

# TTM! CONNECT



***"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:  
A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, a time to reap that which is planted;"***

***Book of Ecclesiastes***

We are going through unprecedented turbulence on our planet. Few have been spared the anguish, the loneliness, and the uncertainty that COVID-19 has unleashed on us. In India, the situation is particularly poignant, there is a sense of betrayal. We caught a tantalizing glimpse of the light at the end of the tunnel, yet we were sucked back into the black orb of this terrible virus.

This is clearly time for us to plant, not yet to reap. To plant seeds of compassion. Not just among our mentees, but also among our family of mentors, who are being severely tested by the challenges that Covid-19 has strewn on our path. Plant away my dear, dear friends. As Andy Rooney said, "sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand". Reach out, reach out and touch someone!

Nothing lasts forever. Everything will pass, even COVID-19. The seeds of compassion we have sown will blossom into love. Love, that like COVID -19, erases all the lines of caste, creed, and gender. We will live as one!

"Be kinder than you need to be"

**Malavika Sharma**



*"If you want to be powerful educate yourself" -Buddhist saying*

### **A Unique Mentee**



One of our mentees is a Tibetan monk. His name is *Jampa Topgyal* and he is 43 years old. Originally from Nepal, he studies Buddhism in the ***Sera Jey Monastic University*** for advanced Buddhist Studies & Practice in Karnataka. One of his roles is to meet people and discuss Buddhist philosophy and the way of life. He wants to brush up his spoken English and be proficient and exact in his interactions. Hence , he sought help from TTM! to take him to the next level. He truly is an example of how learning is an ongoing process. During the sessions with his mentor, Jampa often shares beautiful Buddhist teachings thus encouraging debate and lateral thinking. Another example of learning for both the mentor and the mentee

" When we are very young, 5-10 years old we are very truthful. The brain is not influenced by society and we are in our 'natural' state. The 'natural' self is honest, nice, self respecting."

"Truthfulness leads to trust and trust leads to transparency. The most important thing is that we should not lie to ourselves."

"Impermanence is what defines our existence. If you're very happy today or very sad, you know that this too shall change."

"A monk's goal is infinite love and compassion."

## New Year the Indian Way

!!! Indians celebrate the New Year on the first of January like everyone else, but we are unique in that we also celebrate regional festivals to mark the New Year. Customs vary from region to region and special foods are associated with the festivities. Celebrations normally begin in spring. However, observance is determined by whether the solar calendar is being followed or the lunar calendar.

Starting in mid-April, Ugadi is New Year's day in Andhra Pradesh, Telengana and Karnataka. Ugadi pachadi is made of neem flowers, raw mango, jaggery and coconut. Gudi Padwa heralds the arrival of spring and is celebrated in Maharashtra and Goa. Bihu is a harvest festival and marks the beginning of the Assamese New Year. Baisakhi is a spring festival and is celebrated in Punjab with great fervour. Poila Baisakh as the name suggests is celebrated on the first of the month of Baisakh. In Gujarat, where the lunar calendar is followed, the new year is celebrated the day after Diwali. These are just a few examples of festivals that mark the new year in various parts of the country.



What does the New Year mean to you? Do you celebrate Baisaakhi or Bihu? Is the New Year known by another name in your home state? How do YOU celebrate the New Year?

Discuss these questions with your mentee. Ask them to write about their personal experience of the New Year using up to 100 words. Please work with your mentee to polish the content.

**Our editorial team will select 3-4 mentee pieces for our next newsletter. The pieces need to be submitted to us by May 15th.**

### Reflections from 2020



On the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, some members of the TTM! family connected to share their personal experiences and the most important lessons they had learned in 2020. This truly was a special time of sharing / bonding. Although it is difficult to capture the heartfelt emotions expressed, the inter-active session focused on relationships, spiritual journeys, self-development, coping mechanisms, and heightened awareness. While each of us has our own personal journey, when hearts are open, there is empathy.

### Use of Idioms

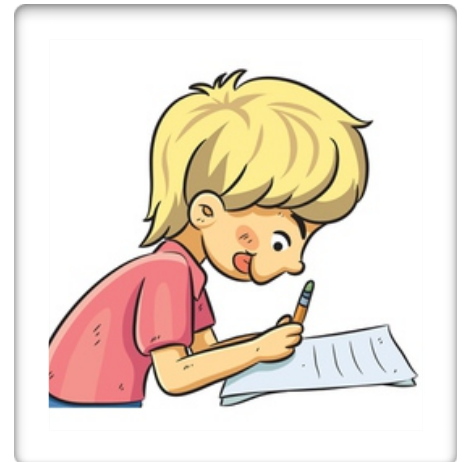
Once there was a boy named Rocky. He was a naughty boy. One day his father was very angry. He was scolding him and **to add insult to injury**, his teacher called his father to complain about Rocky's behaviour in school. His teacher complained that Rocky is always ready to **fight at a drop of a hat**.

