Follow Every Rainbow

Reena Mehta

“Don’t limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you. What you believe, remember, you can achieve.” Mary Kay Ash, founder Mary Kay Cosmetics.

Rashmi Bansal is prolific nonfiction writer. This is her 5th book on entrepreneurship, she has been successful in stimulating entrepreneurship vibes in the youths by her previous books like Stay Hungry Stay Foolish, Connect the Dots, I have a Dream and Poor Little Rich Slum which has been translated in 10 different languages.

Being an eminent entrepreneur and author herself, Rashmi Bansal is also a youth expert and columnist. Packed with a power house of knowledge this book helps her readers get clarity of mind and a purpose in life, building enthusiasm to rise every morning with the knowledge of what they want to achieve from their life and work relentlessly every day every hour and every minute towards their goal in life.

This book Follow Every Rainbow is a well-researched book having stories of 25 successful women entrepreneurs. Very lucidly written, these stories are about the dreams, the struggles and the success of these daring women who not only dared to dream but also had the courage to peruse it in spite of all the odds. An eye-opener and inspiration to all the women this book will surely create an impact making every women search her soul for her passion and her dream.

1 Reena Mehta, K J Somaiya Institute of Management Studies and Research, Mumbai, reena.m@somaiya.edu
This book is a must read for all the women of all age groups as it shares the success stories of women from various strata of life and educational background. There are some stories of women who although not highly qualified or educated, and basically homemakers, started business in whichever field of expertise they were at i.e. designing clothes to baking cakes and cookies, to purse making and taking their business to the whole new level. While there are some success stories of women who got best of the education and started their business in animation, call centers and became successful, some stories are of those women who had to struggle a lot and had to start off with absolutely nothing and who later went on to build a huge empire of catering or for that matter labeling companies.

This book motivates the readers immensely, convincing them that the path to success is to dare to dream; then there is nothing to stop your dream from coming true. If you have the passion, courage and aim to focus on fulfilling your dream-- success will follow the suit.

This book is divided into 3 main parts Lakshmi, Durga and Saraswati.

The first part of the book aptly named Lakshmi has stories of those women who brought wealth and prosperity into their homes by co-opting family members into their business. The stories listed in this part are of all those fortunate women who got the support from their family members. It has inspiring stories of Meena Bindra pioneer of Biba brand. Meena was the wife of a Naval officer, who at a very late age of 39 started something just out of passion i.e. designing clothes for friends and ended up building the very famous Biba brand after getting support from both her sons. One of her sons had studied at Harvard who further brought the business to a higher level. The story of Rajni Bector founder of Cremica inspires women who can pursue their hobby of cooking for higher goals. What she started off as baking cakes for her family and
friends has turned out to be a Rs. 650 crores business empire supplying buns to McDonalds and has a Joint Venture with Quaker Oats of USA for manufacturing different types of ketch ups and sauces, Cremica also bakes biscuits for Cadbury and ITC Sunfeast. There is also an inspiring story about Manju Bhatia of Vasuli who entered the male dominated recovery business very early on i.e. in 2005 and how she carved a niche for herself by creating an only women force which rather than becoming her weakness became her strength. The story of Nirmala of Vivan Agrotech who pioneered and marketed vermin composting unit and Leela Bordia of Neerja International who worked with local artisans to sell Jaipur potteries with new vibrant colours, are also very motivating. There are struggle stories of Han Qui Hua from China and how a person with very meager means, without any formal educational support had to struggle hard to create her own successful business empire of label making which started off by selling rice cake at the age of 16. The very offbeat story of Hemlata Agarwal another housewife from Jamshedpur, a mother of two, who at the age 48 went on to become the oldest Indian woman to climb Mount Everest also makes a very inspiring read.

The Second part of this book called Durga has stories of women entrepreneur, forced by circumstances to become enterprising as they had to fight for their very own survival, having carved a place for themselves in the society today with the of Shakti of Ma Durga. It has touchy stories of Patricia Narayan who was forced to start a catering business and how she fought against all odds to grow the business. For the first time I read the story of a female sculptor Jasu Shilpi who carved statues of great people and got appreciation all around the world. Dipali Sikand of Les Concierges where Rakesh Jhunjhunwala is an investor tells us how she started for the first time the concept of ‘life care desks’ and her journey to open international branches of the business. There is also the very motivating story of Ela Bhatt who devoted her entire life for
bottom of the pyramid- like vegetable vendors, rag pickers and midwives. SEWA started by Ela Bhatt believes in Gandhian values and caters to 1.7 million women. There is this wonderful story of Nina Lekhi of Baggit. The sales of this brand are more than Rs. 34 crores. Her story emphasizes on how she struggled as a college student to start something very small. A belief in herself made her create Baggit which has gone on to become a reputed name in the luxury goods market.

The third and the final part of the book is Saraswati has stories of women armed with professional education, who carved out their identity through entrepreneurship. It has stories of Otara Gunewardene of Odel the first woman entrepreneur to take her company public in Srilanka. Namrata Sharma of Krayon Pictures who started her Animation Company After every story there is a advice from these personalities which is very inspiring as most of them advice you to be focused, passionate and maintain balance between personal and professional life.

Though the book is good, sometimes it becomes a little monotonous as the theme of all the stories is the same. A change in the style of depicting the lives of all these successful women would have made the book even more interesting.

But overall this book inspires the minds of young and old giving them a purpose in life.

“Today’s decisions are tomorrow’s realities. Remember you have three choices: Take it, leave it or change it “as rightly said by Marsha Petrie Sue.