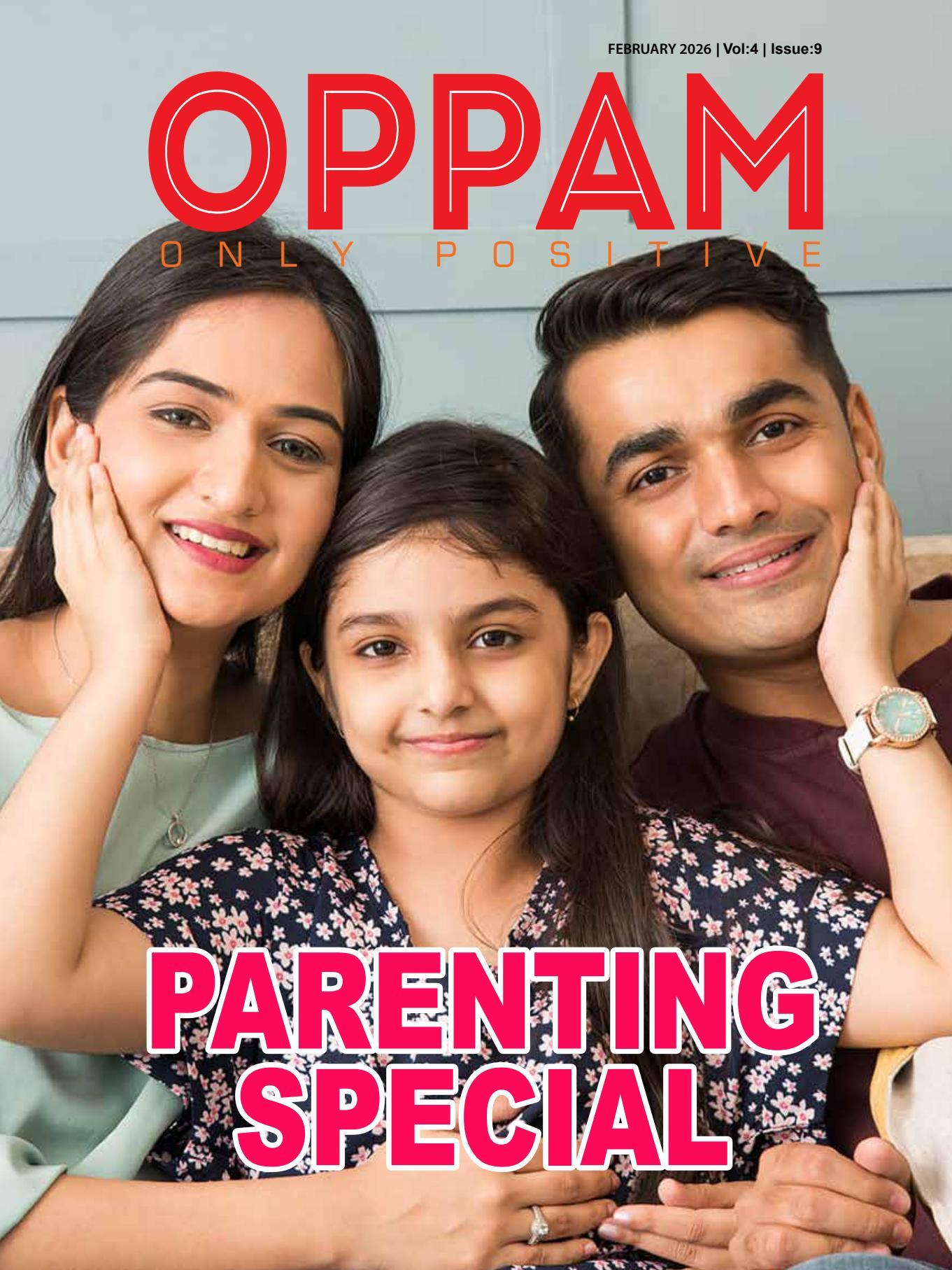


# OPPAM

ONLY POSITIVE



# PARENTING SPECIAL



# OPPAM

ONLY POSITIVE

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# Editorial

PROF ANTONY P JOSEPH  
Managing Director

# What happens when we decide...

Norman Vincent Peale, the author of inspirational books, describes an experience connected with a television show in one of his books. A very ordinary man had also participated in that program. He did not have much education and, naturally, did not hold a high-profile job. Yet he had one special quality: he was a happy person. He was someone whose face was filled with cheerfulness, who could tell innocent jokes that never hurt anyone. His conversation and his responses captured the entire attention of the TV show.

As the show was about to end, the director asked him a question:

“Why are you able to be so happy? What is the secret of this radiance of yours?”