When his father asked him that why is he fighting with others in school, so he started **beating around the bush** and **didn't get to the point**.

Rocky's classmate also became **devil's advocate** in front of his father. He was also against him. Then his father didn't allow him for the school's picnic and now for him, it was just **beating a dead horse**.

(A story written by mentee **Amreen** )

*"I was doing idioms with her. I asked her to write a story using the idioms to make sure she has understood them"* (Mentor Usha Swaroop)



## Managing Exam Anxiety



At the beginning of March, Dr. Agarwal, a Child Psychologist from Assets Life Skills conducted a workshop for mentees on **Managing Exam Anxiety**. Following the session, this is what Dr. Agarwal had to say: “I felt it went very well. Students interacted, shared their experiences and take aways from the session.” Here’s what some of our mentees had to say: “Yesterday’s class was very helpful. It helped calm my mind.” (Rahul Gupta) “Session was amazing. Learned many things – like self-control and much more. It was really helpful.” (Riya Kohli). And here’s the feedback from our mentors: “Anjali just spoke to me about today’s session and was happy to attend it. Thank you TTM! for giving them this opportunity.” “I have heard from one of the two mentees who attended today’s class – he really enjoyed. My second mentee, Eitika also loved the session. Thank you so much!”

Over the summer holidays, Dr. Agarwal has once again offered to run a series of 10 workshops on Academic Skills for mentees from Classes 9-12. Details of the modules have already been provided, however, dates will be confirmed on the Group Heads WhatsApp group.

TTM! is extremely grateful to Dr. Agarwal for offering our mentees this opportunity, and for giving so generously of her time and expertise. Thanks also to our very own Surita Banerjee for facilitating these sessions.



## Workshop for Mentors



**On Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April,** Priya Suri Dhawan, a member of the TTM! tribe, presented a workshop on **How Thoughts Create our Destiny.** The session showed the sequence of how the quality of our thoughts has a direct impact on our destiny. It also provided tips and techniques on how we can upgrade the quality of our thoughts to lead a happier, more fulfilled life. It was heartening to see such a good response to this initiative. The questions fielded by mentors during the Question & Answer session were well handled by Priya, and the session ended on a high note with Prakash Wadhvani's rendition of "Dewana Leke Aaya Hai Dil Ka Tarana."

We are grateful to Priya for providing us with a tool kit for our mental well-being, to Surita to facilitating this interesting exercise, and to Prakash for not only handling the sound but also giving us the pleasure of listening to his melodious voice.



Having embarked on a long and arduous journey, Amrita and her team have completed hours of labour on the Class IX and Class X CBSE English syllabi. They have developed intensive teaching guides for all the prescribed texts. Kudos to Amrita for her perseverance, and also to Renuka, who helped upload this enormous body of work on our website.

Tara also recently completed a herculean task in her inimitable, vibrant style. She has produced video recordings of all the Prose and Poetry chapters from the CBSE Class IX and Class X texts. They are available on the TTM! video channel and are a joy to listen to; she has made the lessons come alive for the listeners.

We are grateful to Anushree and Vaseema who, along with Amrita, have taught the entire Class IX and Class X English syllabus to their mentees through intensive group sessions. These sessions are not only engaging but also provide a contextual background for each chapter. This is critical because many of the stories are set against backdrops that are totally alien to our mentees. Our dedicated team encourages interaction between the mentees and helps them to relate the stories and poems to their own lives.

These sessions will be repeated over the next academic year, so please connect with Amrita right away if you would like to enroll any of your mentees for the next session.

Though the Class X board exams have been cancelled due to COVID-19, we are seeing remarkable results from the pre-board exams. Great team effort!!!

### Food for Thought

Over the past year, several hidden talents have come to the fore. Besides creative writing, art and other craft related activities, cooking has become a necessity and a way of self expression. As an example of this, Debika's mentee, Asif, has been trying out new recipes every day. Following is Asif's recipe for **Chowmein** (as explained by him)

#### **Ingredients:**

- 1 pkt Noodles
- 2 Carrots
- 1 Cabbage
- 1 Capsicum
- 1 Onion
- 2 Green Chillies
- 1 tsp Vinegar
- 1 tsp Green Chili Sauce
- Soya Sauce
- 1/3 tsp Ajinomoto (optional)
- Salt

#### **Method:**

- Take the noodles and boil for 5 minutes on high flame and 2 minutes on low flame. Keep aside to dry out.
- Cut two carrots finely.
- Take the cabbage and the capsicum medium sized chop finely.
- Take one medium sized onion.
- Put the wok put on the burner and heat then put two teaspoons oil. Then add 2 green chillies and chopped onion, fry till golden brown. Then add cabbage, carrots and mix well for 2 minutes only, then add capsicum and fry for 1 minute. When vegetables are cooked, add boiled noodles.
- Add salt and Ajinomoto according to taste.
- Add one teaspoon soya sauce.
- Add one teaspoon Vinegar.



