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OPPAM

O N L Y P O S I T I V E



**Rewrite
Yourself...**



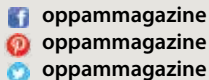
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Editorial

PROF ANTONY P JOSEPH
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A Glimmer in The Darkness

They were a poor couple. But they possessed an extraordinary curiosity about science and a remarkable willingness to experiment- far beyond what ordinary couples might have had. They had dedicated their time, their wealth and even their very lives to scientific achievements. They were even willing to do manual labour to raise money for their scientific experiments. Even the money they earned in this way was spent on building a laboratory and purchasing raw materials for their experiments.

Once, after conducting an experiment that ended in complete failure, they went to bed in disappointment. The reason was that all the liquid had evaporated. They could not find an answer to the question of what they should do next. After thinking about many things, they eventually fell asleep.

They awoke on seeing an unusual light in the laboratory. Their first fear was that the laboratory had caught fire. But the very next moment, they realized that the laboratory was not burning; rather, the liquid that had evaporated had begun to glow on its own in the surrounding darkness. For them, this was the success of their experiments. Everyone must know that this is the story of Marie Curie and Pierre Curie and their discovery of radium.

Some darkness is necessary to fill life with light.

For it is only when there is darkness that we become aware of light entering our lives. It is only in darkness that light exists- or, rather, only in darkness can we recognize the presence of light. It is true that there is not always light in our lives, even though light is what we desire. Every one of us has either gone through or is going through, different kinds of darkness in life. At such times, we tend to believe that light will never enter our lives again. Most people remain weighed down and anxious under the burden of such thoughts.

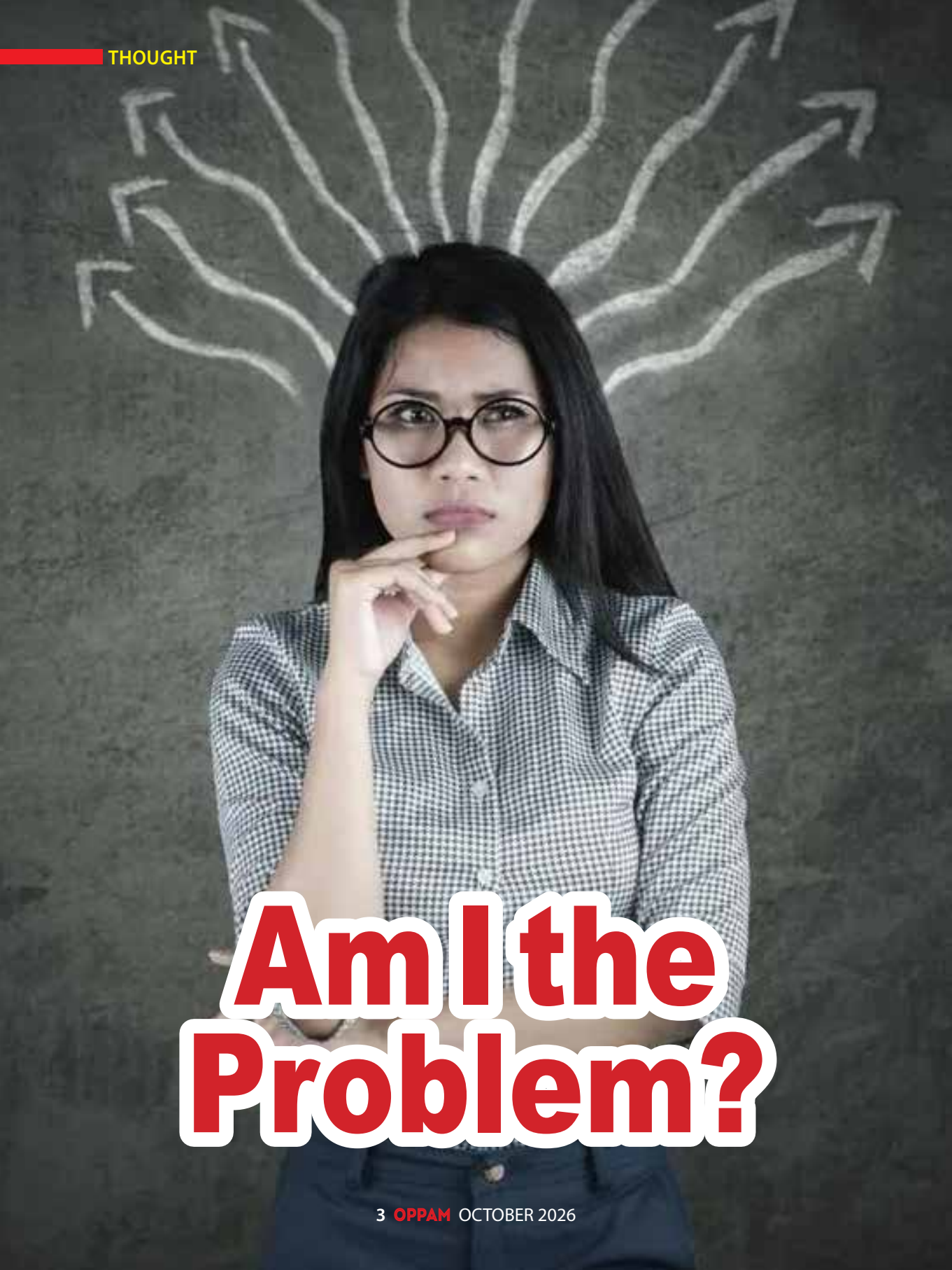
This experience of the Curies is often cited to share and inspire the idea that one should not withdraw in despair, but should keep trying again and again. That is certainly true in itself. Yet, beyond that, this incident also teaches us that light can enter through darkness and that it is in darkness that we are able to see the light.

