politically correct and gentler child-rearing era in which we operate, the game should perhaps be renamed "Sleeping" rather than "Dead" lions, though...

Sometimes children will demonstrate unexpected uses for the wisdom that older generations attempt to provide to them. For example, my friend Mira often finds that her kids not only come up with some interesting questions for her, their follow-up comments and questions are even *more* interesting. Recently, her son Faiz asked, "Amma, are the pigeons in the porch our tenants?"



"Yes," Mira responded, taking the easy way out. Technically speaking, she was of course right since the pigeons do live on their property. Immediately, Faiz had a follow-up question, asking "Do they pay rent?" Again, his mother replied in the affirmative, "Yes, but only in poop." Not to be outdone, Mira's daughter Anya chimed in, referring to her maternal uncle, who also lives in the house with them - "The pigeons have left lots of rent on *Mamu*'s car"!

Of course, older kids can be entertaining too, but more often than not, they tend to decide that they don't particularly want to talk to adults... At a Christmas party last year, a friend's teenager, the most funny and adorable 14 year old I have met in recent times (and let's face it, 'teenager' can be more like a disease than a stage of growth at times!) took me by surprise with her friendliness. While a live music session was underway - featuring "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "You've Got a Friend", alongside "Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer" - I had the following conversation with her.

Teen (laughing): Adults are so lame. Look at all of them, singing along. It's so *embarrassing*! Do they not realise how embarrassing it is?! Oh my God...

Me: You *do* realise, you're going to be an adult one day. Just like them, in fact!

Teen: No, never!!! I am never going to be like them. Never!

Me: But you *are* - honestly! And sooner than you think, in fact, because you're smart for your age.

Teen (triumphantly): Nope, I'm never going to be like them. I'm going to be a *cool* adult. Like you!

She will go far, this one - she has already recognised the value of flattery...

Finally, a recent conversation with my rather elegant mother proved not only that intergenerational conversations can teach us things at almost *any* age, it also reminded me yet again of the many reasons why I will never be a fashionista. I was getting ready to travel - times at which I always prioritise comfort over classiness, in terms of clothing - and she was clearly worried about just how, ahem, "casual" I was planning to get.

Mother: Just promise me that you won't wear a shalwar with your T-shirt, like you did that time!

Me: That's just vicious slander. I have *never* worn a T-shirt with a shalwar outside the house!

Mother: You did *that* time...

Me: That was not a shalwar! It was one of those Aladdin pants. They are perfectly respectable. Lots of people wear them.

Mum: *What* pants?!?

Me: Oh, you know what I mean! They have some name out of the 'Thousand and One Nights'.

Mum (manages to shudder and sigh simultaneously): Oh my God, are you talking about *Harem* pants?

Me: Yes, yes, those are the ones!

OK, fine, I admit that I do sometimes wonder if I'm adopted. And I suspect she does too! But one undeniable truth remains: the generation of adult wisdom is facilitated by such inter-generational exchanges of wisdom... ■