- Add one teaspoon green sauce.
- Cook for 5 minutes, mix well and then the Chowmein is ready. Serve hot.

#### **Note:**

***Could you please circulate this among your mentees, and have other budding chefs share their recipes too. We have to make sure that all ingredients are inexpensive and easily available.***





### **Mind your Pronunciation**

Iqbal Judge has done a phenomenal job in presenting a series of 13 videotaped lessons that will help our mentees with their pronunciation. The videos have been uploaded on our **TTM! YouTube Channel**

They have also been uploaded on our website under Additional Resources.

Many thanks to Iqbal for all her hard work. Thanks also to our gifted and ever helpful Tara, and Renuka, who along with Rishi and Sugandha painstakingly uploaded these videos both to our website and on our YouTube channel.

**We shall overcome....**

**With the extended crisis the world, and India in particular, is facing at the moment, it is so easy to fall into a gloom and doom mindset! It therefore warms our hearts when we can share real life stories as the one below from a member of our TTM! Family:**

“I received a call a few months ago from a student whom I had mentored previously. He was reaching out for help as his Class X boards were round the corner and he was performing miserably in English. He is dyslexic\* but due to his financial background had not received any specialized education. Neither the fact of his medical condition nor my lack of knowledge of the Class X syllabus deterred me from mentoring him once again. Fortunately, the TTM! Class X notes framed by Amrita and her team gave me the courage to guide him through the preparation for the Board exams for which we had two months. He worked diligently and passed his English exam with 50% percent. This is the first time, EVER, that he had passed an English exam. This in turn, helped him in improving his performance in other subjects as well. When the Pre-board marks were announced, he was in tears and delighted with his performance. I shared in his joys as well knowing what he had been through, considering his challenges. We decided that we would work even harder for the forthcoming final board exams. Unfortunately, the exams were cancelled. But this hasn't dampened his spirits. He now has a new found confidence in himself and wants to continue with the TTM curriculum.”



**Thank you TTM! for truly changing his life and inspiring me.”**

*Note: \*Dyslexia affects a child's ability to read, write and spell.*

*Names have intentionally been kept anonymous to respect the privacy of the individuals concerned.*

talk  
to  
me!

LUGI



**Mentee Ankita Kapoor/ Mentor : Ruchira Lahiri Goswami**

Ankita is a conscientious, hard-working student and has for the last four years been consistent in her dedication to her goal. She has been exposed to diverse ways of learning and has responded well by seizing all learning opportunities that come her way. I wish she achieves her dream of getting into IIT as she has been working towards it for the past few years. All the best to Ankita for achieving success in her goals and for a very bright future.



**Mentee Creativity**



Art By Tanya Yadav



Art By Sakshi



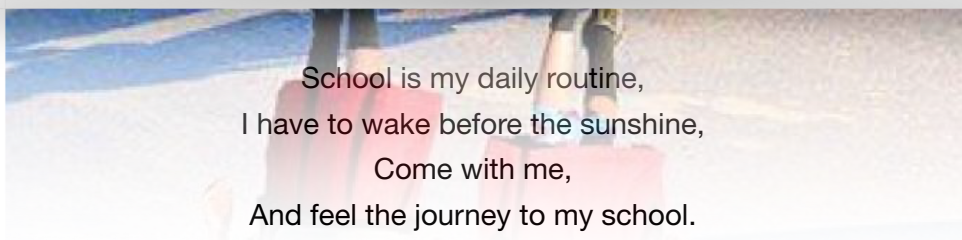
Art By Pooja Goswami



Art By Ruchi Jha



## My Walk to School Everyday



School is my daily routine,  
 I have to wake before the sunshine,  
 Come with me,  
 And feel the journey to my school.  
 Morning is quite cool.  
 Peace is near,  
 Greenery is everywhere.  
 Some of my school mates are getting ready,  
 Reaching school at 8 am is our priority.  
 My school is five minutes far.  
 It's easy for me to reach school,  
 Without the help of a bus or a car.

Mentee: Pooja Kaul