WONDER
TO THE
WANDERERS

A Self Help Book
With Psychological Counseling Tips To Develop Insight

DR ABHA SAXENA

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Dedication

This book is dedicated

to

the minds that deepened my insight,

and to

the souls who allowed me to serve —

Turning knowledge into healing for those who needed it most.

Acknowledgement

My deepest gratitude to my parents — for love that never wavered, care that asked for nothing, guidance that lit my path, and prayers that sheltered me. Because of you, I have grown in every direction, and I carry your blessings in all that I do.

I extend my deepest thanks to every learned luminary of psychology whose guidance allowed me to understand the depths of psychological thought. By the blessings of the Supreme Father, I could channel that wisdom to kindle inner vision in all those who sought me out, longing to walk the path of positivity.

I am deeply grateful to my husband and my sons, who have always stood by me — offering their wisdom, experience, and all-encompassing awareness — and supported me both emotionally and technically in completing my academic projects and counselling challenges.

My sincere thanks to every individual who helped transform my 25 years of psychological knowledge and counselling experience into the form of a book, and to all those who will become the means of carrying this meaningful work to every heart and home.

Preface

In the grand tapestry of life, nothing remains static - not time, not humans, nor any living being. We journey through life, often driven by goals, seeking wealth, power, knowledge, or position. Sometimes, we flee from pain, discomfort, or danger. Amidst these travels, we stumble upon breathtaking moments - people who inspire us, skills that awe us, and wonders that leave us spellbound.

This is where psychological counselling comes in - a miraculous process that, when approached willingly and guided by a trained professional, can bring peace and happiness to one's life. In today's fast-paced world, counselling is a beacon of hope for those navigating life's challenges.

Counselling is an act of assistance, a one-on-one relationship between an individual and a trained professional (Hahn and Mc Lean, 1955). It's a process that fosters voluntary change, helping clients overcome personal difficulties.

Imagine being lost in a dark cave, searching for an exit. Exhaustion sets in, but a glimmer of light appears, guiding you towards hope. Counselling is that ray of light, penetrating darkness, restructuring thoughts, and redesigning response patterns.

As Dr V. Hope (a successful counselling practitioner mentioned with an imaginary name) shares her stories, you'll witness the transformative power of counselling. These anecdotes, though not exact narrations, illustrate the effectiveness of counselling in treating psychological problems and promoting well-being.

In a world plagued by social, political, and financial pressures, counselling offers a safe haven. It teaches us that "Happiness is not the absence of problems but the ability to deal with them" (Steve Marboli). Let's embark on this journey, discovering the power of counselling to transform lives.

About the Book

This book bridges psychology and everyday life for the common reader. Born from the author's hard-won resilience and gratitude for guiding words, it aims to awaken society — to self-awareness and responsibility. The first four chapters introduce psychology, counselling approaches, counsellor ethics, and qualities, drawing on key texts and resources. Chapters Five and Six present real counselling cases, speeches, and anecdotes in simple language, showing how psychological insight heals anxiety and conflict. Avoiding jargon, the book promotes counselling as a scientific, lifelong tool for growth. It is for students, adolescents, and anyone seeking to understand their strengths, reshape responses, and find meaning.

Editor's Desk

Wonder to the Wanderers is a thoughtful and compassionate work that approaches counselling as a deeply human act of guidance and healing. Using both theory and lived experience, the book creates a space where readers feel supported rather than instructed. Its greatest strength lies in the author's sincere voice. It carries years of observation, empathy, and dedication to understanding the emotional struggles people silently endure. The manuscript moves gracefully across a wide range of counselling areas, from educational and vocational guidance to family, marital, and emotional counselling. What makes these discussions engaging is the author's ability to simplify psychological concepts without diminishing their depth. The language remains approachable and warm, allowing even readers unfamiliar with counselling terminology to connect with the material comfortably. Particularly impactful are the case depictions and practical examples woven throughout the text. These moments transform the book from an academic discussion into something more personal. The emphasis on self-awareness, emotional resilience, healthy communication, and personal growth gives the work an encouraging and hopeful tone throughout. There is also a strong philosophical undercurrent running beneath the text: the belief that people can heal, evolve, and rediscover themselves when met with understanding and compassion. That emotional sincerity gives the manuscript its identity.

Foreword

Some books are written from knowledge. This one is written from life.

For over twenty-four years, Dr. Abha Saxena has taught, counselled, and guided individuals across India and West Africa. Her academic accomplishments are impressive—M.A., B.Ed., Ph.D., a Postgraduate Diploma in Counselling, over thirty research papers presented, and eighteen published. Yet, beyond these achievements lies something far more valuable: lived wisdom shaped by real human experiences.

She understands the journey because she has walked it herself. And through these pages, she reaches out to those still navigating their own path.

In a time when information is abundant but true understanding is rare, this book gently brings psychology down from abstraction into everyday life. The opening chapters offer clarity, grounding readers in principles guided by empathy and ethics. As the journey unfolds, readers are invited into authentic, confidential stories of transformation—where anxiety softens, relationships heal, and new perspectives illuminate the way forward.

Clear, Compassionate and Grounded In Reality.

Whether you are searching for strength, seeking answers, or longing to understand yourself more fully, this book speaks to you.

May it anchor you in moments of uncertainty, and quietly guide you back to the place where you feel most whole—within yourself.

Dr Monika Sahai,
Associate Professor and Head of Department,
S. N. Sen B. V. P.G. College C.S.J.M. University, kanpur.

Foreword

It is a privilege to write this foreword for Wonder to the Wanderers by Dr. Abha Saxena, a thoughtful and insightful contribution to the field of psychological counselling.

In a world marked by constant change and increasing emotional demands, counselling stands as a guiding light to help individuals move from confusion to clarity, and from distress to renewed strength. Dr. Saxena captures this beautifully, combining clear theoretical foundations with compelling case narratives that reflect real journeys of transformation, growth, and self-discovery in her book, Wonder to the Wanderers.

Her commitment to ethical practice, particularly in maintaining confidentiality, further strengthens the value of this work. Beyond individual cases, the book thoughtfully addresses broader life concerns like parenting, relationships, and personal development, making it relevant to a wide audience.

Wonder to the Wanderers is both a resource and an invitation: to reflect, to grow, and to embrace the healing power of insight. I commend Dr. Saxena for this meaningful work and trust it will inspire and guide many.

With best wishes,

Dr. Timi Oyebode

(Provost, ADI College of Counselling and Psychotherapy Nigeria)

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Introduction to the Book

Those who ride an elevator to the top floor will never truly know the height of the building. But those who take the stairs — step by step can speak of its grandeur with authority, for they have felt every inch of its rise. So is true with life. A person who chooses the hard roads, steep inclines, treacherous passes, is never wandering without cause. Such a traveller is pulled by necessity and propelled by resolve — a resolve so unwavering it begins to resemble faith.

The author of this book has walked many such paths. Today, standing close to what the ancients called 'Eudaimonia' — a life of meaning, of deep and active flourishing— she turns back with reverence to all those quotes, sermons, teachings & experiences in her life that held a power to - redefine the cognition, restructure behaviour patterns & develop insight. The author has witnessed the magical power of these in counselling setups, which forms the central idea of this book

Getting enlightened with the amazing power of counselling as a psychological assisting process, author resolved to create something that might serve others. Not a narrow few, but the many who fill our world today. She writes to awaken. To remind ordinary men and women of the needs and resources of this present hour.

Toward that end, this book was born.

Its pulse beats strongest in the closing chapters. There, the author has gathered real cases from psychological counselling — narratives that began in shadow and found their way to light. Beside them stand speeches, orientation talks, interactive sessions, and essays that hold a mirror to our society. The analyses are original, the language is unadorned, the intent is to stir thought without strangling the reader in jargon.

The first four chapters lay the foundation. They offer a clear, concise entry into psychology itself: what counselling means, the main schools and fields within it, the personal and professional qualities of a good

counsellor, and the ethics that must guide the work. In shaping these chapters, the author stands gratefully on the shoulders of others — *Dr. S. Narayana Rao's 'Counselling and Guidance'* ; *Kathryn and David Geldard's 'Counselling Adolescents'* and a constellation of online articles and resources that helped distill a vast discipline into precise, accessible form.

Chapters Five and Six, in particular, trade technical language for story and anecdote, so that the power of psychological insight becomes visible in the fabric of everyday life. The hope is simple and urgent: that people will come to see counselling not as a last resort for the broken, but as a scientific, humane, and enduring companion for growth, joy, and success.

This is not a volume meant only for the specialist's shelf. It is for the lay reader. This book is not only for students of psychology, nor only for those already seeking help. It is for every adolescent and every adult who senses restlessness inside — a hunger to understand their own life more clearly. If you do not yet know your strengths, if you are unwilling to name your weaknesses, if your opportunities lie unmapped and your threats unacknowledged, begin here. The real cases chapter is written to help you re-pattern your responses and shift your thinking. From those two changes, anxiety loosens, pain softens and conflict dissolves.

To wander is human. To wonder, *why* we wander is the beginning of wisdom. May this book walk with you on your staircase, so that when you reach your own top floor, you can speak of the height and the view with the authority of one who climbed.

— Dr (Mrs) Abha Saxena

Chapter 1:
Introduction to Counselling

1.1 What is Counselling

Counselling is an act of assistance. When a person in difficulty seeks out someone in whom he has confidence for advice and guidance, a situation exists for counselling. It is a common situation in everyday life. Younger people seek advice of elder people. A less successful person seeks advice from more successful and experienced people. Thus, act of giving and receiving advice is prevalent since time immemorial but counselling as it has developed in a scientific manner has been of more recent development.

It is not just an art of advising another person but it is technical in terms of specific knowledge, understanding, skills, attitude, and values of the counsellor. Rogers (1952) describes counselling as the process by which the structure of the self is relaxed under the safe relationship of the client with the therapist. The previously denied experiences are perceived and then integrated into an altered self.

Counselling is concerned with bringing about a voluntary change in the client. To this end, the counsellor provides facilities to help achieve the desired changes or to make a suitable choice. A popular definition by Perez (1965) says that "counselling is an interactive process conjoining the counselee who needs assistance and the counsellor who is trained and educated to give the assistance. The counsellor can initiate, facilitate and maintain the interactive process if he communicates feelings of spontaneity and warmth, tolerance, respect and sincerity."

While understanding what counselling is, we should simultaneously know what counselling is not:-

- giving information though information may be given.
- giving advice, making suggestions and recommendations.

- influencing the client's values, attitudes, beliefs, interests, decisions etc. with or without any threat or domination.
- interviewing clients.

Counselling, as said before, is concerned with bringing about a voluntary change in the client. To this end, the counsellor provides facilities to help achieve the desired changes or make the suitable choice.

The client alone is responsible for the decisions or the choices they make, though the counsellor may assist in this process by their warmth and understanding relationship.

The major objective of counselling is to help individuals become self-sufficient, self-dependent, self-directed and to adjust themselves efficiently to the demands of a better and meaningful life.

There are many other terms and professional services like psychotherapy, guidance and advising that are thought to be the same as counselling. But each has a small difference from the point of view of their exact meaning and their process.

If we talk about counselling and psychotherapy, the great psychotherapist Rogers, who is known as the father of 'client-centred therapy', in terms of the counselling process, was the one who bridged the gap between counselling and psychotherapy by denying that any difference existed (Lewis, 1970). Rogers holds that both counselling and psychotherapy are exactly the same, but a close examination of the work of a psychotherapist and of a psychological counsellor reveals that the former sometimes does what the latter does most of the time and vice versa.

Psychotherapy developed as a therapeutic technique in the treatment of illness in the traditional model. Later it came to be recognised as an important method of rehabilitation. While counselling in recent times is known as an instrument of self-actualization, it has been known as a method of rendering help to the people to realize their potential. The fundamental goal of counselling is to produce a more positive self in the client.

Psychotherapy looks more towards re-interpretation and reorganisation of malignant conflictual elements within the personality through the relation with the therapist. For this purpose, the psychotherapist integrates the ego of the patient and analyses infantile conflicts or impulses. The psychotherapist is more concerned about the unconscious or repressed material of the patient.

Counselling generally deals with the future: “what shall I do with my problems?” is the concern of a counsellor, while a psychotherapist deals with the question, “what is the client doing that is creating their problems?”

Knowledge of learning theories, personality theories, principles of psychological measurement, psycho-diagnostics, etc., are of vital significance to the counsellor, while it is not so for the psychotherapist.

We can try to understand the difference between a psychotherapist and a counsellor with an example. We observe in present times that it is not the psychotherapist but the counsellor whose appointment is mandatory in schools these days. Schools are to promote excellence, candidness, innovation, creativity and dynamism, among other positive things, in pupils and help them become responsible, responsive citizens. Counselling is supposed to stimulate the development of positive ideas and feelings and prevent the growth of negative factors in the educational environment. That's why nowadays, the appointment of a school counsellor is mandatory in educational institutions.

Guidance is another popular term that has been used sometimes synonymously with the term counselling. But more often it is used with the preposition 'and', as in 'guidance and counselling'.

Guidance is the assistance given to individuals in making intelligent choices and adjustments. It is based on the belief that the ability to make intelligent choices is not innate. It, like other abilities, must be developed, but from childhood this is continuously hampered by internal conflicts or external barriers.

Guidance helps make the individuals self-dependent and self-directed. Firstly, it promotes the utilization of one's own potential and the

available environmental resources. Secondly, it also helps in the onset of changes in one's own personality for desirable adjustment.

Here we can find the difference between counselling and guidance:

Guidance is concerned with the first method of helping, while counselling is concerned with the second one.

Thus, the important aspect in guidance is the manner in which the situation is structured for the client, taking into account their expectations and goals, while the counsellor has to persuade the client to discover for themselves what is their personality in terms of their interest, attitude, etc., and decide for themselves how they can overcome their obstacles and move forward.

Guidance can be understood in three models. The first model is the S↔R model. It explains that most of the human behaviour does not and cannot be explained with this model because it does not consider a human being's consciousness as a determining principle. It considers a human being as a reactive being.

The second model adaptable for guidance is the model of a reacting being in depth. According to this model, the principles of recall and recovery are central to guidance.

The third model of guidance is based on giving information. The person seeking guidance is expected to make their own choices, while the person giving guidance does not choose but helps in choosing the more desirable or most appropriate response. It is aptly said that guidance helps individuals to help themselves.

There is a general agreement that counselling is a very significant aspect in any model of guidance because counselling stresses the importance of in-depth exploration of feelings about self and the confidential nature of the client-counsellor relationship.

Now comes the difference between counselling and advising. If an individual faces some problem and, for taking a decision or making a choice, they approach another individual for assistance, it is an act of taking advice. This situation has several important features:

- There is an element of voluntariness.
- There is a belief that the other person who is assisting or advising has the necessary experience, wisdom and ability to advice.
- The advice is sought for consensual validation.

Thus, advising has no psychological implications regarding individual development. A person in difficulty may seek advice on the problems confronting him at the moment. They may receive help towards the solution of his problem and can solve it, but on a future occasion, in a similar predicament, they may not be able to resolve this problem without any outside assistance or advice. Parents and teachers usually give advice to children.

While counselling aims at helping individuals reach a stage of self-autonomy through self-understanding, self-direction and self-motivation. Such an individual suffers from the minimum of conflicts and anxieties and develops into a fully functioning person.

Chapter 2:
Special Areas of Counselling

Here are mentioned a few areas of counselling which are well practised in present-day lifestyle. These are:-

2.1 Guidance and Counselling in Educational Settings
    2.1.1 At Elementary School Level
    2.1.2 At Secondary School Level
    2.1.3 At Undergraduate and Postgraduate Level

2.2 Vocational Counselling
2.3 Family Counselling
2.4 Marriage Counselling
2.5 Counselling Women
2.6 Counselling the Weaker Sections
2.7 Counselling Drug Addicts
2.8 Counselling with Parents
2.9 Counselling Delinquents
2.10 Counselling Reluctant Clients

2.1 Guidance and Counselling in Educational Settings

Education is looked upon not only as a means of personal advancement but is also valued as an asset of fundamental importance to society. Hence, the expectation from education is varied and many.

With ever-growing complexity of civilisation and increasing pace of life, there is a need to equip the youth of today to meet the challenges of life in the future; for this, education is an indispensable part of life.

It is often found that students who clamour for education and succeed in gaining admission to institutions of learning perform far below the standards that might be expected of them. Why is it that students of low

ability fail in their academic efforts? This question is becoming more and more persistent almost everywhere in the world.

One of the answers to this question is that education is a diffused and often contradictory process. It may move towards or away from its preconceived goals. For example, successful education should encourage self-motivated enquiry, which is obviously a valued educational goal. On the other hand, a self-motivated and free enquiry may reject a rigid curriculum and scheduling of classes. In this sense, students may view the goal of education to be dysfunctional, and that affects their performance.

Another answer is that the crucial role of emotions in an individual's development and struggle for fulfilment has not received adequate attention in education. Bolton (1931) draws attention to this lacuna. He holds that a pupil's attitude towards society and its problems, religion and models, and duties and obligations are vastly more important than the few items of intellectual knowledge imparted in schools.

The pupil, as they grow, learn the interests, aspirations, dilemmas, fears, anxieties and attitudes of the people who are immediately around him—their family, their schoolmates, teachers and others.

The pupil's likes and dislikes, longings and aversions, loves and hates, really determine the manner in which they behave as a human being and adjust to the demands of society and environment. The counsellor can help clarify to the pupil the role of positive emotions that are constructive and integrative, and avoid those of negative emotions which are disintegrative and disruptive.

A human being is fundamentally a growing, seeking, exploring organism but in an educational setting it is fallacious to believe that people should be forced to learn. This is the biggest hindrance in the true educational growth of a child.

In the educational setting children are not admired for their specific skills and qualities but are trained and expected to learn the common lessons at a decided proficiency level.

Failure of some students to secure expected grades, marks and prizes etc. becomes a source of humiliation and leads to the growth of a feeling of inadequacy and inferiority in these students. It is important to realise that while textual learning is important, the learning of self-confidence, co-operation, curiosity, persistence etc. is more important in order to develop a wholesome personality.

The educational process ceases to be enjoyable when it neglects the uniqueness of the individuals. The schools and classrooms are marked by diversity rather than similarity because students enter there from different social and economic groups and communities. Therefore, the basic educational objective should essentially be the development of a student's uniqueness, both personally and vocationally.

2.1.1 At Elementary School Level

At elementary school level, counselling is required not for students but for the teachers and administrators of the school. This is the time when a child comes out of his comfort zone for the first time. He leaves his parents, protective environment, comfortable routine, etc., for attending the school regularly. Understanding this, the school should try to create an atmosphere where the child feels safe as at home. This will be the first motivation for the child to come out of the nutshell, to enjoy the novelty as well as diversity and not to become anxious and withdrawn when coming out of the comfort zone.

The teaching methods, the curriculum, and the disciplinary rules should not be harsh on the child. The positive reinforcement instead of negative reinforcement system should be applied to develop the good qualities and response system that a school expects to develop in a child. Comparison, discrimination, and partiality, if witnessed by a child at this elementary level, leave scars on his future personality growth. A child counsellor should compulsorily be there as a member of the advisory board of elementary education, which decides the curriculum, selects the books to be taught in schools, advices on training the teachers in Creative Teaching Techniques, designs various activities for the happy hours in school, etc.

2.1.2 At Secondary School Level

The students enter the secondary school around 10+ years of age. Their physical and motor development is, by this time, generally complete. However, the other aspects, namely social, emotional, mental, and moral, still need to develop. It is during these years that students are at the edge of a crucial period called adolescence. This may be called the stage of pre-adolescence.

At this stage, most of the students are at the pre-puberty stage, and the physical development during this period is rapid and marked. This stage is known as the age of puberty spurt. This is also a period of emotional brittleness. Therefore, the counselling of the pupil at this stage is of great importance.

At this stage, counselling is required especially for two purposes-

1) For academic choices that would ultimately determine their vocational future.
2) To provide sex education to develop sexual maturity.

Helping in character building, developing an integrated personality, attaining self-esteem, confidence, and resilience could be the other tasks to be achieved by counselling at the secondary level of the educational setting.

2.1.3 At Undergraduate and Postgraduate Level

When a student enters the undergraduate level, he has already spent some years of his adolescence at the secondary education level. In this period of education, the student is at the peak of adolescence and is entering into early adulthood.

This period is also very crucial for the pupil. This is "the time of human development during which a young person must move from dependency to independence, autonomy to maturity, from being a part of a family group to being a part of a peer group, and to standing alone as an adult." (Mabey and Sorensen,1995).

There occur many noticeable challenges in front of a pupil at this level of education. The biological, cognitive, psychological, social, moral and

spiritual challenges, etc., are the challenges faced by the students in this time zone.

Many of the pupils, willingly or under family pressure, enter into married life at this level of education.

Careers, marriage, relationships, breakups, family liabilities and expectations, “me-time” requirements are the various forces that hit the pupil hard from all sides. So, at this level, arranging a trained and experienced counsellor in college should be mandatory. Every person, being a unique personality, needs personal counselling at various fronts in this stage.

2.2 Vocational Counselling

Vocational guidance and counselling are the forerunner of counselling psychology, as the counselling movement had its origin in the vocational guidance movement. It was Jessie B. Davis (1898) who started this movement a few years before the end of the 19th century. He set up an Educational Career Counselling Centre in Detroit in 1898.

The choice of a carrier is undeniably one of the most crucial decisions one makes in life. The irony is that such an important decision is often made quite early in the life of an individual or sometimes made without giving as much thought to it as is often given to buying a necklace or a pair of shoes.

The choice of work determines how an individual's time is going to be spent, what type of people he will associate with, and what kind of place he will have to work in.

Vocational counselling usually is based on various theories like the decision theory, the sociological theory, the psychological theory, and the development theory, etc.

Super (1953) formulated ten propositions which comprise his theory of occupational development, often labelled as a differential development social phenomenological approach of vocational counselling.

Few of these prepositions are-

- Individuals differ with regard to their abilities, interests, and personality attributes.
- Different occupations require different patterns of abilities, interests, and traits.
- The career pattern of the individual is determined by several factors, among which are parents' socio-economic conditions, intelligence, personality, and available opportunities.
- The preferences of people for different vocations change with their self-concepts, which are modified with time and experience.

The above and other prepositions made by Super helped in understanding the development and concerns of young people.

Ginzberg's theory of occupational choices and Anne Roe's theory of career development also states various propositions for vocational counselling.

In essence, the main thrust of vocational counselling is on vocational planning because it determines curricular choices for the counsellee and provides the necessary motivation for his scholastic achievements.

The important function of a vocational counsellor is to provide complete career information because it is only after considering the occupational information that the counsellee can make vocational plans.

Thus, vocational guidance largely concerns itself with providing occupational information, while vocational counselling is basically more concerned with the vocational development of an individual, that is, concerned with his personality growth. Vocational counselling has for its locus the client or the individual. It is concerned with the discovery of the individual's potential, his interest, and attitude such that he is helped to advertise himself in pursuit of his occupation. Vocational counselling helps the client to discover for himself the ways to fulfil his urge for self-actualization on vocational grounds.

2.3 Family Counselling

The home and the family comprise the most important and informal agency of education and personality development. Therefore, it is rightly held that the family system of behaviour becomes the individual system of personality.

Family counselling is concerned with the family system and with the changes that can be made in that system. If the interaction of the family with one of its individual members leads to stress, it is a symptom of a sick system.

Different types of family counselling are in vogue at present.

The Conjoint Family Counselling is the method of counselling where the counsellor meets the family and understands the pattern of interaction within the family. The focus is on the family discord or problems. In this approach, no member of the family is dealt with individually.

In Multiple Impact Counselling, several counsellors work with the individual members of the family intensively over a period of 3 to 4 days. In this approach also, the focus is on the family system.

The Network Counselling approach starts in a concentric way, working with the unit (nuclear) family and proceeding towards the neighbours, friends, relatives, and others.

In Multiple Family Counselling, a number of families are brought together and are enabled to be counselled simultaneously. This approach provides for different families opportunities for observation, imitation, and identification with other families. This results in social facilitation and reduction of social inhibitions.

