

# STELLA

AWARD - WINNER

11 November 2018

Move over,  
Marie Kondo

Can these  
A-list approved  
sisters  
declutter  
your  
mind?

40

beauty  
'tweaks'  
for over

40s

(yes, they  
really work!)

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The Sunday Telegraph

# Meet the sisters who can Marie Kondo your mind

One is the yoga teacher credited with helping Kate Moss calm her party lifestyle, the other is a health-food chef to the stars. Now Nadia Narain and Katia Narain Phillips are on a mission to make over *your* life. *Kerry Potter* gets the low-down

PHOTOGRAPHY: MORGANE LAY & JONNY COCHRANE







KATIA NARAIN PHILLIPS

**'People are so sick of hearing a 20- or 30-year-old's advice on how to live. We have age on our side'**

in their younger days. Take Nadia talking about her recent eight-day digital detox: 'Checking your phone is like smoking cigarettes – you were just going to have a social one at dinner, but then suddenly you've smoked the whole packet.'

The principle of self-care, the theme of their debut book and surely the most zeitgeisty phrase of the last couple of years, is hard to argue with – it's basically being kind to yourself and carving out time to do things that nurture you (rather than scrolling through Instagram). Their new book focuses on establishing rituals to achieve that – from making your bed properly in the morning, to getting up 10 minutes before everyone else in your house to enjoy a cup of tea in peace with the lights low and no phone to hand. Most of it isn't exactly rocket science.

'Yes, we do all already have rituals, but the book is about *how* you do them. It's about paying attention, pausing and reconnecting with yourself,' says Katia (favourite ritual: changing out of her smart-jeans-and-blouse work clothes into her joggers-and-jumper 'home clothes' as soon as she returns from the school run with her 11- and nine-year-old boys. This 'changes the energy of my day and draws a line under work').

Despite my initial cynicism, it's a pithy, witty book, full of simple, achievable exercises or 'rituals' to tackle challenges – job interviews, dealing with difficult people, accepting your flaws, starting the new year on the correct note – as well as recipes for herbal teas and soothing bath salts. You know how you don't need your mum to tell you to eat more vegetables because you knew that already, but when she does, you do actually eat more veg? It's a bit like that.

Both recoil at the term 'guru'. 'It gets thrown around and used too loosely,' says Nadia. 'My yoga guru is in her 70s and I've studied with her since I was 18. She's a guru. Our book is just stuff we've done over the years that works for us. If it works for you, that's wonderful. If it doesn't, that's cool.'

They're unconcerned about the recent backlash against glossy, photogenic, self-appointed well-being experts. 'We were talking about that with someone who's worked with a lot of those girls the other day, and he said, "People are so sick of hearing a 20- or 30-year-old's advice on how to live your life," says Katia. 'We, however, have got age on our side!'

They point out they're not 'part of that scene', although Melissa Hemsley, one half of that other famous sister well-being act, is a close friend. 'We've been doing this for more than 20 years each, since before it was fashionable,' points out Nadia. 'When I started teaching yoga, not one of my friends did it. Now every single one comes to my classes. It's just a different time.'

Part of the problem is that it seems to be exclusively a rich woman's game. 'Our ethos is definitely not about spending loads of money on fashionable smoothies and leggings,' she says. 'Rituals are about pausing and noticing the small things you can do. It's about time rather than money.'

Growing up in Hong Kong with a South African ballet dancer and Pilates teacher mother, and a hard-living Indian father who worked in fashion retail, the sisters had a 'temperamental' childhood. 'Our parents had hangovers all the time,' says Nadia with a laugh. 'It was always, "Stop talking so loudly." Everything we did irritated them. You only realise when you start drinking what a hangover feels like – as kids we just thought we were doing everything wrong.'

Their parents divorced and both girls left home at the earliest opportunity, with 16-year-old Nadia travelling the world modelling, living in New York and LA, and eventually getting into yoga. Katia followed not long afterwards to study photography in Boston, before training as a massage therapist and working as a chef.

Their late teens and 20s were a blur of 'drinking and drug taking', before they both turned to the kind of alternative therapies they were already familiar with, thanks to their eastern upbringing. Although working in similar fields, they lived fairly separate lives, and only became 'inseparable' after the death of their father 12 years ago. Having spent six long weeks by his hospital bed in India, they realised how much they had in common and how their careers might complement each other.

By then they both lived in London and they soon began working together, with Katia doing the cooking on Nadia's yoga retreats. Co-writing books felt a natural progression, although not without some low-level sibling bickering. And what's it like working together? 'She calls me every hour,' growls Katia. 'That's because she doesn't reply to emails quickly enough!' shoots back Nadia.

Their keeping-it-real, not-taking-themselves-too-seriously, low-key approach is charming. While Katia may extol the virtues of playing her sons a guided meditation every night before bedtime (not sure that'd work in my house), she admits the handmade sushi rolls in their lunchboxes aren't such a hit. 'They complain a lot. One of them recently said, "Can't you just make us normal kids' food, like pasta?"'

As for their nickname, the 'Marie Kondos of the mind', they see it as a huge compliment. 'We love [Marie Kondo] and we try to keep our houses as clutter-free as possible as we believe it has a direct effect on your well-being,' says Katia. She pauses and adds with a straight face, 'Just don't open that cupboard behind you, please.' ♦ *'Rituals for Every Day' by Nadia Narain and Katia Narain Phillips (Hutchinson, £14.99) is out Thursday. Buy yours for £12.99 at books.telegraph.co.uk or call 0844 871 1514*



From left Narain sisters fans Sienna Miller, Kate Moss and Reese Witherspoon