

## #CELEBRATION

# International Sudoku Day

Puzzle lovers, get ready to celebrate because it is time for International Sudoku Day!



Challenge your mind and improve your logic skills with this addictive puzzle game that has taken the world by storm! We all must have played Sudoku once in a lifetime. It is a game to fill a 9x9 grid so that each column, row and 3x3 sub-grid contains all the digits from 1 to 9. So, the nine-nine is the natural choice for the day of celebration. Every year, on September 9, the world celebrates International Sudoku Day.

So now it's time to get your brain into gear because today is the most definite cause for celebration.

While many people believe that Sudoku is a game that has ancient roots in Asia, the game is actually a fairly modern invention. In the late 1700s, a Swiss mathematician named Leonhard Euler invented a similar game that he called Latin Squares. The difference is that the game was not subdivided into blocks of nine at the time.

Almost two hundred years later, Howard Garns, a freelance puzzle inventor from Connersville, Indiana, submitted his puzzle to an American puzzle magazine called Dell Pencil Puzzles and Word Games. The puzzle, called "Number Place", was first published in 1979 in a book of random and various puzzles.

At the time, the puzzle didn't really gain much traction of its own, even though it continued to be published by Dell in their puzzle collection books.

By 1984, Number Place had made its way to Japan, where the Japanese people were especially fond of it.

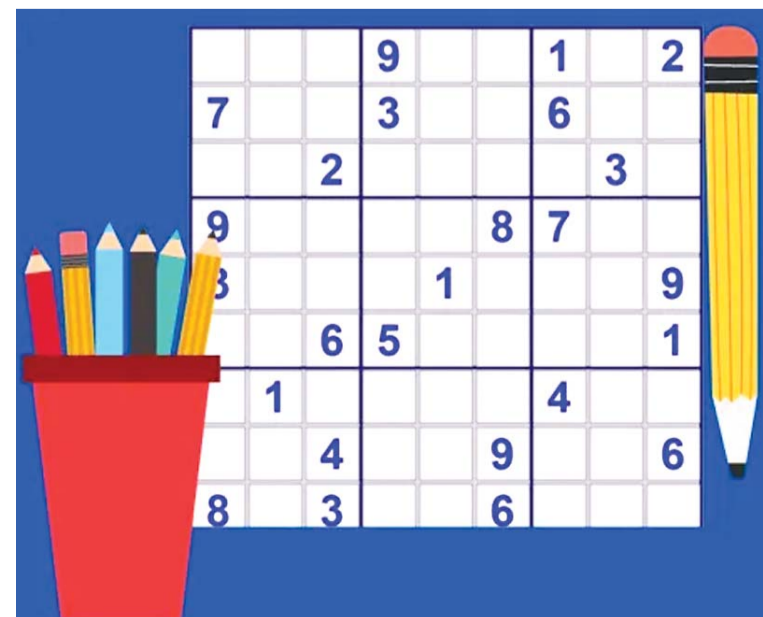
This is probably due to the fact that crossword puzzles are very difficult in the Japanese language, but this game only required the use of numbers so it's much simpler. Here the game was named Sudoku, pronounced "Soo-doe-koo", meaning something along the lines of "the numbers must remain single".

For two decades, Sudoku remained an obsession only in the Far East until the late 1990s when a traveller picked up a puzzle book while on vacation in Tokyo. A New Zealand judge named Wayne Gould saw the squares and quickly became a devoted enthusiast of filling them in.

When Gould's wife presented his work to the London Times and they printed a Sudoku puzzle in their newspaper in 2004, the game began to grow in popularity and became "viral". Sudoku games began popping up in puzzle books while books made up entirely of Sudoku started hitting the stores.

No one can explain exactly why Sudoku has become so popular all around the world, but some people think it has to do with the human's innate desire to find order from chaos. In addition, when a person is able to finish a Sudoku puzzle, it offers a sense of accomplishment and productivity. It makes a person feel like a winner. And they're in!