The family is a primary group of society. Its characteristic feature is the affective bonds among the members in the family and concern for each other. Family relations are broadly of two types —the parent-child relations and the husband-wife relation.

When the members of the family are disunited, tension, distress, and misery are the natural outcomes. The family counsellor helps find ways

and means of reducing, if not eliminating, the strife, mutual distrust, and ill-will among the members of the family.

Most problems in family relations have been identified to result from lack of communication or because of improper communication.

High expectations, judging each other on the basic ethics and philosophy of the family, impractical disciplinary demands, jealousy, sibling rivalry, lack of healthy bonds between father and mother, parents' attitude of overpowering each other in front of outsiders, too much interference of outsiders, presence of some patient of chronic or terminal illness in the house, financial instability, and identity crisis felt by any of the family members are the major reasons which, when accumulated for long or in severity, make family counselling inevitable.

2.4 Marriage Counselling

Marriage counselling is indeed a very wide field and has these important areas namely

1. premarital counselling
2. counselling for better marital harmony
3. counselling to eliminate or forestall a marriage from breaking up

Marriage is an important event in the life of an individual. It has a number of dimensions and functions. Most religions, with the exception of Islam, consider marriage as a sacrament and not a social contract. Oriental societies like the Japanese, Chinese and Indian societies have a highly conventional and traditional concept of marriage. In these societies, it is not merely a matter of consulting individuals but is looked upon as an event involving families and communities at large. Therefore, the question of individual choice of a mate or a partner is limited. The consent and approval of the family and acceptance of the new member into the family becomes the desideratum.

This conventional idea of marriage has become quite difficult to accept with the increasing stresses of rapid industrialisation and urbanization. That is why some liberal attitudes are currently in, so far as marriage is concerned.

The broader or advanced ideas of marriage have propagated the view that marriages are a matter of convenience and if one of the parties tries to get out of it, he/she should have the freedom to do so. The force of this argument has compelled social legislation to be enacted in almost all countries, providing for divorce under certain stipulated conditions. The twin issues of marriage and divorce loom large in social and domestic lives.

It has been observed that marriages deteriorate due to various issues like incompatibility between the partners, financial crisis, drinking habits or drug addiction, post marital affairs, sex conflicts, frigidity on the part of women and impotency on the part of men, lack of understanding between the partners, lack of space for each other, lack of communication, ill-treatment of one partner by the other, non-caring attitude of the partners to each other, difference in priorities of the partners about having a child and rearing the child, career opportunities and decisions etc. They are various factors that make a marriage unsuccessful and need a counsellor's support to revive it.

As far pre-marital counselling is concerned, it helps a person at the very important stage of choosing a mate. In Indian society most marriages are arranged where partners more often are strangers to each other. The social fabric of the Indian system does not permit a period of courtship to the would-be couples.

Such a set up reduces the chance of gaining understanding of each other. In such case, the counsellor helps the parties to gain a better understanding of themselves as this is the basis for a happy marriage.

The counsellor can provide insight regarding the true meaning of marriage to the 'would-be couples'. He can make them understand that it is not the wedding ceremony which is important but it is the marriage that is important. They spend little time to discuss each other's interests, habits, dreams and family expectations. Instead, they consider the venue, decoration, attires to be worn etc. more important for discussions.

If the 'would-be couple' are known to each other from their childhood or may be related in one way or another to each other or may be in close contact in day-to-day life as co-workers or classmates, still the pre-

marital counselling can add noticeable brightness in their marriage by alerting them to focus on acceptance, understanding, truthfulness and need for healthy communication. Counselling helps in cultivating empathy as it is one of the important factors for the sustained growth of a husband-wife relationship. The couple gets counselled to understand that faulty communication, misinformation, lack of communication breeds misunderstanding and tends to create an information vacuum between the pair.

Counselling for better marital harmony and for saving a marriage from breaking up is a very delicate process. Here the counsellor has to understand his role as clearly as possible. He should recognise that he is not an arbitrator.

He is not supposed to be telling the couple who is right and who is wrong. His role is essentially confined to helping the parties understand themselves and each other. Most human beings suffer from a myopic understanding of themselves. They refuse to recognise their own faults or weaknesses. The counsellor has to use his skills with the utmost care. Perhaps the client-centred approach of counselling suits this situation most appropriately.

In this situation the counsellor is not there to give solutions. He only provides them with the sense of orientation which enables them to believe that a solution has to be found on the basis of their own involvement.

2.5 Counselling Women

In the late sixties the women liberation movement made the appearance of counselling for women. Marriage is no longer the only option for every woman. Some women deliberately opt out of matrimony or choose to bear no children or become careerists.

Counselling of women has become a special area of concern in modern times. Traditionally it was believed that men and women differed significantly from each other in their physical capacities so there should be a difference in the status and role of men and women in the society.

In the days of initial awareness, the occupations open to women were very restricted but women today have more avenues open to them than their counterparts had in the first part of the twentieth century.

This change neither was nor is easy to be accepted by all. Some of the studies by Matina Horner (1970) and Philip Goldberg (1971) reveal that when professional articles were to be evaluated by women, they generally undervalued themselves. Later it was concluded that, "when the fear of success interferes with the desire to be successful the result is an inhibition in achievement motivation."

Women counselling is required to make the women understand the conflict between their need for achievement and the need to conform to their female image. Women counselling is required to make women understand the freedom of choice that is typically a novel freedom to females.

While counselling women, it is important to jettison the false and untenable ideas; only then can the female counsellee be helped. The counsellor should strive to bring their biased negative feelings into the open so that they are able to think better of themselves rationally. Sympathy, understanding and persuasion are necessary to put them on their feet. The technique always found useful in women counselling is the method of raising consciousness in women. Lack of confidence, feeling of a void in the middle age, facing identity crisis, managing balance between the dual role as wife and as a career woman, rejecting the responsibility of the only saviour of the marriage are the new avenues where counselling is helping women and motivating them to lead a life full of self-respect, self-growth, and self-belief.

2.6 Counselling the Weaker Sections

One of the characteristic features of the Indian society is the diversity of its people. Though India has been the seat of one of the great ancient civilisation, it has paradoxically for over three centuries, if not more, been an underdeveloped country. This backwardness has brought into existence the differences between various sections of society.

Even after nearly seven and a half decades of freedom, communal cleavages not only continue to exist, they are growing wider and deeper.

Psychologically speaking, the social phenomenon of pluralism reflects the fact that the social groups exist separately for whatever reason, naturally or voluntarily or out of compulsion. They develop different languages habits, manners, social attitudes, prejudices, perceptions of themselves and others, values and norms that guide their behaviour. Consequently, the groups cultivate mutual distrust and misunderstanding of one another resulting in ill-will among themselves.

The groups that suffer socio-economic backwardness since generations and are really under its oppressive tyranny develop a serious feeling of inferiority. This gets reflected in deficiency of language, value, education, income and general cultural lifestyle. Consequently, the members of these groups have been socially discriminated against and until the late 1930s were treated as untouchables.

Counselling the weaker sections needs special attention and care. The counsellor must be able to reasonably assess the client's state of adjustment and must know what to be done to help the client improve his/her current adjustment. It should be recognised that cultural differences affect the ability of the counsellor to relate himself to his client. While discussing the problems he may encounter in making a diagnosis of the socially and economically weak client. Though the rapport establishment is the first step of each type of the counselling but in case of the counselling of weaker section it enables the counsellee(s) to react spontaneously warmly and sympathetically.

The minorities and weaker section differ in a variety of ways. There is always a suspicion in their minds regarding the dominant cultural groups. Therefore the counsellor should not give rise to the feeling that he belongs to a higher social or privileged section. He should not appear over sympathetic, for there is a danger of his attitude being interpreted as condescension. It is always desirable to pursue the middle of the road approach rather than take extreme position either very critical or very sympathetic.

While counselling clients from weaker and backward sections, the counsellor should realise that he is working with people who are unable or unwilling to participate in the counselling exploration. Therefore, prolonged silence should be avoided, and until positive rapport has been established, the counsellor should pay more than usual attention to structure the counselling situation.

The psychological barriers which a counsellor faces in general but specifically while he is counselling the weaker section, are difficulty in self-disclosure and self-hatred from the side of the counsellee. It is beneficial when counselling the weaker section that the counsellor must prefer to use non-standardized procedures such as observation, anecdotal records, interviews etc. instead using the standardized diagnostic instruments.

2.7 Counselling Drug Addicts

Drug addiction normally represent known adjusting behaviour, broadly speaking, the reactions of drug addicts fall under the category of character disorders. In recent times the phenomenon of drug abuse has become a very serious threat to order and society's survival. Those who pick up this habit become wrecked personalities.

The various reasons for the increasing number of drug addicts in the society may be as follows.

Owing to defective economic planning and educational policies, more youth are becoming unemployable and are disillusioned because the education they have received was not designed to equip them with skills or competencies for the employment market. This frustration drags them towards drugs.

Life today is of strain and stress, tension and depression. Everybody is busy in the rat race to achieve those things which they do not even know how and when to use. The glamour word is mesmerizing the youth. When they find such goals unachievable, they try to fantasize them through drug addiction.

The feeling of worthlessness on the socio-economic front creates an identity crisis among the people, and they avoid facing that pain by addicting themselves to some or other drugs.

Sometimes the thrill of drugs soon becomes addiction to drugs. They develop a sense of craving, heightened state of anxiety and physical suffering.

There are normally two categories of drugs. First are those which work as ups and second, the sedatives which work as downs. The commonly used drugs are marijuana, heroin, brown sugar, L.S.D. etc. These are barbiturates, while the amphetamines create a feeling of excitement.

Addiction to drugs usually leads to anti-social behaviour and personality disorders, low frustration tolerance, exhibiting feelings of inadequacy and self-devaluation.

The question is where it comes from. This addiction develops in a child during family discords, religious turmoil, unbridled freedom, and a family or peer group atmosphere of too much permissiveness or too many restrictions.

Treatment of drug addiction may involve medical, psychological and sociological processes. Medical procedures include drug therapy. Psychological treatment aims at alleviating the individual's maladjusted behaviour and strives to bring about personality change to foster more effective adjustment. The psychological treatment and counselling falls under three categories -supportive psychotherapy, behaviour modification and re-educative psychotherapy.

2.8 Counselling with Parents

Most problem children are products of problem homes. The disturbing features in a home affect the harmonious development of the children. Parent counselling is aimed at helping parents become sensitive to the possible adverse effects of their behaviour on their children.

Parent counselling deals with the area of parent-child relationships concerning the dimensions of dependence-independence, conflicts concerned with vocational choice and comparisons made by the parents

of their child with other children in every sphere of their life: studies, mannerism, lifestyle, obedience, aims and goals of life and the method of their persuasion etc.

Parents should be counselled to adopt proper parenting techniques for rearing up the child. They should be informed about the shortcomings of protective/neglecting/indifferent kinds of parenting. These kinds of parenting styles hamper the integrated personality growth of a child. A parent when over-protective adversely affects the decision making-power and challenge-facing attitude of the child. The djinn of the lamp attitude of parents for providing children everything demanded by them, develops obstinate and impatient behaviour in a child.

Neglecting and indifferent behaviour when received by a child from his/her parent, one loses his self-esteem and self-confidence. The child remains in a confused state. He/she keeps changing his/her response patterns, likings and dislikings on various grounds to make an attempt to receive acknowledgement and approval from the parents. Besides it, sometimes a child starts expressing anger and inferiority in himself/herself as a response pattern.

Feelings of care, concern and respect between the parents for each other, are one of the biggest factors that impacts the personality development of a child. Parents are the most precious people in a child's life. When a child observes that parents are always engaged in conflicts and quarrels, hurting and arguing, a child assumes himself the greatest loser and develops many psychosomatic diseases and withdrawn symptoms.

The higher the level of understanding between the parents, the higher is the level of confidence and boldness in a child.

Not only understanding but also coordination between the parents is very important for the proper personality development of a child. Sometimes one of the parents starts taking the side of the child when the other parents refuse some of the demands of the child. If such kind of episodes occurs again and again, a child may become manipulative.

Freedom of communication, promotion of healthy communication, practicing condemnation of no information and misinformation exerts a very positive impact in the development of a child's personality.

Child doesn't want much. It is not the quantity but the quality of time, proper communication and healthy support between the parents and children that makes a child develop into a perfect being.

2.9 Counselling Delinquents

Delinquency is a symptom of emotional immaturity leading to socially unacceptable or reprehensible behaviour of the youth. It is a problem that is reported at the post-puberty or early adolescence age in children.

One of the common symptoms of delinquency is truancy. Delinquents commit petty offences like thieving, shoplifting, and so on. Most delinquents are emotionally immature and their behaviour is a compensatory reaction. Sometimes it becomes an act of gangsterism.

When considering the etiology of delinquency, it is observed that rapid physical growth and accelerated endocrinal functioning may result in energy-seeking expressions in unsuitable outlets. Somewhere it also shows the need of recognition in a child. Watching horror movies, crime serials, movies or story books provide the adolescent with a convenient form for daydreaming and self-identification. But a few are there who do not stop at their dreaming, they resort to socially unacceptable means of expressing their energy to seek recognition.

Counselling the delinquents is not easy.

Counselling delinquents involves a multi-faceted approach focusing on rehabilitation through Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), reality therapy, Solution-Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT), Art and Activity Therapy and environment therapy to address underlying issues, build empathy, and alter negative behaviour patterns.

Key strategies include setting clear behavioural limits, improving emotional regulation, and fostering a supportive environment.

In case of juvenile delinquency cases, parents can be counselled by some trained counsellor.

They should be informed that instead of shouting and hating the child for the wrong he/she did, parents should try to stay cool and express their love, care and belief for the child. This can bring surprising results of reformation.

2.10 Counselling Reluctant Clients

Counselling is a help voluntarily sought by the client but this is not always the case. Occasionally counsellors have to work with clients who are reluctant to discuss matters with the counsellor.

Reluctant clients are usually those who are the referral cases. They may show open defiance or express the reluctance in more passive ways. They do not take any responsibility and exhibit unwillingness to communicate.

Dealing with the reluctant clients is a difficult matter. Sometimes counsellors become highly anxious and feel inadequate when dealing with such non-communicative clients. But a counsellor has to deal with himself non-defensively in the situations to be able to successfully cope with the reluctant clients.

Counselling the reluctant clients requires building trust through empathy, non-defensive communication, and validating their autonomy. Instead of fighting resistance, "join" it by accepting their perspective, setting collaborative and small goals, and offering choices to empower them. Utilize techniques like, motivational interviewing, reflection, and creative methods, while avoiding excessive questioning.

Key Strategies for engaging reluctant clients can be as follows -

- Acknowledge that the client is there unwillingly.
- Counsellors need to validate the reluctance as normal.
- Counsellor should develop a safe and non-judgemental environment.
- Counsellors need to join the resistance. Instead of confronting the resistance.

- Counsellor should adopt a martial art approach (like Aikido) to work with it rather than against it. If the client says, "I don't know", counsellor should accept and validate his answer.
- Counsellor should involve the client in small achievable goals so that he can rebuild his confidence.

He should use creative methods like journaling, role-play therapy etc. for counselling.

Chapter 3:
Approaches to Counselling

Different approaches to counselling are based on varying conceptions of human personality structure and dynamics, and are subject to the limitations to which the personality theories are prone.

Counselling therapies are broadly divided into two major categories:

1) The supportive counselling therapies
2) The insight therapies.

Supportive Therapy Approach is the belief in restoring the individual's adaptive capacities. These may involve persuasion, pressure and coercions, reassurance, environmental manipulation, suggestive hypnosis, muscular relaxation, use of drugs and electric shocks etc. Behaviour modification and learning theory approaches can be placed under the supportive theories approach.

Insight Therapies Approach is broadly of two kinds:

1. Re educative
2. Reconstructive

Insight therapy approach tries to release what has been called the self-actualizing tendency in the individual. These therapies instead of removing the anxiety producing sources in the life of the individual bolster behaviour that permits and enables the individual to cope with the anxiety.

Some of the popular approaches to counselling are discussed here.

3.1 The Directive or Authoritarian Approach to Counselling

This approach of counselling is basically based on the psychoanalytic theory of personality which believes that the client is ignorant and unaware of the reasons for his difficulties which are deeply rooted in the

unconscious. This approach explains the problem of the client on the basis of id, ego and super ego. All the problems that are psychological in nature are believed to take place because of the disequilibrium of these three energies in the psychic system.

While using the directive approach of counselling, the diagnosis is based on the analysis of prominence of id or ego or super ego, the inhibitions or repressed desires developed by the individual, type of anxiety, the mental mechanisms adopted by the individual and the dominance of any one of the two basic urges the life instinct (Eros) or the death instincts (Thanatos) etc.

The classical psychoanalytic technique or directive approach of counselling consists in bringing repressed wishes, desires and complexes to the conscious level. This process is long and time consuming. Resistance and transference are the two major phenomena that create hindrance in the process of counselling. A counsellor, well versed in directive approach, has expertise in dealing with these two inhibitory forces during the counselling.

In present days this approach is not much in use because of the difficulties occurring in the counselling process based on this approach.

High time consuming sessions, resistance, transference, over importance to unconsciousness and childhood experience are few of the factors that are shifting the priority of selecting approaches of counselling for the client, away from the directive approach.

After the heydays while it was the time of criticism of psychoanalytic approach as a counselling method, the neo psychoanalysts tried to correct it by placing too much importance on unconsciousness with the new concepts of 'social interest', 'will to power' and 'style of life'.

3.2 The Humanistic Approach to Counselling

In contrast to psychoanalysis, the Client Centred or directive approach or humanistic approach of counselling by Carl Rogers, is a practical application of humanistic psychology in counselling. While using this approach a counsellor seeks to bring about a better appreciation and a clearer expression of the client's latent inner resources.

Rogers attaches enormous importance to helping relationship. In the context of the client centred therapy, the therapist is not supposed to play the 'big brother' role. He does not direct the course of therapy nor does he offer interpretations. The client is always encouraged to rely on himself. Self-concept therefore is the central construct of Rogers' theory.

Few basic postulates of client centred approach of counselling are mentioned here for the common man to understand the belief behind this approach of therapy. These are given here -

- The individual exists in a constantly changing word of his own experience of which he is the centre.
- Knowledge of the stimulus alone is not enough to predict the response. It is necessary to know how the individual perceives the stimulus which explains why individuals react differently to the same stimulus.
- The best way of understanding the significance of any behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself.
- The modes of behaviour adopted by the individual are those which are consistent with the concepts of their 'self'.
- Psychological adjustment can be obtained when the individual accepts all the experiences and integrates them into his self-structure.

3.3 Behaviouristic Approach to Counselling-

Counselling and psychotherapy are concerned with the behaviour changes and therefore according to some theorists counselling must involve the application of the principles of learning and learning theories.

The learning approach employed in the behaviouristic model of counselling could be either the classical conditioning model or operant conditioning model because from the behaviouristic point of view, all behaviours, adjusting or maladjusting, are primary learned in the same manner. Four basic principles are involved in all types of learning. These principles are abbreviated as DCRR, where 'D' means drive or

motivation which impels the organism to act. 'C' is the cue or stimulus while the two 'R' represent response and reinforcement.

The behaviouristic approach to counselling employs the four principles of learning mentioned above and believes that response is considered modifiable by the use of an appropriate system of reinforcement.

The behaviouristic therapy consists of several simple steps:

(1) Identifying the undesirable, unwanted, maladjusted and maladaptive behaviours.
(2) Careful analysis of the maladaptive behaviour into small units.
(3) Each unit is eliminated by an appropriate technique involving an operant conditioning procedure.

Among the different variations adopted for counselling under behavioural approach, Dollard and Miller's (1950), reinforcement theory is a thought provoking approach. They define neurosis as learned behaviour. According to them neurotic conflicts are taught by parents and learnt by children. Thus, unwanted and maladjusted behaviour is acquired or learnt. This includes phobias, compulsions, hysterical symptoms, regression, reaction formation and alcoholism etc.

In the treatment of such clients, the therapy involves the creation of a new type of social situation which is opposite of that responsible for inducing repression. The new social situation provides for gradually overcoming the repression, under permissive social conditions.

While adopting the technique of psychodrama, the same principle is employed for counselling. Much of our learning makes us form different labels. This is based on the principle of generalizations where the fear of one object by association leads us to the fear of several other objects. In therapy this principle of labelling is used to help a client overcome his fears by learning to label appropriately.

The reciprocal inhibition technique of counselling applies the behaviouristic approach with the belief that changes in the behaviour of any organism are caused by growth (maturation), lesion (injury, damage and disease), and learning. Wolpe the protagonist of the therapy believes that "learning is assumed to have occurred if a response has been evoked

in temporal contiguity with the given sensory stimulus and it is subsequently found that the stimulus can evoke the response although it could not have done so before."

He says that strengthening of the relation between the stimulus and the response is called reinforcement, which is strengthened by several factors such as:

(1) optimal interval between the stimulus.
(2) interval between the response and the reinforcement.
(3) the nature of reinforcement.

The therapy based on reciprocal inhibition principles is of three types-

- counter conditioning
- positive reconditioning and
- experimental extinction.

The experimental extinction procedures can be implemented in three ways-

- systematic relaxation
- systematic desensitization
- assertive training

3.4 The existential counselling approach

Existential counselling has its origin in early philosophical thinking. The existential view is a complex one arising from theology, literature, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry and others.

Existential therapists hold that man is more than an intellect and that counselling should therefore be psychological rather than logical.

Existential thinking places a normal synthesis on the concept of freedom. It sees man not as a 'being' but as 'becoming'. A free man has limitless opportunities not only to make a free culture but also to transcend it.

3.5 The Eclectic Approach to Counselling

Some counselling practitioners in actual practice adopt minor to major variations in their theoretical orientations. They adopt different

viewpoints which are consistently combined into a working theory. This trend in practitioners' approach towards theory is often described as emerging eclecticism.

English and English(1958) defined that eclecticism is the selection and orderly combination of compatible features from diverse sources and of incompatible theories and systems into a harmonious whole.

Brammer (1969) explains that eclectic approach in counselling refers to selecting or choosing from the various systems or theories. What is selected, presumably, is the best of each system.

It is therefore not practicable to predict what an eclecticist will do in a given situation. They claim the openness of this approach to be a great advantage.

Thorne (1950), one of the important protagonists of eclectic point of view says that eclectic approach is the most practicable and apt approach of counselling as he calls this approach, an integrative approach.

Chapter 4:
Process of Counselling

To understand the process of counselling elaborately is a very long process. To understand this process, one has to understand many terminologies first.

The readiness or the referral is the first thing to know before starting the counselling. Pre-counselling interview and then the rapport establishment between the counsellor and the counsellee is another thing that impacts the process of counselling, deeply.

Transference, counter transference and the inhibitions are the various concepts that affect the receiving of information from the client.

We are avoiding going into details about the technicality of the terminology involved in various steps of counselling. Here is given a commonly approved sequence of steps of the whole counselling process in short.

- The first stage is the awareness of need for help on the part of the counsellee. Sometimes when the counsellee is not aware or does not wish to approach the counsellor, referral is being made.
- The second important stage in counselling consists of development of relationship between the counsellor and the counsellee. Here is the time when the counsellor should be aware of the defence strategies likely to be exploited by the client.
- The third step in counselling is to aid the expression of feelings and clarification of problems. In a sense, it is a ventilation of feelings and the client experiences a feel of relief consequent to the release of tension.
- The next stage comprises exploration of the deeper feelings. The counsellor must try to explore the deeper feelings and conflicting situations which are not only to be brought to the surface but also

satisfactorily resolved without damaging the individual's personality. This step, therefore, involves analysis.

- At the fifth stage, the counsellor is able to synthesize and integrate client's potential, needs, priorities, and aspirations and direct them towards appropriate goals.
- The sixth stage is the one of developing the awareness in the counsellee. This is the stage of insight development. It is the stage when the counsellee is aware of the goals and the direction in which the self is to reach out or move forward.
- The last stage is the stage of termination of counselling which should be done with great precautions. It should not induce the pain of detachment in the client but a feel of rediscovering oneself with all potential, possibilities and positivity.