“Oh, there is no great secret in that,” the old man replied. “It is as simple as the nose on your face. When I wake up in the morning, I can decide only two things: either today I will be happy, or I will be unhappy. Which one do you think I choose? I decide to be happy. That alone is the secret of my happiness,” the old man said.

It is not merely because circumstances are favorable or because everything happens as we desire that people in this world are happy. Rather, they are happy because they decide to be so. Norman Vincent Peale continues to write as follows: If you wish, you too can be happy. It is the easiest thing in the world to attain. Choose happiness. If you keep telling everyone that nothing is going right and that nothing is satisfactory, there is no doubt that you will remain unhappy. Therefore, tell yourself: everything is moving forward well. Life is good. I choose happiness.

At this moment, as we step into the second month of the new year, this should be one of the good decisions we make: today I will be happy. This is a decision. If we look at circumstances and people, we may not always be able to be happy. After all, human beings are social creatures. We often interact with people who are very different from us. Because of these differences, sometimes they may even spoil our happiness. They may not speak, behave or respond in the way we desire. This applies within the family as well. Often, a husband may not behave as his wife wishes or a wife as her husband wishes; children may not act as parents expect, nor parents as children expect. But for that reason, we should not destroy our own happiness.

Happiness is a decision. It is when we implement that decision that we become happy people. Imagine that before us lie withered flowers and fresh flowers; likewise, spoiled fruits and good fruits. Which will we choose? Good fruits and good flowers. The same applies to despair and happiness. Despair is like withered flowers and spoiled fruits. We never use withered flowers. Despair and sorrow are things that harm the body and the mind. Happiness, on the other hand, benefits our health and protects life from wounds and injuries.

Therefore, decide: today I will be happy. Every day when we wake up, let us say to ourselves: even if others treat me badly, accuse me without reason, misunderstand me or even if nothing happens the way I wish, I will still choose to be happy today. Make this a habit. Look into the mirror and repeat this every day. In the midst of negative experiences, this will help us remain happy. If we decide to be happy, happiness will surely come.

Life is very short. In that brief span, why unnecessary sadness, grief and despair? Therefore, let us be happy today. May this happiness remain firmly rooted in our lives.

With happiness...

Regards  
Prof Antoney P Joseph

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, is smiling and pointing her right index finger towards the text. She is set against a solid yellow background.

# Becoming more attractive through small things

Some people whom we meet or know tend to attract us more. Their behavior, appearance, manner of speaking or the philosophy of life they follow often plays a major role in this. However, no matter how attractively some people speak, it does not necessarily mean that we will be impressed by them-because we already know what they are like and who they really are. If we make certain personal efforts, we can become more attractive in the eyes of others. What should be done for this?

The first and foremost thing is to pay attention to health matters. People tend to feel attracted to someone who takes care of their body and health with respect-someone who follows a proper diet, avoids anything harmful to the body and moves forward with regular exercise.

Likewise, one should use one's income in a controlled manner. For some people, expenses exceed income. As a result, they borrow money from others for their needs. There are people who spend their entire monthly salary within a few days and then start asking for money from the very next day. On seeing such people, others tend to avoid them. Maintaining honesty in financial matters and avoiding unnecessary expenses is important.

There are also people who speak pleasantly to outsiders and show readiness to help in every situation, but display a completely different nature within the family. They may neglect their parents, behave inappropriately toward their life partner, and fail to fulfill their responsibilities. Society may sometimes interact and speak well with such people, but deep inside, society evaluates them only with contempt and







ridicule. This is because a person who does not do justice to their own family will always be looked down upon-will be unattractive. A person who takes good care of the family will be respected and honored in society.

Another important thing is to maintain integrity toward the people we associate with and the matters we are involved in. Love should exist in actions, not merely be expressed through words. Without judging by face-whether someone is great or small, high or low- give every person the place and consideration they deserve.

Some people interact with others only by looking at their position and status: utter contempt toward those below them and blind obedience toward those above them. Understand that

this is merely a way of serving one's own interests. Try to interact with others by abandoning the 'T' attitude. There are people who think they are something special- everyone else is beneath them, everyone must obey them and everyone must do as they say. Such people are never attractive.

One should be ready to listen to what others say. Be open to the thought that there may be value not only in what I say, but also in what they say. No one will abandon people who are willing to love.

All these are some of the reasons why others may feel attracted to us. What is needed is to move life, words and actions together.

When words and actions are torn away from life, be careful not to become hollow.

