



With Neelofer Mir



'Eating clean' versus 'eating dirty'

WITH increasing numbers of us educating ourselves on nutrition and health, most people will now recognise the eating clean and eating dirty terminologies.

'Eating clean' mainly refers to consuming more of the best and healthiest options in each of the food groups and less of the not-so-healthy ones. That means embracing foods like fresh vegetables, fruits and whole grains, plus healthy proteins and fats.

Think super food salads, quinoa, seeds, avocado, beetroot, grilled chicken and fish, and copious amounts of green vegetables. My Instagram feed is full of 'clean eating' inspiration, including a number of paleo-friendly recipes.

What is paleo, I hear you ask? The paleo diet is apparently the healthiest way you can eat because it is the only nutritional approach that works with your genetics to help you stay lean, strong and energetic. Research in biology, biochemistry, ophthalmology, dermatology and many other disciplines indicate it is our modern diet, full of refined foods, trans fats and sugar, that is at the root of the rising number of degenerative diseases such as obesity, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, depression and infertility.

'Eating dirty', as you can imagine, refers to foods which are the polar opposite of healthy eating. Picture burgers dripping with melted cheese, fried chicken, chips fried in duck fat and Krispy Kreme-style doughnuts, red velvet cake, cookies, ice cream and generally anything deep-fried and full of sugar.

It would seem obvious that we should steer well clear of anything unhealthy, but it's easier said than done.

My current approach to try and balance healthy eating with enjoying the things I like to eat is the 5/2 method. This means during the five week days, I try and keep to salads, lean proteins and plenty of lemon water, with a minimum amount of carbs. That way when the weekend arrives, I have two days to indulge in a treat of my choice.

I have never been someone who can suffer just to be thin. I refuse to starve myself and am not the most self-disciplined when it comes to exercise (apart from walking). I do, however, want to be as healthy as possible, so you have to do the best you can, as no one knows you better than yourself. As for me, I continue my love affair with food.

Follow Neelofer Mir on www.twitter.com/wildflowermir www.instagram.com/wildflowers_lens and www.facebook.com/WildflowersKitchenTable

In memory of Seema Jaya Sharma

'I WILL MISS HER WARMTH, POSITIVITY AND LARGER-THAN-LIFE CHARACTER'

by ASJAD NAZIR

AFTER a six-year-long battle with cancer, Seema Jaya Sharma was diagnosed as terminally ill earlier this year.

Instead of being crushed by the devastating news, the mother of two used social media to inspire countless people with her positivity and message of celebrating all life has to offer. The DJ, songwriter and singer also helped those who were going through difficult times and set up a charity to people fighting cancer. Her final message on Facebook also received a lot of media coverage.

Not surprisingly, there was a massive outpouring of grief when she passed away on August 21, and tributes, including from celebrities, poured in for a woman who truly made a difference to people's lives. *Eastern Eye* got some of those from all walks of life, who were inspired by Seema, to pay their own tribute to her.

Zaynab Mirza: "I came across this amazing woman's fight on Facebook while going through my own battle with cancer. We had long chats on Messenger and on the odd few occasions over the phone. I will never forget her conviction that I would beat the disease and her advice to never let 'cancer' consume me has stayed with me. Seema, your infectious laugh and fighting spirit is how I will remember you."

Raj Hundal: "Rest in peace, my beautiful friend Seema Jaya Sharma. I'm just happy you don't have to feel no more pain any more. Your lovely children and the great charity you founded, Can Mates, are proof you will never leave us or be forgotten. The little time I spent with you was filled with fun, laughter and bliss. Your positivity was a blessing. I have never seen a bigger heart or champion like yourself in my lifetime and doubt I will."

Swami Baracusc: "Seema was such an enigmatic personality that you were immediately drawn to her energy. We initially bonded over music; she was a big supporter of mine. But the further our

friendship delved, it was I who became more inspired by her brave and emotional journey. I'll miss our talks on today's music; she could be so brutally opinionated. However, I'll mostly miss her warmth, positivity and larger-than-life character and hope we can continue our crazy banter on the other side."

Priti Menon: "I got to know Seema through Facebook and grew closer to her when she was diagnosed as terminally ill earlier this year. I used to message her asking if I could help her in any way. "Seema then said she wanted me to fulfil one of her final wishes by singing a *vidai* song for brides who don't have a father to give them away. She wanted this to be a mother's take on the traditional *baabul ki duaan* song. It is also a gift that she would leave her daughter Shanti when she gets married one day. As time wasn't our friend, this song was written, recorded and filmed in one day. If it wasn't for the lovely people who got together to make this happen, we wouldn't have never been able to achieve her vision in such a short time."

'She was a perfect role model'

"I know she was touched by the song because Seema and her mum had tears in her eyes when they heard it. I feel happy knowing I could do one small thing for her before she left us."

Lisa Maffia: "Rest in peace my beautiful friend Seema Jaya Sharma. I will forever think of you."

Sanyya Gardez: "I first met Seema Jaya Sharma when she came on *Broken Silence* to discuss marriage. She was so open and honest about who she was and what she believed in and was so very hopeful about the future. Rest in peace, Seema, and say hi to my father for me."

Saima Ashiq: "I've had a kidney transplant and was going through a rough patch with my health. We were inboxing each other on Facebook. I didn't know her personally, but her kind words, positivity and passion for life gave me strength. I will always remember her words. She went through so

much and never moaned. I guess she never had time to. She will be missed by a lot of people. Gone too soon. RIP"

Sangeetha Singh: "My mom passed exactly the same way as Seema did (brain tumour) and with exactly the same attitude of staring death in the face. When I told Seema how my mom said she will poke us if we cry at her funeral, she laughed so much. I told her when my day comes I pray I have half her courage and half of my mom's. Rest in peace Seema."