Chapter 4(A): Importance of testing and diagnosis in the process of counselling

Diagnosis has always been an important and crucial step in a medical or clinical context. It is an essential aspect of the therapeutic process. Diagnosis, in general, refers to the identification of an abnormality on the basis of the symptoms and classification of the observed characteristics of the counsellee.

In the views of Thorne (1950),"Diagnosis refers to the description of the organism and his behaviour by a variety of methods whose basic purpose is to discover the personality dynamics in each individual case".

Diagnosis, according to Tyler (1953), is a means of obtaining a comprehensive picture of the client.

Brammer and Shostorm (1968) hold that "diagnosis is a descriptive statement generally identifying the client's style of functioning. It could be a technique to motivate desirable changes in the client's behaviour through a description of his behavioural style..."

There are many tools that help a counsellor to diagnose the problems of the client and also the reasons behind them. These are helpful in understanding his personality dynamics so that the probable techniques for counselling can be structured accordingly. The use of diagnostic tools gives an insight to the counsellor regarding the outcomes of the counselling.

Few of the diagnostic tools are given below:

a) Psychological testing
b) Projective techniques
c) Case study
d) Diary writing
e) Journaling

f) Autobiography
g) Interview
h) Social Media choices

(a)Psychological testing

A psychological test is "a standardized instrument designed to measure objectively one or more aspects of the total personality by means of samples' verbal or nonverbal responses or by means of other behaviour."

Psychological tests are developed for use with specific populations and for definite purposes. Psychological tests usually yield scores that have to be interpreted in terms of certain rules and norms.

Psychological tests broadly fall under three categories namely personality; ability and aptitude; and attitude and interests.

Psychological tests are objective devices designed and developed with great care on the basis of sound psychometric principles.

The test user or the counsellor has a great responsibility in the choice of the test appropriate to the given situation.

There are some limitations to the use of psychological tests. Verbal psychological tests usually create the problem of comprehension for the testee.

There are some psychological tests which are difficult to administer and few are there which are difficult to score. Lack of motivation and support from the side of the client also creates problems in administering the test properly and also in getting appropriate results.

No test is infallible. Therefore, the counsellor must use the test to supplement and complement other available information. They should always verify the test results.

Interpretation of the test results is also a complex process. Goldman (1961) identified four dimensions of test interpretation:

- Descriptive
- genetic
- predictive and

- evaluative

Few of the desirable approaches in test interpretation have been recommended by Byrn (1968), in his paper 'The test interpretation--Planning Interview.' Few of these are as follows:

- Relate the clients' immediate and proximate ideas and actions to his remote or distant future plans.
- Relate the test data to the other experiences of the client.
- Explain the purpose of the test in a manner the client can understand.
- Use the test results in relation to all other available information received from other sources like interviews, case history, school records, family interviews and general observation.
- Use the test results to plan best solutions for the client and not just for the counsellor's diagnosis.
- Counsellor should explain the poor test performance or unpleasant information honestly and meaningfully to the counsellee.
- Let the clients see their profiles for themselves and after that make the client summarize what he/she has learnt from the profile. For example, the counsellor could say, "How would you summarize your interest as you see them from your test scores?" instead of, "Your interests are high in this, low in this, lowest in this" and so on.

(b)Projective Techniques -

Projective techniques differ from the self-report psychometric inventories/tests of personality assessment. Projective tests are characterised by the global approach to the assessment of personality. These tests provide an indirect and unstructured situation for assessing the various traits.

Projective techniques offer unique advantages by bypassing conscious defences to uncover deeply rooted emotions, motives, and subconscious, unconscious, or latent attitudes. They promote free expression without

fear of judgment, provide rich, qualitative data, and are versatile, often acting as engaging "icebreakers" in therapeutic or marketing research.

Key advantages of projective techniques include:

- **Access to Unconscious Material**: These methods are specifically designed to tap into subconscious thoughts, motivations, and hidden feelings that individuals may not be aware of or willing to express directly.
- **Reduced Social Desirability Bias**: Because the stimuli are ambiguous (e.g., inkblots, incomplete sentences) and the purpose is not obvious, respondents cannot easily fake their answers or provide socially acceptable responses.
- **Encourages Freedom of Expression**: Projective techniques provide a safe, non-threatening environment, allowing for open-ended, creative, and uncensored responses.
- **Rich Qualitative Data**: They generate in-depth, rich, and subjective data that can provide deeper insights into a person's personality, attitudes, or emotions.
- **Versatility in Application**: These methods can be adapted for various purposes, including clinical diagnosis, personality assessment, and market research (e.g., brand perception).
- **Fun and Engaging**: In research contexts, techniques like storytelling or drawing are often perceived as more enjoyable than structured surveys, leading to better engagement.

Key disadvantages of the Projective Techniques include:

- **Low Reliability and Validity:** Because they lack standardized, empirical, or normative data, it is difficult to determine if they accurately measure what they claim to measure.
- **High Subjectivity and Interpretation Bias**: Results depend heavily on the clinician's expertise, leading to potential misinterpretation where benign responses might be deemed hostile.
- **Costly and Time-Consuming:** The need for highly trained professionals and intensive, in-depth analysis makes them expensive and slow to administer.

- **Lack of Standardization**: There is no uniform method for administration, scoring, or interpretation.
- **Situational Influence**: Responses can be affected by the subject's current emotional state, the test context, or the examiner's behaviour.
- **Potential for Misleading Results**: Due to the unstructured nature, they may not yield consistent or valid data, and in some cases, early, non-standardized systems have been found to have poor replication.

Despite these drawbacks, they are still used in specific clinical settings to assess unconscious traits.

(c) Case study-

A case study is an analysis and documentation of data collected in a case history. It presents a cumulative picture of the personality of the individual. The information is gathered from sources such as cumulative records, observations, interviews, autobiography, self-reports, tests, teachers' reactions, school records etc.

Case histories conventionally cover areas such as

- Identifying information
- Educational information
- Personal data
- Vocational information
- Specific information indicating special problems.

The case study provides an opportunity for the person to be understood and treated as a unique individual. It is capable of reducing errors in diagnosis. It also helps in the prediction of behaviour. One of the disadvantages of the case study is that it causes delay in assistance to an individual as it is a very time-taking process to gather it.

(d) Diary writing

Diary writing has been a practice of the olden times adopted by many people. Before the technical advancement, people used to write their day-to-day experiences and feelings in a diary mentioning the dates and

time. It was a good source to understand not only the psyche of an individual but his environment too.

(e) Journaling

Journaling came as a new idea in the present-day scenario to express oneself. It is the regular practice of writing down thoughts, feelings, and experiences to boost self-awareness, manage stress, and track personal growth. It is a flexible tool—using paper or digital apps—for recording daily events, setting goals, or practicing gratitude. Key methods include daily logging, free-writing, bullet journaling, or using prompts, with no strict rules other than consistency.

Few Tips for Journaling

- Keep it Simple: Use a simple notebook and pen, or a digital app, to minimize friction.
  Start Small: Dedicate just 5–10 minutes a day to start, letting your thoughts flow freely.
- Be Consistent: Aim for regular entries, though not necessarily daily, to make it a habit.
- Don't Overthink It: Focus on the process, not perfection; it's okay if it's messy.
- Write Anywhere: You can write in the morning to set intentions or at night to reflect on the day.

Popular Journaling Techniques

- Gratitude Journaling: Write down three things you are thankful for to improve mental health.
- Bullet Journaling: Use a dot-grid notebook to organize tasks, goals, and daily events.
- Free Writing (Brain Dump): Write whatever comes to mind to clear mental clutter.
- Prompt-Based Journaling: Answer specific questions like "What did I learn today?" or "What made me smile?"
- Dream Journaling: Record dreams immediately upon waking to explore subconscious thoughts.

Benefits of Journaling

- Emotional Processing: Helps you understand your feelings and reduce stress.
- Increased Self-Awareness: Aids in identifying patterns in behaviour and thought.
- Improved Goal Setting: Helps track progress and maintain focus on personal development.
- Memory Preservation: Documents your life for future reflection.

(f) Autobiography

Autobiography is an introspective report of one's own experiences. Autobiography is generally considered to fall into two categories namely unstructured and structured. Structured autobiographies are chronological, comprehensive life accounts (birth-to-present) often organized by life stages like childhood, career, and retirement. Non-structured (or thematic) autobiographies focus on emotional arcs, memories, or specific themes rather than strict timelines, often using flashbacks or nonlinear narratives to tell a more engaging story.

There is a very important inherent weakness in this technique namely it is very subjective and the real magnitude of each problem remains unknown—whether the writer has exaggerated anything or whether he has tried to underestimate its importance.

(g) Interview as a Method of Data Collection -

The interview method of data collection involves direct, oral-verbal interaction between an interviewer and a respondent to gather primary data for research. It is highly versatile, allowing for structured, semi-structured, or unstructured formats to collect qualitative or quantitative data, often offering deeper insights than questionnaires.

Advantages of the Interview Method -

- **High Response Rate**: Personal interaction in the process of interviewing encourages participation.

- **Flexibility & Depth**: The interview method allows opportunities for probing, clarifying questions, and exploring complex issues, which are ideal for gathering detailed, nuanced data.
- **Control over Information**: In the process of interviewing, the interviewer can ensure that all questions are answered and clarify misunderstandings immediately.
- **Applicable to Diverse Populations**: The biggest advantage of the interview method as a means of data collection is that it can be used with both literate and illiterate respondents.

Disadvantages of the Interview Method

- **Time and Cost-Intensive**: Arranging interview sessions requires significant resources for travel, training, and analysis.
- **Interviewer Bias**: The interviewer's tone, appearance, or behaviour may influence respondent answers. The vice versa effect can also be noticed in interviews. How does the interviewer analyses and interprets the mannerism and the answers of the respondents is completely a subjective matter.
- **Subjectivity**: Another disadvantage of the interview method is that data analysis can be subjective, especially in unstructured interviews.

(h)Social Media Choices -

Social media access enables comprehensive client data gathering, offering deep insights into demographics, behaviours, interests, and sentiment through analytics, listening tools, and direct engagement.

Data Collected from Social Media:

(1) **Personally Identifiable Information (PII):** Social media platforms are used to know the PII of someone, either a common man or a person registered as a client to some counsellor. This information includes knowing the name, age, email addresses, employment history, and location of the client.
(2) **Behavioural Data:** Content consumed, post interactions, accounts followed, and groups joined help the counsellor to

understand the various traits of the client's personality, their preferences, and attitude.

(3) **Sentiment Analysis:** The sentiment analysis of the comments given by the client on various posts on different social media platforms is helpful in determining the emotional tone (positive, negative, neutral) behind the client's mentions and comments.

Common Social Media Platforms in Use at Present Times

- Facebook (94.8%): Most common for broad user insights.
- Instagram (51.9%): High engagement for visual content and lifestyle data.
- Twitter (X) (14.3%): Used for real-time sentiment tracking.
- LinkedIn/TikTok/Snapchat: Used for specific, niche, or professional targeting.

Chapter 4(B):
Effect of the variables related to the counsellor on the counselling process

Pepinsky and Pepinsky (1954) state that counselling is that interaction (1)which occurs between two individuals called counsellor and client (2) takes place in a professional setting and (3) is initiated and maintained to facilitate changes in the behaviour of a client.

Smith (1955) defines counselling as "a process in which the counsellor assists the counsellee to make interpretations of the facts relating to a choice, plan, or adjustments which he needs to make."

The above two definitions clarify that there are two important people in a counselling session, the counsellor and the client or counsellee. Both are equally important for getting counselling sessions to end on happy notes.

Talking from the side of the counsellee, the major characteristic from his side for a happy ending of the counselling session is his/her willingness to come out of the painful situation.

His belief in the counsellor and his/her sincere efforts to complete the projects and practices suggested by the counsellor also work in pursuing this goal effectively.

When we try to understand the success of a counselling project on behalf of the qualities and characteristics of the counsellor, there is a lot to understand regarding what general characteristics and personality characteristics a counsellor should possess. His skills, attitude, and beliefs are also important to handle the case of any client effectively.

General characteristics of the counsellor:

According to the Association for Counsellor Education and Supervision, the counsellor should possess six basic qualities: belief in each individual, commitment to individual human values, alertness to the

world, open-mindedness, understanding of self, and professional commitment.

The general observation reports that clients perceive their counsellor in different ways depending on the counsellor's age. If the counsellor is younger than the client, the latter will have less confidence in him. High correlations were obtained between experience and age while rating the counsellors on their success stories. It was found that counsellors improve with experience. Several investigations (Fiedler 1950, Strupp 1955) revealed that the important difference between experienced and inexperienced counsellor is with regard to flexibility. Experienced counsellors behave in a more stable manner than do inexperienced counsellors.

Till three or four decades before, it was the general notion that male counsellors are preferred, but Koile and Bird (1956) and Fuller (1963-64) concluded that female clients prefer to discuss emotionally loaded problems with female counsellors.

Personality characteristics of the counsellor:

Several studies have attempted to determine the personality characteristics of the counsellor which are basic to effective counselling. These studies were conducted by Tuma and Gustad (1957), Mendelsohn and Geller (1965), and a few more. Below is the list of the personality characteristics expected in a counsellor.

Interest in helping people is the basic quality expected in a counsellor. This characteristic is defined as a social service need, which found necessary for success and satisfaction with a counselling job.

The counsellor should have perceptual sensitivity to perceive and understand the thoughts and feelings of the client and should be sensitive to the clues given by the client.

Taking adjustment as another personality characteristic of a counsellor, Synder (1961) says that the counsellor should be normally adjusted but not necessarily perfectly adjusted. He should be able to cope with the problems in a constructive manner and should not attempt to try and solve the problems of the clients when he himself facing difficulties.

As per the studies done by Weitz (1957), the feeling of personal security is another important factor a counsellor should hold.

The ability to establish a genuine relationship with the client by which they can achieve their counselling goals is an equally important characteristic that a counsellor should possess.

Rogers (1958) suggest that the counsellor should be 'a real person' to his client

As far as beliefs are concerned, the dominant belief of the counsellor should be that the client should be treated with dignity, equality, and individuality. If a counsellor believes in the worth and value of the counselling, he also believes that the counsellee has the ability to deal efficiently with his/her problems.

When discussing the value system of the counsellor, Williamson (1958) points out that the counsellor cannot be indifferent to social and moral standards and should not try to be neutral. Samler (1960) states that counsellor should be fully aware of their values because a change in values constitutes an important counselling goal.

Dreyfus (1967) declares that "The Counsellor, however, is expected to expose his values to the client and not pretend as though he doesn't have any values."

Chapter 5:
Success Stories from the Memory Lane:
Depiction of Cases

Case 5.1 - Belongingness Nurtures the Relations.

At the very dawn of her career as a counselling psychologist, Dr V. Hope received an informal visit from a relative — let us call her Mrs. X — who had recently welcomed a second baby girl, four years after her first daughter was born. A working woman, she was approaching the end of her maternity leave and felt the familiar, tightening knot of anxiety that visits every new mother who must step back into professional life.

When the leave ended, Mrs X hired an elderly nanny, a woman of gentle heart and noble spirit. The nanny cared for the new-born with genuine tenderness and extended the same warmth to the elder daughter, now four-and-a-half years old.

Yet, one afternoon, Mrs X came to Dr Hope's clinic. When asked about her family's well-being, she sighed: "Everything is fine… except that my elder daughter seems jealous of the baby. At first, I thought it was normal sibling rivalry. Now her glances and gestures feel alarming."

As a mother, Mrs X loved both daughters equally. But the infant's complete dependence made her worry more for the younger one. Dr Hope invited her to narrate the story from the moment she conceived the second child.

"I began preparing my elder daughter from the day I knew I was pregnant," Mrs X recalled. "I told her she would get a 'live doll' to play with. When she first saw her sister in the hospital, her eyes lit up. She reached out to touch and hug her. But my mother-in-law snapped, 'Be careful! Be patient!' My daughter's face fell. More admonitions followed — 'Be a good girl, don't be rough' — and I saw anger flicker in her eyes."

In the three days that followed, visitors filled the hospital room. To the elder child, they seemed dismissive: every compliment was for the baby; every instruction was for her. By the time Mrs X returned home, the little girl's earlier excitement had curdled into resistance. "Throw the baby in the garbage," she once said. "I don't like her."

Mrs X confessed, “Sometimes I scold her. Sometimes, to my shame, I’ve hit her. Other times I plead, ‘Mama won’t love you if you don’t love your sister.’” Her voice broke. “Both are precious to me.”

Dr Hope listened, then asked gently, “Can you repeat, word for word, what you say to your elder daughter when you are busy?”

Mrs X nodded. “I say, ‘I’m in the kitchen making your breakfast, or washing clothes, or finishing office work. You must act as grown-up. The baby is tiny. If you misbehave, people will love her more, and you — a bad girl — won’t be loved as much.’”

Tears followed. Dr Hope responded, “I see a mother’s equal love for both children. But your intention and your language are not aligned. A small shift - replacing warnings with pride and responsibility, can change everything.”

Mrs X, desperate for guidance, asked for an example. Dr Hope offered a direct suggestion:

“Say this: ‘I wish your baby sister grows up to be as wonderful, well-mannered, and independent as you, my elder daughter. Do you know why she came to our home? Because God knew there was a loving big sister here who would care for her. One day you two will be best friends. That will make Mumma and Papa so happy. And when you are busy with higher studies, she’ll be grown too. She then can be your companion. Imagine how beautiful that will be. It feels like a lovely dream, doesn’t it?’”

Mrs X embraced the behavioural counsel faithfully. Six weeks later, she returned with light in her eyes. The elder daughter’s hostility had melted. She now hovered around the baby, laughing at her gurgles, proud of her “big sister” role. The mother could finally exhale, no longer fearing for the infant when the elder child was near.

“How did a few words work such magic?” Mrs X asked.

Dr Hope explained, “No one likes to be compared or constantly corrected. Endless instructions breed obstinacy. Even small children resist being perpetually managed. They respond to positive language

faster than to prohibitions. Positivity feeds curiosity, belongingness, and recognition."

"By reminding your elder daughter only of her 'duty' without celebrating her own virtues, and without weaving a sense of belonging to the baby, you unintentionally planted the idea that the new-born was a rival who" had stolen her throne. The child saw love as a finite currency and feared she was losing hers.

"Children hear love in stories, not in scolding. When we honour their identity first, they naturally extend that honour to others."

Mrs X left with clarity, and the case closed with a happy beginning. Life, for this little family, had found a gentler rhythm.

The cases illuminate a single truth: when belongingness is nurtured, relationships bloom.

X-X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.2 Self-Respect versus Social Conformity

Before devoting herself fully to counselling, Dr V. Hope served as a Professor of Psychology for fifteen years. Empathetic by nature and analytical by training, she carried an aura that drew students to her-especially those who felt invisible.

One such student caught her attention. In class, the girl would raise her hand at every question, yet keep it so low that no teacher could see it. When Dr Hope invited her to speak, she would retreat into silence. The contradiction was eloquent: a deep wish to be heard, and an equally deep fear of being seen.

Dr Hope called her to the chamber. Kindness and an outstretched hand of help dissolved the girl's reserve; she wept. Sessions moved to the clinic.

The intake revealed the source of her turmoil. Her elder sister had married six months earlier and returned home, bruised by inhuman domestic violence. Now the parents pressed the married daughter to return to her in-laws, lest her separation cast a shadow on the younger girl's marriage prospects.

Here was a social dilemma rooted in a psychological reflex: blind conformity to outdated norms, no matter how irrational or cruel.

Curiously, the student did not seek counselling for herself. Instead, she implored Dr Hope to see her elder sister. The trust she placed in the counsellor was profound enough to bring her sister into the light.

From the first session, the elder sister's indecision was palpable. She clung to a few golden memories from early marriage and blamed herself for the collapse. Relatives echoed the refrain: "Ups and downs are normal. Be strong. Be patient. Have a baby — everything will settle."

Over many sessions, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy gently dismantled the fog. Dr Hope placed thought-provoking scenarios before her:

"What if a child arrives, and nothing changes?"

"Imagine that child's life if the hostility around you continues."

“What adversities can you truly bear, and for how long?”

"Picture yourself free, but without parental or in-law support. What capacities do you have?”

"Now picture the reverse- support without freedom.”

"Envision your parents’ and siblings’ lives if you remain trapped versus if you choose autonomy with struggle.”

Each week the client returned with answers and new questions. Slowly, a decision crystallised: she would leave the toxic marriage.

With newfound courage, she spoke to her parents, not in rebellion, but in clarity. “Your blessings and companionship are enough,” she told them. “I am prepared for society’s scorn.”

Dr Hope then invited the younger sister, the student, back for follow-up. The transformation was visible. The hesitation, the self-effacement, had evaporated.

Dr Hope asked:

"What weighed on you when you first came to me? How do you feel now? What changed, and why?”

The girl answered, “I always believed one should leave a toxic relationship immediately. But the thought of society shaming my parents paralysed me. Imagining my sister caged for life, without identity, paralysed me equally. That conflict lived in my gestures: hesitation, indecision, heaviness.

“Your step-by-step exploration with my sister taught us both to measure our worth. We learned that pain may be inevitable, but prolonged suffering is a choice. This awakening gave us the strength to speak our truth to our parents and to the world.”

The happy ending of the case give a lesson that to claim oweself is to take a step toward self-actualisation. When self-respect is honoured over blind conformity, individuals reclaim their lives.

Hats off to those who dare to hold the steering wheel of their own lives.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.3 - Change in Cognition Matters

In the early years of her career, Dr V. Hope was serving as an academician. Among her many colleagues was Mrs G: a bright young woman who had recently been blessed with a son.

“Securing a coveted job and welcoming a child into the world may seem like winning two lotteries at once,” Dr Hope often reflected, “but when both arrive together, a woman finds herself in a silent, ceaseless tug-of-war between duty and motherhood.” This is an unspoken truth, especially in the Indian milieu, where a girl’s upbringing inscribes dutifulness, submissiveness, and self-sacrifice as the hallmarks of goodness.

When two life events, each demanding total attention, arrive together, a classic positive-positive conflict unfolds. It is the most stressful of all conflicts, because one must choose between two cherished gains. Mrs G lived this conflict daily, shadowed by guilt that she was somehow failing her new-born.

To give her son the care he deserved, Mrs G turned to her mother, who lived in the same city. The grandmother embraced the responsibility with joy. Though she had three unmarried daughters at home to share the household load, tending to her grandson with all her skill and love became her most treasured task.

On weekends and holidays, when Mrs G and her husband were free, they reclaimed their parental role. Those days became the grandmother’s “off days” from her self-chosen duty of love.

Time moved swiftly. The little boy turned three and began pre-school: a brief two-hour window each day. The grandmother’s hours of care grew shorter, yet the strain did not ease.

One afternoon, during lunch break, Mrs G approached Dr Hope. A counsellor’s demeanour is, by nature, an open door. Sensing safety, Mrs G spoke plainly of a worry that had gnawed at her for six months.

“My son has grown disrespectful toward his Granny,” she said. “He shouts at her, tells her not to come, refuses to change clothes or eat when

she asks. Sometimes he even bolts the door from inside and won't let her in. It frightens me. For the past few months, my mother tells me he runs a fever every day after school. His eyes look red and inflamed. Yet when I return from work, I find him low, but by sunset, just before his father comes home, he is perfectly fine.

"We have consulted physicians. All tests are normal. There is no medical cause. I am tormented. What have we done wrong in raising him?"

The grandmother, though hurt, was selfless in the way grandparents often are. Her concern was not for her own dignity but for the child's unhappiness- an unhappiness no one could decode.

Mrs G added, "When my in-laws visited for three days during the last festival holidays, he was radiant. We performed rituals together, went out, ate at restaurants. When they left, he wept and begged them to stay."

Her voice trembled. "My husband and I feel ashamed before my mother. She gave up everything to raise our son, and now he shows her no regard. Yet he adores those who never altered their lives for him, who visit only at their convenience. I am sad because he is sad. But I am sadder still that he is not becoming a good human being. He cannot honour the one who sacrificed for him."