# Making each day productive

When we wake up from sleep, the thoughts that first enter our mind often influence the entire day. If we wake up with positive thoughts, the whole day becomes a pleasant experience for us. We feel satisfaction and a sense of productivity. But sometimes we may wake up feeling very discouraged. Suppressed thoughts like "Oh, what a boring life" or "what a boring day" may dominate us. In short, the first thought of the day has complete control over

that day. Thoughts such as "life is being wasted" or "life is meaningless" can also drain our day of enthusiasm.

Therefore, a certain amount of self-reflection is necessary right in the morning. Life gains meaning only when the day has a purpose. Try to begin each day with a sense of purpose. Decide at the very beginning: today I will do these things; I will complete this much work. Those who do not use the day productively may not achieve anything at all.



Review what you did in a day until yesterday. How many hours were spent on useless activities? Unnecessary phone calls, uncontrolled use of social media, momentary pleasures, fruitless discussions- very often we waste the good hours of the day on all these. It is only when the hours of the day are used for productive purposes that the day and life begin to feel meaningful.

We also need to think about the results of our actions. In a single day we may do many things. But do we experience mental happiness and satisfaction from all of them? Or are they limited merely to fulfilling duties? Anything done without inner joy will only become tiring.

You have awareness and confidence about your own abilities. Yet you do nothing on your own to bring them into action. You keep postponing things by saying "I'll do it tomorrow." There too, life begins to feel burdensome. When

we are unable to live according to our own preferences, and when we keep doing things merely to please others, we remain very far from real life.

It is only when we live our life in its fullness, along with its limitations and wounds that we feel truly alive. Life gains meaning and depth only when it is lived properly.

Life is not a mere feeling; it is a reality. Even if there is life because we breathe or perform bodily functions, there may not necessarily be 'living'. Mere existence does not mean life has reached its fullness.

It is hopes and dreams about tomorrow that give meaning to our life and our days. Even if, for certain reasons, a day feels dull or lifeless, do not allow that to make life continuously monotonous. For that, approach life with order and discipline. Each day is sufficient with its own troubles-but it must also have its own dreams.



# When parents' mobile phone use affects children



It is impossible for us to imagine a life without mobile phones. Everything is mobile-centric. That is why everyone carries a mobile phone, regardless of age. Newborn babies grow up seeing mobile phones. In this context, it is natural that they develop closeness to mobiles and even addiction. What they see is that their parents spend most hours of the day on their phones. Many parents are not aware of the mental and cognitive changes that this can cause in children. Let us look at how excessive mobile phone use by parents negatively affects children.

### **Reduction in speech or delay in speaking**

Today, people mostly talk to those who are far away through mobile phones. Children learn language through direct listening and response. They learn words and language through interaction with others. But many parents do not have time to talk to their children. As a result, children do not grasp words or language properly. Not only is their speech delayed, but when they do speak, their use of words is very limited.

### **Decrease in interaction and exchange**

When a baby makes a sound, the mother or father usually responds to it. When parents talk, the baby responds in return. This is a continuous flow. But with the arrival of mobile phones, this flow is interrupted.

### **Reduced eye contact**

Through interaction, a baby learns many other things as well-facial expressions, lip movements and more. Today, many parents look at their mobile phones more than they look at their children. Because of constantly looking

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**Children who grow up seeing their parents constantly holding mobile phones will first try to grab the phone themselves. To put children to sleep or to feed them, many mothers place a mobile phone in their hands.**

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at the phone, eye contact decreases. Eye-to-eye connection is crucial for language development.

### **Mobile influence extends to children as well**

Children who grow up seeing their parents constantly holding mobile phones will first try to grab the phone themselves. To put children to sleep or to feed them, many mothers place a mobile phone in their hands. By using mobiles from a very young age to listen to songs or watch visuals, children too fall into its circle of attraction.

Primarily, excessive mobile use causes delays in children's speech and slows down their language development. What should parents do to protect children from this problem?

- Keep the mobile aside and spend more time with children
- Increase phone-free conversations
- Respond to the child's sounds and words
- Offer direct book reading, songs and games to children

Before approaching doctors with complaints such as "my child is not talking" or "pronunciation is not proper," parents must first gain clarity about how much they talk to their children and how much time they actually spend with them.

A photograph of a man from the waist up. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark blue jeans. He has dark hair and is looking directly at the camera. His hands are raised to his face, with his fingers covering his eyes. The background is a plain, light color.

Is being an  
introvert  
a fault?

“Oh, he is an introvert.”

This is often how we speak about certain people. Even within that remark lies the suggestion that being an introvert is a deficiency or a mistake. People who have no connection with the wider society, who mind only their own affairs, who live withdrawn and closed in- this is how introverts are often perceived. Not harmful, perhaps, but also not particularly useful. This is the kind of definition we commonly assign to introverts.

