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DAISY CLEMENTINE SMITH



THE CHRONICLES OF NAZARIAN

Author **Angella Nazarian** has a knack for discovering unforgettable stories of incredible women. Thanks to her latest book, "Visionary Women," we can all take a page of inspiration.

BY JENNIFER ARELLANO PORTRAIT BY ANGELA MARKLEW

Iranian-American author Angella Nazarian believes that everyone has a good story. "You don't have to be famous," she says. "My mom had a great story. Our best friends and teachers have great stories. It's just taking the time to really know and connect with those things." Nazarian's claim is bolstered by her own rigorous fact-finding: She researched and wrote 20 captivating profiles of female leaders in the fields of art, science, politics and more for her book "Visionary Women," out in October (published by Assouline).

The tome's extraordinary subjects include the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai; the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Doris Lessing; and long-distance swimmer Diana Nyad, who became the first person to complete the 110-mile Florida-to-Cuba swim without a shark cage.

"Visionary Women" is the follow-up to Nazarian's 2012 book, "Pioneers of the Possible: Celebrating Visionary Women of the World," which also chronicles the life stories of lady vanguards such as Frida Kahlo and Ella Fitzgerald. With this second compendium, the 47-year-old speaker and philanthropist, who currently resides in Bel Air, is quickly carving a niche for herself as a kind of Malcolm Gladwell-esque detective for female success stories.

Nazarian says she was pleasantly surprised to learn that for these elite achievers, their biggest adventures often came midlife. Many had to overcome gut-wrenching personal crises and many risked great social disapproval to trumpet their own missions. Nazarian, who is married to venture capitalist and Nimes Capital CEO David Nazarian, with whom she has two college-aged sons Phillip and Eli, insists that "Visionary Women" offers salient advice for men, too. "The basic tenet to success isn't any different for women than it is for men," Nazarian says. "I think that when you have the support of a whole system, your family, you go a long way. So, the basic lesson is that teaming up with a powerful woman is good for men as well."

If her last name looks familiar to real estate savvy South Floridians, it's because her brother-in-law, Sam Nazarian, is CEO of SBE, the entertainment group behind South Beach hotels SLS and The Redbury. "Florida has a special place in my heart," says Nazarian, an avid art collector and interior design enthusiast who frequents Miami's art fairs, including Art Basel. "I love the Latin culture. I love the diversity." Last May, Nazarian visited Miami to speak at the YPO-WPO International


Women's Conference: Lean In, and she plans on a "Visionary Women" book tour stop in Bal Harbour Shops early next year.

As for Nazarian's own good story? Born in Tehran, she immigrated with her family to the United States at age 11 during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. She arrived in Beverly Hills with only one suitcase containing little more than clothing. "There's not much from my childhood home that I have," she says.

It was a tumultuous time for Nazarian, who eventually was separated from her parents (her father, a import-export dealer turned real estate developer, and her mother, a homemaker) when they returned to Iran to sell their assets, but instead got stuck in the country for five years due to the Iran-Iraq War. "There's something that happens when you're completely cut off from your own place of birth," Nazarian says. "And the only way that you relate to it is through memory."

Thankfully, she preserved those memories—of her family's escape from Tehran and her gradual assimilation into Western culture through her California upbringing—in her first book, 2009's "Life As a Visitor." Despite the three books she's penned, writing wasn't always Nazarian's first calling.

For 11 years, Nazarian, a UCLA grad, worked as an organizational psychology professor teaching courses on motivation and motion, statistics and research in psychology at Mount Saint Mary's University, Los Angeles Valley College and California State University, Long Beach. "That was what I thought I would do for the rest of my life," she says. She left the classroom setting to apply her training to personal development workshops for adults. While organizing these groups, Nazarian decided to take writing classes and impressed her classmates and teachers with her family's unforgettable story. "It took me on another track where I wanted to impact and influence more people than just those in my classes and my seminars," she says.

Since then, Nazarian has co-founded a Los Angeles nonprofit, also called Visionary Women, which hosts leadership talks and whose funds benefit women's initiatives all over the world. She has also created a personal development coaching app and has booked a slew of speaking engagements. "My life has changed and opened in a very beautiful way," Nazarian says, "just because I decided to take a chance and do something out of the box." 

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FEMININE MYSTIQUE With the release of a new book and a new nonprofit promoting innovation among women, Angela Nazarian shows us what can happen when you think outside of the box.