Dr Hope listened and then invited Mrs G and her family for an informal evening at her home. She wished to observe the child in a natural setting.

The visit was warm. The little boy played freely, asked curious questions about new things, and basked in the cheer of a new household. When he grew comfortable with Dr Hope, she led him to the toy room and began a gentle, playful inquiry.

"What do you like most?"

"Holidays."

"Are you happy here in my house?"

"Yes."

"Do you like it when people visit your home?"

"Yes…"

“Who do you like to visit?”

“Grandpa, Grandmother, Uncle, Aunty,” he smiled.

“Anyone else?”

“No. I don’t like anybody else.”

“Would you like me to visit your home?”

“Mumma…! Would you and Papa welcome this aunty to our home?” the boy replied with a question.

Mrs G smiled and nodded yes.

Next, Dr Hope handed Mrs G a set of pictures: a modern adaptation of the picture-story technique. Dr asked her to show them to her son. For each picture, the same question was to be asked: “Whom do you imagine in this picture?”

Picture 1: A cinema hall.

"Me and Mumma-Papa.”

Picture 2: A picnic spot.

"Me, my parents, and Grandfather, Grandmother, Uncle, Aunty.”

Picture 3: A decorated, festive home.

"Grandmother and Grandfather are coming, so Mumma has decorated the house.”

Picture 4: A playground.

"Me, my neighbourhood friends, and Mausi —The youngest sister of mumma ”

Picture 5: A toy shop in a mall.

"Me, Mummy, Papa, and two Mausis — the youngest and the second youngest sisters of Mumma."

When Mrs G brought the answers to Dr Hope, the pattern was unmistakable. “Your son never mentioned Granny in any happy scene, though she has been his constant companion for three years. Has she ever been part of these moments?”

Mrs G explained, “To care for my son, many chores at my mother’s home remain undone. She comes to my house daily. The moment I return from work, she leaves for her home in an auto. On holidays, she stays back to attend to her old father-in-law. So when we go out, it’s usually with my two younger sisters. If my in-laws are visiting, we enjoy with them. Otherwise, he plays with neighbourhood friends. Granny is almost never part of the ‘happy hours’.”

“So,” Dr Hope asked gently, “she is never present in his joy?”

“Hardly ever,” Mrs G admitted. “Only when he was an infant and we needed her expertise. Now that he can walk and talk, she isn’t included.”

“Do you see the connection?” Dr Hope asked, and soon arranged to meet the grandmother.

When they met, Dr Hope first honoured the old lady’s sacrifice. Then she invited her to share her experience.

“When he was born, I was the only one available,” Granny said. “His paternal grandparents live in the village, tied to farming, that demanding work that keeps them there. They visit occasionally. I did everything for the baby: massage, nutritious food, day-night care. He loved me then. If he cried, only my arms could soothe him.

“Now he is grown. He wants someone to run, dance, and climb stairs with him. I cannot. I tell him to wait for his parents. He demands toffees, wants me to take him to the shop, but my knees won’t allow it. Sometimes I ask him gently, sometimes sternly, to behave.”

“Why have you not joined him in happy moments — a picnic, a movie, the park, the mall?” Dr Hope asked.

“I have a large family,” Granny replied. “Three daughters help me, but my old father-in-law lives with us. I feel I have neglected him these past years. On holidays, I try to give him extra care. My son-in-law invites me out sometimes, but I cannot make myself free.”

“Yet a three-year-old cannot understand the hierarchy of duties,” Dr Hope said softly. “Try to be part of some happy moments with him. It will change everything.”

Dr Hope then advised Mrs G and her husband to occasionally request half-days or short leave from work, return home unannounced, and create surprise "fun time" with the boy, with Granny included. Take her and the child for ice cream, or a short outing.

They followed the counsel. The little boy began to see Granny in the frame of his joy. His cognition shifted. The old conditioning was:

1. My parents leave because Granny comes. If she doesn't come, they won't go.
2. Granny is never with me when I am happy.
3. She doesn't want me to be happy with Mumma-Papa.

With repeated new experiences, the conditioning was reframed.

Dr Hope explained to Mrs G:

"The first stimulus for your son was absence of his parents. The second stimulus was the presence of Granny. These two never appeared together in time. That temporal pairing created his disappointment. He was not angry at Granny's presence; he was angry at his parents' absence. His mind forged a faulty link between the two. Hence, he resented Granny's arrival. And because she was never part of his celebrations with him, he could not associate her with happiness."

"Psychology teaches us: what matters to all of us, is not only what we receive, but how we perceive what we receive."

Within weeks, the feverish evenings vanished. The shouting stopped. The boy began to run to the door when Granny arrived, to show her his drawings, to ask her to sit beside him for ice cream. Belongingness had been restored.

The Insight:

Change in cognition changes everything. A child, like any of us, does not react to reality itself but to the meaning he assigns to reality. When we alter the meaning by altering the experience, behaviour transforms without punishment, without sermons — only with understanding.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.4 - Burden of Expectations

Justine, an imaginary name, was a student of Grade VIII in one of the city's most prestigious higher secondary schools. He had walked its corridors since his pre-primary years. Until the close of the previous academic session, he had been the school's quiet constellation: charming, obedient, and effortlessly excellent. His mind shone in studies; his spirit sang in co-curricular life - a gifted guitarist, a poised debater, a spirited volleyball player. Trophies and certificates from inter-collegiate contests lined the school's showcase, many bearing his name.

Yet when the new session of Grade VIII began, teachers and parents saw a stranger wearing Justine's face. The boy who once chased every challenge now turned away from books, from sport, from music. His manners, once warm, grew sharp and discourteous toward teachers, classmates, even the walls that had applauded him.

At first, everyone offered the kindest diagnosis: adolescence. Hormones, they whispered. Success, others suggested, had perhaps spoiled him. But the edges only grew rougher. Rudeness became his daily language. Anxiety entered his parents' home like an uninvited guest, and finally they came to Dr Hope.

Dr Hope listened to the entire chronicle. Then she asked about Justine's early childhood, how his games were chosen, what filled his free hours, and the texture of his relationship with his parents.

They spoke with tenderness. "Justine has always been a good boy: outgoing, talkative, eager. He never resisted school. From the start he was friendly, participative, and, by God's grace, successful in whatever he touched."

"How did you prepare him for those achievements? How did you respond when he succeeded?" Dr Hope inquired.

"Doctor," they said, "we come from a very humble, lower-middle-class background. Life taught us struggle. Our only wealth as a couple has been our trust and our harmony. When Justine was born, we were overjoyed. We gave him everything we could afford to make him happy. Fortunately, he grew into an energetic, versatile boy who won praise and

prizes. Whenever he brought home news of a victory, we applauded with all our hearts, as any parents would. We encouraged him to do better next time."

Dr Hope sensed there was more. She waited. "Anything else in your response?"

"No, Doctor, only that. We would hug him, kiss him, give him a small token of appreciation, and promise to provide whatever he needed for the next, higher goal."

"If I invite Justine for a session, will he cooperate?" Dr Hope asked.

"We believe so. He carries a heavy weight inside. Though he misbehaves daily, we see that he is unhappy with himself. We will try to bring him."

A week later, Justine sat in the clinic. Dr Hope welcomed him with genuine admiration for his long list of accomplishments.

"Thank you, Doctor," he said, "I feel fortunate to hear your compliments. But may I ask, what is your hidden agenda? Do you also want me to fetch shields and medals for your organisation, or do you truly wish to help me with this behaviour I can't control?"

"My dear," Dr Hope replied, "I expect nothing from you. Your parents came to me with worry, and I wished to hear your story."

"Wow… so cool," Justine whispered. "Someone actually wants to listen to me, to understand me."

"It is unfortunate for those who do not listen to your success stories, your struggles, your preparations…" Dr Hope said, opening the space.

"If you think so, I trust you will understand me," Justine answered.

What followed was a cathartic release, and through his outpourings, Dr Hope saw a startling landscape of his perceptions.

"Doctor, this world is sadistic," Justine began. "People and institutions earn money, name, fame, and recognition from your success. They keep piling expectations on you until, one day, you collapse under the weight."

He continued, “Yes, I won many competitions- music, sports, and debate. But I won because I loved those arenas. The guitar, the volleyball court, the debating floor, they were my joy. I gave them 100% because I was immersed, not because I was chasing a trophy. Winning was a by-product, not the purpose.

“But Doctor, winning is an addiction, not only for the winner, but for everyone around him. They stop accepting your failures. Eight years of victories are erased by a few months of decline.

With tears in his eyes, he asked, “can I have even a small say in the decisions of my own life? I want peace. I have earned enough fame. I want to feel satisfied, to step aside and make room for others who deserve to win. I would be happier guiding them toward success. I am not a bad boy, Doctor. My parents and grandparents taught me to have vision, to think, to walk alone. But now they press me to act on their wishes. Their values and their expectations no longer match. They push me into a dilemma.”

“Everyone praised me when I succeeded. Why is no one with me now, in my decline? No one says, ‘Don’t worry. This is just a different phase of your journey. Take no pressure. We only want you happy and peaceful.’

“No one pats my back when I fail or when I quit. Instead, they question me, mock me. Their responses taught me that people do not love me, but my success. If anyone had held me with warmth in my failure, I would have been a different person. But their attitude compelled me to become worse as a student, as a son, as a friend, as a human being.”

Dr Hope nodded. “That is a truly mature self-analysis, Justine. May I ask you one thing? You said, ‘Can I have a little say in the decisions of my own life?’”

“Yes, Doctor,” he replied.

“Then tell me, the way you are behaving now, is it your decision or your reaction to external stimuli?”

Silence filled the room. Dr Hope watched his face, the micro-movements of thought. Finally, Justine spoke firmly: “I honestly admit, i am purposely rude. It is my reaction.”

“So,” Dr Hope concluded gently, “your response is conscious, yet it is brewed from your suppressions. You know, Justine, old stored food begins to smell foul. Suppressed emotions do the same to our aura. Perhaps that is what we are witnessing.”

“Maybe. I think so,” Justine murmured.

“Do you watch cricket? Love it?” Dr Hope asked, shifting tone.

“Yes… very much.”

“When a bowler delivers the ball, his intent is to get the batsman out or stop runs. But the batsman doesn’t bat the bowler’s intent — he bats the ball. He reads its line, length, speed, and the field placement, and then chooses his stroke.

“Hope you can make conscious choices, free of inhibitions, and respond to life the way a good batsman plays a ball.”

A smile broke across Justine’s face. “I will remember this example, Doctor. You will soon find me a good batsman of life.”

The session ended on that note — not with a prescription, but with a metaphor that had reached the boy where lectures could not.

The Insight we receive from this case says that

Expectations, when untampered by empathy, become a burden that bends the strongest backs. A child’s achievements should be celebrated, but his failures must be sheltered with equal warmth. Otherwise, he learns to perform for applause rather than live for joy, and when the applause fades, he believes he has faded too. The remedy is not to lower expectations, but to raise understanding — to let a child know he is loved for being, not merely for winning.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.5 - Misleading Emotions.

Mrs Simple, an imagined name, was the mother of a 22-year-old daughter who was pursuing her MBA from a prestigious university. One afternoon, her steps carried her to Dr. Hope, a well-known psychological counsellor. She had come to unburden a worry that had settled in her heart like a stone.

“My daughter is a good girl,” Mrs Simple began. “She is sincere in studies, grounded in values, disciplined in habits. Yet a few days ago she told me something that left me restless. She said she is in love and wishes to marry.”

In today’s world, such news might seem ordinary. What unsettled Mrs Simple was the identity of the man: a guest faculty member at her daughter’s university, more than fifteen years older than her. The age gap alarmed her. Beyond that, he belonged to a different community, caste, and state — a world unknown to her, making it difficult to learn about him or his family.

Mrs Simple had come with a clear hope: that Dr Hope would counsel her daughter to change her mind.

Contrary to expectation, Dr Hope asked Mrs Simple to arrange a meeting with the young man and, if possible, with his family. She was advised not to reveal her true purpose.

Though unconvinced, Mrs Simple agreed, half-heartedly. Dr Hope asked her to return only after the meeting, with her impressions.

Mrs Simple requested the guest faculty for a brief appointment, saying she wished to discuss her daughter’s studies. The young man, a gentleman through and through, invited her home so they could speak without hurry.

What she found disarmed her completely. The simplicity of the home, the dignity of the man, and the quiet grace of his mother spoke of character.

She told him she sought his guidance for her daughter’s interview preparation. She added that she was especially anxious because, after her

separation from her husband years ago — when her daughter was only five — the girl had become her sole anchor in life. She had heard her daughter speak of him with gratitude, and that was why she dared to approach him.

The young man smiled. He described her daughter as curious, hard-working, punctual, and persevering. He admired her determination, and that was why he had shared books and notes-to help her complete assignments and secure a good placement. His generosity, he said, was that of a teacher to a promising student.

In the course of conversation, Mrs Simple learned his story. He hailed from the farthest southern tip of the country. Two years earlier, a catastrophic flood had swallowed his home and taken his wife and two-year-old daughter. The memories haunted him, and he had moved to this new city seeking a fresh start. Teaching gave him solace. He confessed that whenever he guided a female student, he imagined his own daughter grown up.

His mother spoke too. She said her son had lost all taste for life after the tragedy. His only purpose now was to see his younger brother — in the final year of post-graduation in Information Technology and Robotics-settled. That was his single, unwavering dream.

The meeting laid bare the truth: the girl's feelings were one-sided. The young man harboured no romantic thought for her.

Yet something unexpected blossomed from that meeting- friendship. Two families, found comfort in each other. Mrs Simple telephoned Dr Hope and shared the essence of the encounter.

Dr Hope asked her to bring her daughter for the next session. Both arrived at the appointed hour. On a pre-arranged cue, Mrs Simple excused herself for some urgent work, leaving the girl alone with the counsellor.

Dr Hope began gently: "Your mother is troubled about something concerning you. Would you like to share anything about yourself?"

From the girl's words, a quiet ache emerged. She carried childhood memories like shards of glass- memories of a drunken father's cruelty

toward her mother. Those scenes had left her with a lifelong hunger for the protective presence of an older man. When she met the guest faculty — kind, caring, elder male figure, she felt her long search had ended. In his company she felt seen, supported, loved.

But one question remained: Was her attachment to him romantic love, or something else? The girl found the question difficult. Dr Hope closed the session for the day.

In the next meeting, Dr Hope asked, “Are you comfortable today to speak of your marital plans?”

The girl replied, “Doctor, my studies will finish in two months. I hope to get a good placement through campus interviews. About six months into my job, I would like to plan marriage.” She smiled. “I already have someone in mind. I’ll introduce you when the time comes.”

“That would be my pleasure,” Dr Hope said. “May I ask, what qualities in him make you think of him as a husband?”

“He is caring, soft-hearted, understanding, cooperative… he has all the qualities that earn my respect and make me feel protected.”

“And what is marriage, in your view?” Dr Hope asked.

“The qualities I just named, respect and protection, are the essentials of a successful marriage.”

“What dreams would you pursue after marriage?”

“I want to travel the world with my husband, with someone who will never make me feel abandoned.”

“Do you think respect alone makes a marriage thrive?” Dr Hope asked gently. “Is there not also room for romance, for disagreement, for debate and discussion that lead to shared conclusions? These are the salt that keeps a marriage healthy.”

The girl paused. “Hmm… yes. I never thought of it that way.”

“It’s alright,” Dr Hope said. “I speak as a woman married for twenty-five years. For me, marriage is not only protection and respect. It is love. It is romance. It is not subordination, but walking together through ups

and downs, smiling. It is empathy, cooperation, stepping into each other's roles when needed. It is moving toward common goals while honouring differences."

"Wow," the girl said, "that is such a broad, beautiful view of marriage."

"I'm glad you receive it," Dr Hope replied. "In our next session, I'd love to know more about your dream person. I'll help you mature that proposal—not just as a counsellor, but as an elder sister."

"Thank you, Doctor. I'll come soon."

In the final session, the girl returned with clarity. "I had someone I was infatuated with," she admitted. "But after our last talk, I understood that what I felt was not complete. I was about to make a grave mistake—choosing a husband for whom I felt only respect, not the other emotions a marriage needs."

"How do you feel now?" Dr Hope asked.

"I feel… childish, and yet relieved," she said. "My old memories were pulling me toward a wrong decision. Since childhood, I was searching for someone to fill the void left when my parents separated. That man filled the void. But now I see: if I marry him, I will always be on the receiving end of care. That imbalance is not good for a marriage. I'm glad I never told him or anyone except my mother.

"My mother is wonderful. The way she handled my request calmly, wisely and brought me to you… it enlightened me."

"You helped me understand myself, Doctor. You saved me," she said, eyes glistening with gratitude, before bidding goodbye.

The Insight earned from this case announces that emotions born from unhealed wounds often wear the mask of love. A heart starved of protection can mistake respect for romance, and guidance for partnership. True counselling does not impose answers; it holds up a mirror until the client recognises her own reflection. When cognition changes — when we see why we feel what we feel — the heart chooses wisely, and life realigns with truth.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.6 - Happy Couple, Happy Child

Mike—an imagined name, was a six-year-old boy who, in his early years, had been the very definition of sunshine. To his parents, to his paternal and maternal grandparents, to uncles, aunts, and neighbours alike, he was the apple of every eye.

At two-and-a-half, when he first stepped into pre-primary school, praise gathered around him like light: sincere, disciplined, creative. He was not boisterously social, yet with a chosen few classmates he was entirely at ease, his laughter unguarded.

This gentle brilliance continued until he turned five. Then, almost imperceptibly, the colours began to fade. The boy who once raised his hand in class grew shy and withdrawn. His voice in the classroom fell to a whisper, then to silence. The spark in his studies dimmed. In the free periods that once rang with his footsteps on the playground, he now sat indoors, hunched over a carom board, avoiding every team game, every open sky.

Time hurried on, and Mike's decline deepened. Absences piled up, each marked "medical leave." His face, once luminous, lost its glow. Teachers who had cherished him in his pre-school years looked at him with quiet sorrow. In a parent-teacher meeting, one such teacher drew his parents aside and spoke her concern: Mike's strength, his grades, his friendships—all were withering.

The parents listened. But when they reached home, shame turned to anger, and anger fell on the child. Mike fled to his room and began to draw furiously on a rough sheet, as if the crayon could speak the words he could not.

Illness became his companion. Doctors multiplied, diagnoses did not. Report after report said the same thing: physically, there is nothing wrong.

Finally, someone whispered the word counsellor, and so the case arrived at Dr Hope's door.

As the parents recounted Mike's symptoms, Dr Hope noticed something discordant. They were not speaking in harmony. While one described the symptoms, the other supplied causes, and each cause sounded like an accusation against the other's family. A quiet blame-game threaded through their narrative.

The seasoned counsellor suspected: the child's distress might be the echo of dissonance between mother and father.

She invited the parents alone. She saw two people who loved each other, responsible and hardworking, both striving for a better financial future. To sustain that dream, both held jobs. In the narrow window of three to four hours — between Mike's return from pre-school and his mother's return from work — they relied on grandparents. Whichever of the four elders was available would step in.

In the second session, a clearer picture emerged. The couple's companionship was genuine, yet their dependence on four different caregivers had woven a web of contradictions around the boy. Each grandparent loved him, but each loved him in a different language:

The paternal grandfather: idealistic, principled, exacting.

The paternal grandmother: talkative, breezy, "take-it-easy" by nature.

The maternal grandmother: systematic, meticulous, orderly.

The maternal grandfather: cautious, anxious, fearful of risk.

Little Mike, with the honesty of children, reported his days to his mother. "No, no! Granny says do it this way. Grandpa says do it that way." The methods for tying a shoelace, for eating a meal, for greeting a guest—all came in four versions.

His parents discussed these contradictions, and the discussions bruised. Each perceived the other's observation as a critique of their own parents. Bitterness seeped in, slow but steady. There was no personal enmity between husband and wife, no loss of affection—only a widening gap when the subject was their son. And the boy, caught in the middle, was learning four different scripts for the same scene of life.

Dr Hope discerned that the grandparents' differences were not mere personality shades; they had hardened into a silent contest—possessiveness on one side, a humanistic "I know best" on the other. The parents, instead of aligning for their child, were defending their lineages. Coordination had collapsed, and in its place stood miscommunication, misinterpretation, and mistrust.

Mike, already bewildered, now watched his two beloved anchors, his mother and father, misunderstand each other. The sight was too heavy for six-year-old shoulders. He retreated into shyness, into non-cooperation, into absence. He pulled back from every stage where he might be seen, because being seen had begun to feel unsafe.

Dr Hope asked the parents to step into their son's shoes. She offered an analogy: "Imagine you are assigned a new manager every few weeks, or the same manager changes the rules every Monday. How long before your mind tires, your confidence erodes, your performance slips?"

The image struck home. In an instant, they saw the storm inside their child's mind. The residue of their arguments melted.

They made a decision together. The mother would take six months of leave-without-pay to be with Mike. When he later entered full-time school, the gap between his return and hers would be minimal—a gap they vowed to bridge themselves, whatever it took.

Visits to grandparents, they resolved, must return to what they were meant to be: festivals of joy, extra freedom, and play, not duty rosters.

Peace returned to the home, and with it, Mike returned to himself. The carrom board was abandoned for the football field. His hand rose again in class. The pallor left his cheeks.

"Nothing is more soothing to a child," Dr Hope said as the sessions closed, "than the feeling of two hands holding his—one his father's, the other his mother's."

The case leaves a very precious Insight to all the parents who are raising their children of crucial budding age.

It says that a child is not raised by instructions alone; he is raised by the atmosphere between the adults who love him. When caregivers speak in conflicting dialects, the child loses his language. When parents defend their pasts instead of protecting their child's present, the child learns to hide. Harmony between parents is not a luxury for a child, it is oxygen. A happy couple does not guarantee a happy child, but a couple at war with each other can scarcely rear one who is whole.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.7 - Displacement of Feelings

Dev Prakash and Aayesha—names imagined for the sake of privacy—first met in the crowded corridors of undergraduate life. In the second year of their degree, two of their three major subjects overlapped, and so, almost every day, they found themselves seated in the same classrooms, listening to the same lectures, solving the same problems. Both were bright, diligent students. Notes were shared, absences were covered, presentations were co-authored, and minor projects became joint ventures. Study, for them, became a shared language.

The companionship that began in lecture halls deepened quietly. Like-mindedness, daily proximity, and the trust born of academic collaboration drew them closer. Yet both possessed the wisdom to read the season of life correctly: they came from lower-middle-class homes where a career was not a luxury but a necessity. The matters of the heart, they agreed, must wait until the foundations of life were laid.

Acting on that understanding, Aayesha cleared a university entrance examination and enrolled for post-graduation, while Dev moved to another city to pursue his MBA. For nearly five years they studied, worked, and built themselves, separated by geography but connected by occasional messages and calls. The urgency of young love softened into a steadier affection.

When their paths converged again—both now employed in the same city—the old warmth rekindled into flame. They were of marriageable age, and after patient persuasion, they convinced their families and married.

The first chapter of their married life read like a celebration: romance, travel, friends, parties, and the exhilarating fatigue of two ambitious careers running side by side. Time, as it does, moved forward.

But gradually, something shifted. Aayesha's once-radiant attentiveness began to dim. Warmth gave way to friction, conversations to misunderstandings, dialogue to silence, and silence to sharp words. The couple who once believed they could not live apart now seemed to practice the art of avoiding each other.

When bright colours fade, the change is noticed quickly. Colleagues and friends, troubled by the absence of smiles on two familiar faces, urged Dev to seek help. And so, one day, he sat across from Dr Hope.

In that introductory session, Dev recounted the long arc of their love story and the recent ache of its unravelling. His face said more than his sentences. Dr Hope listened, then asked him to gently request Aayesha to come for a session as well.

Dev returned home, apologised for his share of mistakes, and told Aayesha with humility that he longed to restore the beauty they had lost. He mentioned his meeting with a counsellor and said the doctor wished to hear her side of the story. Aayesha agreed.

When she came, her words opened a different door. “Dev and I belong to different faiths,” she said. “Marrying was difficult. His parents accepted me with open hearts. Mine did not. It was my brother and two sisters who stood by me and helped me marry Dev against my parents’ wishes.

