



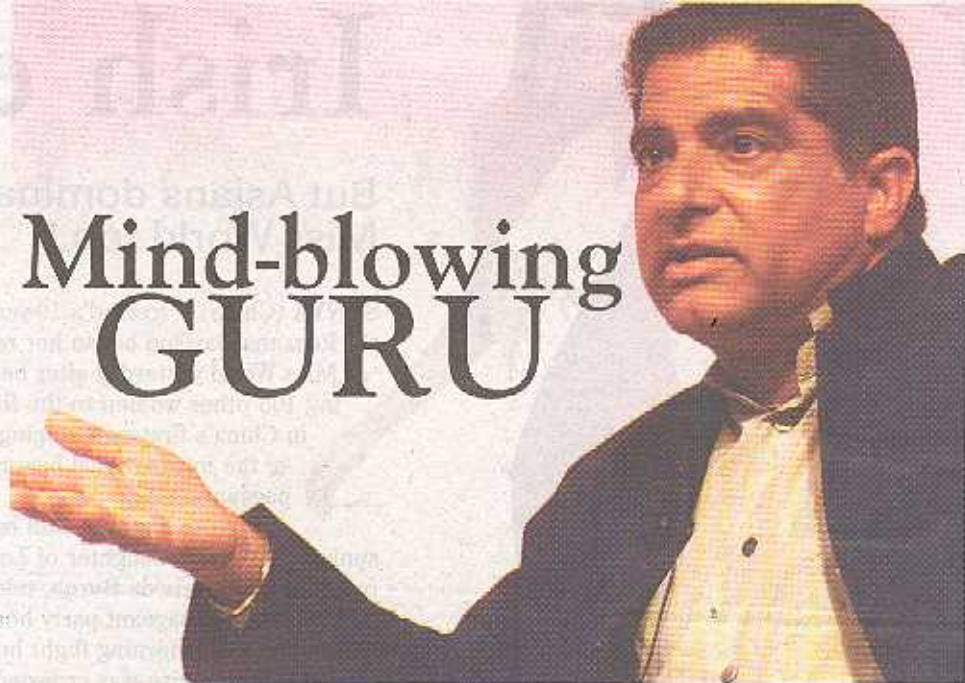
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Mind-blowing GURU

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Soul-meister Deepak Chopra on religion, race and how they co-exist with his work

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BUSH-WHACKING took on a whole new meaning when new age visionary Deepak Chopra told a forum of over 700 business people that the United States President and two of the world's most feared terrorist leaders were allies.

Speaking about leadership at the recent Global Brand Forum, the renowned mind-body guru criticised US President George W Bush's foreign policy and said the leader was no different from his enemies as he pursued violence as a means to an end.

"Mr Bush can be thankful to Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein because explicit enemies have become implicit allies – they co-create each other."

This is not the way leaders should be. True leadership comes from the soul.

"Leaders who aim only for external goals will fail," said the Indian-born holistic medicine expert.

In today's fear-based society after the 911 attacks, Mr Bush is

"probably the appropriate President" but the world has to transcend this "old paradigm of fear and competition" or risk being destroyed, he said.

No amount of war mongering and arms build-up will provide security. The only guarantee of security is to have no enemies.

"And the only way not to have enemies is to genuinely care," he said.

In an interview with TODAY, the noted author and guru left few sacred cows unslaughtered.

people by race and ethnicity.

"Race is a ridiculous notion. The minute you put a label on yourself, you limit yourself."

The soul-meister, who does not propound any particular ideology or dogma, also rejects the idea of religion, which he sees as divisive.

"All our religious conflicts are based on a tribal identity of God. We think of God as a dead white male in the sky. In other places, we think of God as a tribal chief."

He thinks the world needs spirituality that goes beyond religion.

"On one hand, we are trying to know about outer space, about the human genome, about quantum physics. But, our self identity has not kept pace with our understanding of how nature works," he said.

Yet, Chopra maintains that he is not exploiting the icons he treads on, such as the teachings in the Ayurveda – the ancient Indian treatise on health – which is part of the Hindu canon.

He draws on the ancient Vedas – the origin of Hindu philosophy – and not modern

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– Mind-body guru Deepak Chopra and his views on race

Hinduism.

Purists might see Chopra's differentiation between the two as too convenient, but there is no contradiction in his views on medicine and healing.

For countries such as Singapore and the US where an aging population makes medical costs a major issue, the best way to control such costs is through health education in the school curriculum.

Chopra said children must be taught to understand their bodies and emotions. They must learn about how to reduce

He started by talking about his ethnic kin – Hindus and Indians in general.

“Indians are a spiritually arrogant people. Just because we have a great spiritual history, we assume we are very spiritual, but there is so much violence there.”

Chopra practises what he preaches – holistic medicine in a holistically unified world – and disdains the identification of

stress, how to deal with relationships, the role of diet and about their physiognomy. (Physiognomy is the interpretation of outward appearance, especially the features of the face, to discover a person's predominant temper and character.)

“You have to start a system of education that gives you a context for living.”