

# TTM! CONNECT



TTM! is exercising its bragging rights!

We conducted a survey of all our mentees. And 98% agreed that TTM! was a caring organization that tries to help them. 93% said they can speak better English after joining TTM!

We have hit our goals spot on!

I am embarrassed to keep blowing our own trumpet. We have also just completed our mentor satisfaction survey. I must share some of these results with you too:

98 % agreed that they are very satisfied with their TTM! experience.

94% agreed that the TTM! structure makes for smooth functioning.

94 % said they have developed a good relationship with their mentee.

91 % agreed that their group head is able to resolve most issues they face.

My deepest gratitude to our extraordinarily committed, talented and cohesive family, led by our Core Group, that I can only call a blessing!

The challenge is to figure out where we go from these dizzy heights! We have never been content to rest on our laurels. Our constant endeavor is to keep evolving, and to get better, better and better.

Life is hard, and harsh for our mentees. Their reality is one of deprivation that can include poverty, neglect, discrimination or perhaps even abuse. And our hearts bleed. We want to do everything we possibly can to help. Often, we are helpless, because the socio-economic forces we are battling against, are just overwhelming. It is hard to accept that we have limits. But we do!!! So, we have to steel ourselves with the serenity prayer:



***“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can:  
And wisdom to know the difference.”***

The last line is critical. ‘The wisdom to know the difference.’

We now need to enter the next phase of our relationship with our mentees. We have to prepare them for the day when they spread their wings and fly, away from the protective embrace of their mentors. We have to prepare them to deal, independently, with the harsh realities of their lives. We cannot change their reality. But we can make them stronger, and empower them to deal with their circumstances more responsibly, with more confidence, and more acceptance.

So that is our next milestone. We will continue to work hard at improving the English skills of our mentees, skills that will allow them to deal with the world with confidence. But along with this, we will empower them with habits, values, and attitudes that they need, in order to succeed in their environment. Outside of our protective umbrella.

Let’s continue to evolve.

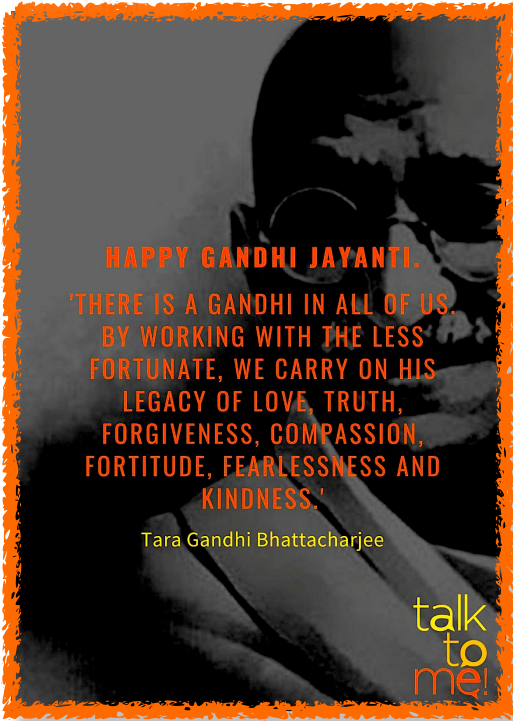
Let’s remain extraordinary!

**Malavika Sharma**

### ***A Special Message on Gandhi Jayanti***

When the 2nd of October comes along, we are reminded about the Father of our Nation, ***Mahatma Gandhi***. We read interesting articles and impactful quotes the great leader made during his lifetime. This year, a few of our creative students even came up with origami versions of the three monkeys that are synonymous with ***Gandhiji’s*** thinking of See No Evil, Speak No Evil, Hear No Evil.



I have had the privilege of meeting and interacting with **Gandhiji's** granddaughter, **Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee**, on quite a few occasions. When I first met this interesting octogenarian a couple of years ago, I was immediately drawn not only to her attractive persona, but to her grace, intellect and, above all, humility. I was also entranced by stories of her growing up years, personal anecdotes, and things close to her heart. Not only does Taraji trace her lineage to the Mahatma, but on her mother's side, her grandfather, **C. Rajagopalachari**, played an important role in the freedom struggle. Although she wears her personal success and ancestry lightly, I feel the French Government's recognition of **Taraji's** "remarkable work in promoting, peace, solidarity, culture, education and development through her commitment to perpetuating the memory and legacy of her grandfather, **Mahatma Gandhi**" says it all. So this year, as we marked **Mahatma Gandhi's** 151<sup>st</sup> birthday, I reached out to this amazing lady and asked her to give us a message for the TTM! family. The message she so spontaneously shared not only honors her grandfather, but is a reflection of this incredible lady's beautiful heart and spirit.