“Dev’s family is good to us. His parents visit, spend time, bless us. But mine… they have never come. They will not come even if I die. I feel erased. I cannot forgive them for being so ungenerous.” Her voice trembled, and the reservoir of pain overflowed.

The pages of life were turning, and the picture was becoming clear.

Dr Hope called Dev for a second session. She told him a story:

“A newly married couple lost some valuables at the very start of their first journey. Perhaps they were stolen, perhaps misplaced in the haze of new love. They were traveling for the first time together, and the joy of nearness outweighed the loss. They reported the theft, but the belongings were never found. They learned to live without them. Two years later, the wife began to grieve those possessions again. What should the husband do to console her?”

Dev understood at once. “So you know everything now, Doctor.”

“Yes, Mr Dev,” she replied. “Your wife’s anger toward you is not original. It is displacement — the pain, anger, and longing for her parents finding voice in the safest place she knows: her marriage.

Forgetting parents is not easy. Be gentle with her. Help her move through this impulse."

She continued, "Do you know how to satisfy a child who insists on a toy? You can buy it — that's one way. Or you can tell him you don't have money now, but you will try later because you too wish him to have it. Or you can convince him the toy is not useful, and promise something better that he will love more."

It was an indirect suggestion, a lamp held up to his insight. Dev nodded. He would try.

He began with the second approach. Occasionally he would speak of how much he longed for his parents-in-law's blessings. Sometimes, to lighten the air, he would joke, "When your parents accept us, I hope they won't come with just blessings — maybe some costly gifts too! May that day come soon."

Humour, offered like water to parched earth, began to soften the ground between them. Dev and Aayesha grew empathetic again, their minds quieter, their regard for each other warmer.

They decided to host a small gathering in a restaurant for their second wedding anniversary. Dev asked Aayesha's siblings for one favour: bring their parents to the celebration, by any means. "That is the only gift I wish to give Aayesha," he said.

Pure intentions often summon gentle miracles. The siblings tried, and the parents came. They were received with open hearts by everyone present — by Dev, by his parents, by colleagues, neighbours, and relatives. Each guest praised Aayesha, and in praising her, praised the parents who had raised her. Kind words, soaked in gratitude, washed away years of resentment. They embraced their daughter and son-in-law, and extended warm regards to Dev's parents.

It seemed that when Dev had voiced his wish for gifts from his in-laws, the universe had been listening — collecting every particle of goodwill to deliver it at the right moment.

The case ended on happy note, announcing that displacement is the mind's quiet sleight of hand: it takes a feeling too large or too painful to direct at its true source, and places it where it feels safer. A wife may scold a husband when she is grieving her parents; a husband may withdraw from a wife when he is mourning a lost career. Untreated, displacement corrodes love.

Healing begins when we trace the feeling to its origin, not merely to its outlet. Dev did not argue with Aayesha's anger; he followed it to its source and answered the source with patience, humour, and inclusion. When the original wound was touched with acceptance, the displaced emotion lost its reason to exist.

A marriage thrives not when partners are flawless, but when they are willing to decode each other's pain and meet it at the root.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.8 - Repressed Desires Haunt the Windows : They Are Forbidden to Peep Through

Vatsal —an imagined name — was a man of about thirty-five, holding a distinguished position in a multinational corporation. Dashing in appearance and sharp in intellect, he moved through his workplace like a comet: noticed by all, admired by many, especially by female colleagues. Yet admiration, in his case, was not reciprocated with regard. To the women around him, Vatsal was curt, dismissive, and at times openly rude. Respect and concern were currencies he seemed unwilling to spend on them.

One afternoon, his disdain spilled over. He spoke disrespectfully to a female colleague in front of others. The humiliation was so stinging that the woman broke into tears. Word of the incident travelled swiftly to the Senior Manager, who summoned every witness. Each account confirmed the same truth: Vatsal's behaviour had been indecent, unwarranted, and cruel.

The Manager called Vatsal, instructed him to apologise, and issued a stern warning against any repetition. To everyone's astonishment, Vatsal refused contrition. He defended his conduct, punctuating his justification with further demeaning remarks about women.

The Manager's patience ended. Vatsal was suspended for a week and given an ultimatum: return only with a report from a counsellor. Thus he arrived at Dr Hope's clinic.

Dr Hope had already been briefed. In the introductory session she observed a man steeped in orthodoxy. Vatsal spoke of his family: two real sisters, nearly half a dozen cousin sisters — yet when asked about his relationships, he lingered on male cousins. He had no real brother, and his pride was palpable when he mentioned his father and grandfather.

Of the women, he spoke with selective reverence. His mother, his grandmother, and two elder sisters- one real, one a cousin- received respect. But his younger sisters were targets of mockery. He had christened them with belittling nicknames: Minnie Mouse, BBC Radio,

Bollywood vamp. The habit was so embedded in his speech that he uttered these labels without hesitation, unaware that they revealed more than he intended.

When Dr Hope asked why he had come, Vatsal answered without apology: “My senior manager sent me. He thought my behaviour with a female colleague was inappropriate.”

No remorse colored his tone. Dr Hope noted it and asked, “From what I’ve seen so far, you seem quite playful with your female friends and sisters. Is that true?”

“Yes, Doctor. We shouldn’t take girls seriously,” he replied, laughing sardonically. “They can’t equal men in intelligence, power, responsibility—in anything. Well, households are an exception.”

“Oh… I’m sorry, I don’t agree with you,” Dr Hope said calmly. “But that’s fine. Everyone is entitled to an opinion. What concerns me is this: what is your opinion of me?” She smiled, a glint of mischief in her eyes.

“No, no, Doctor! With all due respect, I hold you in the highest regard. You are an elder. How could I think otherwise?” Vatsal answered in a rush.

“But what if I were not elderly?” she asked. “What if I were young and beautiful? What would your opinion be then?”

Vatsal’s composure cracked. He rubbed his palms, shifted in his chair, crossed and uncrossed his legs. Embarrassment sat on him like an ill-fitting coat.

“Don’t be embarrassed, Vatsal,” Dr Hope said gently. “I am not here to judge you. No answer will upset me. You may speak freely.”

Her kindness steadied him. He exhaled, and his eyes grew moist. “Doctor, this is the first time in my life I’ve had a deep, sustained conversation with a woman. I’m realising my relationships with women have always been… shallow.

“I was taught to obey elders — men or women. To question them felt like sin. When I was small, I loved my younger sisters. I played with them. But my grandfather would get furious whenever he saw me with

them. He'd ask, 'Are you a girl?' He told me to behave like the men of the house. Maybe those words, coming from authority, shaped me into the man I am today."

"You deserve applause for such self-awareness, Vatsal," Dr Hope said, and closed the session. She asked him to bring his mother next time.

The session with his mother was an excavation. She told Dr Hope that Vatsal was the first male child born in the family in two generations. He was her second child; her first was a daughter. His birth brought jubilation, especially to his grandparents. Two years later, another daughter arrived. Vatsal thus grew up flanked by sisters. They played kitchen-set and doll-weddings together; he played cricket, marbles, and toy guns with them.

"But my father-in-law would rage whenever he saw Vatsal with his sisters," she recalled. "He would shout at Vatsal and at me, demanding that 'the boy of the house' be raised properly. He would repeat that Vatsal, as the sole bearer of the family name, must be brought up to fit that role. Whenever Grandfather shouted at me, Vatsal would run and hide in my lap, terrified.

"I think those commands — that insistence on a prescribed image of manhood — molded Vatsal into the patriarchal man he became," she concluded.

In the next session, Dr Hope did not interview Vatsal; she conversed with him. She explained, and he questioned whenever he did not understand.

She said, "A great psychologist taught that an integrated personality is a blend of masculine and feminine qualities. A man reaches wholeness when, along with his male traits, he carries touches of the feminine — kindness, care, gentleness. The reverse is true for a woman: her femininity is enriched by touches of masculine boldness, assertiveness, leadership. This feminine aspect in a man is called the anima. In you, Vatsal, the anima has been suppressed."

"Oh… so that explains my behaviour," he murmured. "But Doctor, it has become part of me. How can I become someone else now?"

Dr Hope smiled. “If we are speaking technically, remember this: personality is dynamic. It changes, grows, reshapes with new cognitions, situations, learning, and experience. We are living beings. We learn, relearn, and unlearn all our lives. Take this as a challenge to the gentleman in you.”

Vatsal’s shoulders relaxed. His male ego, addressed in its own language. Challenge felt honoured. “I will take it up,” he said. Then he paused and turned back. “But Doctor, why did my grandfather hold such wrong ideas? Why was he never criticized? He was admired for his patriarchal values. Why is it different now?”

“Society is always in motion,” Dr Hope replied. “Obedience was once a cornerstone of conformity. In his time, men were protectors and providers because social and political conditions demanded it. Today, women have access to education, employment, sports, science, space — every arena. For families and society to rise, men must accept women in these new roles and work alongside them.

“This could be a long discussion, Mr Vatsal. We shall continue it outside the clinic someday.”

“Sure, Doctor. Thank you.” He left with a steadier gait.

A week later, a handwritten apology — humble, contrite — lay on the Senior Manager’s desk. Vatsal stood before him, beside the colleague he had wronged. She read the letter. The sincerity in his words and posture softened her, and she forgave him.

Vatsal had learned one more quality to respect in women: their generosity.

The case closed successfully, yet Dr Hope noted in her report: Reframing childhood learnings etched deep into the psyche is slow work. For Vatsal, as for anyone, sustained effort from within and consistent, deserved appreciation from others will make the reshaping of core beliefs possible.

The Insight poured out of this case is:

What we call “attitude” in adulthood is often a child’s adaptation to the commands of authority. When a boy is taught that softness is shameful, he buries his anima and calls the burial “manhood.” The repressed does not die; it leaks — as contempt, as cruelty, as the need to diminish others to feel intact.

Healing begins when a man meets his own disowned tenderness and realises that strength is not the absence of gentleness, but the courage to hold both. Prejudice against women is frequently a war against the feminine within. When that war ends, respect for women begins —not as a performance, but as a natural extension of self-acceptance.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.9 - To Err is human

Ritesh—an imagined name—came to Dr Hope as a referred client. In his first introductory session, the young man seemed to be standing at the nadir of himself.

He had never been a prodigy. By the yardstick of grades, he was average, perhaps even mediocre. Yet there was more to him than marks could measure. He was an NCC cadet, a participant in the athletic events of his college's annual Sports Day, and on the scales of soft skills, conduct, and humility, he weighed far heavier than most.

But now, something in him had dimmed. Dr Hope noticed that his answers did not flow. They stumbled. At times he stammered, as if each word had to climb over a wall of hesitation before it reached his lips.

She handed him a questionnaire that asked for subjective reflection: write three or four good qualities and three or four shortcomings of his teachers, his parents, a few close friends, and neighbours he knew well.

Ritesh took an hour and returned the sheets. He was asked to come again after two days.

When Dr Hope reviewed his answers, one detail stood out: the section on his parents was riddled with cancellations—words written, scratched out, rewritten, and struck again.

"Well answered, Ritesh. I appreciate your effort," Dr Hope said when they met again. "But may I ask, why so many cuttings when you wrote about your parents? Often we feel such overwhelming gratitude toward them that words fail us. Is that what happened?"

"Maybe that's true for others, Doctor, but not for me," Ritesh replied. "I was torn between being truthful about him and simply praising him because he is… no longer here."

Dr Hope was startled. Her file said both of the parents of Ritesh were alive. She steadied herself and asked gently, "From what I understand, you are deeply hurt by your father for some reason. You can trust me, Ritesh. Be a friend to yourself. Speak what you have stored inside. Things kept too long begin to smell."

"Not so easy, Doctor," he said.

“The road to peace never is,” she answered.

Ritesh began, slowly. “My parents are good people. Mother is simple. She isn’t highly educated. She comes from a traditional background and doesn’t know the ways of today’s world. But she is caring, hard-working, and gives herself entirely to keeping our home in order.

“Father is educated. He holds a senior position in an MNC and earns well. He is kind-hearted. He loves his family and carries every financial burden for our welfare without complaint.”

He took a sip of water. “But is financial support enough to deserve a family’s respect? Shouldn’t a person also be truthful?”

“Of course, I believe that,” Dr Hope murmured.

Ritesh’s voice dropped. “How do I say this… I feel ashamed even telling you. I came to know of his closeness with another woman — someone known to one of my best friends. The knowledge itself wounds me. But worse is the fear that if this spreads, my friends will mock me. And when I look at my mother — so pure-hearted — and think she is being cheated, my chest tightens. I’ve become quiet around her these days, afraid she might read the truth on my face.”

“I understand your state of mind,” Dr Hope said. “But don’t you think you should have an adult-to-adult conversation with your father? Set aside the news for a while and create ground for a heart-to-heart talk.”

“I don’t want to see his face,” Ritesh said flatly. “That he still supports me financially is the only reason I respect him now.”

“You are entitled to your hurt, Ritesh. But tell me - if the pipe that brings water from the rooftop tank to our taps gets choked, what do we do? However unpleasant or time-consuming, we clean it. We do it ourselves or call a plumber. Because unless we do, the water won’t flow.”

“I understand,” Ritesh nodded.

“Parents are worthy of reverence, yes,” Dr Hope continued. “We grow up seeing them as idols. But they are human. We dislike many of their habits — their anger, their fussiness, their demands that we be punctual, wake early — yet we bear them, even forgive them. Place this knowledge in the same list of ‘dislikings’ you tolerate. Don’t react to it.

“It is human to err. Parents, too, are flesh and blood and heart. They face social, emotional, hormonal storms. In those moments they don’t need only our respect or our hatred — they need our support. Support in the form of understanding, calm dialogue, and reminding them that they matter to us.”

Ritesh looked unconvinced, his agreement only half-formed. Seeing this, Dr Hope offered another image.

“Normally we think a creeper is supported entirely by the host tree. But sometimes the creeper shelters the tree — gives shade, holds moisture, keeps pests away, offers birds a home and thus shields the tree from harm.

“We receive from our parents all our lives. Let us, sometimes, help them out of their wrong perceptions, decisions, and actions.”

At that, Ritesh rose in one swift motion, a determined smile breaking across his face. “With your permission, Doctor, may I end the session now? I will meet you again within a fortnight- hopefully with a story of how I overcame my pain.”

The Insight from the case is:

We canonise our parents in childhood, and when they fall from the pedestal, the crash shakes our own ground. But to err is human, and to be a parent is to be human first.

A child’s moral clarity can become a prison if it leaves no room for the parent’s frailty. Condemnation may feel righteous, but it rarely heals. Healing begins when we see that the pipe is choked, not broken-that the flow can be restored with courage, conversation, and compassion.

Ritesh’s pain was real, and his father’s action was wrong. Both truths can exist. The work of growing up is learning to hold them together: to name the wrong without erasing the whole of the person, and to protect one’s mother without becoming her judge. In families, sometimes the creeper must shield the tree, so that the tree may live to give shade another day.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.10 - Acceptance is the Perfect Answer

In a lecture hall filled with voices, one student sat like a pocket of silence. She never nodded yes, never shook her head no, never raised a hand to ask a question. Day after day, through every professor's lecture, she remained still — a presence that seemed to absent itself.

One afternoon, a classmate, unable to watch any longer, gently but firmly led her to the Personal Counselling Cell and placed her before Dr Hope.

"Yes… my friend, what brings you to me at this hour?" Dr Hope asked, her voice warm.

"I didn't come to you. She brought me here," the girl replied, glancing at her classmate.

"That's alright, young lady. I'm glad to meet you. But why do you think your friend brought you?"

"She's foolish. She thinks I have a problem because I'm quiet all the time."

Dr Hope smiled. "Perhaps she misunderstood. But since you are here, would you like to talk about anything?"

"I don't want to. Is being quiet a crime?" The question came edged with resentment.

"Not at all," Dr Hope said softly. "If silence is your nature and it brings you peace, there is no problem. But if you practice silence and still feel a storm inside—if you are quiet because you cannot speak, rather than because you choose not to, then perhaps there is a hurt you wish to voice but cannot."

"How do you know that?" the girl asked, startled.

"I'm only guessing," Dr Hope replied, still smiling. She sensed the girl was near the edge of her own dam.

"Look, Doctor, I'm good at studies. I don't want to waste time on useless talk with these girls. She isn't even my friend. We're both new admissions this year."

“Yes, your aura tells me you are studious,” Dr Hope said. “So how are your studies? How do you like the new college, the professors, and the subjects you chose?”

At that, the girl’s composure splintered. Her eyes filled for no reason she could name.

“Don’t worry, dear. I’m not forcing answers. I asked only to know you a little,” Dr Hope said.

“Doctor… if there is so much disturbance at home, how can a girl be happy in college? Who can chat with friends when she is already so confused?” The words came out sharp, brittle.

A small silence settled between them.

“May I help you in any way?” Dr Hope asked, her tone humble.

The gentleness broke the girl. Tears returned. After a few minutes she spoke, steadier now. “Everything was fine at home. I have my mother, father, and an elder brother. Two years ago my brother got married. I was so happy to have a sister-in-law. She is a good woman. My brother is a good man. But three months ago they left our home and moved to a rented house."

“My parents feel humiliated. Since then, neighbours and relatives keep visiting, asking questions. Sometimes they speak ill of my parents, sometimes of my brother and sister-in-law. I feel like screaming at all of them.”

“What troubles you more,” Dr Hope asked, “the separation from your brother and sister-in-law, or the talk of relatives and neighbours?”

“Doctor, I miss my brother and sister-in-law terribly. They loved me so much. We know why they left. Ours is a kind of extended-family system. Uncles and aunts live nearby. Someone or the other visits almost daily. My sister-in-law and brother are both scholars - I am too,” she said, and for the first time a small smile appeared.

“They are doing important research projects at reputed institutes. They couldn’t balance their studies with the online jobs they took for financial independence.”

“May I ask you a question?” Dr Hope said.

“Please ask.”

“Do you appreciate their decision? If yes, why? If no, why not?”

Dr Hope added, “Miss N, I would like you to take these two questions to your mother and father as well. There is no hurry. When all three of you have answers, come meet me within a week. If your parents wish to come, they are welcome. Until then, have a peaceful time.”

Nearly ten days passed. Miss N called Dr Hope herself and asked for an appointment. To Dr Hope’s surprise, she arrived with her father.

The essence of the answers from all three was the same: none of them were angry with the son/brother. They felt ashamed before a questioning society. They were hurt that he had not sought permission. He had only informed them of his decision to move. Yet all three agreed with his reasons. The father admitted openly that the decision would help the young couple grow — in their marriage, in their academics, and in their careers.

“My son and daughter-in-law didn’t ask us for money,” the father said. “They only wanted our happy consent. But we didn’t send them off with joy. That’s why they haven’t visited since they left. This troubles us. And people keep reopening the wound, saying our son doesn’t care for our happiness.”

“Are you unhappy because you are angry with them, or because you miss them?” Dr Hope asked, inviting him to reaffirm his true feeling.

After a pause, the father answered, “We miss them. They are the apple of our eye.”

“So you are not angry?”

“Not exactly. Why should I be? They are adults. Legally they can decide.”

“Then why is this a matter of grief and discussion?” Dr Hope asked.

“How to face relatives and neighbours- that is the reason for our dismay.”

“Who gave these people the authority to question? You, or your son’s decision?”

The father went pale for a moment, then looked as though a light had been switched on. He spoke without meeting her eyes. “Doctor, I see it clearly now. I am the one who was wrong. I opened the door for others to step into our family matters. My defensive replies are the root of our suffering these past months. I should have answered with pride in my son’s decision. I was wrong. But what do I do now?”

“It is always better to be late than never,” Dr Hope said. “You can still turn the scene in your favour. Do something public that shows your consent to your son’s decision. Consider yourself fortunate: your son chose to face life’s challenges on his own. Tell the world you are a proud father of a self-made man.”

The father asked leave and returned home with his daughter.

A week later, Dr Hope’s phone chimed with a WhatsApp message: an invitation to high tea at an address she recognized — the girl’s home. The father had arranged a get-together to welcome his son and daughter-in-law back for their first visit since they had moved out.

That single act answered every relative, every neighbour, in one stroke.

The case insight:

Circumstances are seldom in our control; our perception and response are. Social pain is rarely about the event itself — it is about the meaning we allow others to assign to it.

The father’s grief was not for a son’s departure, but for a society’s questions. When he withdrew his permission for those questions to matter, the grief dissolved. Acceptance of a child’s adulthood, of a decision made in love, of one’s own right to feel proud, became the perfect answer.

A family does not fracture when a member moves out; it fractures when shame moves in. Close the door to shame, open the door to pride, and the family stands whole again, even across two addresses.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.11 - Stooped to Conquer

Veena (an imagined name) was a beautiful young woman of about twenty-two. One day she walked into Dr Hope's counselling room, her steps uncertain, and her eyes holding a weather of unsaid things.

The conversation began with gentle, formal introductions. She was in the final semester of her post-graduation in the arts. When Dr Hope asked the purpose of her visit, Veena's voice faltered. Pauses stretched longer than her sentences. At times she stammered, as if each word had to push past a wall of fear.

Dr Hope reassured her: here, she would not be judged; here, every word would remain in strict confidence.

Gathering herself, Veena said, "Doctor, what I have to tell you is very difficult. It is about… sexual abuse by a family member." Her gaze stayed fixed on the floor. "My sister and brother-in-law live in my mother's home because they are financially unstable.

"We were raised in comfort. My brother-in-law does not have a well-paying job, and my sister refused to live in hardship. So they stayed on with us. But his staying here has become a daily problem for me. He… he has impure intentions toward me. I feel unsafe in my own house.

"The worse truth is that when I told my mother, she blamed me. She said, 'You are jealous of your sister. You must be giving him wrong signals. He is the son-in-law of this house—you must respect him.'"

Veena's voice shook. "My mother has forbidden me to tell my father. And my sister… she is so blind. She doesn't see her husband's dirty mind. She won't leave the comfort of my mother's home."

"What should I do, Doctor?" Veena asked, impatience breaking through her despair. "This constant fear has destroyed my focus. My studies are suffering."

Dr Hope listened, her face composed, her heart attentive. "Ms Veena, I understand the place you are trapped in. In the hardest hours of life, we must be calm and audit ourselves — our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

“You are under threat — to your safety and your name. Among these four pillars, which one will you hold to pull yourself out? Think, and come and discuss it with me the day after tomorrow.”

She added a caution: “In family matters, one must move with extra care. It is costly to lose any member. Sometimes the cost is invisible, but it is paid for years.”

The next session was illuminating. Veena returned with clarity born of sleepless thought. “Doctor, after deep reflection, I have decided to use my present weakness — the fact that no responsible person in my family is concerned for me. They already see me as the accused. So let me become what they believe I am.

“I will play the role they have assigned me, but I will play it safely. I will pass small, sharp remarks to that man in front of others. I will ask to accompany him to the market. I will act like the ‘accused’ they imagine — but within boundaries I control. Surely this will force them to respond. I will come back to you after I see what response I receive.”

Dr Hope nodded. “A person who keeps her temper and her wisdom in a crisis can find the best way out. Your plan is bold. Be very, very careful.”

In the following session, Veena’s eyes held a quiet triumph. “It worked, Doctor. Just as I thought. Everyone now accuses me of trying to ruin my sister’s marriage. They have decided to send me away — to let me get married or to settle me down in some nearby another city for higher studies.”

Dr Hope congratulated her courage, but then offered a further insight into human nature. “Quickly accepting the decision they impose may arouse suspicion. You must stay in the role a little longer. Let the drama play out naturally.”

Veena took the counsel to heart. She threw herself into researching professional, career-oriented courses. Then, with theatrical resolve, she declared at home: “I will leave this house only if I am allowed to pursue the programme of my choice. Otherwise, I am not going anywhere.”

The family, eager to remove the “problem,” agreed.

Veena left — not as a banished girl, but as a student with a funded future. The predator remained behind, now watched by a household that had been forced to choose. Her sister, confronted by the family’s unanimous move, began to see her husband with new eyes. Her mother, deprived of the daughter she had doubted, began to question her own judgment.

