

There are several concepts in bharatanatyam which can help you cope with the challenges in life. For example, the mudras of the dance form channel your mind in certain directions. They highlight the mind's power of perception. On many occasions, stress, too, is a result of your perception of the situation. *Nritta* and *abhinaya* are integral parts of bharatanatyam that highlight the duality of life, and teach you how to balance your personal and professional lives. *Thala* symbolises the rhythm of life, and gives you essential lessons on time management.

In her book *What Is Bharatanatyam*, Vidya Bhavani Suresh, dancer, musicologist, researcher and author, draws out various life skills that the ancient dance form offers. She illustrates how one can use basic concepts of the dance—like *padam*, *talam*, *margam*, *nritta* and *abhinaya*—to navigate the problems in life.

"It is a book on positivity," she says. "It teaches you how you can live life in an easy manner, and get the best out of it." She says you can never be truly peaceful if you let emotions get the best of you. The graceful movements of bharatanatyam are the best way to de-stress, she says. In her book, she elaborates on how the dance form offers much more than a spectacular visual experience; it gives deep insights into life. "It was very challenging in the beginning," she says. "But as I started [writing], thoughts started flowing." She says the book is rooted in personal experiences



WHAT IS BHARATANATYAM

Author: Vidya Bhavani Suresh
Publishers: Skanda
Pages: 264
Price: ₹1,330

as well the experiences of people she knows.

The book is divided into two segments of 10 chapters each—'The Splendour of Bharatanatyam' and 'Life Lessons through

Bharatanatyam.' While the first part elaborates on the dance form, the second interprets and applies it to various life situations. Both are seamlessly blended. The book is a must-read for the busy professional, the multi-tasking parent, the stressed-out student.... Suresh has taken a fresh approach to writing about bharatanatyam, and helps you see it in a different light.

A mother of three, Suresh's journey in dance began at the age of 16, thanks to her mother who was passionate about it. "My mother wanted me to learn dance, even though I preferred music," she says. So she took the best out of both worlds. Her book on 50 rare Carnatic ragas is very popular among musicians and music lovers. ●