Therefore, it is not enough merely to light a lamp so that we do not curse the darkness; we must also wait for the light that may unexpectedly appear even in the midst of darkness. Often, our lives are full of wonders. Many times, it is from the very point at which we think everything has come to an end that we begin our lives anew.

We have also heard the story of a king who, driven into a cave for the sake of saving his life because of the impact of his defeats and his fear of his enemies, regained new energy after seeing a spider weaving its web. He returned to the battlefield and fought with greater strength than before.

Light does not need much space to enter- especially when darkness has enveloped everything. Therefore, let us wait for the light, without cursing the darkness, with the hope that there will be light even in the deepest darkness.

Regards
Prof Antony P Joseph



Am I the Problem?

Narcissistic abuse is a pattern of behaviour in a relationship in which one person repeatedly uses control, humiliation, blame and psychological manipulation in ways that damage another person's self-confidence, sense of independence and peace of mind. It can occur not only in romantic relationships, but also between parents and children, among friends, in the workplace, in marriages and in many other situations.

However, one thing needs to be understood. 'Narcissist' is not a mental-health term that should be used casually. Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) is a clinical condition that can be diagnosed only by a qualified mental-health professional. In other words, simply because someone behaves selfishly, is arrogant or behaves badly does not mean that the person has NPD.

In narcissistic abuse, what is often seen at first is an excessive amount of love and attention. The person may make us feel that we are someone very special to them. They may constantly praise us and quickly move towards developing a close relationship. This is known as love bombing.

Later, the nature of the relationship may change. Love and praise may decrease, while control and blame increase. When someone repeatedly hears statements such as, "You are always wrong," "You don't understand anything," or "You are the reason for every problem," they may gradually begin to doubt their own abilities and decisions.

Overtime, they may lose confidence in their own opinions and become dependent on the other person's approval.

Another pattern that can occur

here is gaslighting. Denying things that actually happened, claiming later that something was never said and making another person question their own memory and experience are examples of this. When someone repeatedly hears responses such as, "That never happened," or "You are just imagining things," the person on the receiving end may eventually find it difficult even to trust their own memories and feelings.

