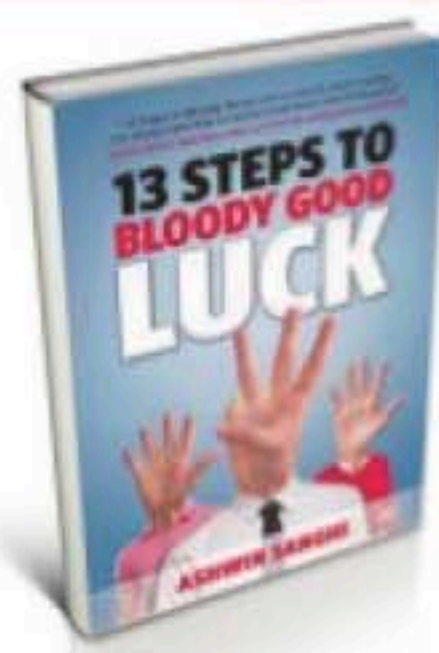


Kismet connection

Bestselling author Ashwin Sanghi's latest is a non-fiction—a far cry from the theological, historical, mythological and crime thrillers that he is known for. Will fortune favour him this time too?



**13 STEPS TO
BLOODY
GOODLUCK**
Ashwin Sanghi
Westland
₹100
Pp 160

Kunal Doley

AFTER COMPLETING his first novel, *The Rozabal Line*, Ashwin Sanghi was in the process of making submissions to literary agents and publishers, when he received one rejection letter after another—some polite and others not so much. Sorely disappointed, he described his situation to a close family friend, who responded, “In life, 99% is about good luck.” To this, Sanghi asked: “What about the balance 1%? Surely, that must be hard work or talent?” Laughing loudly, the family friend declared: “The final 1%? That’s called bloody good luck, my boy!”

Sanghi's latest, *13 Steps to Bloody Good Luck*, is all about that 1%. For, he believes that Lady Luck isn't that fickle, she is well within our reach. All one needs is to “train ourselves to be lucky”.

The entrepreneur-turned-best-selling author should know. By his own submission, *The Rozabal Line* was rejected 47 times before it was published. Not surprisingly, his first draft for *13 Steps to Bloody Good Luck* contained 47 steps to good luck, but then he deliberately crunched them to 13. “The choice of 13 was deliberate. It was to drive home the point that ‘triskaidekaphobia’ (fear of the number 13) has no place in our



Luck is simply the ability of an individual to ‘raise’, ‘recognise’ and ‘respond’ to opportunities, says the author in his new book

efforts to demystify luck,” says the 45-year-old author.

But then, what is the point of working hard or developing one's skills if it all boils down to luck? One may as well sit back and do nothing at all. The answer is both yes and no, says Sanghi. “Yes, we can change our luck. But no, it does not mean that one should stop working hard or developing one's skills. Luck is simply the ability of an individual to ‘raise’, ‘recognise’ and ‘respond’ to opportunities. The better one becomes in doing this, the better the odds of ‘getting lucky’, and the truth is that one often needs to work hard to ‘raise’, ‘recognise’ and ‘respond’,” he adds.

It's these three ‘R's—‘raise’, ‘recognise’ and ‘respond’—that form the core of Sanghi's new

book and which he would like to call the basics in the world of ‘good luck harvesting’. As per Sanghi, the 13 steps, or the ‘attitudes’ and ‘approaches’, as mentioned in the book, seem to be the ‘magnets’ that help lucky people ‘raise’ their flow of opportunities, ‘recognise’ valuable ones and ‘respond’ to them effectively.

To make things easier for the reader, Sanghi starts each of the 13 suggestions with a graphic item. He puts ‘tick marks’ to the left of each of them, indicating whether the recommendation involves a change in ‘attitude’ or ‘approach’ (or both). Additional tick marks to the right of each point indicate how the change can help in ‘raising’, ‘recognising’ or ‘responding’ to opportunities.

Through entertaining and informative anecdotes, narrations or personal experiences and vignettes of homespun wisdom, Sanghi gives us a whole new insight into how people can work towards being lucky. He ends the book with a twist, by adding a ‘14th step’ to bloody good luck. He writes: “It has been said that success is about having what you want, but happiness is about wanting what you have. In effect, the fourteenth step for good luck is: lucky people are those who are able to see how lucky they are.” He further writes: “In effect, truly lucky people are able to count and appreciate their blessings. This realization is the most important step to bloody good luck!”

But how often has ‘bloody

good luck’ played a role in his own life? “The most important events in my life happened because opportunities presented themselves and I reached out and grabbed them. I would never have written my first book, signed my first publishing deal, seen my book on a bestseller list or co-authored an international bestseller had it not been for the right opportunities and the right response,” says Sanghi, the man behind bestsellers like *Chanakya's Chant* and *The Krishna Key*. Last year, he and American author James Patterson co-wrote an India-based thriller, *Private India*, within Patterson's *Private* series. Sanghi is currently working on his next historical thriller titled *Sialkot Saga*. The story kicks off in 1947 in Sialkot (modern-day

Pakistan) and traces the evolution of a family business down the years.

From theological, historical, mythological and crime thrillers to now a ‘self-help’ book on ‘bloody good luck’, Sanghi has made his maiden attempt at non-fiction. He, however, insists that his first love is fiction—historical, mythological, conspiratorial and thrilling. “I am an absolute Dan Brown fan, but I also love the work of many other authors. Among thriller writers, my favourites are James Patterson, Thomas Harris, Jeffrey Deaver, Stieg Larsson and Martin Cruz Smith. Among Indian authors, I am a fan of Salman Rushdie, but I also enjoy reading the works of Devdutt Pattanaik, S Hussain Zaidi and Ramchandra Guha. My all-time favourites are *Autobiography of a Yogi* by Paramahansa Yogananda and *The Mahabharata Retold* by C Rajagopalachari,” he adds.

His love for fiction hasn't changed much though he offers. “It's just that I find that there are many topics and issues that I wish to comment on, hence the need to write in the non-fiction genre,” he explains. He says he's grateful that this particular title has been welcomed by readers. “The difficulty does not lie in writing in a new genre; the key challenge is getting one's core readership to accept and appreciate one's work,” he adds.

Sanghi doesn't like to call *13 Steps to Bloody Good Luck* a ‘self-help’ book. “It's much more of a feel-good book, one that tells you—through the lives of many people—that being lucky is a quality that you can develop; that it's not something that requires divine intervention,” he adds.

Sanghi sure has learnt how to develop luck, or rather bloody good luck.