Millennials and the most sought-after Mexican restaurant in Dhaka

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HOW PARENTS CAN RESPOND

Many working parents drop their child at school and come home in the evening eager to hear about the day. Instead of answers, they get, "My friend knows everything."

Dr Ahmed emphasises that this situation is not a big problem. "Parents must not forbid it. They have to listen to the child, with full attention. If the child says the friend was talking to them today, ask what the friend said, what game they played, where the friend is now, and whether the friend has rested or slept."

There are things to avoid, too. Do not insist the friend is real, and do not make fun of the child either. "Don't say, 'Stop this nonsense,' or 'You have no friend; there is nobody in this room,'" he warns. Parents should also resist adding new characters, inventing scary events or cross-examining the child. And if the child has cousins or classmates to play with, real relationships should not be pushed aside for the imaginary one.

Laughing about the friend in front of relatives is another mistake. Dr Ahmed points out that it can embarrass the child, which can be a very bad experience for them.

GHOSTS AT THE WINDOW

Many of us grew up hearing, "Go to sleep, or a ghost will come through the window." Dr Ahmed has no objection to imaginary characters, but not when they are used as a threat.

"Say something positive instead," he suggests.

Childhood lessons stick, he asserts. Telling a child that the doctor will give an injection if they refuse medicine can plant a lasting fear of doctors. Warning that a cat will bite can grow into fear of animals, and he alerts us by mentioning that some adults who hurt animals are carrying a bad early lesson, as they were taught negative things in their childhood.

WHEN TO SEEK HELP

Only in a small number of cases does imaginary play become a real problem. Dr Ahmed indicates a few clear signs.

One is fear so strong that daily life suffers. The child stops sleeping, refuses to eat, avoids the washroom or trembles with fright. Another is a friend who gives harmful instructions. "I hit him because my friend told me to" or "I threw the phone out of the window because my friend said so" are the kinds of statements that should get a parent's attention. A sudden, major change in behaviour, with the child seeming overwhelmed or obsessed, is a third warning.

In such cases, the cause may be obsessive-compulsive disorder or panic attacks, and sometimes an intellectual disability, he says.

For most children, an imaginary friend is a healthy imagination at play. Listen with patience, and seek professional help only if daily life suffers.

By Tagabun Taharim Titun
Photo: Collected

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Trust your intuition. Embrace change this week. Find your inspiration and keep moving forward. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Reflect on relationship dynamics. Balance loyalty with personal boundaries. The weekend brings important decisions about existing partnerships. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Review your daily routines. Drop habits that drain your energy. Prioritise practical steps to support your health and wellbeing. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Explore creative solutions to financial challenges. Seek support from trusted family members. Make time for dancing, romance, and friends this weekend. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Find comfort within yourself. Release emotional baggage. Check household repairs, bills, and essential systems to prevent future problems. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Speak honestly about your needs. Seek friends who accept your authentic self. Use your communication skills to strengthen trust and understanding. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Prioritise restorative self-care. Review financial worries and spending habits. This week can bring clarity about money and personal confidence. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Trust your instincts. Move forward despite uncertainty. Honest, courageous decisions can strengthen self-confidence and deepen trusted relationships. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Question your assumptions about truth. Make time for solitude. Use quiet reflection to understand your emotions before pursuing new adventures. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Reassess your social circles. Connect your friendships with long-term ambitions. Keep your promises to protect the trust others place in you. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Handle criticism calmly. Clarify your professional ambitions. A career shift could help you pursue recognition and build a lasting legacy. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Prioritise sleep, nourishment, and rest. Reconnect with your core values. Take extra care when organising travel plans and making arrangements. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