Another aspect of narcissistic abuse is deliberately ignoring a problem or refusing to communicate instead of discussing it in a healthy manner. Similarly, giving someone an excessive amount of affection at one moment and then suddenly becoming cold and distant can leave the other person confused.

Establishing boundaries can also become difficult in such relationships. When a person asks for freedom regarding their time, money, friendships or personal decisions, the other person may respond by creating feelings of guilt, becoming angry, or making threats. In some situations, there may also be attempts to isolate the person from friends and family.

Repeated experiences of this kind can affect a person's self-esteem. Questions such as "Am I the problem?" "Am I not a good enough person?" and "Can I make decisions on my own?" may begin to arise. Some people may even start hiding their own feelings because they fear that whatever they say will once again be used against them or lead to further blame.

However, not every complicated or unhealthy relationship can be described as narcissistic abuse. Differences of opinion, marital arguments, anger, selfishness and poor communi-



cation do not automatically constitute narcissistic abuse. What is important to examine is not whether a particular person has a diagnosis, but the repeated pattern of behaviour within the relationship.

A person living in such circumstances should first take their own experiences seriously. Talking to a trusted friend or family member can be helpful. Keeping a record of incidents can sometimes also help bring greater clarity to what is happening. If financial control, threats or physical violence are involved, safety must be given priority.

Whether to leave the relationship or continue it depends on each individual's circumstances. It is their personal choice. There is no need to blame yourself for another person's harmful behaviour.

In a healthy relationship, there should be security instead of fear, mutual respect instead of control and com-

munication instead of humiliation.

Reclaiming your sense of self is also important. Returning to things you once enjoyed, maintaining connections with your friends and family and creating small opportunities to make your own personal decisions can help rebuild your confidence. Seeking the help of a mental-health professional can also be beneficial.

The most important thing to understand here is this: the fact that someone repeatedly portrays you as a bad person is not proof that you are a bad person. Your worth is not determined by another person's behaviour or by the way they speak to you.

A relationship does not necessarily have to make us complete. But if a relationship is constantly breaking us down, frightening us and causing us to lose our sense of identity, then it is worth taking a step back and reconsidering that relationship.



**Don't Take
Things Too
Seriously...**



How quickly things that begin in jest end up becoming serious! How quickly the colour fades from many things that should have been taken lightly. Some innocent jokes can even reach a point where they cost someone their life. Do we really need to take things that seriously?

They had started talking to each other quite normally. Somewhere along the way, one of them said something in a way that sounded like teasing the other. The person who heard it felt that he was being insulted. His ego was hurt. What followed was a fierce war of words. Words flew wildly in all directions, missing their intended targets. Even after many years have passed, they remain enemies to this day. If either of them had been able to take that particular matter as a joke, such a distance would never

have developed between them.

Some things have to be let go. Some things should not be given excessive importance. Haven't we heard people say of some individuals that they "walk around with their noses in the air"? It would be good if this kind of pride actually helped solve problems. But what we usually see is that it only makes matters worse.

The insistence that everyone should behave towards us exactly as we want them to, and the discomfort we experience even when there is the slightest reaction different from what we expect, will damage relationships. We often hear that we should accept ourselves, encourage ourselves and nurture ourselves. But excessive self-importance and an unwillingness to compromise can destroy relationships. To avoid this,

a few suggestions can be made.

Listen to jokes. Share amusing things with your friends. Instead of worrying excessively about small mistakes, learn to laugh when you remember them. Try to laugh at yourself. If we ourselves do not take ourselves too seriously, the mockery or belittling of others will not weaken us so much. Only a person with a deep sense of self-awareness can make fun of themselves and treat themselves lightly.

Just as important as learning to take ourselves lightly is developing a humorous nature and spending time with people who approach things with ease. There are many people who cannot accept or accommodate even an innocent joke. When we begin to think, "This is all there is to life; this much is enough—there is no need to take everything so seriously," we can step back from

many things and look at them from a distance.

