

Maybe our parents aren't perfect

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

I was once asked in kindergarten who my idol was. "My father," I had replied without a hint of hesitation.

It might sound like a typical answer, but I was being absolutely honest. My father's impressive professional journey, his kindness, his knowledge about leg-spinners – it all allured me. I was awestruck by Abba's personality and when I said my father was my idol, I meant it. I use the past tense, for things have changed as our relationship with our parents often do when we age.

As we grow up, we meet more people. People who hold opinions different from our parents and do things differently than our parents did. So, naturally, we start questioning things. We compare our parents with others and, for once, we judge them not as our parents but as individuals. We find flaws and wonder, is it possible that my parents are not the perfect human



beings I considered them to be?

Of course, our parents have every right to be as flawed as we are. Maybe we're the ones who are having trouble understanding that people make mistakes. It's only fair that our moms and dads don't fit our made-up template of human perfection.

While many of us had to hear "Why can't you be more like him/her?" in our childhood, we grow up to do the same to our parents and say, "Why can't you

be more like their parents?" We put them behind bars for questioning, and more often than not, they don't bother answering. They analyse our anger as a lack of discipline and a form of revolt.

Even if we accept this inevitable realisation of the imperfections of our parents, the most difficult part is accepting their flaws as human beings and the problematic aspects in their mindset. When we see them being on the wrong side of a conflict, picking on

people or being misogynist or racist in their actions, it's difficult for us to stay quiet as individuals, especially as teenagers and young adults with our own perspectives. And if our parents aren't open enough to unlearn their past problematic habits or accept opinions different than their own, that too from their own children, we often have to learn to stay quiet and live with it.

But overlooking peoples' flaws day after day isn't always an option. And so we fight, we cry, hearts break and relationships crack. We become too impatient with our parents. Before you know it, you haven't talked to your mother in two days and somehow going to the next room and telling her about your day feels unwanted.

For us to rebuild our broken relationships, we need to identify what broke them in the first place. While our parents need to accept that conflicts between parents and children are only natural, maybe we need to be brave enough to take the first step and open up to our own parents.

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Why are football clubs hiring young, inexperienced managers?

TAMJIDUL HOQUE

"The only reason I can understand is that they look through the CVs and see guys with more defeats and guys with less defeats, so guys with less defeats are given the job. I cannot find another reason."

That's what Jose Mourinho said on Mikel Arteta's appointment as Arsenal's manager back in 2019. Since then, Arteta has gone on to win two trophies, has a strong command over Arsenal's project, and is putting up a good fight for a top four spot in the Premier League.

Similar to Arteta's appointment, there are many other instances where betting on less experienced managers has worked wonders for football clubs. Like Hoffenheim when they hired a 28-year old Julian Nagelsmann, or Rangers when they hired Steven Gerrard and later went on to win their first league title in a decade. Likes of Ruben Amorim, Marcelo Gallardo and a few others also achieved many managerial successes by the time they were 40.

This isn't something new. However, the trend has gained more popularity in recent years. In the ever-changing game of football, hiring a proven manager with his proven tactics doesn't always guarantee good results anymore.

That's why more clubs are opting for relatively younger managers. For instance, Everton had hired Carlo Ancelotti, and then Rafael Benitez, two UCL winning managers to turn their fortune around, but eventually failed. They're now working with Frank Lampard, hoping to improve.

One reason is the reluctance of experienced man-

agers to change their gameplan when the club is not doing well. From Mourinho's "park the bus" to Bielsa's philosophy of constant pressing, many experienced managers push their own ideals over adapting to challenges.

In a similar situation, a younger manager is more likely to accept their shortcomings and change their ways to introduce new tactics that suit the team.

Young managers often have a history with the clubs that hire them. Even though they lack experience, they know what the club and fans demand. Hiring a popular figure as a manager also helps the club keep its fans happy.

Another influential factor is a manager's approach towards individual development of their players. Experienced managers often ignore working on such details or delegate that job to assistant managers and focus on the system overall. In this regard, a younger manager seems to give more effort. Working on the players and maximising the output from each player can make all the difference between winning and losing.

It seems like the ability to adapt, innovate, making use of modern football data



and statistics, relating to the demands of fans and clubs while following a set philosophy is why clubs are being more attracted to the idea of hiring new, younger managers. It remains to be seen whether younger managers continue to deliver and impress clubs in the future. Only time will tell.

Tamjidul Hoque loves talking about football and watching anime. You can find him on twitter.com/TamjidulH24



PHOTO: AP

What happens when parents fight

INQIAD BIN ALI & TAZREEN JAHAN BARI

Life has hardly been straightforward for Rahat Rahman*, the only son of a government officer, studying at a prominent English medium school in Dhaka. Contrary to his typically nonchalant attitude, Rahat is an emotional trainwreck – devastated by regularly witnessing violent arguments and even fighting between his parents. Much of his time is spent trying to defuse quarrels, picking sides, or just sitting helplessly as things unravelled.

"All I ever wanted was to be happy," he says, voice cracking. "I see my friends, so cheerful with their families. Is it so difficult to be that ideal family, full of peace and happiness? I look back on the most trivial of matters and think just what could have been. I am never content with the reality, even when it is positive."