Those who are more attached to home and who rely heavily on home for rest and reflection often fall under this definition. Added to this are people who like to be alone, who spend most of their time by themselves, who speak very little, and who stay away from crowds- all of them are labeled as introverts. There is a widespread belief that being an introvert is a flaw. However, what needs to be understood here is that introversion is neither a flaw nor a mistake and that introversion is not weakness.

Many world-famous leaders were introverts- for example, Mahatma

Gandhi and Abraham Lincoln. In the Indian context, statistics suggest that nearly fifty percent of India's population are introverts. Introverts possess many strengths beyond their perceived shortcomings. They are often rich in creativity. Writers, painters and scholars are mostly introverts. Most introverts prefer listening more and speak only after thinking carefully.

Another notable quality is the honesty and transparency they maintain in relationships. They may not have a large number of friendships, but in the friendships they do have, they are sincere and deeply committed. They also prefer to do things without excessively depending on others.

Whether introversion becomes something positive or negative depends on how you view and evaluate that state. If you are someone who feels happiness and satisfaction in being an introvert, then it becomes a shining ornament in your life. On the other hand, if you believe that introversion is the worst possible condition in the world, then it will become a source of humiliation for you.



# Pay more attention to children

A child who insists on being picked up by a working mother. Another child who quarrels to sit on the lap of a father busy working on

a laptop. Often, amid their work pressure, parents may feel that they are not obliged to give in to such demands. However, there is one important thing







to understand here: these reactions of children are part of their desire to seek more attention from their parents. Similarly, there are children who frequently call their parents at the office to ask when they will return. Here too, what they are saying- without saying it in words- is: 'pay attention to me, notice me, I need your presence more'.

Haven't you seen slightly older children who cry very easily? Even a small disappointment or dislike comes out of them as tears. This is a sign of their inner emotional emptiness. Some children invite their parents to play with them. From this, it is clear that they need the closeness and presence of their parents very much. Even when friends or other family members are around, some children prefer to be with their mother or father. This indicates their desire to stay emotionally connected to their parents.

A child who was once very active may suddenly withdraw into silence, or become sad and quiet. Experts say that this too happens due to a lack of parental attention. Children sometimes do things even after being told not to, fully knowing they may be scolded or punished.

There is a psychology behind this as well: an attempt to gain the parents' attention, even if it comes through scolding. Some children sleep very late. Some insist that either the father or the mother must sleep with them. This too is part of seeking emotional security.

One common complaint all parents share is children's addiction to mobile phones and television. Excessive immersion in these happens because children do not receive enough parental presence, closeness, care and attention. Parents who spend time with their

children or play with them will never see their children become addicted to games or mobile phones.

There are loving parents who buy expensive toys or anything their children ask for. But they never spend time with their children. They do not hold them close, hug them or give them kisses. Children who grow up without experiencing emotional security are the ones who, at a very young age, fall into drug abuse or unhealthy relationships.

For children who grow up experiencing their parents' love and touch from early childhood, mobile phones and television are never more important than their parents. They may use mobiles and TV, but even if they do, they will never get trapped in addiction to mobiles, TV or immature emotional relationships- this is certain.

The love and affection that children fail to receive from their parents in early childhood are what they go searching for in others when they reach adolescence. Therefore, if children go astray somewhere along the way, one reason behind it is that they grew up without receiving enough love or attention in their early years. When children are small enough to be lifted, lift them and cuddle them. When they grow too big to be carried, hug them and touch them affectionately. What refuge can give our children greater security than the loving touch of their parents?

By understanding these signs mentioned above and by giving children what they truly need, try to become better parents.

# Understanding children

“I just can’t understand him at all”- this was a father’s reaction about his adolescent son. When a teenage daughter left home without informing her family to live with a friend, a mother said this:

“She had the freedom to say anything at home. Even then, why didn’t she tell us about this?”

Many parents today feel that they are unable to understand their children at all. It is unclear whether the problem is that children have grown beyond the point of being understood or that parents have failed to grow along with their children.

The easiest way to understand children is to spend time with them. It



is only when parents spend time with their children and listen to them that they can understand who they are and what is going on in their minds. Observing children quietly, without their knowledge, can also help parents understand their journeys and moods.

Parents, across generations, have always tried to correct children through advice. But for children, advice is often the most unbearable thing. More effective than advice- and something that truly influences children- are good role models. Even when parents live exemplary lives before their children, it does not guarantee that children will always

turn out well, because many factors and circumstances around them can lead them astray. However, even if they do go astray, it is the parents' life examples that give them the courage to return.

