

Direct Connect



Sadanand Godse

For youngsters grappling with the challenges of life in the urban jungle, the Art of Living Foundation's Youth Empowerment Seminar (YES!+) held at Pune from August 3 to 9 came as a shot in the arm. 335 people in the 18 to 30-year age group participated in the seminar. The programme was tailored to help young people improve their powers of concentration, time management and communication skills, as well as leadership qualities. "Parents and teachers often complain that today's youngsters have lost direction," says Dinesh Ghodke, an IIT graduate who worked as an instructor at the seminar. "The seminar was a proactive attempt at addressing this issue."

A majority of participants found the interactive nature of the seminar a great help. It put them at ease to discuss their relationships with friends and family, their problems at work and at college. "Unlike parents and teachers, the instructors did not lecture us," says Sri Vidya, a first-year student at Fergusson College. "They shared their experiences about the pressures they used to face as students," she adds. The yoga sessions and breathing exercises during the programme gave her some practical tools to cope with everyday stress. "I used to look at life with a tinge of cynicism," says Vidya. She swears that by the end of the programme, she had developed a positive and confident approach to life.

For software professional Ankur Arora, the seminar proved to be a great help in improving his powers of concentration. "This was a week of introspection for me," says Arora. "The seminar has given me valuable tips to improve the quality of my relationships, not just with others, but also with myself," he says. Iravati Kulkarni, a freelance editor and translator found the seminar an ideal venue to connect with other young people. "In our daily lives, we are becoming increasingly disconnected with the people around us," says Kulkarni. "This seminar has given me several useful tools which can help to mend my relations to the world." —TNN