

TTM! CONNECT



***“Will you teach your children what we have taught our children? That the earth is our mother? What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth. The earth does not belong to man, man belongs to the earth.”
(Chief Seattle, Susquamish Chief.)***

As we embark on yet another journey around the sun, I wish you and your families a healthy and joyous New Year. May this year bring the fulfilment of all your hopes and dreams.

These are sombre times, times for reflection. Our planet has been crippled by environmental crises: devastating fires and winter storms, severe flooding and droughts, and the pollution of our water, our soil, and the very air we breathe. The bad news never stops, for many of these crises are driven by human greed.

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“When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that we cannot eat money.” (Native American saying)

As mentors, we all understand that our responsibility goes beyond teaching English; we strive to instil a strong value system in the hearts of all our mentees. Our planet is in crisis. We must, therefore, approach our mentees with greater urgency to convince them that their interest lies in helping create a community based on reverence for Mother Earth. Every school today is sensitising their students to environmental issues. Our bonds with our mentees give us a unique opportunity to reinforce their efforts. We must ignite in our mentees a passion for creating a safer, healthier planet.

As I look at the year we have left behind, I feel immense gratitude for everything you have done to nurture and protect the spirit of selfless giving and unity that define TTM!

Together, may we continue to plant the seeds of a better future.



~ Malavika Sharma

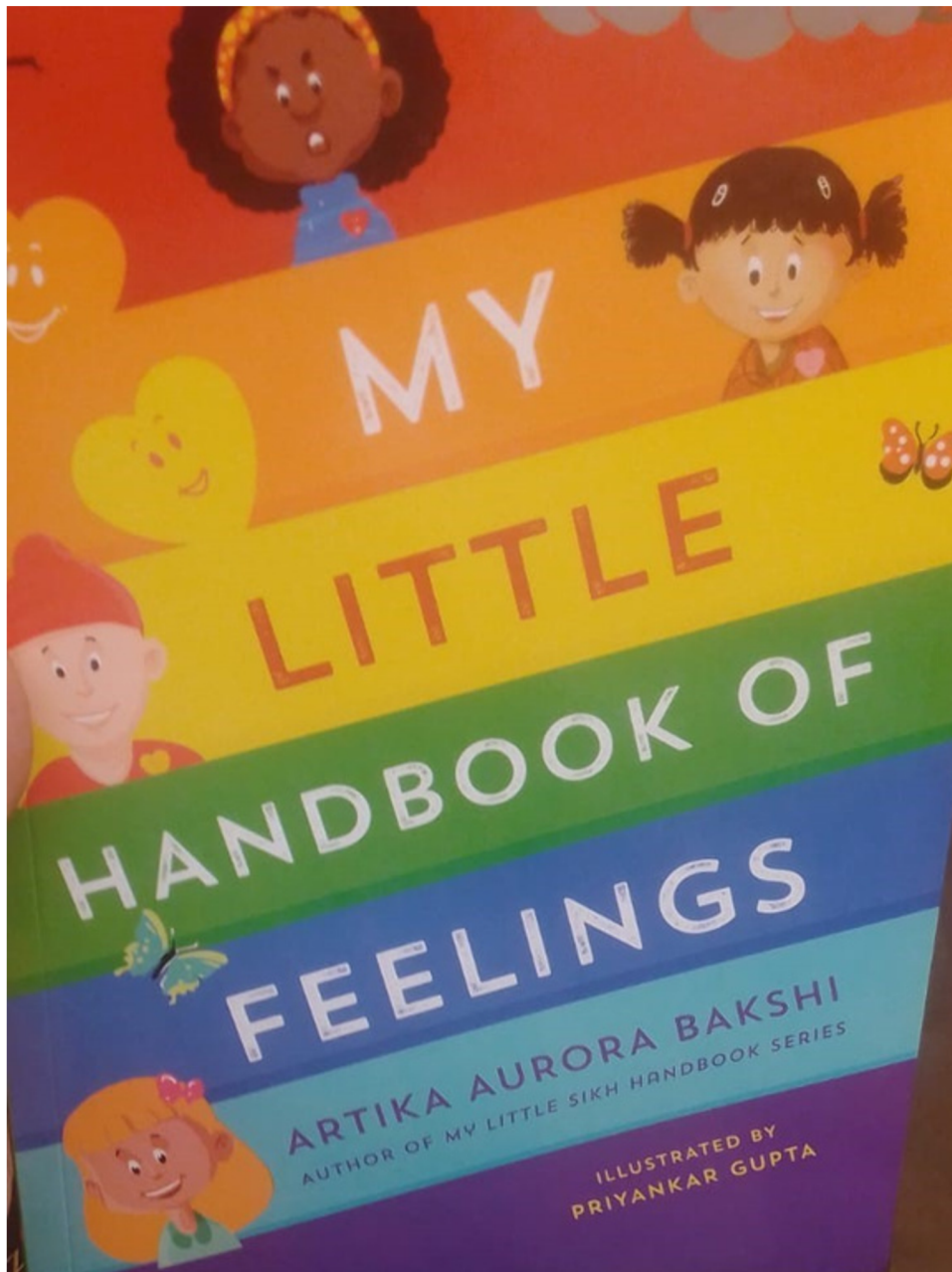
Congratulations !!!