Avoid placing too many restrictions in front of children by constantly saying "don't do this, don't do that." Warnings can be given, but it is also good for children to experience small failures and mistakes. Instead of discouraging them by saying mistakes should never happen, allowing a minor misstep in their life helps children learn how to recover from it. That is the benefit.

Never treat children as insignifi-



cant. Do not speak in ways that hurt their self-respect. Many parents show little tolerance toward their children's mistakes and they also tend to explode in anger quickly. Neither is a healthy approach. Because of parents' anger, some children develop a tendency to hide many things from them.

Parents always want to see their children succeed. From their perspective, that is their right. However, children must also be taught that failure exists alongside success. Only then will they not collapse completely in the face of failure. Parents should focus on shaping a personality in their children that balances both success and failure. If we

observe closely, we can see that many people who end their lives due to failures- from exam failures to failures in career and family life- never received training at home on how to face failure.

Many children lie as part of their attempt to please their parents. Some lie about low marks or exam failure, thinking it would hurt their parents too much to hear the truth. Pleasing parents is not the child's responsibility; rather, living honestly and transparently before parents is. This is another lesson that must be taught to children. Children who live without honesty and transparency become a source of deep pain for their parents.



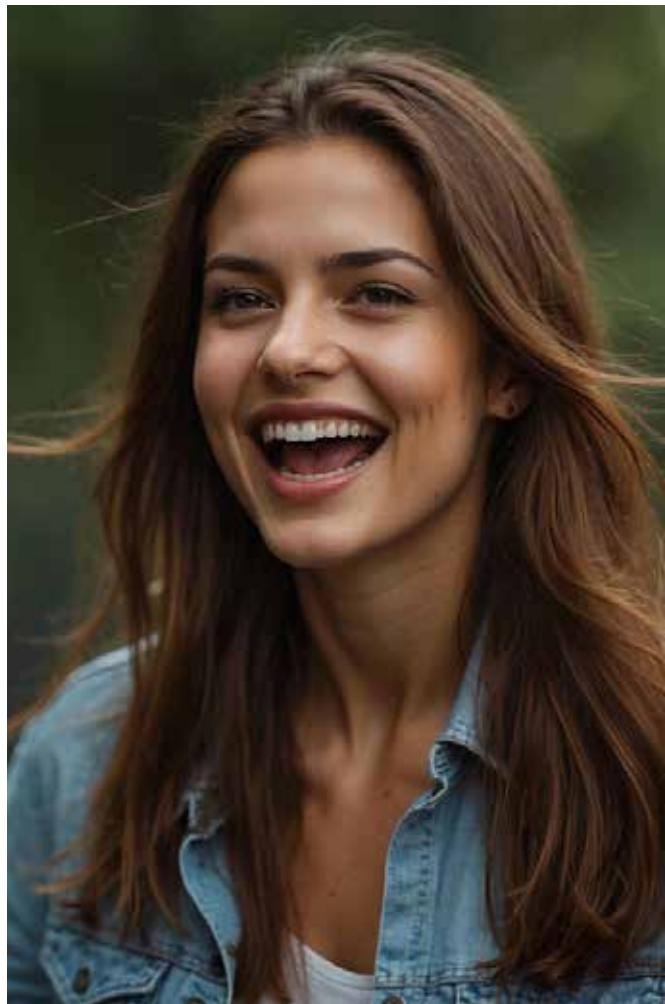
# A smile is not just a smile

Most people are those who have forgotten how to smile. Yet everywhere, people are those who long to smile. Every smile is the beginning of a relationship that can grow into warmth. Many loves and friendships begin from a smile that may seem trivial. Not only personally, but also in terms of health, smiling is highly beneficial. Experts say that any kind of smile, regardless of its form, is helpful for health.

Smiling helps reduce stress hormones such as cortisol, and increases immune cells and antibodies that fight infections. It strengthens immunity and protects us from illnesses. It also boosts the production of calming neurochemicals like dopamine and serotonin. Smiling helps reduce symptoms of depression and helps form a more positive outlook toward life.

Smiling improves the functioning of blood vessels and increases blood circulation, thereby helping reduce the risk of heart disease. It stimulates the release of endorphins- chemicals in the body that not only elevate mood but also act as natural painkillers.

When we laugh heartily, the diaphragm and lungs become active. The abdominal muscles and shoulders are engaged and the heart rate increases. Through smiling, concentration can be improved and memory strengthened. Reducing abdominal fat, easing eye



strain and helping tear production are also benefits that can be gained through smiling.

Now you can see why it is said that a smile is medicine. So do not waste the opportunities you get to smile. Smile.

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