The insight we receive from the case says that solutions often live beside the problem, wearing the same clothes. When words fail, action speaks. Veena did not beg to be believed; she used the disbelief itself as leverage. She stooped — as a cat stoops to slip through a low doorway — and in stooping, she conquered.

Sometimes survival asks us to wear the mask others have made for us, just long enough to walk out the door they open. To stoop is not to surrender; it is to pass through. And once through, one can stand tall again, in a place of one’s own choosing.

Dr Hope’s final note on the case read: When a family refuses to protect its daughter, the daughter must protect herself. Wisdom is knowing when to fight, when to flee, and when to turn the enemy’s narrative into an escape route. Veena chose flight, and in that flight she found freedom.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.12 - Take the First Step, Roads are There

This is the story of a house where every room had wealth, yet the air inside felt thin. A family of eight, spanning four generations, lived under one roof. They were billionaires, politically influential, their name spoken in the town with a mixture of reverence and fear — reverence earned by ancestors long gone, fear maintained by the living.

The great-grandmother, the eldest, was the only soul in whom compassion still bloomed. The grandfather, the father, and the father's brother — the three male pillars of the house — ran a relentless, sightless race for more power, more position, more money. The grandmother and the mother had long since grown accustomed to the machinery of that race. They neither approved nor opposed; they kept the wheels oiled, the meals served, the calendars clear, the routine intact.

Then there were the children of the newest generation: Manav and Kalyani, imaginary names, both in their early twenties. They were privileged in every material sense: educated, healthy, unscarred by want. Yet they were wounded by the climate of the home. The great-grandmother was their only refuge. When their spirits sagged, they would go to her, and she would gather them in her arms without a word.

One can picture the conversations in such a house: contracts, constituencies, rivals, returns. In psychology, Abraham Maslow gave us a hierarchy to understand human striving: first the body must be fed and sheltered; then it must feel safe; then it seeks belonging, then esteem; and finally, when all those are secured, it yearns for self-actualisation — to become what it is capable of becoming.

Manav and Kalyani had the first four needs met in abundance. It was the fifth that ached. They looked at the men of their house and saw hunger without end, and they looked at the women and saw silence without end. They pleaded with their mother and grandmother: "Use your influence. Speak. Stop them from doing what is inhuman."

But fear and indifference had been practised too long. The two women answered with the same refrain: "Focus on your future. Eat, drink, and

be happy. Leave this house respectfully after marriage or after a job. If you cannot wait, go to a counsellor and get your minds fixed."

The children, in turn, gave the same prescription back: "Mother, Grandmother, you go to a counsellor. Learn to live a lively life."

These exchanges, flung back and forth like cheap, worn coins, only widened the emptiness inside Kalyani. One day she could bear it no longer and came to Dr Hope. She laid the whole tapestry before her — the power, the paralysis, the pain.

Dr Hope listened, then said, "The largest elephant, the heaviest ship, the widest tent — all are held by two things: a peg and a rope. And in your story, you already have both." She continued, "One cannot ask a river to change its current. But one can learn to swim — with the current, and against it."

Kalyani understood. She and Manav did not wait for permission to be different; they decided to become the difference.

Together they built a Self Help Group for women's empowerment. They named it after their great-grandmother, the one person whose moral spine had never bent. Then they did something audacious: they went to their grandfather and asked him to inaugurate the group with a generous donation in great grandfather`s name. They asked their father and uncle to introduce the project in their constituencies and to help organise the launch.

The three men, for all their hunger for power, could not say no. The project was already being spoken of in public. To obstruct it would damage the very image they worked to polish. So they complied — inaugurated, funded, announced.

That was the first step. The road appeared beneath their feet.

The Self Help Group endures to this day, teaching skills, arranging micro-credit, and restoring dignity to women in the region. From it grew other branches: educating girl children, spreading awareness of cleanliness, and making sanitary pads accessible. The umbrella

organisation now carries work that the family's name once only overshadowed.

The lesson one learns from this case says, "Privilege without purpose hollows a house. When the elders choose comfort over conscience, the young must choose action over anger. Dr Hope did not tell Kalyani to fight her family or to flee it; she told her to use the peg and the rope already in her hands — the family's name, the family's resources, the family's need to look good — and tether them to something good."

Maslow told us we climb a ladder of needs. But sometimes the top rung is not reached by climbing at all, but by turning around and extending a hand to those still on the lower rungs. In doing so, we discover that self-actualisation is not a solitary peak; it is a bridge.

Dreams and plans are necessary, but they are not the journey. The journey begins only with a first step. And once that step is taken, roads reveal themselves — roads that were invisible to the one who only stood and stared.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.13 - Doors Are Not the Only Exit

“Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.” — Margaret Mead

The words belong to those teachers who, in Henry Adams’ phrase, “affect eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.”

One such teacher saw a flicker of light in a student and knew it was being smothered. She referred the girl to Dr Hope with a brief note: 'In my opinion, she is struggling against an orthodox family that cannot see her. She is eager, but the house holds her down.'

Thus Yashi (an imagined name) entered the counselling room. She was the second of six daughters.

In the first session, as rapport was built, the architecture of her home revealed itself. Her mother was educated, yet had folded her dreams like unused saris and put them away for the sake of the family. The cost of that surrender was visible: acute depression.

Her grandparents had waited for a grandson to carry the family name. Instead, six daughters arrived, one after another, Yashi being the second. Her father, not highly educated but prosperous through his resort business, was a traditional patriarch. His self-esteem was low; his rules for his daughters were high and rigid. He wished them to become flawless daughters-in-law for other homes, not free women in their own.

He bore a private guilt: he had failed his wife — failed to protect her ambitions, failed to shield her from the mountain of childbearing his own hope for a son had placed upon her. Frustration, when it has no door, turns to aggression, and the house had felt its heat many times.

Yashi was in the final year of her undergraduate degree in Arts — Home Science, Hindi Literature, and Drawing. Her elder sister had completed an M.A. in Sitar. The next sister, immediately younger than Yashi, was in Grade XI, Science stream, in a state-board school. Three younger sisters followed; the smallest was only eight.

“Father doesn’t allow any of us to go out and earn, to become independent,” Yashi said. “In his mind, if girls earn, people will say he cannot provide. He also fears we will be ‘spoiled.’

“Doctor, we live as if in prison. He is rigid, afraid of society. Whatever the reason, we are the ones who suffer. Mother cannot support us — she is already lost in depression. Grandparents defend every old custom that has kept women small.” She said it all in one breath, as if she had been holding it for years.

Dr Hope looked at her and said, “I see in you a hunger for your own identity. I also see the chains that bind you. But I believe this: no problem comes without a solution hidden nearby. There is an answer for you, too.”

She continued, “Be more observant of small creatures. An ant, a lizard, a sparrow — they do not need open doors to enter a house, nor to escape it when danger comes.”

With that, the session ended. Dr Hope asked Yashi to return when she herself had imagined a possible way forward.

Almost after two weeks, Yashi returned, and she was not alone. Beside her stood her younger sister, the Grade XI Science student. Yashi’s eyes were bright with a kind of disciplined excitement.

“Doctor, this is my sister. She is good at studies. Science students hardly get time for Hindi, and most of them struggle with it. She can invite her friends home for group study. That gives me a chance to tutor them in Hindi, at least twice a week. It is a small step, but it is a step toward earning, toward identity. The rest we will plan as the situation allows. Am I right, Doctor?”

“Any effort born of pure intention is right,” Dr Hope said. “Such steps often become the foundation stone for what comes later.”

What followed was a quiet revolution inside four walls. The eldest sister, the sitarist, began to teach music to children in the neighbourhood at home, with the door open to students but closed to gossip. Yashi’s Hindi tutorials grew; science students brought younger siblings, and soon there

was a small, regular batch reciting dohas (couplets) and learning grammar, their English-medium tongues tripping comically over Hindi idioms. The third sister, versed in Home Science, started a small, home-based kitchen: pastas, grilled sandwiches, baked snacks for the resort's guests and also to the students coming for tuitions in the house. Dishes were prepared with mother's experienced recipes under her supervision only. The aroma of possibility replaced the stale air of prohibition.

None of the girls stepped outside to earn. Yet within the "restricted walls," the three elder daughters earned name, fame, and money. The house, once heavy with unspoken resentment, now carried melodies of sitar on some afternoons, the scent of oregano on others, and the sound of children mangling and mastering Hindi in the evenings.

The father, who had feared the world's judgment, found himself praised by the same world: "Your daughters are talented. They are teaching, they are creating." The fear that had made him a jailer slowly became the pride that made him a patron. He did not say it aloud, but he stopped objecting. The mother, watching her daughters claim small sovereignties, began to attend to herself again — a little more each month.

The last three sisters, still young, will walk an easier path. The doors were never opened, yet the daughters found windows, and where there were no windows, they made their own.

The insight from this case reconfirms many of the influential sayings by great people.

Margaret Mead was right: teach a child how to think, and she will find exits where none were drawn on the map. Henry Adams was right: a teacher's influence does not end at the classroom door; sometimes it walks a student home and rearranges the furniture of her fate.

Freedom is not always a matter of geography. It is a matter of ingenuity. When the main gate is locked by another's fear, one must study the walls like an ant, a sparrow, a shaft of light. There are cracks, there are eaves, there are ways through.

Yashi did not break the house to be free; she made the house larger from inside. She and her sisters proved that a home can be both a boundary and a beginning. Stoop, if you must, to pass through — but once inside your own purpose, stand tall.

And so the path-builders now say, quietly and without boast: the road is easier for the ones who come after, because we learned that doors are not the only exit.

The first salute to the teacher who noticed Yashi's pain and potential both and pushed her for the counselling at right time and to the right counsellor.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.14 - Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Every human life is a tapestry woven with threads of the social, the psychological, the financial, and the political. No event belongs to a single cause. This case reminds us of that truth.

Miss Reva — a name chosen to guard her identity, was a young woman of sharp intellect and steady diligence. Yet her professors knew her mostly by her absence. Her attendance register was a landscape of gaps, and the faculty, weary of excuses, had grown exasperated with her irregularity. One day, a professor directed her to Dr Hope, the senior counsellor of the college's Personal Counselling Cell.

In the first session, the outline of Reva's life emerged in quiet, halting sentences. She came from a large joint family, pressed hard by poverty. The household held too many mouths and too few means: an ailing grandfather in the last stage of a terminal illness; a widowed paternal aunt living there with her two children; and an income that appeared and disappeared like a seasonal stream. Financial crisis was not an event in that home; it was the weather.

Her parents told her, almost daily, that they could not spend on her education. There were other claims on every rupee — medicine, food, the aunt's children. They could not pay the college fees, or even the daily bus fare. That, simply and brutally, was why she missed classes. She had pleaded, argued, wept for permission to continue, but to parents besieged by survival, a daughter's degree seemed a luxury they could not afford.

Dr Hope asked, "What do you truly want for your career, for your future, Reva?"

"I want to study, Doctor," she said. "But I cannot make my parents understand how deeply I believe in education. When I speak, they don't listen. They shout, they scold me for repeating the same wish."

"Then stop speaking with words," Dr Hope replied. "Speak with actions. Actions speak louder than words."

"I… I don't understand, Doctor."

To reach the root, Dr Hope asked, “What subjects are you pursuing in your degree? Which one do you love most? What career do you dream of?”

“Psychology, Drawing & Painting, and Political Science are my majors,” Reva answered, and her voice gained colour. “Minors are there, but the university won’t allow us to pursue them later. Among these three, I see my future. I want to be a counsellor — like you, Doctor.”

“Wow,” Dr Hope said, and meant it. “I would be proud to see you become a fine counsellor. But how will you chase that dream? What path are you planning to walk?”

“I am clueless, Doctor. I have no idea what to do, or how.”

“Then come back in two days,” Dr Hope said. “Bring any projects or assignments you have completed in these subjects — the ones your professors gave you.”

Two days later, Reva returned with a folder. Her psychology and political science assignments were sincere, thoughtful. But her Drawing & Painting work stopped Dr Hope’s breath. The pencil portraits were alive — each line certain, each shadow understood. The landscapes on canvas were bold, the brushstrokes fearless, the sense of space and silence unmistakable.

“Reva,” Dr Hope asked, “can you guess which of your works impressed me most?”

“I think… my paintings and portraits, Doctor,” Reva said, a small, shy certainty in her tone.

“Exactly. You know your strength. So where, then, is the problem in moving toward your dream?”

A light came into Reva’s eyes — the light of a door recognized. “I understand, Doctor. If you can help me get a few orders — for portraits or paintings — from the college staff or people you know… the money I earn can pay my fees, my bus fare. I can show my parents through action, not words.” In a moment, she had turned despair into a plan.

“Make three landscapes for my Counselling Cell,” Dr Hope said. “Paint peace, beauty, and calmness of nature. Take this as an advance.” She handed Reva an envelope. “Proceed toward your goal.”

She added, “Remember this, Reva: knowing your strength, and turning it into timely action after calm thought, is the strongest weapon you will ever hold in life’s battles.”

Time moved, as it does for those who move with it. Reva completed her graduation, then her post-graduation. In gratitude to the counsellor who had seen her, she pursued professional certification in counselling as well. She fused her gift and her passion — Art and Psychology — and became what she is today: a budding Art Therapist, helping others draw their pain into the open where it can be healed.

The Insight coming out of the experiences of the case is colourful as well as healing. It says, "Circumstances can be brutal, but they are not always the final author of a life. When words fail to persuade, action can convince. Reva’s parents could not hear her argument for education, but they could see the money she brought home, earned by her own hand, and the dignity with which she brought it."

Every life is governed by many forces, but within those forces each of us has one strength that is ours alone. Find it. Use it. Early. Let the work speak when the voice is not heard.

Goals do not differ in their worth; only journeys differ in their texture. Some travel with comfort, some with struggle. But both arrive with stories — one to relish, the other to inspire. And sometimes, as in Reva’s case, the struggle becomes the very credential that makes the counsellor wiser, the artist deeper, the healer truer.

X-X-X-X-X-X

Case 5.15 - Respect Yourself

Sometimes that teacher is a counsellor, and sometimes the lesson begins with a laugh.

Nalini — an imagined name — was an undergraduate student whose academic file called her “below average.” She was short in stature, dark in complexion, and in a world that judges books by covers, she had learned to read herself as a discounted edition.

The judgments of others had seeped into her like slow rain into soil. Classmates in early school had christened her Kali Kalooti (Blacky). Teachers, frustrated by her wrong answers, would sigh, “Kuch to achcha kar lo" (Do at least something good). Even elders at home urged her parents to begin the search for a groom early, as if marriage would be a mountain they might not climb later.

Word by word, she was taught to devalue herself. And so she did. She became overly affable, offering friendship before it was asked, fearing no one would extend a hand to her first. Her self-esteem sat on the floor.

Yet somewhere beneath the learned smallness, a different impulse lived. That is why she herself sought an appointment with Dr Hope. No one sent her. She came.

She entered the cabin with a polite greeting and a disarming question, half-joke, half-wound: “Hope you are not disappointed to see me?”

“Not at all,” Dr Hope replied. “Truthfully, I was praying to meet someone unconventional today. Novelty always impresses me.”

“So you too think I am abnormal,” Nalini countered, quick to translate kindness into pity.

“Yes,” Dr Hope said, holding her gaze, “you are extraordinary. Your sense of humour and your command over conversation — both are commendable.”

The words were not flattery; they were observation. And they landed. Nalini’s shoulders, long held in apology, eased a fraction. She straightened, as if confidence were a posture one could remember.

“So… what would you like to share with me?” Dr Hope asked.

“Doctor, as you see, I don’t have charming looks. This gives me tons of inferiority. From childhood, people made fun of me. At school it was 'Kali Kalooti' (black beauty) Teachers scolded me. At home, relatives told my parents to marry me off early because finding a match would be hard. I think those words, said when I was too young to argue, stole my self-love, my self-respect, my confidence.”

Dr Hope nodded. “Nalini, what I’ve learned is this: most people evaluate the world — and people — superficially. They choose what glitters without asking what it is made of.

“But a few think differently. They make the best out of waste. They know that pressure and temperature turn coal into a diamond.” She let the image rest in the air between them.

Something in Nalini loosened. She gathered courage and asked, “But how do I live with such low self-esteem? I’m not good at studies, I’m not good at music, art, cooking — I have no merit.”

“Everyone is given at least one exceptional quality,” Dr Hope said. “Find that one quality in you. Come back when you find. We will reach a solution together.”

Clouds cannot hold the sun forever. And voices that are silenced too long tend to come back louder.

Days later, the counselling centre’s assistant was on leave, and Dr Hope was answering calls herself. The phone rang. She picked up.

“Hello, I am Donald Duck. May I have an appointment?” a voice quacked.

Thinking it a prank or a wrong number, Dr Hope ended the call.

Ten minutes later, the phone rang again. “This is Goofy speaking. My friend Donald Duck said you refused her an appointment.” Then a burst of laughter, and the voice dropped its mask: “It’s me, Doctor. Nalini.”

Dr Hope laughed aloud — she could not help it. “Appointment confirmed for Mr Goofy and Donald Duck, tomorrow at 4:00 p.m.”

There is little need to describe how Nalini's story turned. She had found her quality. Voice mimicry - the ability to become anyone by sound - had been her quiet defence since childhood. When she could not be seen as beautiful, she made people look by making them laugh. It was sublimation: pain turned into performance, invisibility turned into audibility.

The warmth and acceptance she felt in the first session had given her permission to be mischievous, and the mischief became a miracle. Once someone in authority heard her and did not laugh at her but with her, she became unstoppable.

Today Nalini- under a professional name the industry knows-is a renowned voice-over artist. Her voice fills commercials, animations, audiobooks. She has praise, followers, income, and what she had lost longest: a sense of worth.

The insight opening up from this case says, we often wait for the world to respect us before we respect ourselves. The order is reversed. Self-respect is not a prize given after achievement; it is the condition that makes achievement possible.

Nalini's so-called shortcomings were only the world's shallow readings of her. Her complexion was not a flaw; it was a fact. Her height was not a deficit; it was a dimension. The real deficit was in the mirrors others held up to her. When she put them down and found her own-her voice-she found herself.

Coal does not complain that it is not diamond. Under pressure, under heat, it becomes. And when we respect ourselves, the world, sooner or later, rearranges itself to agree.

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Chapter 6:
Orientation Lectures, Speeches and Articles

6.1 Orientation Talk on - 'Nurturing the Blooming Buds at the Foundation Level of Education'

This reflection is a tapestry woven from years of lectures, dialogues, and heartfelt conversations I have shared with reverent parents and learned teachers at various orientation forums. The theme has always been the same: how do we tenderly care for our children during their pre-schooling years — those fragile, luminous years when they first step into the world of formal learning?

We speak today of the “blooming buds” - children at the foundation level of education. As envisioned by the New Education Policy, this foundation spans 3 + 2 = 5 precious years. Academically, it begins with Playgroup, then Nursery and Kindergarten, and culminates in Grade One and Grade Two. The child who journeys through this phase is between three and eight years of age — an age of wonder, vulnerability, and infinite possibility.

As a mother of two, whenever I speak of these little ones, my hippocampus stirs with my own memories. So allow me, with your permission, to take you back to that unforgettable moment — the birth of your child.

A child struggles with all its might to emerge from the mother’s womb. And when it finally arrives, it announces itself to the world with a loud, resounding cry. That cry is not noise; it is the first, sacred certificate of normalcy and life.

Now fast forward two or two-and-a-half years. The same child is taken to a playgroup. Again, there is a loud cry. But this time, the world reacts differently. To parents, it becomes a source of embarrassment. To school authorities, it is a disruption. To teachers, it is a challenge: how to hold the child and keep her seated, disciplined, for two or three hours each day.

Pause and imagine: a child barely thirty months old, not yet fully capable of managing herself, is suddenly placed in an unfamiliar room with unfamiliar faces. Within those two or three hours comes snack time — a moment that, at home, was pure joy. At home, snack time meant stories

of bears and elephants, tactical coaxing, and a shower of kisses between every bite. Mothers clapped when the child ate well, asked her to "show her muscles" after the last morsel, and stroked her hair with reassurance.

But in school, snack time transforms. It becomes a drill of instructions from someone who, just days ago, was a stranger: "Eat properly. Finish your food. Wash your hands before and after. Fold your mat." These instructions are not wrong. What is wrong is the pace of transition we demand from a tender heart.

Thus, the happiest hour at home becomes the loneliest hour at school. The child feels unseen, unheard, and bewildered by a sudden world of sophistication. Until now, food was fun, shared with laughter at dinner or in the quiet intimacy of a mother's afternoon feeding. Now it is procedure.

Can you feel the quiet ache in those little chests?

Why must pre-schooling resemble handing a puppy to a trainer for a dog show? Why can it not feel like the gentle, voluntary shift from a mother's lap to a grandmother's or an aunt's — a transition the child initiates herself, drawn by safety, love, and the smile of assurance on her mother's face?

Let me share a memory of such a graceful transition, one I lived abroad with my second son.

When he was two years and nine months old, we registered him for pre-school. Two months before the session began, the school opened its gates to us. Parents and children could wander the campus together. There were swings, see-saws, little merry-go-rounds, and a miniature zoo with rabbits, a peacock, a tortoise, and even a talking parrot. A small patch of earth grew tomatoes, cauliflower, and spinach. Battery cars, scooters, and toys waited to be explored.

Our repeated visits wove an invisible thread between my son's heart and that place. By the time classes formally began — with rhymes, counting, and days of the week — the children did resist, yes, and some tears were shed. But the resistance was gentle, because the environment was

already a friend. Mothers were welcomed to wait in a common room for as many days as needed, until the child himself felt assimilated.

Today, that boy is a young man in his mid-twenties. Watching his journey assures me: a smooth, loving transition from home to school leaves an imprint of security that lasts a lifetime.

This is Maslow's hierarchy made visible. When the foundational needs of safety and belonging are genuinely met, a child learns to climb toward higher needs with sincerity. When they are not, we raise adults who chase achievement but lack the inner compass to pursue it with conviction.

The Law of Primacy reminds us: first experiences linger longest. When a bride is welcomed into her new home with warmth, that memory anchors her through future storms. If her first days are of restriction, comparison, and expectation, resentment takes root — no matter how many good days follow. If this is true for an adult, how much truer for a child of two?

On Content and Method at the Foundation Stage

Today, schools are often in the business of display. Walls blaze with charts, models, and AV aids teaching months, fruits, and transport. The bigger the brand, the glossier the chart paper, the larger the television, the heavier the fee. But we must ask: are we using talent to touch a child's mind, or merely to impress a parent and expand enrolment?

If we wish to build the concept of "fruit," let us not paste pictures. Let us bring a basket — banana, apple, guava, grapes, orange, kiwi, litchi. Let the children touch, smell, peel, and share. In that one act we teach names, properties, and values together: sharing, cleanliness, gratitude toward helpers. We teach that fruits are nature's gifts that need no fire.

Education at this stage is not information-dumping; it is curiosity-quenching.

Children learn fastest by observation. A teacher's disrespectful remark about a helper is a lesson memorised in seconds. Labelling children

‘good boy’ or ‘bad girl’ is educational poison. It breeds bullying, false superiority, withdrawal, and a dozen other shadows.

Teachers at the Foundation Level

To make this stage truly generous and child-friendly, schools must choose teachers with maternal warmth and the promise of long-term commitment. A career-driven, unmarried young woman may bring fluency and glamour, but she may not promise continuity. And continuity is what a child craves. It may help the school’s marketing, but not the child’s heart.

Homework, if any, should be creative, never repetitive. Asking a four-year-old to write 1–10 five times is tedious. Her attention span is a butterfly; her finger muscles tire quickly. Instead, ask: “How many eyes do you have? How many friends did you play with today? How many sips of water from your bottle?” Such tasks spark dialogue at home and in class. Today every organisation talks of KYC — Know Your Customer. In schools, let us champion KYS - Know Your Student - so teaching becomes bespoke with minimal effort.

Uniforms should spell comfort, not corporate. We prune trees, not seedlings. Trousers, shirt, tie, belt, shoes, ID card- the armour of an MNC CEO - can wait. Let the child breathe.

