

## NEW RELEASE

## ‘Want to put scaffolding around their spine’

Actor-writer-mum Tisca Chopra hopes to instill period pride and self-confidence in teenage girls with her latest book, a lockdown project

JANE BORGES

As a teen, the four Ps (puberty, periods, pimples and people) hung like an albatross around our neck. What made it tough was the stigma that came with some. Add to that, the lack of access to good information. It didn't help my 14-year-old self, who was a bundle of nerves, back then.

Actor-writer Tisca Chopra shares our sentiment, when we connect with her to discuss her new book *What's Up With Me?* (Red Panda, Westland). The just released title is a handy guide for young girls, offering practical suggestions for coping with the rollercoaster that is growing up is, especially tackling the four Ps.

The idea came from Vidhi Bhargava, editor at Westland and Chopra's schoolmate. "Because I am quite invested in my daughter's life, as all mums are, I started looking at her, and her friends more carefully, trying to understand their level of curiosi-

ty about things, and how trusting they are about our generation," says Chopra.

**Edited excerpts from the interview.**

**Most of the issues you discuss in the book are still considered taboo here. How did you negotiate them?**

I have had some issues with this growing up as well. I always talk very directly about things, and find it puzzling, when this happens with [conversations around] periods. The fact that you have your periods is great. What should be a concern is when we don't get it. Historically, in many cultures, there used to be celebrations when girls got their periods, because it was a biological necessity for survival of the species. I wonder when this narrative changed, and when we started making cloaked or veiled references to it. At home, I have taken a lead in this

matter. I call vagina, vagina, and thr penis, penis. If you can talk about your hands and feet, why won't you talk about the rest of the body? I feel this is also a way of putting women on the back-foot. It angers me. [Through this book] I wanted to give girls the power to change and control their own narrative. Subtly, I wanted to put a scaffolding around their spine, and make them stand upright, and say, 'You know what? We are the reason why the human race is procreating.' We need to instill period pride in our girls.

**What kind of research did you have to do for the book?**

Apart from Vidhi, I had three other wonderful women holding my hand through the process. There is Dr Mala Arora, a leading gynaecologist from Delhi, and Malvika Varma, counselling psychologist and therapist, who discussed teen angst, hormonal issues, and



TISCA CHOPRA

mood swings, among other things with me. Akanksha Angnihotri did the lovely illustrations for the book. We have tried to keep the book as inclusive as possible, not just talking about the equations between girls and boys, but between girls as well. Though I am a mother, I chose to write this book from the perspective of an informed friend.

**You also have a chapter dedicated to the boys. Why?**

The fact is that having your period, at some point, does involve procreation, and there is a curiosity attached to it. I

wanted to satisfy this curiosity in a very matter of fact way. Like women, men are biological entities too. They have their own issues and it's not easy for them either. We need to have empathy for the other gender. I wanted to demystify this whole idea of boy-ness.

I hope this book becomes a conversation starter of sorts, and that both, mothers as well as fathers become part of it. Why are fathers being kept out of period talk? It needs to be normalised, and that's the narrative I want to push for.

jane.borges@mid-day.com

WHAT: *What's Up With Me?*

PRICE: ₹350

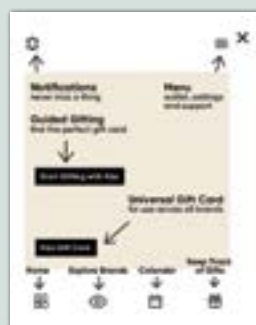
TO BUY: amazon.in

## Tohfa, tohfa, tohfa

A fashion designer and her husband launch a gifting app whose product creation is eclectic and design led

CYNERA RODRICKS

➔ Necklace from Studio Metallurgy



➔ Payal Khandwala and Vikram Ramchandani



EACH time we think of buying someone a gift, we are riddled with doubt. Wouldn't it be nice to have the option to swap a gift without the gifter knowing?

Kizo let's you do this,

The gifting app, launches by fashion designer Payal Khandwala and husband Vikram Ramchandani, helps you send gift cards from design-led brands curated by the couple. "We found that with friends and families living in different cities, or separated due to the pandemic, gifting became even tougher during the lockdown. The idea was to make it convenient in a more thoughtful way, where you discover new brands and the flexibility lies in the hands of the person you gift. Now, you never have to give or receive another gift that won't be loved," says Khandwala.

Kizo easy to navigate, we found. The collection includes apparel, jewellery, cosmetics, bags and skincare.

As a jewellery hoarder, I found Kizo's jewellery collection to be both eye-catching and wardrobe-friendly. The designs are contemporary, fashionable and have the ability to elevate any outfit. The rug collection stands

out from the rest of the lifestyle section and is my personal favourite. Despite the limited number of pieces available, the colours of these rugs and their abstract designs can make them an ideal decorative piece for your home. The board games section is also a good place to look for unique gift ideas. When it comes to board games we usually gift games like ludo, snakes and ladders, monopoly, uno, etc. Kizo, on the other hand, has a wide range of board games with catchy names like cards vs sanskaar, taco cat goat cheese pizza, sixstix, and others that are very different from the mainstream board or card games we play. Cards vs. Sanskaar, for instance, is nearly identical to and



Board games by Bored games



Handcrafted necklace from En Inde

despicable as Cards vs. Humanity. However, in Cards vs. Sanskaar, the questions are filmy, making the game more enjoyable to play.

There are two gifting options, the guided gifting and the Kizo gift card. If you're sure about the likes and choices of the person you're gifting, go for guided gifting. If not, simply add any amount of your choice to the gift card. Both options make your gifting experience easy. To make the experience more personalised, you can attach a message, a recording or a picture along with the gift.

WHAT: Kizo – Curated Gift Cards

WHERE: Android and iOS

FOR: Prices start at ₹100

Email ID