



Mother's SIXTH SENSE

Borhan Uddin Ahmed (Rabi), Group Marketing Manager of a local company, shared a different viewpoint on parenthood. He accepts that 'intuition' is possibly pseudoscience and almost impossible to prove, yet he shares a touching story about his own mother

"This is back in '90s," he said. "My sister had gone with our cousins to a family get-together in their farmhouse at Keraniganj. My brother and I stayed back with Amma at our house in Dhanmondi.

"I clearly remember her sitting in our balcony, humming to herself; while my brother and I played together. Suddenly, she started pacing the balcony looking very concerned about something. She then went inside and started using the landline phone. Then she started crying after talking to someone and I went up asking what's wrong. Apparently, my sister fell down the stairs and broke her leg. It was impossible for her to know if something was wrong with my sister. She only had a 'gut feeling' that

something was not right and her instincts proved to be true."

Yet there are others who do share an experience similar to Ahmed's.

Sadia Hossain, a process engineer by profession, lives in America's Midwest. Hossain is a survivor of an abusive relationship that began when she was just 19. She married her long-term boyfriend against her mother's wishes and survived everything from physical torture and mental torment to infidelity and a lack of commitment in their marital relationship.

"My mother was against my relationship with him from the very beginning. But I never listened. I

was blindly in love," said Hossain. "She saw things that I did not."

After Hossain made up her mind to marry her then-boyfriend, her mother stopped talking to her out of frustration over her daughter's miscalculated major life decision.

"But I was adamant about respecting my love and my six-year relationship. I also thought I would not be happy with any other man," she said.

"In retrospect, I should have thought with my head, not my heart. I should have also not tried to drag my dysfunctional marriage for nine long years," she added.

Hossain now feels the anguish of solitude. "My



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Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Malika Kuddus and Ulfat Kuddus

The names of some of the individuals interviewed for this article have been changed to protect their privacy. Special thanks to Dr Mehtab Khanam, Laila Khondokar, Shahana Huda and Borhan Uddin Ahmed (Rabi) for their contributions to the article.

mental effect," she said.

Mothers must realise that even though they are always looking out for the best, there is a certain point where they must let go and allow their children to become mature adults on their own. This process of letting go is beneficial to both the parties.

The type of guidance parents should provide depends on the child's age and maturity. A 'six month old infant' does not understand that putting objects inside the mouth may be harmful. An analogy can be drawn that parents of adolescents must be aware of their children's friends and interests, but that does not mean they have to, or even have right to, monitor every activity in an intruding way.

Like all things in life, it is always about maintaining 'the right balance'.

Laila Khondkar, Director-Child Rights Governance & Child Protection, Save the Children -- who has been working in this field for a long time -- shared some of her knowledge.

"We observe various types of parenting in society. Some say 'yes' to everything the children demand without even thinking if that will be in the best interest of the children. Some others try to impose their views on children

without even considering their opinions, and try to control their every move," she said.

"All of the findings of the hundreds of studies on parenting conducted over the past 30 years show that children need to live in an atmosphere of love and warmth and require a framework to help them learn. They deserve appropriate guidance from parents, but overprotectiveness has a detri-