**Bridget Ganguly**

### Counseling Session

On Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> October, Debika Lahiri invited **Nivedita Singh**, a trained counselor and psychotherapist to conduct a webinar for TTM! mentors. **Nivedita** is the founder of **Co-create Change (COCH)**, an internationally recognized centre that works with children, adolescents and adults to maximize their potential, wellbeing and participation in their families, schools and communities.

The focus of the talk was to deal with three vital questions relative to youth:

- How to listen to your mentee and pick up signals in case they are troubled?
- How can you probe in a sensitive manner?
- When should you hand over to a professional?

Here are the key takeaways from the session:



1. Build a culture of accountability. The world demands it. If you allow your mentees to be irresponsible with timing or work commitments, you are not preparing them for the real world. Give them tough love.
2. Don't allow mentees to become dependent on you. Empower them to stand on their own feet.
3. Don't give them solutions to their problems; guide them to think through their problems.
4. Help them develop social skills.
5. NEVER BE JUDGMENTAL. BE APPRECIATIVE. Ask 'what', 'where', 'how'. Never 'why.'
6. Never undermine the role of their parents.
7. Hard as it may sound, you cannot solve every problem. Teach them how to cope.
8. Don't reinforce "victimhood."
9. Listen to, and address emotions, not just what they say. Look for non-verbal cues. It is ok to switch to video calls IF BOTH mentor and mentee are comfortable doing so.
10. There is a fine line between concern and probing.
11. Allow silence when necessary.

Any perceived threat to the mentee, particularly any mention of suicidal thoughts, MUST be escalated to the Group Head and leadership team immediately. Let us know if you suspect any mental health issues like depression, chronic anxiety etc. The TTM! team will guide you on how to deal with issues of confidentiality and trust.

As we can see from the feedback received, **Nivedita** not only kept her audience well engaged, but gave them lots to think about!

"It was very informative and helped me to understand my own daughter a bit better!!

It clearly advised us on what we can do and when to hand over to the professionals.

"I think it gave a lot of food for thought. I simply loved it. Very well explained and I look forward to another webinar with **Nivedita**."

"I was totally hooked. I took copious notes and am glad I did because there was so much to digest. And the inputs were helpful, not only for our interactions with our mentees, but also with our children, friends and everyone else around us."

"Very handy inputs for us to execute. I was completely engrossed and taking notes . It would be great if she could do a session with the mentees on parental pressures and the subject of cyber bullying. Thank you for organizing this enlightening workshop . Made me question my own parenting skills."



### Career Counseling

During the months of July / August, **Pooja Kapur** organized Career Counseling Webinars with iDream and **Etasha** for TTM! mentees from Classes 9-12. Over the next month, 36 TTM! mentees completed the assessment process. The career assessment tool is designed by psychologists to help people understand themselves better. It also enables the participants to know their strengths, weaknesses, aptitude, perception, passion, interests and ambitions that need to be taken into account while selecting a career. Mentors were invited to join the sessions as observers so that they would have the necessary tools to guide their mentees.



CAREER  
COUNSELLING

TTM! is very grateful to **iDream** and **Etasha** for providing us with this excellent service for our Mentees.

### CBSE English Syllabus Work

After completing the work on the Class IX English Syllabus we took on the work for Class X. We decided to expedite the work so that the mentees currently in Class X could use the material to prepare for their exams early next year. The work is well underway and should be completed by the end of this month.

The arduous task of writing up the summaries and answering all the questions in the lessons from the Class X readers was very ably done by **Amita, Ashima, Monica, Minakshi, Neelam, Shalini, Sarita, Rashmi, Neera and Ramaa**. The poetry lessons were done by **Rajni and me**. The huge work on vocabulary for most of the lessons was done by our inimitable Poonam. Poonam is also editing the answers as is Bridget, who has a fantastic turn-around time. The team is doing the final corrections and additions of the background material and videos. I am coordinating this exercise and also formatting, completing and correcting some of the answers.

So it is a huge team exercise, with everyone having pitched in despite ill-health and other restraints due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A heartfelt thanks to each stellar member of this team! Way to go, girls! **-Amrita Biswas – CBSE Team Leader**





**Stereotyping Webinar**

On Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, **Rasika Batra**, held a webinar on sensitizing mentees to being subconsciously biased by stereotypes. The focus was on our experiences that are shaped by what we believe about our world. This in turn is influenced deeply by socialization and what we see around us. If we know what shapes these ideas, we can decide for ourselves if they benefit or limit our society.