Zee Ali: "I was blessed to spend time with Seema on many occasions and am proud to call her my friend. All we did was laugh and have great times. There aren't enough superlatives to pay her a fitting tribute. I have shed my tears for you, Seema. Now I smile and consider myself one of the privileged people to have spent time around your immense and contagious energy. Sleep well my angel. You're in no more pain. I'll love you forever because you'll live forever. You impacted so many people and will continue to do so."

Kishore Bhatt: "I met Seema Jaya Sharma for the first time at the Asian Music Awards. She was so lovely and we got on so well from that day. We then bumped into each other a lot as we lived two roads away and her daughter went to the same school as my children. She was always positive and smiling. She kept everyone laughing with her videos on Facebook and I'm sure she has them all smiling up there too."

Ali Azeem: "I am so happy to have met her. She advised me on my work and told me to never give up. I feel blessed to have known her and will miss her. She was like a big sister to me."

Riz Yasharah Azrz: "I never had a chance to meet Seema in person, but started following her vlogs. I inboxed her and never expected a reply, but she messaged me with some great words of wisdom. They will stay with me for life. She really is an unsung hero who was so courageous and brave. We really have lost a true angel."

'It was difficult to convey exactly what I wanted'

SEEMA JAYA SHARMA, who was terminally ill with cancer, had a last wish before she passed away and that was to take a special photoshoot with her young daughter Shanti. Before her sad death two weeks ago, Seema told *Eastern Eye* why it was so important to her.

"I was on Facebook, where I spend most of my time since being bedridden for the last five months, and the most stunning picture of a mother and daughter in matching dresses appeared on my newsfeed.

"It was very quickly followed by an idea - I had to have a picture like this with my princess. I have seen many beautiful photo shoots like this, but always in western dresses and that is how it began.

"After putting the status on Facebook, I was blessed with an abundance of people who wanted to help and on the very same day, the photographer came around.

"I had the lovely lady from the sari shop MemSaab, who is also a good friend, who matched the sari perfectly to the suit that Shanti already had. The next thing you

know, the following day we had the photo shoot.

"But as I lay in bed the night before the shoot, I wanted it to be more than us in matching dresses. I started thinking of how I could show her that I will be here for her always and she will always have my blessings. I have always been very open with her about my passing on and it is my greatest peace of mind that she has accepted it and says that I will always live in her heart. She is only eight.

"So then I had this image in my head and I won't lie, it was difficult to convey exactly what I wanted, but also so important because it is an image that is close to my heart.

"After that felt like several thousand back and forths, we finally got there. I am so grateful for everyone who worked so hard to make it happen. But the thing that makes me happiest is that when I showed Shanti the picture, I asked her what it meant to her and it's like she took the words out of my mouth. She just understood and that to me is perfection."



Priya Mulji: "I never met Seema Jaya Sharma; however I always admired her spirit and the fact she stayed strong until the end."

Hazel Kaur: "When it comes to Seema, the term strong, courageous woman is an understatement. Her charity Can Mates is her vision to help people who are going through cancer. I hope we can help to continue to bring this vision to light. People come and go in your life, but Seema is someone who inspires you to always be true to yourself, to be strong no matter what you are going through, and to smile. I love the fact I met you, Seema, and you have touched my life forever. Rest in peace our angel."

Rangzib Nazir: "Seema was and is an inspirational lady to thousands who are suffering from cancer. She smiled, laughed and never hated cancer. She loved life and we were lucky to work with her. She was a great person who symbolised humanity. May she rest in peace. I bet she's in heaven smiling."

Pritpal Kallah: "I met up with Seema a few times as we live close by. It was a humbling experience being in her company, but always so much fun too. Will miss her status updates on Facebook. Much love to her beloved family. Rest in peace Seema."

Kajol Kochar: "I only met Seema once at a birthday party. We had a great time chatting and dancing that night. She was diagnosed some time after, and I've been reading her posts and watching her videos. She is a magnificent inspiration, not just to cancer patients and women, but to every human being and in so many ways. God bless her and keep her safe. I wish an abundance of courage to her children and mother."

Rana Shama Nazir: "An amazing lady and an inspiration full of positivity and vibrant energy. A true example for those suffering with ailments and pains in how to overcome and face challenges head on. You have found peace now. May God bless you, dear beautiful sister Seema Jaya Sharma."

Robin Bedi: "Even the best words in the dictionary struggle to come close to describing her true brilliance. She was like an innocent child full of life who had no fear, nor did she harbour any ill or negative feeling towards anyone. She was always giving without any expectation of anything in return. A perfect role model and inspiration for all of us.

"Don't be sad that she has gone, but smile and remember the happy memories she has left us with because she was a true blessing, teaching us so important and valuable lessons of life and death. The only thing guaranteed in life is death, so let's adopt Seema's philosophy and live each day to the fullest. Be the best person that you can be, avoid negativity and distance yourself from bad energy. Love unconditionally, laugh uncontrollably, spread positivity and hope indiscriminately, like Seema taught us to. God blessed us with you Seema.

"I would say rest in peace but I know wherever you are, you are causing wonderful havoc."



IMPACT: Seema Jaya Sharma; and (above left and far left) with her daughter Shanti