Congratulations to
ANUSHREE
on the honour bestowed upon her
by being invited to address the **House of Lords**.



Congratulations !!!

Congratulations to
ARTIKA AURORA BAKSHI
on the release of her **latest book** for children.



Special session for Mentors held by Madhu Tandan

*“The interpretation of **Dreams** is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.” (Sigmund Freud)*

On the 9th of November 2024, TTM! organized a special session for mentors on “Dreams”. Introducing Madhu to the captive audience of TTM! mentors, Amita attributed the three A’s to her – Absolutely Awesomeness Amazingness! That tribute was not only for the subject she had chosen, but to our keynote speaker as well. In her early 20’s Madhu and her husband, Rajeev, moved from the comfort of their home in Delhi to an ashram in the remote Himalayas, in an area where they have chosen to build their beautiful home. A writer, a researcher, and a woman with the gift of interpreting dreams, Madhu’s first book, *Faith in Fire*, was published in 1997. Thereafter, Madhu wrote four more books, her latest publication being “*A Way Within*.” She has also presented papers at world renowned international forums and venues, and has received recognition for her literary work in Europe and North America.

Madhu's presentation was brought to life with dramatic visuals that added great depth to her presentation. It became clear that dream interpretation can be highly subjective; it requires a specific set of skills to bring meaning to dreams. Madhu has all the skills...and more! She is highly intuitive, given her intense meditative practices, perceptive, and has a deep understanding of human psychology. In addition, experience is the greatest teacher, because certain patterns keep repeating themselves.

Condensing four decades of experience in collecting and interpreting dreams, Madhu Tandan’s “*The Logic of Dreams*” is the perfect primer for those confounded by the multiplicity of our chaotic dream world, and simultaneously a ready handbook for those who wish to learn to interpret their own dreams.

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At first glance, dreams are strange, even bizarre. In them, kings can turn into cabbages and horses can sing! It's easy to dismiss them—as they routinely are—as meaningless hallucinations that arise when the rational intellect has been disarmed by sleep. And yet, human beings have forever puzzled over their meaning, and continue to do so, arguing that their strangeness is pointing to something other than what is depicted in them. Even a cursory analysis of our own dreams can reveal the truth of such a claim, that dreams aren't random images conjured by the erratic firing of the synapses in our brain. They seem to know our thoughts, often when we don't know them ourselves, and have answers to questions that vex us in our waking lives. Analysed carefully, they can show us our deepest desires and confront us with concerns that we've been trying our best to avoid. They may even know our bodies better than we think we do. And then of course there are the paranormal dreams, which, as the author shows, are not beyond rational interpretation; and lucid dreams, which prove that sleep isn't even a necessary condition for dreaming.