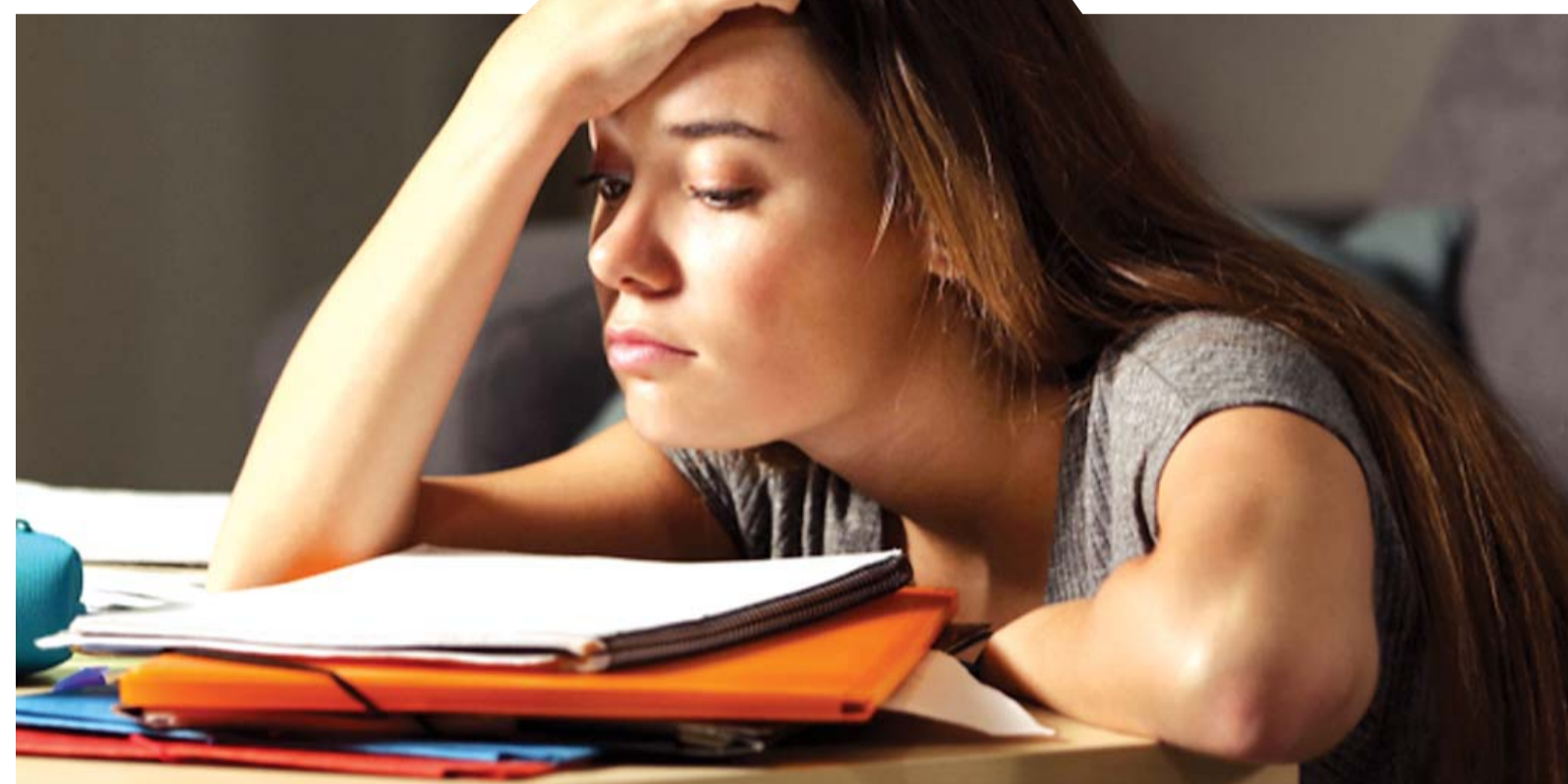
In 2013, International Sudoku Day was founded by the World Puzzle Federation to pay heed to this unique, challenging and somewhat addictive game. So get ready to play and enjoy one - or many - of these little puzzles in celebration and honour of International Sudoku Day!



Shailaza Singh  
Published author, poet and a YouTuber

# Teenage Troubles

In a world where teenagers know more than their parents ever will, boyfriends and girlfriends have become the new bone of contention between the teens and their exasperated parents. While parents want their children to focus on their studies, games, career; the not-so-child prefer to walk the road of their own making!



Most! Almost every girl in my class has a boyfriend, why can't I? said my daughter. 'How many times do I have to tell you that this is not the time to have boyfriends. It is the time to study, get into a good college and then perhaps think of relationships,' I replied. My daughter muttered, 'You don't realize the peer pressure there is, do you? I am the only girl in my class who doesn't have a boyfriend and the rest of them treat me like an alien.' Although I hate to use it but my answer is the same as what my mother used to say when I compared my life with that of my peers, 'If they will jump in a well, will you too follow suite? To this my daughter replies her standard answer, 'take a chill pill.'

