



Decoding Family Dynamics in 2018

There was a time when family meant living within a set of rules and guidelines, when afternoons meant doing homework with your siblings and mother, and then playing with the neighbourhood kids outside, when evenings meant watching whatever movie was on the TV together and when the clock struck 10, it meant bed time. But now gadgets dictate the lives of the members in a family. And even though there are many perks of technology, it can foster imbalance within the family dynamics.

If children are allowed to use gadgets at a very early age, it can affect their brain development, posture and vision in the long run. More subtle but as assured are the changes these gadgets can cause on a child's interpersonal and communication skills. Many children who spend longer amount of time on gadgets have been observed to be socially inept. They grow up to be socially awkward, mentally disturbed and unable to absorb human relationships in depth. Furthermore, children who spend most of their times on social media tend to be weak in their mother tongue. Hence more emphasis should be given on family interactions.

Children are delicate because their cognitive behaviour and personality are still in the making. "Children who don't learn their mother tongues properly have poor cognitive skills," says Mosharrat, a Bangladeshi linguist from Chicago.

When children are growing they need love and attention. They need their families to listen to them and make them feel important. This helps shape their communication and social development skills while strengthening emotional stability and conflict resolution. It is advised to include extended family members such as grandparents and uncles/aunts in the above practice to increase the social reach of children.

Bringing up children with rules and guidelines is important to develop morals and a sense of responsibility within them. But children do not understand the importance of following rules right away. Hence, such rules should be reinforced with positive rewards. Children should be encouraged to follow specific guidelines within the family. However, to set an example because children always learn what they see, all the other family members must follow the same set of

rules and guidelines.

"Whenever we get some free time, my husband and I play CandyCrush on our phones. If I complain that he is on his phone all the time, he complains that it is because I am always on mine," said Raffat Rashid with a chuckle. So as you see, technology is not only affecting children but adult relationships too. Healthy family dynamics are also important to help the other members of the family to maintain proper mental states. Spending time with your partner, parents or siblings will give you a sense of belonging in this difficult world. Living within a routine gives you purpose and discipline. Moreover, healthy relationships within the family help the children learn about relationships and how to treat others.

Therefore, it is necessary to make time for your family even if you are exhausted at the end of the day (which you eventually will be if you stare at a screen for too long as proved by science). Cut down gadget time and if necessary collect everyone's phones and tabs for a few hours a day to just sit and talk or play a board game. Make sure the children in your home are allowed to have only 1-2 hours of screen time at max and instead go out and play with them. Encourage everyone to participate in household chores together. And definitely find the time to share your feelings and opinions with your family and more importantly to listen to their experiences and feelings.

Humans are designed to rely on social interactions and behaviour for a healthy lifestyle. Hence, help yourself and your family to love and live better.

By Tanzim Islam Silony

Photo: Collected

The friendship complex zone

As a child of growing interest, the idea of having friends and partners to play afternoon games with seemed like the best part of the day. However, as we grow up, our ideals and environment change, and so do we. With those changes around us, people seem to come and go. Before you know it, you are in your 20s or 30s and you think life through all over again and the true friends you make. But what even is a "true" friend?

It might feel awfully strange when you have a fall out with a friend with whom you have spent your whole middle school with, or even your best friend who now lives abroad and long distance seems to be the most difficult aspect of your life. You are not wrong when you feel that way because life takes these sudden shifts which seem to affect two or more people in a friend circle. "I think, at times, we grow a little bit distant because we already grow a disinterest for everyone else over time and for many other reasons, our egos seem to play a much more bigger part in this whole scenario," says Rifat Fariha as she speaks of why she believes that distance and age plays a big role in life.

There might be a time in your life where the term "toxic" seems to play a much bigger role from the person you considered as your friend. Of course, there might be nothing wrong with that person or there might be, but you just cannot seem to mingle your spirit into theirs because their actions disrupt your peace. This will change your perspective on your friend, but if it gets too much for you, it is safe to move on rather than experimenting with your patience. "I think there comes a time where there is a boundary no one should cross and if a friend keeps discouraging you in the worst way possible without being aware of it themselves, then I think it is high time to move away from that 'friend'. There is a thin line between bullying and insulting to be frank," says Lamia Tabassum as she prepares for high school with a fresh new perspective.

It is important to understand that with time, people change and this change might not be as transparent as one seems to hope. Accept the fact that not all friendships are deemed to last but then again, not all fights are the end of one either. No matter what it is, try to stay positive and be more accepting towards the changing paces of familiar faces. Quoting the 14th Dalai Lama, "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." Surprise your friend with a meme or a WhatsApp text because it's only so easy to go a long way if you just take the first step.

By Sumaiya Tasnim

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