Although the webinar was primarily for mentees, some of our mentors also attended. In fact, attendance was much higher than expected. As one of our mentors commented, “My heart was bursting with pride. Our mentees were so engaged, so confident and incredibly well behaved. Kudos to our mentors and the Group Heads who work so lovingly to keep the system humming smoothly!” Given the feedback received, another session is in the pipeline.



**Institutional Feedback**



Truly TTM! has added value to the lives of our youth enlisted. We had a ZOOM meet last Sunday and I teared hearing the immense effort the SBT youth had put and all the encouragement given by the mentors to boost their confidence.

I thank you for initiating this program with us. Special thanks to **Ratna** who has been very diligent to ensure that mentors and mentees connect and willingness to sort out issues. Wish you and the TTM! team the very best.” **(Agnès Fernandes, Coordinator – Salaam Balaak Trust, Mumbai)**



Talk To Me! is one of the most useful programs that our Mensa scholars participate in. It gives them the one critical tool that most of these first generation learners lack-the ability to speak English with confidence. This is an invaluable lifelong asset.

Thank you for giving these deserving children this opportunity that has the power to change how they interact with the world and how the world interacts with them. It has done wonders for their self esteem too.”**(Kishore Asthana, President-Mensa Project Dhruv)**



Talk to Me! initiative is indeed a great platform provided to the young mentees to enhance their personality and improve their communication skills. It is boosting their confidence and bringing positive changes in their life.” **Ankita Thagela, Coordinator - BMS (AM)**



### Creative Writing Seminar

Is creative writing a joy?

It most certainly is! When a nascent idea springs up in the mind on seeing or experiencing something, and slowly begins to assume a form as words come together, and your imagination fleshes out characters, images, thoughts... the thrill of such creation is quite indescribable.

The stimulus could be a tiny algae cell or the wondrous expanse of the cosmos, a chance encounter, a memory, a news item... In the sessions with some of our young mentees, a photo of a little boy sparked off a string of stories about coping with loneliness and change, especially during the current pandemic. Cartoon images of animals in a forest elicited tales of elephants befriending school children on a field trip and helping rabbits in distress. Essays emerged on the advantages and disadvantages of animals kept in zoos.

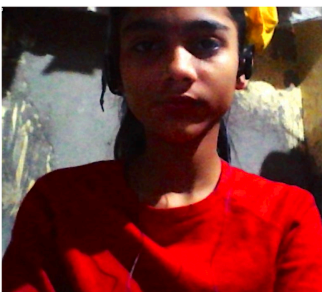


Is creative writing a pain?

Oh, definitely! Sometimes ideas remain elusive, refusing to be ensnared in words. And the process of revising and editing draft after draft is agonizing and tedious. Often, our mentees abandon writing when tasked to re-write and refine their work. Little do they realize there are hours of toiling over vocabulary, turns of phrase, organization of ideas, punctuation... inscribed in the polished perfection of the works of accomplished authors!

### Mentee Speak

I want to share my experience of Model United Nations (MUN) that was held by Bluebells School. It happened online and many schools had taken. There were many committees divided on the basis of their respective groups. This was my first time in MUN and I was little bit afraid about that because many of my doubts were not cleared. Since my mentor is in Canada, I called Neelam ma'am and asked for her help. She connected me with her grandson. He was very experienced and he cleared all of my doubts. The MUN was lasted two days and we had to present one position paper in which we had to put all our research. My both days went amazingly and I represented my country Uzbekistan. Finally, on the last day of MUN, the results were announced and astonishingly I was awarded for best position paper. It was a very heartwarming and valuable award for me. When I told my parents about this they were very happy and blessed me for the future achievements also. **(Rachna Thakur – Vidya School)**



talk  
to  
me!

TTM!

Some months back I got enrolled in TTM! classes. I got the most talented and all-rounder teacher. **Pascha** ma'am taught me many things - taught me how to speak in English, how to pronounce words, spelling, and many more things. But the important thing she taught me is to never give up no matter how much you are suffering from things. She always texted to remind me about TH sound words. It took me 3 to 4 months to improve but she gave her 100000% and never gave up on me. She is not only a teacher for me. She is my mentor, my friend, sometimes like my mom when she used to teach me from very initial point everything. Thank you so, so much ma'am. (**Gaurav Thakur – Mensa Scholar**)



TTM! Maths Classes have helped me a lot; because of this class only I met a wonderful teacher like **Charu** ma'am. My words can't express how much she has provided me with her intelligence. Here's an example how she helped me in getting good marks in my exams. I was really very nervous about my maths exam because I was unable to understand few concepts properly, and hence I asked **Charu** ma'am to arrange a doubt clearing session and she managed to arrange a class the same day. After that class I was very much confident about my exam. I scored very well, and for this would like to give credit to her because she really deserves it.

