



PHOTO: NAYEM SHAAN

# How to deal with disagreements with your teacher

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RAFID KHANDAKER

Authority does not necessitate agreement. Although teachers are there to advise and guide you, it is inevitable that you get into disagreements with them. Such is human nature, and it is not something that should be discouraged or shamed. However, in the complex arena that a classroom can often be, it is best to tread wisely when it comes to tackling disagreements with teachers, lest you fall on their bad side and have your assessment compromised.

Firstly, disagreements pop up mostly in subjects that are more related to the arts or social sciences, and less so in STEM fields, although the latter is not impossible either. The subjective nature of the former ones make it so that various opinions and perspectives are brought to the table. Often, there is no clear-cut right answer, and much can be debated over among students and with teachers, which can often be healthy, insightful and productive.

If such situations are allowed, it indicates that the teacher has respect for their students and values their input, despite them being less qualified or potentially less knowledgeable than them on the matter. This can be highly

motivating for the students, who will be encouraged to freely discuss their thoughts and views without the fear of punishment or ridicule, leading to effective learning.

However, not all teachers are so open to disagreement. Some do not want to give students the opportunity to express themselves, possibly because they feel it's unnecessary or they don't find students' inputs to be valuable. Others may feel that it is disrespectful when a pupil disagrees with their instructor, and they should instead blindly go along with everything that they teach in the classroom. This can be very demoralising for the students, who may feel suppressed by the authority figure.

In cases like these, it is best to be more strategic when voicing your opinions as a student. Plainly blurting out your views that oppose the instructor's can be a bad idea. Instead, you can try posing your opinion as a question. Maybe even include research, statistics and evidence to back up your claim. For example, instead of saying "XYZ is bad", it would be more tactful to say "What are your thoughts on new evidence being found that XYZ is injurious to our health?" This way, the teacher doesn't feel threatened, and therefore

they're more likely to be receptive towards what you have to say.

Furthermore, it's also important to analyse what the reaction from your classmates may be. If you feel that the reaction will be overwhelmingly negative and you won't be able to handle that, you can opt to meet the teacher after class during their office hours, which will relieve much of the pressure coming from being in a classroom.

Despite all this, there are times where it's best to just let it go. Picking your battles wisely is an important lesson to learn, especially when your grades and assessments are at stake. Therefore, first decide whether the risks are manageable enough for you to voice your disagreements safely, and then proceed. If they're not, then prioritising your academic performance might be the right choice. But if the risks are manageable, don't hesitate to stand up for what you believe in, keeping in mind that tact and respectfulness are paramount in making sure you get your point across while neither compromising your grades nor your values.

Rafid is busy dozing off every chance he gets. Wake him up by sending a notification at rafidkhandaker@gmail.com

# Making the most out of self-help books

RUBAMA AMREEN

Self-help books are some of the most popular reads to exist. Almost everybody has had experiences where somebody comes over to them, buzzing with excitement, and ask in the most fervorous manner possible, "Have you read that book? You really should, this book changed my outlook on life!"

Despite all the uproar regarding self-help books, most that I have read never seem to be, well, helpful. The first chapter is usually about some deep, pretentious hogwash about how abiding by just a few simple rules has the ability to change somebody's lifestyle and perspective entirely. The books then continue to list the most ludicrous standards known to mankind, for example, eating vegetables grown in your own garden while you live in a bustling city. To entertain the notion that these books could have the power to be life-changing is like saying that Hero Alom has the potential to win an Oscar.



ILLUSTRATION: FAISAL BIN IQBAL

However, there are ways you can make the most out of your experience with a self-help book:

**Set achievable dietary restrictions**  
Although there is no need to follow the strict, ridiculous regimens suggested, try to set a few boundaries. These boundaries should be something you feel comfortable with and do not have a difficult time adjusting to. For example, instead of refraining from eating red meat at all, you could limit it to once or twice every fortnight.

**Aim for practical and affordable**  
Buying organic fruits and vegetables to stay healthy, or paying a premium for an app to organise your day down to the minute may look good on paper, but is a whole different case when you're being realistic. Especially for students with tight budgets, expensive items that make life easier aren't the most facile to come by. Go for things that do not put stress on your wallet, but at the same time you can make the most out of.

**Make an efficient routine**  
Allocate different pockets of time in your day to fit in some meditation or exercise tips from the book. All the time slots do not have to be filled with productive activities either; leave out time for your luxury and relaxation. There is no need to stress yourself out if the routine goes awry either, try to continue with your day as best as you can. Your life is not something you can map out, things are bound to spin out of control from time to time.

Rubama Amreen spends her time bawling over fictional characters. Send help at rubama.arahman@gmail.com

# Educational institutions need to be more considerate of all religious festivities

SABIL SADAT ZAHIR

Religious festivities are an important part of most peoples' lives, not only from a spiritual perspective but also from the perspective of how these festivities bring people together with their loved ones. Even in such a day and age, it seems as though the institutions and universities of our country are not considerate when it comes to religious sentiments, more so towards those of non-Muslim students.

While most major religious festivals are declared government holidays, the amount of time given to celebrate these are often inadequate. Eid, Christmas, Buddha Purnima, and Durga Puja are major events where people often want to spend time with their loved ones or visit their hometowns. Even though Muslims do get comparatively longer holidays for Eid, many universities conduct classes as far as two days prior to major holidays. This often makes it difficult for students, faculties, and other university employees who are away from home and want to visit their families for the holiday.

Recently, students from some universities had to protest for online classes right before Eid. This was an obvious workaround that university authorities should have considered from the get-go, rather than needing students to address the issue.

The neglect is more apparent with followers of religions outside the majority. Despite being the biggest and most important festive period for Christians, most institutions provide only a single off day for Christmas. Exams are also often



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conducted around that time, further preventing Christian students from properly celebrating the holiday. For other occasions like Easter, they are not even given any days off and are compelled to request their faculties for leave.

The case is not different for Durga Puja either. Despite being a ten-day long celebration, Hindu students are given at most one or two days off, that too near the end of the festive period. The time allotted is nowhere near sufficient for them to visit their families and celebrate the festivities. Certain institutions allegedly do not provide the last day off as well, displaying

insensitivity towards religious sentiments. As is the case with Christians in regards to Easter, there are many other pujas and celebrations for Hindus where they are not given any holidays. Buddhists and people of indigenous communities also share similar experiences.

Now, it is understandable that universities have a syllabus which they must conclude under a certain timeframe, and giving time off for each holiday might derail their plans. This is especially difficult for universities which follow trimester systems. Furthermore, the institutions try to adhere to only government-allocated holidays and do not wish to extend beyond them.

However, there must always exist some room for adjustment, especially when it comes to something as significant as faith and religious practices.

As mentioned before, conducting online classes during Ramadan on the days leading up to Eid is a simple solution which allows them to finish the syllabus while also enabling students to prepare for the celebrations. As for believers of other religions, it is clear that they deserve more than just a day's vacation for their major religious events. Secularism is one of the fundamental principles of this country. Sufficient time must be given to these students so that they can practice their faiths. For now, we can only hope to see more institutions being more considerate towards everyone irrespective of their faith.

Sabil spends most of his time trying to stay as hopeful as possible. You can contact him at sabilasadat616@gmail.com