We can also learn to evaluate situations from other people's points of view. Give up the insistence that everything must be perfect and everything must be exactly right. There are people who believe that only what they say is right. They advise others, but they will not accept advice from anyone else. They will have a justification for everything they do.

Such 'justification workers' create an unbearable sense of weariness and dryness in relationships. In other words, they take only themselves seriously.

When those who take themselves seriously give at least half that seriousness and importance to others as well, their perspectives and approaches begin to change, and life becomes a little more beautiful.





Rewrite Yourself...

What shapes us is what we believe about ourselves. Thoughts such as “I can’t do this,” “I am a failure,” and “I am behind others” influence our decisions, self-confidence and way of life, often in negative ways. We may not be able to break free from such thoughts in a single day. But through consistent practice and effort, we can rewrite ourselves.

- Identify what you believe about yourself. Ask yourself, “What kind of person am I?” Write down the negative thoughts that keep recurring.
- Separate thoughts from reality. Examine whether “I cannot do anything” is a fact or merely a thought. Not knowing how to do something is not an indication that a person is incapable in every aspect of life. Instead of saying, “I can’t do this,” change the way you think and say, “This is still difficult for me, but I can improve with practice.”
- Recognize your abilities and good qualities. Without comparing yourself with others, remember the things you have done well and take pride in them. Recording even small

successes will help build self-confidence.

- Look at past mistakes in a new way. Instead of saying, “I failed,” ask yourself, “What did I learn from that experience?” The past is not made up of failures; it is part of our experiences.
- Speak to yourself in an encouraging way. Use compassionate language instead of harsh self-criticism. If you yourself keep putting yourself down, then who will be there to comfort you and help you grow?
- Set small goals. Instead of expecting a major transformation all at once, accomplish a small goal. Every small success will strengthen the new belief that “I can make a change.”
- Pay attention to your surroundings. Examine the influence of people and content that constantly make you feel inferior. Give importance to relationships that encourage you

and to a healthy environment.

- Prove your new self-image through action. Do not stop at simply saying, “I am a courageous person.” Make a courageous decision, however small and put it into action. New beliefs gradually become stronger when we repeatedly think about them and act accordingly.

You did not fail simply because others did not believe in you. You did not become discouraged simply because someone else did not encourage you. You did not break down simply because someone else treated you harshly; you broke down because you failed to show compassion towards yourself.

Others are responsible for our failures only sometimes, and even then, only to a small extent. Understand that it is our own thoughts and reflections that often make our lives feel like failures and keep us behind. Change them and move forward.





Can You Be Replaced?

If you work well but see no reflection of your efforts in your performance rating, promotion or salary increase, it means that the organization does not truly value you.



The world of work is facing more challenges than ever before. It is not just that people are finding it difficult to get jobs; many are also being laid off from the jobs they already have. Some organizations have even developed a rigid preference for young employees. Behind this is not merely the desire to save money by paying lower salaries, but also the belief that younger people are more productive. It is particularly painful when someone works in an organization for a certain period of time but still fails to succeed or

progress there.

Some organizations treat their employees as 'disposable workers'. We know what 'disposable' means- people who are thrown away once their usefulness is over. The organization needs the employee's skills and experience, but once it has extracted everything it can from them, the employee is no longer considered necessary. Or the organization simply hires someone else to take their place.

There are some ways to understand whether your organization sees you as a disposable worker. You may be given new responsibilities. But are you continuously being assigned only the same kind of work? If so, not only are you failing to grow in your career there, your career growth is actually being hindered.

If the company is not prepared to help you learn new things or provide you with new opportunities, understand that it is interested not in your growth, but only in making use of your abilities. Let us look at some ways to get out of this situation.

Learn new skills. If you work with computers, for example, learn to use new software and technologies.

Find out whether the work assigned to you is something that another person could easily do in your place. If the job you are doing is one that someone else could perform better than you after receiving some training, your situation is not promising, and your job is not secure either.

Therefore, you need to make an effort to become someone whom the organization cannot easily replace. Here too, developing new skills is crucial- skills that enable you to solve problems and implement decisions.