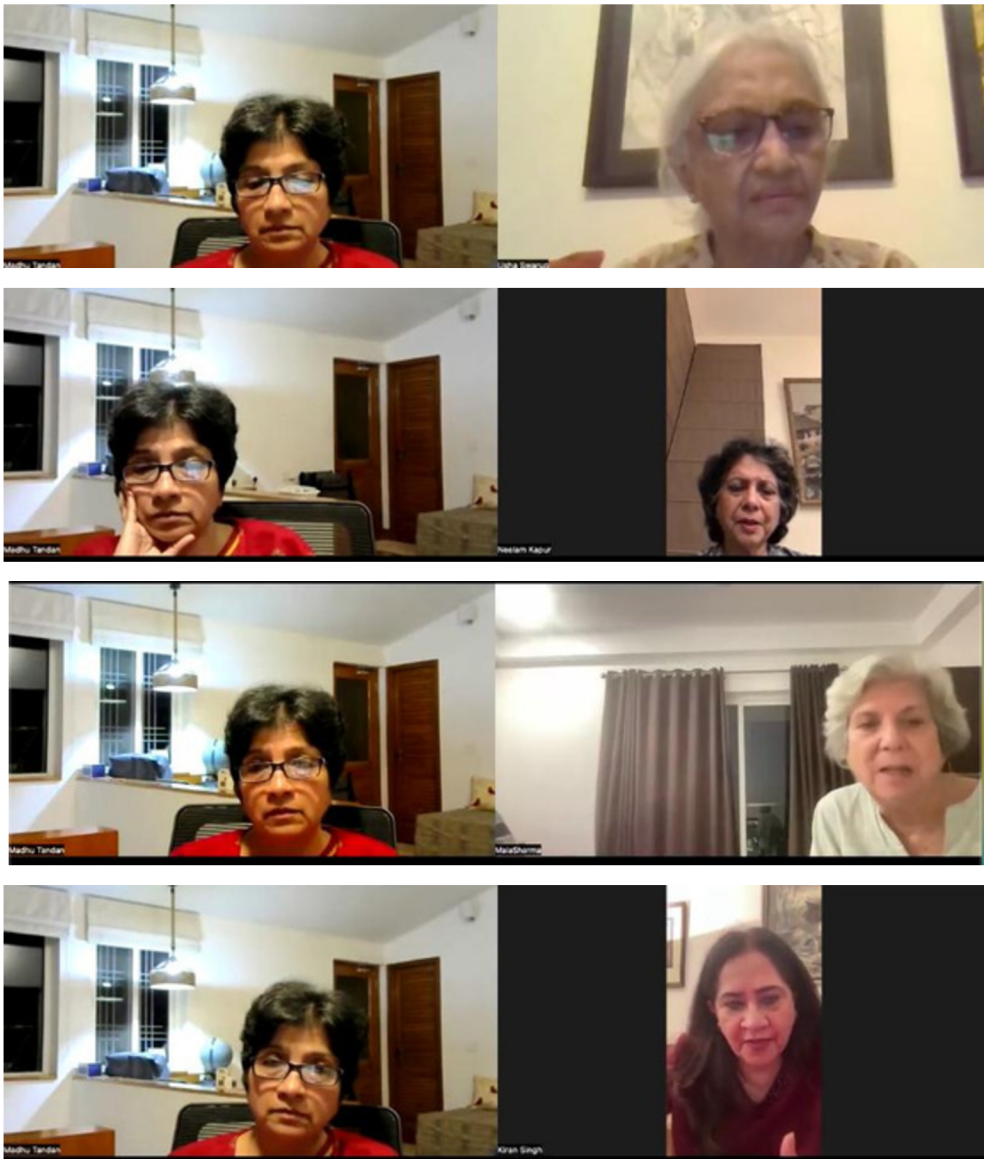
Following the presentation, there was a Question and Answer session. Though Madhu's talk was scheduled for one hour, it extended to almost two hours, the audience was transfixed, and the questions just kept coming. All in all, a fascinating and highly educative experience for all!

Here's what a few of our mentors had to share about the session:

"We all dream, but the way Madhu explained and analyzed it, made it very interesting. I had sent her my dream. She read it out. This was a recurring dream and was really bothering me. A miracle happened and since the day I shared my dream, it has not come back even once. It worked like therapy. Madhu gave us a new perspective to look at things. Sharing my experience healed me." - Usha Swarup

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“Absolutely fabulous. Madhu is amazing, and her understanding of the mind and interpretation of dreams is so intriguing. Amita, you set the bar very high....best anchor we could have. Mala, thank you for organizing the talk. It was terrific.” - Neelam Kapur



The Joy of Mentoring

TTM! for me has been a very humbling journey and an opportunity given to us to give back to society. It handholds and takes its members forward on a humbling journey of learning and expanding our horizons and along the way welcomes all who want to join.

During my recent visit to the US I had the good fortune to meet our US mentors in Miami and Princeton. It was lovely connecting with our fraternity of like-minded self-giving friends across the globe. The bond deepens and is so much more meaningful when you meet face to face. In Miami I spent a lovely evening with Geeta Kapur and Anu Wahi. In Princeton I spent the day with my school friend Rama who is now a very dedicated, passionate and committed mentor.

