get the best self-portrait by being camera-friendly and contrasting your looks with the concept. Lastly, just go with the flow and let your self-portrait speak.





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