Evaluation must be qualitative, not quantitative. Assess soft skills, interpersonal warmth, civic sense, curiosity, verbal expression, body language, and how a child learns — by watching, by doing, by repetition. And write it with grace. I still treasure a remark from my elder son’s pre-school teacher, a woman of rare psychological insight: "The boy is a masterpiece when he comes out of his nutshell.” In one sentence she captured his merit, his shyness, and the path forward - without wounding. That is assessment as art.

There should be no “class monitor” at this age. Instead, cultivate self-service and community service. I admire a school where each parent, by rotation, sends lunch for the entire class, the teacher, and the helpers- once every 20–30 days. Children taste new menus daily. Parents learn accountability for others’ well-being. Caste and creed dissolve at the

lunch mat. And when children write a "thank you" note each day, gratitude takes root early.

A Painful Truth About Adults

Here I must speak of a shadow we rarely admit. Parents, especially mother's love is the most revered force on earth, yet it is often intensive rather than extensive. Watch two mothers defend their children — they will find every fault in the other's child. We serve our best food to those we love, those we wish to impress, or those who pay us. If none of these apply, how generous are we?

Habits of empathy, if not inherent, must be cultivated — by design or by gentle diplomacy. Shared responsibility systems in school can plant seeds of concern and accountability in both child and parent.

Toilet Training and the Psyche

Between two-and-a-half years of age and eight years, toilet training is still unfolding. Freud placed great weight on the Anal Stage — ages 1 to 3 — when a child learns bowel and bladder control. Success, with praise and patience, breeds competence and creativity. Harshness, ridicule, or premature pressure breeds either the "anal-expulsive" chaos or the "anal-retentive" rigidity. It shapes the axis of autonomy versus shame.

In the 21st century, let us abandon the taboo of "toilet talk." Classify behaviours as natural or learned, not good or bad. This liberates children to speak without shame. As a counsellor, I have seen children approach a teacher to ask for the washroom in a whisper, eyes downcast. Sometimes the teacher's smile triggers class laughter. That moment of humiliation can calcify. The adult who forgets to flush, who leaves a toilet unclean for the next person, or who becomes a bully-often carries that unhealed moment within.

Safety: The Unspoken Imperative

The most urgent concern at the foundation level is safety. Darwin wrote of a world that began with spineless creatures ruled by instinct. After centuries of civilisation, technology, and globalisation, we find humanity spineless again - and beastly. In such times, the weakest are the most

hunted. Forests have vanished, but wolves now wear human clothes - neighbours, drivers, visitors, even “respected” figures.

The trauma of abuse haunts a lifetime. It erodes self-confidence, breeds suspicion, kills risk-taking, and thus stunts careers and relationships.

Conclusion: The Pillar Must Not Crumble

These blooming buds are not just children; they are the foundation pillars of a nation. When a building collapses, we lose much. When pillars collapse, we lose everything and must begin from dust.

If we love, respect, and care for them from the depths of our being, we must give them a childhood that is safe, secure, and soaked in love -at home and at school.

Dear Youth, dear Parents, dear Teachers - we are all part of God’s magnificent creation. Nature is our oldest textbook. In its diversity lie all answers: assimilation, interdependence, patience, acceptance, discipline, growth, and resilience.

One day, when you live as a responsible inhabitant of this shared habitat called Earth, the answers to parenting, to education, to pre-marital counselling, and to life itself will reveal themselves to you-quietly, clearly, and without fear.

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6.2 Article on, "Nurture the Child in Growth Age"

Preadolescence, or the growth age, is a critical stage of human development, typically spanning ages 9-12 (or 9-14). During this phase, children transition into adolescence, marked by the onset of puberty. Just as trees require essential elements to grow - water, sunlight, nutrients, air, and space - children in this stage have similar needs.

Sunlight represents emotional nourishment, which can be hindered by:

- Overly strict discipline
- Overprotectiveness
- Indifferent parental attitudes
- Conflictual relationships between parents

This "cloud cover" can lead to indecisiveness, dependence, anxiety, guilt, and even rebellion.

The "soil" represents early childhood experiences (0-8 years), laying the foundation for future growth. Sigmund Freud emphasized the significance of this period, attributing later neurotic issues to painful experiences during this time.

Air and space symbolize freedom and autonomy, essential for healthy development. Factors that restrict this space include:

- Unrealistic expectations
- Limited liberty
- Excessive responsibilities
- Narrow-mindedness
- Conformity to social norms

These restrictions can lead to anxiety, stress, and a sense of suffocation.

To support children in this stage, we must provide:

- Emotional nourishment and clarity
- A strong foundation in early childhood
- Freedom and autonomy
- A nurturing environment that encourages growth and exploration

By understanding these needs, we can help children navigate this critical phase and develop into confident, well-rounded individuals.

Now, let us see what our genius members of New Education Policy, (2020) have suggested regarding the educational arrangements of preparatory and middle level of education.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 restructures school education into a 5+3+3+4 framework, transitioning from play-based to interactive learning in the Preparatory stage (grades 3–5) and specialized subject learning in the Middle stage (grades 6–8). Key focuses include experiential learning, foundational literacy/numeracy, arts, sciences, and vocational training.

Preparatory Stage (Grades 3–5, Ages 8–11)

Focus: Bridges the gap between playful foundational learning and structured formal education.

Methodology: Emphasizes interactive classroom learning, play/discovery-based approaches, and experiential activities.

Curriculum: Covers languages, basic mathematics, sciences, social sciences, arts, and physical education.

Goal: To establish strong literacy and numeracy skills.

Middle Stage (Grades 6–8, Ages 11–14)

Focus: Ages, 11-14 years, running from Grade 6 to Grade 8. This stage reorients the children towards subject-oriented approaches as in sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities.

Methodology: Focuses on critical thinking, abstraction, and experiential learning in all subjects.

Key Features: Introduces vocational training/internships (e.g., coding, handicrafts).

Flexibility: Includes subject-focused study rather than a general curriculum.

Overall Goal

Both stages aim to move away from rote learning toward competency-based education, fostering creativity and holistic development.

As we examine the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, we may agree with some suggestions while differing on others. The policy outlines goals for preparatory and middle-level education, focusing on literacy, numeracy, and competency-based learning. However, we must consider whether these goals suffice for holistic development, particularly during the critical preadolescence stage (ages 9-14), because at this stage, children face numerous challenges, including:

- Body image anxiety
- Parent-child conflicts
- Peer pressure and social issues
- Emotional irregularities
- Attraction to risk-taking behaviours
- Intense desire for independence

Hormonal changes during this period can lead to emotional turmoil, making it essential to have supportive, trained teachers who understand these challenges.

Reflecting on my experience as a counsellor, I've seen how partial attitudes and biases can impact students' self-image and development. A teacher's approach can either foster or hinder a child's growth.

A trained teacher can make a significant difference by incorporating integrated learning approaches. For instance, when teaching biology, they can explain the functions of endocrine glands, the nervous system, and hereditary effects using real-life examples. This approach can help students develop a positive self-image and appreciate their unique characteristics.

It's essential at the same time to instil in students that having positive traits is not a matter of pride, but rather a blessing from God, parents, and forefathers. Similarly, students with less attractive physical attributes should be encouraged to accept themselves and work on their strengths. Inspirational figures like Surdas, a blind poet; Stephen Hawking, a renowned physicist with ALS; Temple Grandin, an autistic

scientist; and Michael Faraday, a physicist from a disadvantaged background, demonstrate that one's physical attributes don't define their potential.

As we see that NEP 2020 aims to foster creativity and holistic development, we must rethink our evaluation processes to achieve these goals. This could include assessing students' analytical power, creativity, soft skills, and original research work, alongside traditional quantitative measures.

By integrating science, literature, and history, we can help students develop a well-rounded personality. This approach can foster creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence, enabling them to overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

Our goal should be to create self-reliant, open-minded, benevolent, and rational individuals who can contribute to India's growth. By prioritizing holistic development and supportive education, we can unlock the potential of our youth and make them a valuable resource for the country.

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6.3 Article on,' Impact of Parenting Style on the Response Pattern of an Adolescent.

A famous English quote describes the effect of parenting on a child in a very effective manner. It says, "What a mother sings in the cradle goes till the grave." This small quote points out that child's behaviour at any age period of life is found to be a result of his childhood experience especially of parenting. Parenting can be compared to a mould that can shape the personality and behaviour of a child in a specific manner as per its nature and style.

Physiologically speaking, every normal child has almost the same pattern of growth and maturity at different age levels. But how a person, as a child, as an adolescent and as an adult, responds to the challenges of life is highly affected by the differences of parenting style in which he has been brought up.

Everybody knows that for any parent, their children are their world and for the children, till they become independent and get married, their parents are like God. In the present materialistic world, the parents themselves have shifted their caring role towards their offspring from the generosity of Godliness to that of a superhero-like Djinn role. As any Djinn immediately presents before his master the items desired by him, parents do behave the same way these days.

Let the child demand something and parents fulfil the demands at the earliest.

This kind of impulsive parenting hinders the growth of a few highly important characteristics in their child. These traits are patience, prioritisation of desires, contentment, etc.

Later in life, when a child lacks decision-making ability and independence or takes irrational and non-contemplated decisions, parents cry over spilt milk.

Parents, many times become very possessive and overprotective of their kids. They wish that they alone should be the decision-makers of each and every big or small issue related to the child: what he should eat, how should he dressed, daily routine, career and what not?

Possessive or overprotective parenting, often termed "helicopter" parenting, creates adolescents who are anxious, insecure, submissive, and lack resilience. They frequently struggle with independent problem-solving, develop low on self-esteem, self-reliance and self-evaluation. Another way this impacts is that these adolescent may become manipulative or rebellious to escape strict controls.

In case both the parents are working or parents are staying in an orthodox joint family system or if parents as couples don't have a harmonious relationship, they may sometimes be neglecting or sometimes be indifferent to their children.

Neglecting parenting (uninvolved parenting) causes deep emotional, behavioural, and academic issues, including low self-esteem, poor social skills, insecure attachment, and emotional deregulation. A child who grows into an adolescent often struggles with delinquency, lack of trust, high anxiety, and academic failure, with lasting impacts that can persist into adulthood.

On the other hand, indifferent parenting, characterised by low responsiveness and low demands, severely impacts a child's development into an adolescent having poor emotional regulation, low self-esteem, and academic difficulties.

Sometimes the contradictory demands by the parents on the child make the adolescent prone to confusion and unclear self-identity and self-devaluation.

Children, when continuously feeling neglected, unheard, and unloved, develop into indecisive people. They suffer from trust issues, delinquent behaviour, and insecure attachments, hindering their ability to form healthy relationships later in life.

If parents treat a child with rejection, the adolescent may develops anxiety, low self-esteem, negativism, hostility, attention-seeking attitude, loneliness and jealousy, etc. (Mc Gee et.al 1997)

Many researchers have proved that if the parents put their own needs first at the time when an adolescent needs assistance, affirmation and

reinforcements for positive behaviour, these parents absent themselves emotionally from their children. (Kaplen et al., 1997)

If an adolescent being a child, has been exposed to physical abuse, he may develop ADHD syndrome (Glod and Teicher, 1996) and may develop suicidal tendencies also. (Kaplen et al., 1997)

Insecure or unsatisfactory attachments during childhood have been linked with later substance abuse, eating disorders, early sexual activities, and high-risk sexual behaviour (Smith, 1997) with poor self-image (O koon, 1997). It has been found that anxiety disorders were more likely to occur in adolescents who had anxious attachment to their mothers as infants when compared with those who had secure attachments. (Warren et.al 1997)

Strict authoritarian parenting is also a kind of parenting strategy that is characterised by high demands and low responsiveness from the side of parents. These parents focus on obedience, discipline, and control. They often do not accept warmth or open communication.

Such parents develop their children into adolescents who are obedient but anxious, have lower self-esteem, or are rebellious.

Parents who opt for permissive parenting (Lenient disciplinary demands) are affectionate and nurturing but set few rules or limits. They tend to be indulgent and avoid confrontation, acting more like a friend than a parent. At a glance, this kind of parenting seems cool and the peer group of the child often gets jealous of him/her, thinking him/her to be a lucky person. But like everything, this kind of parenting also has another side of the coin. This kind of parenting leaves some unwelcoming imprints on the personality growth of the child. Such a child can be impulsive, demanding, and have low-self-control behaviours.

Considering discipline as a factor, in both cases, either of strict discipline or lack of discipline, an adolescent lacks the discipline insight, that may make him become aggressive and might adopt anti-social tendencies too. They sometimes may develop hatred for elders and lack friendly feelings.

The parents who demand perfectionism from their children develop the child into an adolescent who might have unrealistic demands, rigid conscience development severe conflicts and tendency of self-condemnation and guilt.

Parents who have a balanced authoritative temperament while rearing up their child are mostly the parents who are responsive, nurturing. They set clear, reasonable boundaries for the children. They encourage independence while enforcing rules through reasoning.

Children, who are brought up with this kind of parenting attitude, generally develop into an independent, socially capable, and confident children or adolescents.

Other than **the different parenting styles**, rearing up of a child gets impacted broadly by some other factors too. These are

1. Parents' habits
2. Family style.

Parental Habits - children are imitators and so the parents should set a good example to them. A child can learn good manners good habits and kindness to others only if the parents are practicing these in their routine. If the parents show bad temper, irritability, or use abusive language, they must expect their children to be the same when grown as adolescents.

Researches find that supportive parents, who encourage positive, rational and interactive communication and use permanent consistent discipline, help their children as adolescents become more incompetent and develop higher self-esteem. They are better equipped to deal with hazardous life events (Baumrind, 1991)

Family Style is another factor that exerts deep effect on the child in his growth years.

Family is the smallest unit of the society. Writer and Thinker Goethe was a man with great foresightedness when he said, "He is the happiest, the king or the peasant, who finds peace in home."

The quote gives the clear indication that a person, if he is not having an appropriate level of happiness quotient or is not befitting completely in the paradigm of mental health, might have belonged to some unhealthy

familial background where he had received sad and painful experiences during his childhood.

The pathogenic families which have an adverse effect on childhood development and later on adolescents' behaviour can be categorised as inadequate families, disturbed families, disrupted families, or anti-social families.

The inadequate families are those which are unable to cope with the problems of livelihood because of the lack of resources, where there is found maladjustment between the members of the family and where members are in a constant state of tension because of the social problems generated out of speedy industrialisation and modernization causing undue ambitiousness.

The disturbed family is the one where parents are eccentric unstable for destructive to others as well as to themselves. The observations of a study (O'Keefe, 1996) say that an adolescent who has witnessed as a child, violence between parent and child or between parents, suffers from adjustment problems throughout the life.

The disrupted families are those which are incomplete whether as a result of death divorce separation or some other conditions. It was observed that detrimental effects of a descriptive family on a child and later on adolescent may be minimised if a substitute model of the missing parent is available. Grossman and Rawat (1995) examined a number of families and concluded that adolescents will benefit from being in families where there is stable and adaptively functioning parental relationship.

The adolescents belonging to the disrupted families are usually found engaged in drug abuse, delinquency, eating disorders, sexual perversions and hysteria. There is a demonstrated association between parental divorce and adolescent depression. (Aseltine, 1996).

Anti-social families are those where parents are overtly or covertly engaged in behaviours that violates the standards and interests of society. Adolescence developed in such families might be involved in dishonesty, deceit and other undesirable behaviour patterns.

There is found a higher mental health risk for the adolescents who disapprove of their parents' character and behaviour.

The profound influence of parenting weaves itself into every stage of a child's growth, leaving imprints that time cannot easily erase. A parent's attitude, expectations, behaviours, and daily habits spill like vivid pigments onto the pristine canvas of a child's tender mind. As the child matures into adolescence, these colours blend and deepen, ultimately sculpting the contours of his or her personality.

If we aspire to nurture a society that is graceful, compassionate, and thriving, we must embrace the responsibility of parenting with utmost sincerity and awareness. The art of good parenting is not a mantle everyone can wear with ease — it demands patience, wisdom, and unrelenting commitment.

In a nation like India, marriage has been revered as a sacred institution since time immemorial, with its principal purpose long defined as securing a successor for the lineage. Driven by this age-old societal expectation, a vast segment of our population has upheld procreation as an unquestioned duty. It is perhaps for this very reason that we stand today as one of the most populous nations on earth.

Paradoxically, in our society, a couple unable to bear an heir is often scorned with cruel labels — branded as barren or impotent. Yet, when parents raise their children without care or consciousness, and those children grow into violent, obstinate, sadistic, perverted, disrespectful, or fragmented individuals, neither society nor law holds those parents accountable.

The time has come to reframe our values: learning and practicing effective, nurturing parenting should become a prerequisite for earning the honour of being a 'gold member' of society. Such a shift would pave the way for stronger mental health and a higher happiness quotient in the society of tomorrow.

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6.4 Lecture Addressed to College Students Running in Young Adulthood on the Topic 'Pre Marital Counselling'

In today's world, pre-marital counselling has emerged as a burning necessity. Yet this raises a vital question: why has such a need become so urgent now? To understand this, we must journey back a few decades and observe how society was arranged then.

Five or six decades ago, the idea of pre-marital counselling was almost exclusively confined to girls. It was never imparted by trained professionals. Instead, it flowed informally from the seasoned voices of the elder women of the household. From the very cradle, a girl child was moulded — taught to be submissive, patient, diligent, obedient, self-sacrificing, and silent in the face of hardship. That silent apprenticeship in endurance was deemed sufficient counselling for her future as a bride.

For boys, no such counselling existed. They learned by watching the men before them. They absorbed the creed of the provider — the one who earns, protects, and commands. They were respectful toward women in form, yet often oblivious to the depth of a woman's physical strain and emotional world. Women, within their own sisterhood, shared burdens with remarkable solidarity. Though they could be unyielding with each other, policing tradition and family legacy with a strict eye. Such was the social canvas until the late 1960s.

The late 1960s ushered in a quiet awakening. With Mrs Indira Gandhi ascending as India's first woman Prime Minister, the nation began to recognize that a woman's power and intellect could illuminate spaces far beyond the four walls of a home. When daughters were born, many fathers of this new era greeted them with open hearts and dream-filled eyes. Those who embraced this shift sent their daughters to schools and colleges. Yet education, then, was not a passport to employment. It was an ornament, a preparation for a more enlightened life within the family. The home, not the workplace, remained her first allegiance.

This generation gifted the country its fine women teachers, writers, and a handful of doctors and engineers. Still, the woman remained a second-

tier member in most households — but no longer a mute sufferer. Her unspoken dreams and suppressed worth began to find a whisper on radio waves and a face on television screens. This undercurrent of change defined the landscape until the mid-1980s.

For men, little had shifted except the gateway to prestige: admission into the hallowed halls of IITs and IIMs. These highly educated men began seeking educated brides as companions. A boy's degree and affluence turned marriage into a grand spectacle. It was the dawn of technological allure. Television sets, scooters, refrigerators, and gleaming home appliances, alongside gold, silver, and cash, became customary tributes from the bride's family to the groom's.

Still, the old order held its balance. Men remained the provider; women stepped into financial responsibility only when crisis struck — a husband's illness, job loss, death, or a devastating business collapse. Despite being better educated and more visible beyond domestic walls, women remained subordinate. The male ego and patriarchal norms stood unchallenged. Women were cherished, utilized to their utmost, and respected within limits — but rarely as equals.

Thus, through the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, society felt no pressing need for professional pre-marital counselling. The roles were defined, the scripts were memorised, and the stage of marriage moved as tradition directed.

The mid-1980s marked a watershed moment as computerization quietly entered our lives and the world began its steady march toward automation. Alongside traditional occupations, entirely new avenues of work emerged — roles that the male workforce alone could not fill. Yet many young women, though educated, still came from families that were supportive but orthodox in spirit, and they limited themselves to the time-honoured professions: teaching, medicine, and nursing.

In this transitional space, a new class of educated youth took shape. They studied up to higher secondary or graduation, then pivoted to professional courses that promised quicker entry into the workforce. Call centres became the emblem of this era. Their atmosphere was safe yet refreshingly open. For the first time, large numbers of women stepped

beyond conventional roles. They earned not just salaries, but a taste of autonomy and selfhood.

To grasp the undercurrent of that period, imagine the borders between two nations. Heavily armed forces stand guard on both sides, yet neither wish for war. The moment one side detects a suspicious movement, the other stiffens in defence. Society mirrored this posture. As women began to choose careers and independence, their male counterparts grew uneasy. Distrust and disrespect toward ambitious women became a shameful undercurrent. To blunt the aspirations of girls and their families, the spectre of dowry reared its head with renewed ferocity — no longer a custom, but a calculated extraction. Extravagant demands of cash, gold, and goods became a weapon. Countless innocent lives were extinguished under its weight. A patriarchal order, tragically reinforced by women within the groom's family, inflicted cold, systematic torture — physical and psychological — upon brides and their parents.

The game was ruthlessly one-sided:

Educate your daughter. Let her take a job.

Yet be prepared to see her degrees and career mocked, again and again, as worthless.

Keep paying. Dowry was no longer a one-time ritual, but an endless series of instalments cloaked as gifts for festivals, childbirth, promotions, and house-warmings.

And remember, Indian tradition forbade you, the bride's parents, from intervening in your daughter's marital home.

People began to wear multiple masks: one for society, one for their own hearth, and yet another for the bride and her kin. It was exploitation by design, not accident. Laws existed on paper, but patriarchy wielded its oldest, sharpest weapon: character assassination. A single whisper about a woman's virtue could nullify every statute meant to protect her. This architecture of inhuman domestic violence shadowed the land almost until the century closed.

The dawn of the twenty-first century brought a different wind. Financial imperialism redrew global maps, and digitalization surged through every layer of society. Social media platforms multiplied, a mobile phone nestled in every palm, and connectivity wove the world into one restless conversation.

Women no longer sought permission to spread their wings. Their footprints were already etched across earth and sea, mountain and desert, in space missions and armed forces. They fought their battles with grace: choosing to remain unmarried, to separate, to divorce, to adopt without marriage, and to survive crimes meant to break them. The world bows to the rising sun. Laws that once failed to shield women now, at times, lend them courage.

Men, too, were shaped by a new ecology. Metropolitan cities brimmed with branded institutions for engineering, medicine, and management. Alongside merit, paid seats opened doors. At eighteen, boys left hometowns to live alone in unfamiliar cities, mastering self-reliance. The lifelong presence of a mother, sister, or wife to order their routines ceased to be a necessity. They learned to cook, to budget, to be alone and to like it.

Thus, a profound symmetry emerged: the passion for self-identity and personal space now burns equally in both genders. Both know how to survive alone. Both are fiercely individualistic. The growing choice of women to retain their maiden surnames after marriage is not vanity — it is a quiet declaration that even history's suppressed half will not erase her name. Contrast this with eras when a bride was given not only a new surname, but a new first name, as if her past self had to be dissolved.

Social structures, aided in part by legal reforms, now permit consensual live-in relationships. Relationships form and dissolve with frequency; heartbreak is no longer a scandal but a common season of youth.

And so we arrive at the present — a time when the need for pre-marital counselling has never been more acute. Two self-contained individuals, each fluent in independence, must learn the grammar of togetherness. Without guidance, love risks becoming a collision of identities rather than a communion of lives.

Dear Youth,

Our present forever breathes beneath the long shadow of our past. To make this present joyful and whole, we must first turn our gaze backward — to examine, to discern. We must learn what was luminous in yesterday that deserves to be preserved, and what was corrosive that must be laid to rest.

One undeniable chapter in the history of marriage as an institution is this: for generations, we witnessed the glorification of female submissiveness. The more a woman crushed her dreams, her individuality, and her priorities beneath the weight of duty, the higher society placed her on a pedestal. Yet nature teaches us a simple truth — when heat and pressure cross a threshold, a reaction is inevitable. The shifts we now see in the attitudes of today's young women and their families are nothing but that long-delayed chemical reaction to centuries of quiet compression.