**Bamboozlement**  
My daughter and I had been having these conversations for the last two years. She kept asking me questions like these and I kept repeating the same answers. But after a while, this conversation became more of a shouting match. My daughter would then bang her room's door in rage which would effectively cut the entire conversation. Perhaps, that's where Sunny Deol gets his 'dhai kilo ka haath' for his blockbuster movie 'Gadar'! He is probably still a teenager at heart!

**Hearts apart**  
Jokes apart, I was determined to put an end to this conversation, so I decided to consult the Google, the modern age oracle on the internet. When I typed in 'why does my teenage daughter want a boyfriend?', to my surprise thousands of sites opened up!

Some talked about how you should deal with your teenage daughters, how you need to make them understand the many perils of dating, while some were totally against the Indian parents and their 'over obsessive' attitude. In fact, one person on Reddit asked 'What is so wrong in our culture to have a boyfriend or girlfriend? I don't understand why Indian parents lose their temper when they come to know their son/daughter is dating someone. I've seen some parents literally beating their children for being in a relationship. Didn't they have crush or fall in love with someone when they were young? It's such a normal human thing that all of us go through yet for some reason it's such a big taboo in our country.'

Many people (mostly teenagers probably) replied to this. One said, 'My friend's parents literally ran away from their home to get married but she's still not allowed to have a bf' while the other commented 'Yup, the hypocrisy is staggering sometimes. You're not allowed to date or meet people of the opposite gender.'

**Mistrust Trust**  
Another reply read, 'Most Indian parents have major trust issues with their kids. They have zero confidence by default in something a kid chooses for themselves - could be a career, partner, college, you get the idea. They are control freaks to some extent (sad but true). They want the best for their kids, but don't have enough information to judge if the partner chosen by

## #PARENTING



the kid would be the best. But don't attempt to get said info because of the trust issue. So, they instead go with much sillier metrics like horoscope matching. In some cases, the parents were burned by failed love affairs themselves. So don't want kid to end up like them etc. (Indians' natural tendency to generalize others plays into this. Yes, I know I'm guilty of it myself here.) They majorly want their kids to focus on education/job whatever is helping them 'get ahead' in life and see having a partner as distraction.' There was another reply which literally took the icing on the cake and even made me step back and think. This reply read, 'The parents of today they grew up in the 90s and romantic movies in those times were cringe and filled with crap which is far from love. This is what gave a twisted perception

towards love and dating. As a teen growing up in the late 80s, early 90s without the internet and only your 'elders' and news media outlets to trust/shape your world view - movies, tv show brainwashing were the only mediums to understand love, sex and relationship perspectives (other than personal experience). And so in my personal experience and of my friend circles we were just stunted in terms of our emotional growth and attitudes towards sex, etc.

Meanwhile our counterparts in the west it seems like were busy racking up serious learning hours with respect to relationships, sex, etc. The elders back then would pipe up when confronted with this reality with the usual trope 'no wonder divorce rate is 50%, which is quite a lame argument considering that India is also facing the same issues!'



## Wonderful Weirdos Day

Of course, there is no exact way to prove this, but it is likely that weirdos have been around as long as humans have. All it really takes is one person to be a little bit different than everyone else and, just like that, a weirdo appears! But weirdos haven't always been considered by everyone to be wonderful. Enjoying this special day is particularly fun for those whose sense of "normal" is slightly unique! Try creative ideas for celebrating Wonderful Weirdos Day.

## #HEALTHY HABITS

# 5 Ways to Reduce Your Stress Levels

In each moment, we can be constricted and tight, or relaxed and open. Which are you right now? Can you breathe deeper and allow yourself to relax and open?

Stress is a part of life, and eliminating it is a fool's errand. If you ever succeeded in eliminating all of stress, your life would be boring and you'd have removed yourself from anything meaningful.

That said... too much stress can be toxic. It can negatively affect our sleep, our health, our relationships, our happiness. If your stress levels are high on a regular basis, it's like having a smoking habit — it will take its toll over time.

So how do we reduce stress levels to something manageable? We are going to share some of the most important ways to shift stress in your life. They might not be new to you, but we strongly encourage you to view them as life-savers, and commit to putting them into practice.