For those who grew up in healthy family environments, growing up is cakewalk. In contrast, those who grew up in high-conflict families, for them, the picture is not so rosy.

The instability instils fear and yearning for the fighting to stop at any cost. The trauma of being faced with domestic violence is echoed in Isfar Alam, a primary school student's experience as well. Isfar confesses, "I was terrified and even though I didn't understand the topic before, the intensity of the fights made me plead for them to end. It has left a big scar within me."

Parents fighting has serious repercussions on a child's life, especially in Bangladesh, where domestic violence is a common phenomenon. A Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics study shows 72 percent of married women face psychological, physical, and economic abuse. To put that in context, children from more than two-thirds of our households go through the trauma of seeing their parents oftentimes violently fight over a myriad of issues.

A 2013 study published in the Psychological Science journal shows that even infants, only 6 months old, can be affected by parents who fight a lot, as they respond to negative tones in conversation. It also states that being constantly exposed to such a stressful environment can cause long-term cognitive damage. Another study, in 2012, shows that kindergartners who grew up in conflict-ridden households experienced mental disorders and behavioural problems as they became adolescents.

Unfortunately, the plight of these children is something that is almost always ignored. The ordeal they face, and trying to prevent this by any means, has an extensive impact on their innocent minds and more often than not, end up defining their lives. Watching parents quarrel, these children go through radical changes – psychologically, emotionally, and behaviourally.

"Children from disturbed family backgrounds develop a sense of dogma – resulting in great difficulty in thinking and deciding for themselves," says Rumana Akter, clinical psychologist at Inter Services Selection Board (ISSB). "With time, they become low on self-confidence, becoming fearful and resentful about their company, exhibiting more delinquency in their adolescence."

The psychological effects don't stop there. According to Akter, cases of phobias, lopsided daily routines, depression, anxiety, and nightmares are common in these children. They consider themselves to be inferior, and never think of the consequences of their potential actions. "As a result, they feel extreme emotions – guilt, shame, fear, and anger – depending on what they have done. They almost always blame themselves," she adds.

Furthermore, the psychological problems growing up result in these children developing behavioural setbacks causing them to face long-term interpersonal issues. They, sometimes, become arrogant and stop caring about their own good in general, with their tendency towards self-harm pushing them towards bad company and harmful activities.

become evident in adolescence when teens hit puberty and start experiencing more than a few hiccups in their budding romantic relationships.

A 2001 research reveals that, due to the trust issues instilled in them early on, children from high-conflict families experience commitment issues, abandonment issues and infidelity in their romantic relationships. When they get married, this becomes a bigger problem as often, violent behaviour witnessed early on is repeated.

"I started to develop feelings for a girl from my class. Even though we chatted and talked like normal, it was very tough for me as I don't actually know how to talk to a girl," Rahat comments. "Witnessing my parents fight, a sense of paranoia worked within me. I overdid things. To

no role to play – they are the ones to sow the seeds in the long road to recovery.

Psychologist Rumana Akter mentions that family members need to cultivate healthy interpersonal relationships through communication, collaborative activities, and display of affection. Parents should assert their authority, but not become "authoritarian".

"To cope with behavioural malfunction, managing misbehaviour and praising positive behaviour might bring good results. Teaching children how to deal with high-stress situations, navigate negative emotions and develop personal coping statements will also prepare them for familial conflicts if they arise," she suggests.

Despite the damage control, some scars are too deep to heal. This is why parents



Akter points out, "These children are more likely to go into substance abuse, criminal activities or committing suicide." Additionally, she reports that they can be impulsive, judgemental, develop habitual lying tendencies and also tend to overreact regarding situations they have no control over.

Rahat's mother confesses having witnessed such changes in her son, saying, "My son even fainted seeing our fights. His personality and behaviour transformed too."

Terrified by seeing his parents violently fight, Isfar Alam* was influenced by his mother and developed resentment for his father. He stopped caring about his studies and spent more time with friends.

"As I later found out, it was a really bad company. They never helped me as they claim to do. Their actions only turned me away from everything good, even my parents," Isfar says.

Growing up witnessing violence in a family environment that is not built on trusting relationships, these children face interpersonal issues as grown-ups. They encounter difficulty in trusting others, and are more likely to abuse their own children physically and mentally, adds Akter.

The problems in intimate relationships

me, the girl was the light, whose warm, cheerful illumination helped me get over my domestic demons. So, when she stopped talking to me, I blamed everything on myself."

A puppy-love-gone-wrong may look insignificant. The reality, though, couldn't be starker. Witnessing a dysfunctional relationship between parents makes teenagers like Rahat crave perfection, an extreme "ideal" which does not exist. This makes them hesitant about intimate relationships in the end, having far-reaching impacts in their conjugal lives.

Luckily, awareness is building among parents. While talking, we found that even though some parents get carried away by their jealousy, others were fully aware of the impacts of their violence on their children.

Rahat's mother shares, "I try my very best to help him overcome his distress – I give him a lot of time and we talk about my own childhood and his favourite things. Whenever he tries something new, I support and encourage him to the fullest."

Despite the parents' efforts to help their children overcome the trauma, the best solution is to seek professional help. However, that doesn't mean parents have

should think twice, if not a thousand time, before letting their dysfunctional relationship hinder their child's development.

*Names have been changed for privacy

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