Grateful to the universe for giving me this opportunity to meet so many wonderful souls. It added tenfold to my holiday memory.



KAVLEEN RIKHY

Rama and Kavleen in Princeton

Mentorspeak

Udayan Care is an NGO that runs homes for children without parental care. My mentee, **Gungun**, used to live happily in one of their homes.

Gungun's name means 'humming' and she has the sweetest voice, so her name is really apt for her. She had never got an opportunity to learn singing. So, I suggested she enroll in a music class, IF permitted by Udayan.

Gungun was a vivacious and happy girl, who often laughed cheerfully in my class. One day, she did not call at the time scheduled for class. I was very concerned because she is normally very punctual and never misses a class.

The reason was something that I never imagined in my wildest dreams! For some "technical" reason, she and 3 other girls from Udayan were being moved from Udayan to another "home", leaving behind their friends and their loving care givers. To make matters worse, they were being shifted to Government run homes! They feared that this would not be as well run as Udayan.

Without knowing any of the details of the transfer, I tried to give her hope; but this little girl knew much better - that, Government run Homes are not good, nothing can be like her 'comforting Udayan' with her friends, friendly staff and 'didis'!!!

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Just a few weeks earlier, she was bubbling with excitement - describing the Diwali Party hosted by the founder of Udayan, at her farmhouse, with yummy junk-food and cultural shows specially planned for them! She was over the moon; all the children had been gifted new clothes and felt so loved and so protected! The world that was so secure, all came crashing down one day. In her own words:

“I was praying but God didn’t listen to me - I will not like the new Home - I KNOW IT - nothing can be better than my present Home Udayan!”

These four girls have now been moved to their new home. They are all desperately unhappy. To make matters worse, they are not allowed to continue with their TTM! classes and our mentors have been denied permission to contact them. We all miss them terribly and are very anxious about their well-being. It is a harsh world for homeless children, buffeted by winds that nobody seems to be able to control.

All our Udayan mentors are praying for them.



SWATI BAJAJ

I am grateful to TTM! and its wonderful founders for their courage and commitment to this noble cause and giving us the opportunity to reach out to the grassroots levels from the comfort of our homes.



PRIYA GOYAL

Conformity - why do we follow the crowd?

Conformity is the act of aligning your thoughts, your behaviours, your beliefs and your actions according to that of a group. We all practise it, whether knowingly or unknowingly.

But the question arises, why do we conform? A major reason is that we don't want to be left out or rejected. We all want to feel accepted, and if we act differently from the group, we might end up being judged or getting ridiculed. So as not to be isolated, we often do things that others are doing. For example, if someone tells a joke that you didn't find funny, you still laugh since others are laughing and you don't want to be left out.

This is basic human nature, we are social creatures and need emotional support and we tend to follow a group's norm just to get along with them. Also, we feel a sense of safety and security among a group. Many a times, we ask for guidance since we assume that the majority knows better than us.

But how does all this affect us? Conforming helps us get along with others, but at the same time, it makes us lose our individuality, something that makes us unique. It can cause us to make decisions we don't believe in and even stay quiet when we should speak up just because the group or majority thinks it is right. Instead of thinking on our own, we start assuming that if the majority is doing it, it must be correct.

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After all this, one more question that comes to mind is - 'Is there a solution to this?' Yes. The solution to conformity is balance. It's okay to go along with the group sometimes, but when we feel something is wrong, we must speak up. Embracing our own opinions while still respecting others is what makes us both unique and connected.

In conclusion, conformity is a natural trait of human beings, but it's also important to be aware of its effects. By staying true to ourselves and speaking up when needed, we can create a world where both individuality and group unity are equally valued.



VEDANT SINGH
Mensa Prayag Raj



Mentee Speak

It's 19 October. Many congratulations on your birthday ma'am!

Anyone would be lucky to be taught by you, as you are a phenomenal teacher who lays the essential foundations for any student willing to learn. May you have many more years of spreading your endless knowledge and wisdom. This birthday message comes deep from within my heart for everything that you do and all the wisdom you impart. I'm ever so grateful to have somebody like you who can educate me as wonderfully as you do. As you celebrate your birthday today, I just want you to know what a fabulous influence you have been on me and the impact you have made on me ma'am. I have learned more than I ever could've imagined with you as my teacher, and I'll always be grateful for everything that you've taught me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You have taught me so much & you have provided me with values and wisdom that I will carry with me throughout life. You truly go above and beyond what is expected of any teacher. I feel so honoured to be your student!!

(Addressed to her mentor Sangeeta Badlani)

KAJOL
Group C



Online classes vs Offline classes

Online classes offer unparalleled flexibility. Students can learn at their own pace, setting their schedules according to their convenience. This is particularly beneficial for working professionals or those with family commitments. Moreover, online platforms often provide access to a wealth of resources, including interactive simulations, video lectures, and online libraries.

However, online learning also presents challenges. It requires self-discipline and motivation, as the lack of physical structure can lead to procrastination. Technical issues, such as unstable internet connections, can disrupt the learning process. Additionally, the absence of face-to-face interaction can hinder social development and make it difficult to build rapport with instructors.

Offline classes, on the other hand, give a structured learning environment with a set schedule and physical presence. This fosters a sense of community and facilitates direct interaction with instructors and peers. Hands-on learning experiences, such as laboratory work or group projects, are often more effectively delivered in a traditional classroom setting.

Nevertheless, offline classes have their limitations. The rigid schedule can be inflexible for those with busy lives. Moreover, the quality of education can vary greatly depending on the instructor and the institution.

In my point of view, after watching all the advantages and disadvantages, I would like to choose offline classes. After all, offline classes may have limitations in terms of flexibility, but the overall learning experience and potential for personal and social growth within a structured environment make it a preferable choice for many students including me.

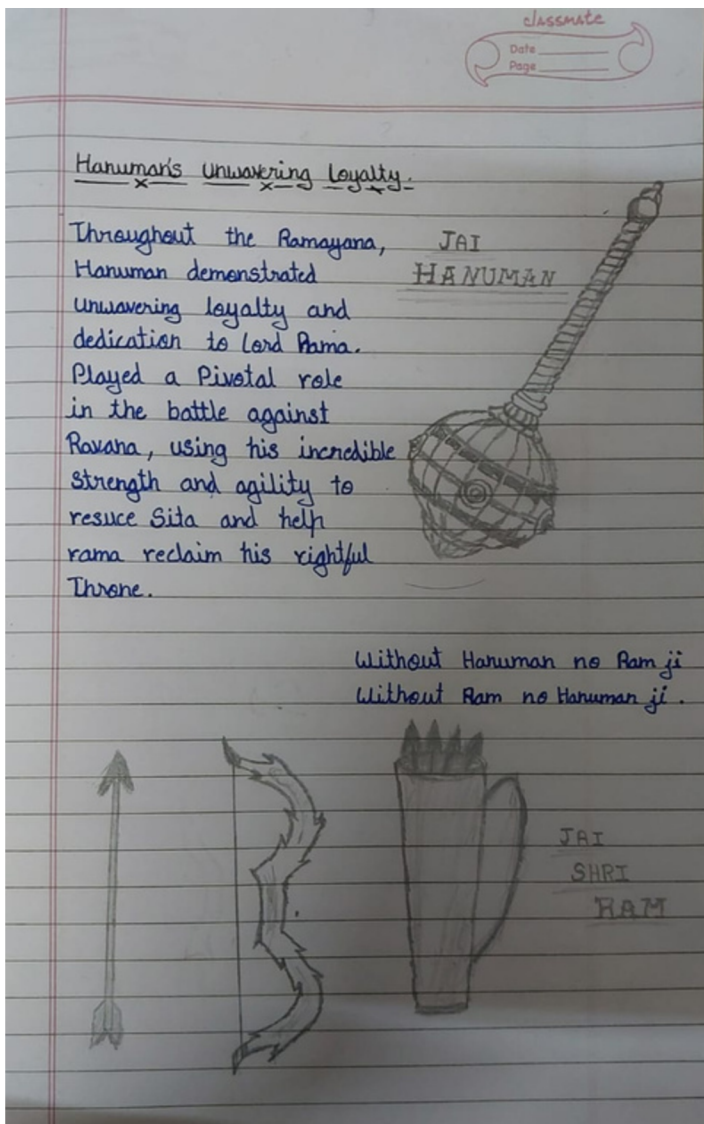
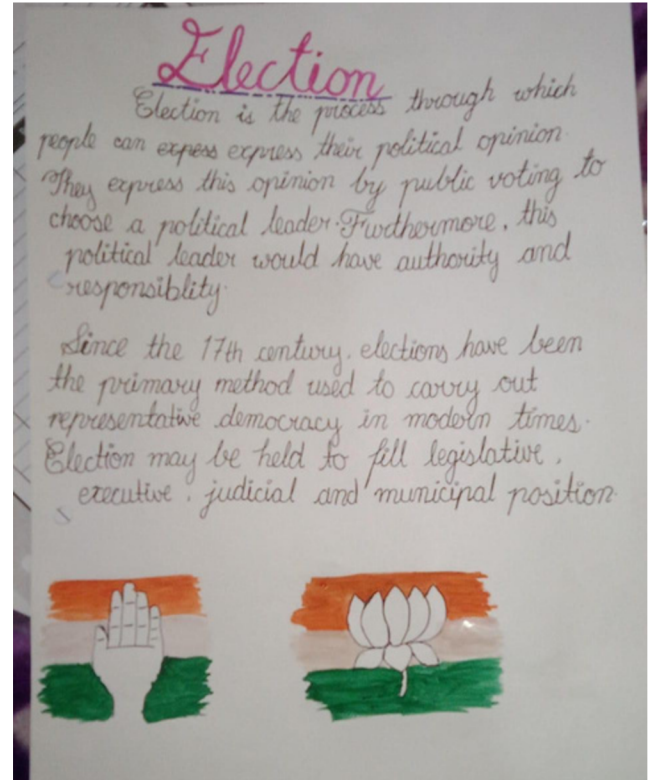


MOHD DANISH KHAN

Mensa Prayagraj

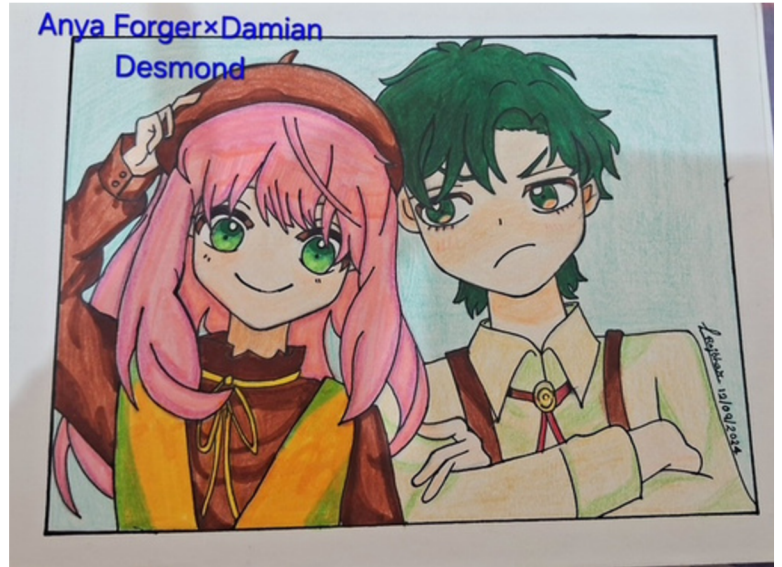
Creativity

KHUSHI SAHANI
Mensa Rishikesh



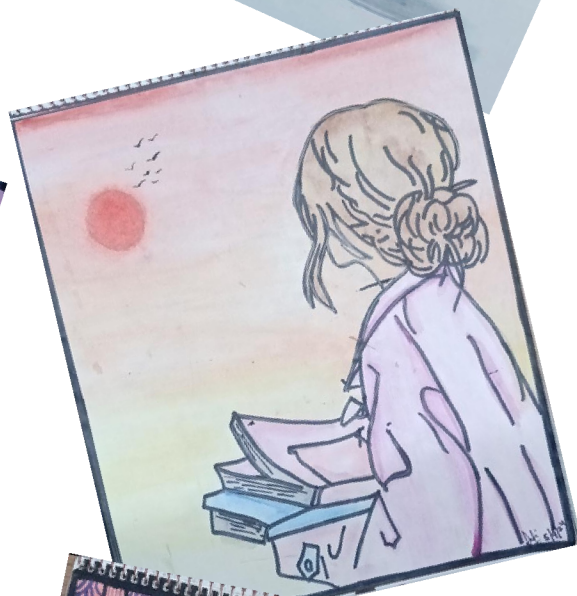
N S BHARGAV
Mensa Rishikesh

Both Anya and Desmond are part of the **SPYxFAMILY** Manga series. While **Anya** is the adopted daughter of Loid and Yor Forger, **Damian** is the second son of Donovan Desmond, and also Anya's classmate and rival. They both attend Eden Academy as first-year students in Cecile Hall, Class 3.



Doraemon is a fictional title character in the Japanese manga series of the same name created by Fujiko Fujio. Doraemon is a male robotic earless cat that travels back in time from the 22nd century to aid a preteen boy named **Nobita Nobi**, an elementary school student.

RUPALI RAJBHAR
Mensa Rishikesh



Chicken Soup - Muskan

This is a heartwarming story of a fearless, committed and compassionate young girl, Muskan. A class IX student, at Vidya School, Gurgaon

In November, 2024, Muskan participated in an inter school debate competition on domestic violence. She spoke with passion and conviction, unveiling the causes of the ugliness lurking in several homes in her neighbourhood. Her powerful words and presentation were captivating! She was deeply compassionate and sympathetic to the fate of victims who suffered in silence, lips sealed for fear of social stigma, societal norms, gender biases and alcoholism.

Amid admiration and applause, Muskan was awarded the second position in the competition. This spurred her determination to become part of the solution.

Muskan's work started in early 2024, when she became part of an international project, Design for Change, under the guidance of a school social worker. This gave her a platform to approach friends and families, including her own father, to 'listen' and to counsel. Her project, Speak to Heal, begun as solo work, and soon had three friends join her.

She spoke about her work before her school assembly. Her talk was entitled 'Speak to Heal'. Her speech is attached. Do read it! You will find it impressive and inspiring! She has complete documentation of her counselling work in her neighborhood. This has been submitted for evaluation and she will receive the results shortly. Muskan's words are wise beyond her years.

When we meet someone who might be a victim, let us offer support not judgment.



Good morning, respected principal ma'am, Uma ma'am, Geetanjali ma'am, teachers, and dear friends.

I Muskan, I Priyanka, I Sanskriti, I Muskan Punder, I Baby - all are the students of grade IX. Today, we stand before you to talk about our international project of DFC - Design for Change. We have all been working on this subject since the last 7 months. Our due date to submit the project is 5th December, 2024. We are working on a project i.e. an issue that often lurks in the shadows of our society—domestic violence. It is a problem that affects millions of people worldwide, crossing all boundaries of age, gender, race, and economic status.

Domestic violence is not just physical abuse. It is a cycle of control, fear, and harm that can manifest as emotional, verbal, financial, or even digital abuse. The victims often suffer in silence, trapped in a web of fear and helplessness. What's shocking is that this issue remains underreported because of the stigma and fear of judgment that surround it.

The impact of domestic violence is profound. It shatters families, affects children's mental health, and creates a ripple effect that influences entire communities. Children who grow up witnessing domestic violence may carry the trauma into their adult lives, growing the cycle further.

But why does this continue to happen? The roots of domestic violence lie in deep-seated societal norms and power imbalances. Gender inequality, cultural expectations, and lack of awareness contribute to its persistence.

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As young individuals, to bring the change we took some actions. So for this in the starting of the project our first step was spreading awareness and making the victims to speak up. We started this with an assembly which was done by us 7 months ago, and after that we did surveys in two different levels, then we created some groups of students of grade IX to do the circle time activity. Now we are looking forward to do this same circle time activity with the teachers soon.

If we ever come across someone who might be a victim, let us offer support, not judgment. Speak up if you witness abusive behavior, and encourage victims to seek help.

Remember, silence allows violence to thrive. But when we speak up, we shine a light on the darkness, breaking the cycle of abuse.

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Editorial team signing off

Everyday Joys

On my daily walk in our neighbourhood park, I look out for the pair of frisky Oriental magpie-robins bobbing their tails up and down. They flit from bough to branch, unafraid when I stop for a closer look. Not without reason are they called 'confiding birds.' If I linger, who knows, they might confide their secrets to me.

I look high up in the bare-branched trees and am sometimes rewarded by the sight of yellow-footed green pigeons fluffed up against the cold. The flock of screeching parakeets alight in their favourite trees and the rattle of the Rufous Treepie alerted me yesterday to the troop of monkeys lumbering along the park wall.

Start your days with observing the world around you: the droplets of water on the tips of leaves, the popcorn shape of clouds, the pale yellow star-shaped flowers emerging on the tomato plant you grew from seed.

The joys of the natural world are yours for the asking.

BRIDGET GANGULY

DEBIKA LAHIRI

RAJAT RAY



Oriental Magpie-Robin