Thank you so much **Charu** ma'am for everything..and thank you TTM! for giving me such a great opportunity to learn from such an awesome teacher. (**Shruti Path – BRMS (PM)**)

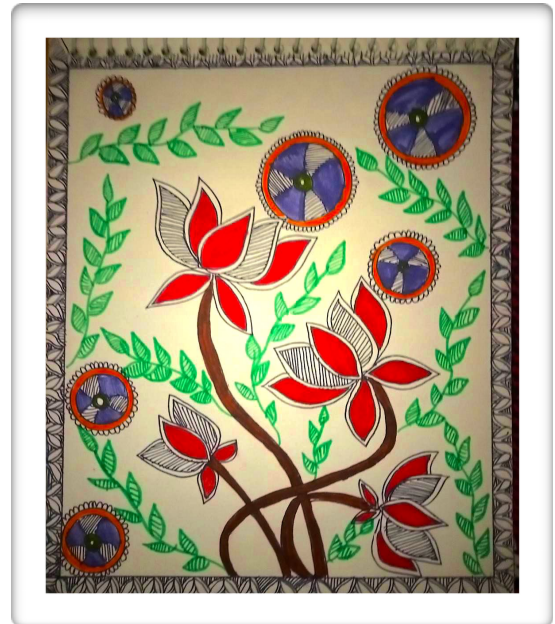
I would like to say that I am enjoying TTM classes. These classes are very helpful. I am improving my English with the help of these classes. My mentor **Anuradha** ma'am is very helpful and nice. I did a lot of lessons, grammar, Games and fun with her. She corrected me whenever I made a mistake, and helped me a lot. My substitute mentor Swati ma'am is wonderful. She helps me and corrects me whenever I make a mistake. And I would like to thank my both mentors for helping me and making the class interesting. (**Anjali Kharel – Mensa Scholar**)