Meanwhile, the male generation finds itself in relentless competition with women in every arena — and in many, it faces defeat. Confronted with this new reality, the responses of young men seem to fall into three broad streams:

First, there are those who accept the capabilities of their female counterparts with an open heart. They choose to walk beside them, building companionship that is healthy, respectful, and collaborative — in society, in profession, and in marriage.

Second, there is withdrawal. A segment of Gen Z men quietly steps back from the very idea of marriage, as if fleeing a battlefield they do not wish to enter. On the other side, some Gen Z women display a visible repulsion toward matrimony itself. Both may be self-defence — an armour forged from the inherited memory of disrespect endured by the women who came before them.

Third, and most troubling, is the extreme. Some young men, swollen with fragile ego and marred by fractured upbringing, resort to the crudest weapon they possess: sexual exploitation followed by character assassination. Parallel to this, some women, burning with vengeance or

driven by a distorted hunger to "prove themselves," enter a man's life like a slow poison — malignant, deliberate — dismantling him physically, socially, financially, and emotionally.

Let us pause and see what this dance of fear on one side and vengeance on the other is doing to our collective fabric. There is an old proverb: "A diligent and focused person shapes his fortune, and only a fortunate person builds a family." Since time immemorial, the family has been the atom of the social world. Families weave societies, societies form nations, and nations compose the world. If fear and retribution keep our youth in retreat, if the very idea of family withers, the chain breaks — and the world, as we know it, begins to unravel.

It is the middle class that has always been the custodian of legacies and the midwife of renaissance. The upper echelons set their own trends; the lower strata often chase the dreams of those above them. These two ends of the spectrum remain largely untouched by this tremor in attitudes. They marry, they multiply. But if the middle class — the bridge between resources and aspirations — loses interest in marriage or in raising the next generation, an imbalance looms. A class with little to bequeath to posterity is producing the largest share of our population. The elite, though resource-rich, reproduce sparingly. And the middle, the manager of both wealth and dreams, stands hesitant at the altar of commitment. Should this persist for another decade or two, the silence could grow into anarchy.

Dear Youth, reflect on your responsibility as a social being. You speak passionately of individuality — and rightly so. But individuality acquires meaning only in the mirror of society. In the solitude of a forest, we are merely part of a crowd; in absolute isolation, the very notion of "self" dissolves. It is like winning a race in which no one else runs.

The hour has come to sift the past: to assimilate its gold and to discard its stones — especially when it comes to marriage.

Today's gravest concern is simple: neither our young men nor our young women feel ready to enter the institution of marriage. Your generation seems to have inherited a cautionary tale — that marriage is a cage, a

contract that demands relentless commitment and the grace to carry the weight of family and social expectation.

You, the children of the baby-boomer generation and of millennials , have grown up privileged. Your self-esteem is robust, your options abundant. But privilege has a shadow: impatience, and a mind that shifts like quicksilver. Your world offers endless choices — in food, in careers, in friends, in partners. After a while, the heart grows restless and begins to crave the next, the newer, the seemingly better.

My dear youth, sometimes our strengths feed our weaknesses. Many of you come from comfortable homes. Morally and socially, you are not tethered to the extended responsibilities that once bound earlier generations. This freedom lets you remain in perpetual search — for a better meal, a better job, a better friend, a better partner.

Remember the primitive human. Born into raw nature, he did not complain of its roughness; he carved utility from every stone and twig. He gave us fire and the wheel — inventions that transformed not just his life, but the destiny of all who followed.

Yet today, instead of discovering the hidden potential in one another, we hunt for flaws. We do not use a partner's strengths to beautify the relationship; we magnify their faults and fracture the partnership. Bitter experiences breed aversion to marriage itself. When a non-marital companionship ends, there is pain — but also a quiet relief: "At least I was not bound by law or society." And so the aversion deepens, and the flight from commitment continues.

My dear ones, as a counsellor I have sat with many who walked out of "toxic" relationships. Whether they left a live-in arrangement or a marriage, the anguish was the same. Ending a bond is like fleeing a house while leaving your treasures behind — the laughter, the embrace after a fight, the midnight care, the intimacy, the countless small, luminous moments. The emotional burden of separation does not ask whether you wore a wedding ring. Only the legal and social paperwork differs.

And here lies a danger: when we justify ourselves too quickly, proclaiming emotional mastery before the wound has healed, we deceive no one but ourselves. You cannot separate colour from coloured water. You cannot cut yourself away from the good and bad memories of a person you once held close.

So, is it not wiser to stop seeking shelter in temporary companionships and instead choose to live that togetherness within the dignified, sheltering walls of marriage?

If your heart answer is yes, then begin by redefining marriage for yourself — not by tradition's dictation, but by reason's light. Ask yourself:

- Is marriage a cage where two people surrender identity and freedom?

  Or

  Is it a safe harbour where two people can grow, using each other's strengths as wind in their sails and forgiving each other's flaws as passing clouds?

- Is it a licence to point fingers at each other's weaknesses?

  Or

  Is it the one place where you may admit your vulnerabilities, because this partnership is meant to last a lifetime, and truth is the only soil in which trust grows?

- Is it a rigid division of roles - you do this, I do that and never to be crossed?

  Or

  Is it a school where, when life demands, you learn to step into each other's shoes and carry each other's load?

- Is it about controlling the other?

  Or

Is it about voluntary self-discipline, pruning your own weeds so that the garden you share may bloom? This is not surrender; it is self-growth.

- Is marriage a pact between two people alone, or is it also a vow to walk in step with the legitimate hopes of both families?

  Or

  Has it been reduced to this: for a woman, 24-hour servitude to please every member of the groom's household; for a man, a periodic display of wealth to impress the bride's family?

Examine carefully: Are the expectations truly what you and your partner want from each other, or are they downloads from the "in-laws' server" installed into your relationship?

Dear Youth, the choice is yours. You can inherit the wounds of the past, or you can heal them. You can fear commitment, or you can redefine it. Marriage is not a relic; it is a canvas. What you paint on it — a cage or a sanctuary — will be the legacy you leave for those who come after you.

The Next Step in Pre-Marital Counselling: Knowing Each Other, Knowing the Self

After long and thoughtful contemplation, when your mind and heart finally lean toward the sanctity and significance of marriage as an institution, there arises a new and essential chapter: the checklist of self-inquiry and mutual discovery.

Before you promise a lifetime, pause and ask — what do you truly seek in a life partner, and where do you yourself stand against those very ideals?

Consider these touchstones, not as a test to pass, but as lanterns to light the path ahead:

What is the educational foundation you value, and what is your own?

Do you envision a partner who works outside the home, or one who nurtures within it — and where do your convictions lie?

Do you desire submission, or do you cherish the dignity of rational dialogue between equals?

Does your heart incline toward the embrace of a joint family, or the quiet autonomy of a nuclear home?

What are your tastes at the table, for even food becomes a language of love or discord?

How do you define love — as manic care or care with space, unavoidable interdependence or energising togetherness , complete freedom or strict dutifulness.

How rigid or flexible are you about roles and responsibilities, and can you flow with life when duties must be exchanged?

Are you willing to speak of past relationships with honesty, and to receive your partner's past without weaponising it?

What strategies will you choose when storms rise between you — silence, blame, dialogue, or grace?

"Man proposes, God disposes" — when life overturns your plans and unsettles your home, do you have the fortitude to rebuild? This question matters deeply, for a privileged generation has seldom been tutored in crisis.

What are your thoughts on parenthood- its timing, its meaning, its responsibilities?

How do you view money-how it is earned, and how it should be spent?

What place does togetherness hold in your life -is it oxygen, or an occasional fragrance?

When something wounds you, do you choose the courage of graceful expression, or the slow poison of nursing grievance in silence?

How do you respond to each other's mistakes, expectations, and frustrations-with ridicule, with retreat, or with repair?

Are you a patient listener, a calm respondent, or does your tongue outrun your wisdom?

The list can grow longer still. Yet if two people, while courting, summon the courage to ask and answer these questions with fearless candour, they will come to know not only each other, but themselves. Compatibility is not a mystery; it reveals itself in the light of such honest inquiry.

The Tragedy of Modern Courtship

The trouble is this: most “would-be couples” never feel the need for such introspection. A creeping nihilism convinces the young that depth is unnecessary, that a glance and a smile are enough to judge a soul. And so the courtship becomes a theatre of impressions.

Wardrobes are curated, manners polished, gifts exchanged, castles built in air, promises made — many of them gilded with illusion. To speak plainly: courtship today is rarely governed by the frontal lobe, the seat of reason and foresight. It is ruled by the hypothalamus, the amygdala, and the endocrine tides. Hormones write the script, and reason sits in the audience.

Thus, a golden season for understanding is squandered. Instead of mapping a shared future as husband and wife, the couple barters in momentary pleasures — the thrill of presence, the validation of attraction, the comfort of being desired. The focus drifts to the grandeur of rituals, the glamour of attire, the choreography of ceremonies. At each step, the unspoken question is often physical: 'will this satisfy me now'?

Rarely do they pause to search, in themselves or in the other, for the quieter virtues that sustain a lifelong bond: maturity, integrity, resilience, empathy. The more flawless the facade each presents, the more fragile the foundation becomes. For no human is without blemish, and a relationship built on performed perfection is destined to crack under the weight of reality.

What Truly Sustains a Marriage

Successful marriages are not unions of perfect people; they are covenants between truthful and dependable people. Two halves do not complete each other by being identical, but by being willing — willing

to learn, to unlearn, to grow into better versions of themselves, and to shed what is harmful.

In a healthy marriage, one does not beg for individuality, recognition, care, or space. These are not prizes to be won in argument; they are the default climate of the relationship.

Consider nature, the oldest counsellor of all:

When the sun sets, the moon rises - responsibility shifts without command, without resentment.

The roots never boast to the tree, “You stand because of me,” nor does the tree scorn the roots, saying, “My flowers are my own glory.” They exist in mutual reverence.

In a drop of cow’s milk, water and lactose are blended in quiet proportion — 87% to 5%. Together they nourish; tamper with the balance, and both value and health are lost.

So it is with two people. When blended with respect, they become more precious to the world than when apart. When the composition is distorted by ego, deceit, or control, the bond turns unwholesome.

Dear Youth,

We are all threads in the vast, intricate tapestry of God’s creation. Look to nature- it holds every answer: assimilation and interdependence, patience and acceptance, discipline and growth, resilience and renewal.

One day, when you choose to live not as a tourist in this world but as a responsible inhabitant, many questions- about pre-marital counselling, about marriage, about life itself — will answer themselves.

Until then, let courtship be more than chemistry. Let it be clarity. Let marriage be more than a ceremony. Let it be a conscious, courageous communion.

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6.5 Session With Girls On: Psychological Preparation of Self Defence

The subject entrusted to me today rests on three pivotal words: Girls, Self-Defence, and Psychological Preparation. Let us unfold each, and then weave them into a single, living truth.

Why “Girls”?

Society’s gaze is fixed on women’s safety with growing urgency - and rightly so. The violence directed at women occurs at a scale and intensity that cannot be compared to general crime. Ordinary offences like theft, snatching, kidnapping, or financial fraud usually spring from material need. They hold up a mirror to our social, economic, and political ailments, revealing structural fractures rather than merely individual malice.

Crimes against women-especially the rising tide of sexual assault- speak a darker language. They are not born of hunger for money but of a hunger for power, control, and domination. Psychologically, such acts reveal a mind preoccupied not with desire, but with aggression and the need to subjugate. When power expresses itself as sexual violence, it signals a tragic atrophy of a man’s productive potential. It is a society bleeding from within.

Recall the famous line from Seagram’s Imperial Blue: “Men Will Be Men.” The campaign, crafted by Ogilvy & Mather, held up a humorous mirror to the small, illogical “menerisms” men perform to appear impressive. Yet behind the laughter lies a sobering question: has a significant portion of manhood stopped growing?

Consider the pattern:

- The object of cheap amusement — women.
- The target of irrational acts — women.
- The recipient of aggression — women.
- The audience for displays of “cool” — women.
- The symbol of family honour — women.
- The cause of heartbreak — rejection by women.

- The mirror of male inferiority — women's achievements.
- The crutch for home, emotions, and relationships — women.
- The canvas for powerless men to feel powerful through rape, especially gang rape or the abuse of minors — women.
- The one to protect — women.
- The one to destroy — women.

So many unrecorded arenas of a man's life revolve around women. What a lopsided evolution! It appears that a large segment of the male population remains chronologically in the 21st century but psychologically stranded in an earlier age.

For such men, the presence of a woman becomes necessary to prove they are male at all. They have grown as males but not yet as men. History testifies that while political and economic systems have shifted- from pre-medieval to Mughal, to British, to independent India — the crimes against women have remained stubbornly constant: domestic violence, emotional harassment, sexual abuse, the erasure of identity.

What Do We Mean by "Self-Defence"?

Imagine a moment when no one is available to complete your project or fulfil your dream. You resolve: I must do this myself. The same imperative now confronts women's safety. When social codes, family traditions, and legal frameworks are still shaded by patriarchal assumptions, the hour demands that women stand up in self-reliance and in self-defence.

And "Psychological Preparation" ?

For decades, women have been handed a checklist of technical precautions: do not go out late alone, share your live location, carry a hairpin or chilli powder, save helpline numbers, use women-only cabs. Useful, yes — but insufficient.

Now, let us unite these three strands and ask: what is self-defence, truly? Is it only the act of warding off a physical assault by someone seeking contact without consent? Is its meaning so narrow?

To most, unfortunately, yes. But the broader, truer spectrum of self-defence proclaims: you have the right to defend your self-esteem, your identity, your voice, your choices, your dreams, and your priorities. I assert with conviction: when a woman learns to guard these, the need to defend herself against sexual aggression diminishes on its own.

Some will disagree. I shall return to their doubts. Yet when we speak of the rape of minors or abuse by family members and acquaintances, a woman's awareness of self-respect and her right to protection demonstrably lowers the incidence. Predators seldom hunt lions; they hunt lambs, rabbits, and deer.

How Is the Instinct of Self-Defence Sown?

Much depends on how a girl is raised. Look back -and look around even now at highly conformist, orthodox communities- and you will find countless homes where the single dream for a daughter is marriage. She must become the "perfect daughter-in-law," and soon. The irony? The standards of perfection are taught in her parental home but judged in her in-laws' home, and those standards rise like a high-jump bar that never stops ascending. The girl is a contestant who receives no credit for any height she clears; one missed bar and she is branded a failure by both families.

How does a conscious young woman, caught in this ancient mind-set, feel today? Poetess Kirti, on her page Khamosh Ahsaas, gives voice to that ache: A girl today wishes she had been urged to study and to dream, not merely to be married and confined to domesticity. She believes daughters deserve the same liberty to explore and learn as sons. The poem is not bitterness; it is the distilled disappointment of generations denied the sky.

Parents shape a girl's sense of self-worth more than any other force. If they honour her identity, nurture her ambitions, and guide her decisions, she will not only flourish but also grow accountable for her choices.

Two expected objections against the above expressions could be:

Objection 1: "This feminism is nonsense. Old women say they were happy in their roles. Indian tradition has always respected women."

My answer: If society truly revered women, why was her world limited to the kitchen by day and the bed by night? Why was education forbidden? Why child marriage, mismatched marriage, and cruel restrictions on widows? The system was not respect; it was enclosure — a strategy to keep her away from "lions and wolves." Men have long known their own unruly instincts. Society, instead of taming those instincts, caged the women. Male ego, fed for centuries, has now turned toxic.

Consider this: if the prey is hidden from the predator, and we then claim "the forest is safe," both statements are false. True progress is when society accepts the duty to stop any woman from becoming prey, and when women themselves are alert to danger and courageous enough to fight it.

Objection 2: "Freedom is risky. Girls misuse it — revealing clothes, expensive restaurants, reckless relationships, drink, drugs, and dance."

I agree with the observation and the fear. It happens. Yet this proves the very point I left unanswered earlier: Is self-defence only about fending off physical assault?

When we grant freedom without first cultivating self-esteem, the ability to stand alone, passion for a purpose, and a roadmap to realise it, freedom can curdle into regret. We do not hand a knife to a toddler — not because we fear he will harm others, but because he may harm himself. Freedom must be given when a person knows how to hold it.

Think of the "Valued Customer" in business. We, as bearers of heritage and resources, must discern whether our children are becoming valued beings and help them become so. We hand a child a hundred-rupee note and later ask for the account. When we send our daughters into the world, have we listed the treasures we packed in her bag: our trust, our blessings, our assurance that she may return even after failure? A girl who feels valued and anchored in belonging defends herself almost by instinct. Without that, she resorts to brittle psychological defences.

Self-Defence as Precaution, Not Just Reaction

Self-defence must be both shield and foresight. Those who practice precaution are visionaries. Before we open the cage, let us teach the bird to be an independent evaluative, fearless yet responsible, adaptable.

A girl who has only heard commands at home, who was never praised for managing her duties because "that is the minimum expected of a girl," will step into the world starved for belonging and respect. Imposters recognise that hunger. They offer counterfeit love, admiration, and care. Unarmed by prior validation, she may be deceived.

But if, as a precaution, we have taught her to be wary of flattery, to evaluate motives, to trust her own judgment, she will pause and probe: Why is this person so kind? Why this warning without facts? A self-evaluative mind is hard to manipulate.

Emotional Maturity as Armour

Teach a girl to distinguish attraction, infatuation, love, and care. Attraction is a flicker: like being drawn to a dress in a shop window. Infatuation is blind impulse, intense but unprepared for tomorrow. Love is patient — it waits, it prepares, it seeks to be worthy of the beloved. When she knows these differences, the chances of emotional and physical exploitation plummet.

In many Indian homes, parents are painted as flawless. That image silences children; they hide their impulses and their hurts. In counselling sessions, girls have told me they skip college because of eve-teasing, yet they cannot tell their fathers because their mothers warn: "He will stop your education." So the girl swallows guilt, believing she herself is the problem.

A mother could instead say: "I too faced this. Some boys are never taught respect; some act from peer pressure or fragile ego. But we will face it- together, in groups, on busy roads, with your father or brother at times." Listening is protection. And protection breeds confidence.

Thus, self-defence is an accumulation of mental strength that often makes physical combat unnecessary. Martial arts are vital for

emergencies, but the first line of defence is psychological - a reserve of clarity, courage, and calm.

Communication: The Final Weapon

If harassment occurs- in college, on the street, by phone — a girl must speak without hesitation to parents, a counsellor, or trusted friends. Together they form a circle of safety.

In matters of mutual affection, or when a boy's interest is one-sided, the first response should be respectful, clear communication. Both should state feelings, limits, regrets, and expectations in dignified language. The listener must listen, not interrupt with blame. Honest dialogue can lead either to a renewed, considerate partnership or to a peaceful parting with friendship intact.

History, from the Mahabharata to modern crime reports, shows how disrespectful rejection, scorn, possessiveness, and poor communication have sparked wars and personal tragedies alike. Words can wound or heal.

A Word on the Perpetrators

To make the world safer, psychological preparation is needed not only for potential victims but also for potential offenders. We must counsel those driven by untamed Id and Thanatos: the death instinct, to channel their energy into creation, not destruction. Let us together with, make this world a better place for you, for me and for entire human race.

X-X-X-X-X-X

6.6 An Address to Elderlies in Old Age Home

Old Age: A Phase of Life.

My very respected elders,

My high regards and gratitude to you. Regards, as you are elderly to me, and gratitude for all your contributions to the society, for making the paths for us to walk on, for the heritage you created and left for us to get benefited from.

My dear elderly friends, when I am here with all of you in this old age home, I am not here to feel pity on you neither to say that society is not kind to you, nor to put a question mark on any of your decisions you have taken in your life.

I am here just to tell you that you are still precious. You still have potential.

You have always been a provider to our generation, so you always deserve heartfelt gratitude from our side.

My friends, growing old is a bliss. It is the only phase of life, especially when you stay in an old age home, when you have free time to introspect.

Feel proud of whatever you accomplished in your life. Evaluate your decisions and events.

You might find yourself sometimes rigid, demanding, interfering and by passing your rights

If the processing of history leaves happy imprints, smile in solitude. If they have painful imprints, shoulder the responsibility of your own part, ask for heartfelt pardon mentally from God as well as from the people who got victimized with that decision or action.

You will feel light. It is a cleansing process.

Unprocessed emotions start smelling bad. They cause bad odour as well as a heavier heart.

Remove the guilt if you have any. Pure-hearted repentance gets accepted by the Supreme Lord too. Forgive all who you think were not good to you.

You have walked so far. Don't look back for long. It will give strain to your neck. See further.

Most of the times, whenever I visit an old age home, I find that instead of living in the present, availing the present availabilities, my elderly friends are having pain out of the remembrance of whatever sacrifices they made for the family or of the indifferent behaviour of their children and grandchildren.

I say if a person is able to perform his daily essential activities (like going toilet, taking bath and doing other caring activities of own body by oneself , still that one is king or queen.

If one is getting food with respect, one is still lucky, if one is having shelter to protect themselves from the adversities of weather and beasts, one is still under God's protection.

Change your cognition. You will see how lucky you are. Don't expect a particular need be fulfilled by any particular person whom you wished to be. Of course, they are your children whom you are searching.

Do not cry for them, don't curse them. Just extend your thanks to the Almighty for deputing someone for your needs.

Forgive your children. They had been busy in complicated schedule of pursuing growing career. It might be their priority to focus on career. It might be a compulsion for them for the purpose of providing a good future to their children. Both are not wrong. We were also busy in our times. Many times we too were expecting compromises from them.

If your sincere and loving care for the family and for the children leads to such a situation where you are not the priority for your children, they perhaps don't know that, "old age needs so little but needs that little so much."

Don't punish yourself for their ignorance.

Feel sorry for their penury of gentle abstract feelings. Pardon them for their inability of learning that love, healthy time spent, care is currency to receive blessings as well self-satisfaction in abundance.

Don't compare your doings with your offspring's preference. You can't evaluate them on the parameters of your decisions and executions of your decisions.

What you did was either your decision or compulsive demand of the times: past over you present or future over your present.

Their compulsive forces and preferences are different.

Consider little big-heartedly their problems too.

Their past is not enriched with versatile memories of grandparents' house, of fights and adjustments with plenty of cousins, they didn't enjoy the togetherness of extended family.

Also they don't have many siblings to share their responsibility. They didn't learn sharing. They always were provided their space. It was you who dreamt high for them and did everything possible for them.

How can they unlearn everything so fast? Give them time and along with concentrate on the productivity of your new routine in new set up.

Life never ends till it meets its fiancé: death.

When that comes at least it should find you alive: living, smiling, assisting in whatever you can do, practicing forgiveness, optimism, gratitude, benevolence as much as possible.

Parting with beloved ones in healthy spirits is always better than staying together with them under expectations and rejections.

It malignates all around surroundings.

Walking gently out from the place where feeling out of place is an intellectual decision. It is a decision that shows that you have the courage of unfollowing the useless conformity demands of the society.

It shows that you are not on ventilator: societal pressures, you breathe your own. You are self-reliant. You are adaptable. You are near to Moksha: self-actualization.

Your world is not in possessions, it is in your experiences and memories.

I wish, time should come when coming to old age home should be taken as before people were leaving home in ‘Sanyas Ashram '.

But in that case the old age homes, either run by government or by charity of some or other professional group, should develop their credibility in society.

Both are well funded. But they should be well managed too.

It should be a place honouring creativity for the oldies.

It should be a platform for fostering and evolution of oldies' specific skills to the youngsters.

The management of the Old Age homes can provide such opportunities to the volunteer oldies, of living their identity. It will keep our history, culture, arts and traditions alive for the upcoming generation.

The old style cooking, the knitting, the crochet work, traditional paintings on the wall on occasions, the learning of state and local languages, the stories of unsung warriors, reformers and leaders, the reasoning and puzzle solving hours of young ones with oldies should be promoted by the management in the Homes.

A person is alive till the goals are there to be fulfilled. Management of these homes should try to induce worry in the oldies. These should instruct the families strictly to visit to their oldies at least once in fortnight.

And that should be a happy day not only for some particular old person, but for all the population staying in the old age home. This will help the third generation of these oldies learn emotions, its proper outlet, the basic sense of socialism.

X-X-X-X-X-X