### Relaxed State of Being

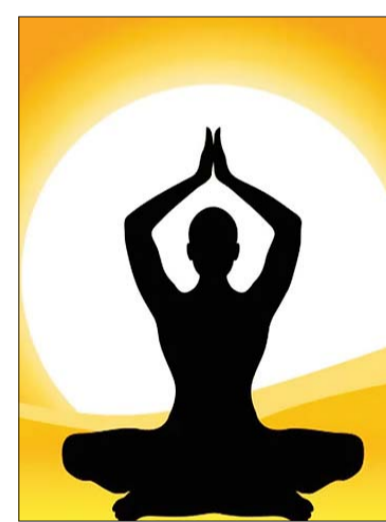
In each moment, we can be constricted and tight, or relaxed and open. Which are you right now? Can you breathe deeper and allow yourself to relax and open? This state of relaxed being is always available to us, but we have to recognize when we're in a constricted state, and take responsibility for bringing ourselves to the open state. It's a practice, and the more you consciously put yourself into this state, the easier it becomes. Can you walk around more of the day in openness and this relaxed state of being?

### Breathing Practice

When you're stressed and feeling in a constricted state... take a moment to breathe deeper into your belly. When we're constricted and stressed, our breathing is shallow (we're in a fight-or-flight state). So breathing helps move your nervous system into a more relaxed state, as if you're not in any danger (and you're not, even if it feels like it a lot of the time). Practice this 5 times a day (or more) and you'll see a huge difference in your stress levels.

### Simplify and Prioritize

Our lives are filled with endless choices and commitments, and simplifying can be liberating.



Embrace the beauty of a simplified schedule, allowing space for spontaneity and relaxation. Then practice doing one thing at a time — letting go of everything else that's calling for your attention. This single-tasking mode helps you to focus more, and worry less.

### Nurture through Nature

Nature has an innate ability to soothe our minds and restore our spirits. Spending time outdoors, walking or otherwise being active each day, can have a profound impact on our stress levels. Disconnect from screens and immerse yourself in the natural world. Listen to the rustling of leaves, feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, and breathe in the fresh air.

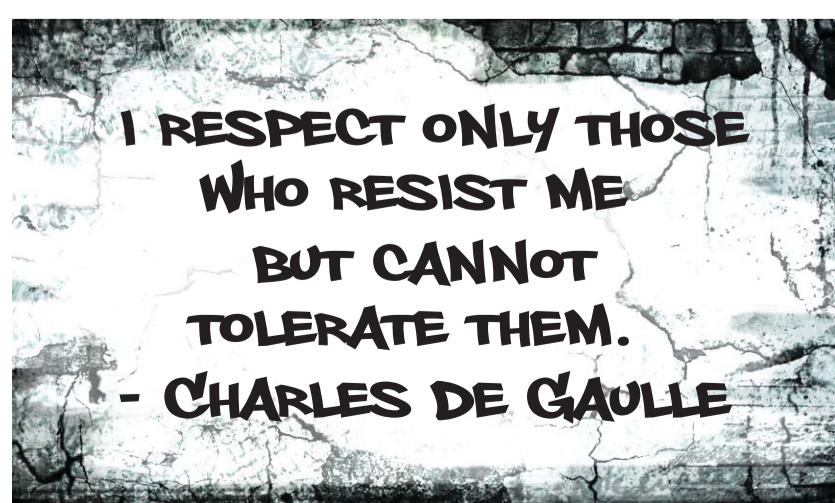
### Awe & Gratitude Practice

While you're out in nature, let yourself open to a sense of something bigger. Stress levels are high when we're too focused on the disaster we feel is in front of us, but when we open to a sense of the wider world, it lets some of that stress go. When we practice awe at the world around us, it helps us to open. When we remember what we have to be grateful for, we feel a sense of appreciation for life. These might sound trite, but I encourage you to take them on as a true practice — something you explore with a sense of discovery to learn what the practice has to offer. It will change your life.

Remember, reducing stress is not about eliminating challenges from your life, but about changing your relationship with them. By integrating these practices into your day, you can build resilience and find beauty in the midst of chaos.

Start small, be patient with yourself, and allow these habits to gradually transform your experience. As you embrace mindful breathing, simplify your life, and reconnect with nature, you'll find that stress loses its grip, making way for a more serene and fulfilling existence.

## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS