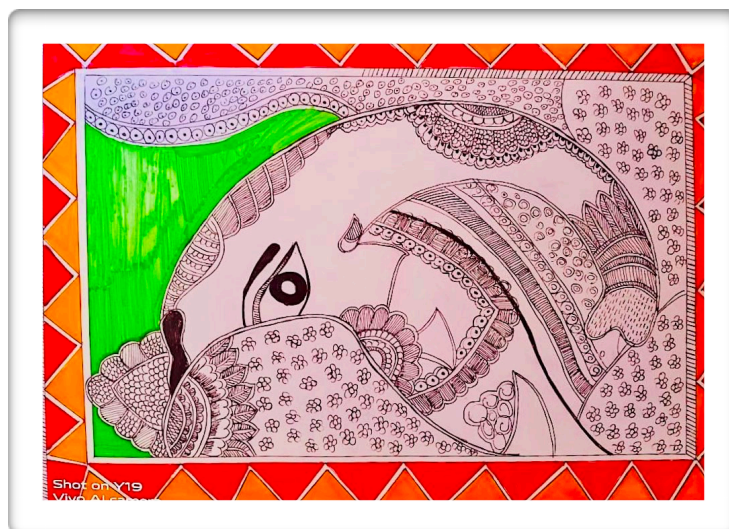




***Mentee Creativity***



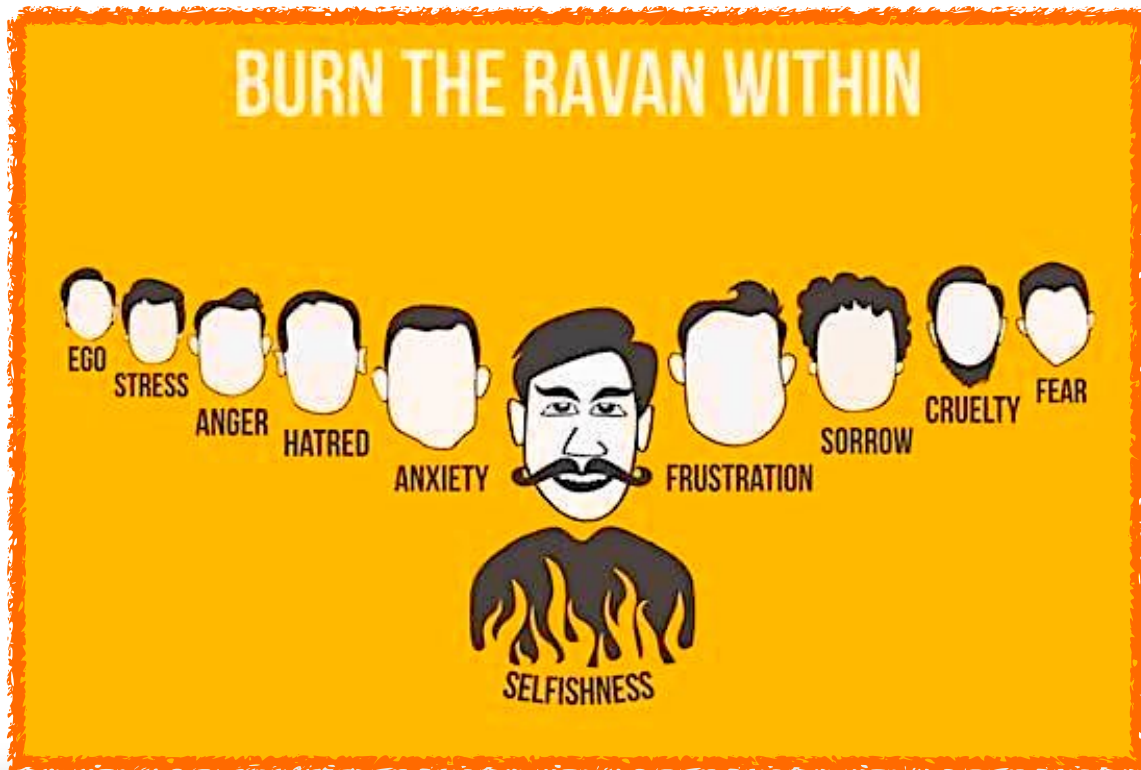
***Madhubani Paintings by Mentee Anjali Kharel***



***Madhubani Painting by Mentee Priya***



## Dussehra Celebrations



This year, Dussehra was celebrated across the country in a sombre and reflective manner. While most families did their pujas within their homes, the festival that marks the victory of good over evil, took on a unique and creative twist for some of our mentees.

To make the festival more meaningful for her family, one of our mentees, **Anjali Kumari of Manzil**, told her mentor how she engaged her family in an exercise in mindfulness. As we know, going through such a process not only requires humility, but also introspection.

This is what **Padma**, her mentor had to say:

"Owing to the pandemic my mentee and her family were home bound on Dusshera. She with her siblings came up with the idea of celebrating Dusshera at home in a unique way. They drew and painted Ravana on paper .. then each of the siblings wrote down their shortcomings (eg. their inability to share things, lying, etc.) and other negative thoughts on another piece of paper. They then burnt this sheet of paper with their shortcomings/ negative thoughts with the paper having Ravana's picture. I am touched by such a novel and simple way of celebrating the victory of good over evil."



*Ravana Made at Home by Mentee Asif*

Another, mentee thought of this innovative way of reaching out to his neighbor. This is what his mentor, **Debika**, had to say: “**Asif**, my mentee, helped his neighbour with her school project. He used the origami skills **Kalyani** taught him.”



## **TTM! Covid 19 Seminar**



*Frontline Covid19 Health workers in a PPE Suit*

Our efficient TTM! band, **Rajni, Usha and Madhur**, organized a Covid seminar for mentors and mentees on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October. What an amazing job they did! **Rajni** was MC and she did a really professional job of getting our mentees on and off the “stage” on time. We had over 50 attendees. The mentees were our superstars!!! They were supremely articulate and confident. They stuck to their theme and did an excellent job of explaining their experience with COVID, and gave really thoughtful advice on how to stay safe.

As some of our mentors observed after the seminar:

“Every time I interact with our mentees I am filled with awe...they all have so much potential. It is just so glorious to see them blossom and grow!!”

“Directly after the meeting I had a class and realized that all our SBT mentees are 'Corona Warriors'. When they go to the centers the girls come and hug them and want that physical reassurance. Our mentees cannot push them away, older ones understand but the younger ones and Special Children don't. Wearing PPE is not an option for them. At the home where **Sushila** works, the cases are increasing every day. How great is their risk!”

Certainly left us with lots to think about. How can we provide protection not only for ourselves, but for those mentees who are front line workers?



*"I will love the light  
For it shows me the way,  
Yet I will endure the darkness  
Because it shows me the stars"*

*- OG MANDINO*



*Wishing All  
A Very Happy Deepavali  
Let The Light Shine On For Ever!  
The TTM! Family*