If all you receive are instructions about what work to do and you are never given a place in important decisions or discussions, understand that you are not a key part of that organization.

In such circumstances, instead of asking yourself, “What can I do?”, change your thinking to, “What can I do better?” Introducing new ideas, finding solutions to problems and taking initiative can all help make you indispensable to the organization.

If you work well but see no reflection of your efforts in your performance rating, promotion or salary increase, it means that the organization does not truly value you.

Sometimes, even when the salary is low, the recognition and appreciation received from an organization can provide greater satisfaction. If you do not receive even that, do not hesitate to

move to another organization where your contribution is recognized and you are respected.

If thoughts such as “If I speak up, I’ll lose my job” or “I’m already this old; will I be able to find another job?” constantly haunt you, you are in a dangerous situation. It indicates that you have lost confidence in yourself.

As long as you remain in a job out of fear of losing it, there will be no real growth in your career. Therefore, instead of staying out of fear, you need to increase your own effectiveness and strive to become someone whose value the company or your superiors cannot deny.

For that, keep rebuilding and renewing your career continuously. Identify and develop new skills. Become a professional. Keep yourself aware of new opportunities in the world of work.





It Happened...

Mistakes are a normal part of life. But how should we live in the days that follow a mistake we have made? Or more importantly, how should we respond to our mistakes?

There is an English expression, 'an embarrassing faux pas.' It can refer to the embarrassment caused by something we did unintentionally or to a social blunder that causes embarrassment. It can include anything from calling someone by the wrong name to accidentally revealing something that was meant to be kept secret in front of others.

There are people who go through considerable mental anguish over such mistakes. Their thoughts may be, "Oh no, but I actually said that!" or "I really did that!" or "I made such a stupid remark during the meeting!" They keep tormenting themselves over what happened.

Here are a few ways to come out of that distress.

First, accept what happened. Yes, what you said was inappropriate. What you did was not right either. But it happened. Now accept it. It is better to acknowledge and accept what happened



than to justify or deny it. That, too, is a sign of self-confidence.

If you realize that your words or actions hurt someone, say sorry. An apology does not need excessive embellishment or lengthy explanations. Very often, long apologies and explanations only complicate matters and make them worse. Say what needs to be said, where it needs to be said and in the way it needs to be said.

If you have enough humour and self-confidence to laugh at yourself, it can also be helpful to lighten the situation with a small joke.

But there is something even more important than all this. You made a mistake. But you are usually the only one

who remembers it for a long time. Other people may have forgotten the incident within a few hours.

The truth is that other people do not think about us as much as we think about ourselves- or as much as we imagine they do.

There is no need to keep blaming yourself and suffering through self-condemnation. You made a mistake. But that alone does not make you a bad person.

Everyone makes mistakes in one way or another. That is all we need to remember. We are bigger than any mistake we make. Once we develop that belief and understanding, even the biggest blunder begins to seem small.





Teach Your Children the Value of Money

Today's parents often go to great lengths to raise their children without any shortcomings, because they do not want their children to experience the hardships caused by the lack of money that they themselves experienced during childhood. An increasing number of parents find it difficult to say no to their children's demands. They buy whatever their children ask for and

give them pocket money whenever they ask for it.

Only last month, there was a report about a tragic incident in which a father, mother and son fell into a gorge and died while trying to save their son, who had threatened to commit suicide because his parents would not buy him an iPhone. In such circumstances, it is important to understand how we should



teach children the value of money.

There are parents who hesitate or are afraid to entrust money to their children. When children are kept away from money from an early age and are raised with a fear of handling it, what parents end up giving them is a negative attitude towards money.

Children who grow up believing that money is something to be afraid of may, when they become adults, find it difficult to handle money wisely and confidently. Therefore, according to their age, parents should give their children money and train them to spend it wisely.

When giving children money as pocket money, parents should make

them understand that it is not meant to be spent entirely on unnecessary things. Children should be taught the difference between what is needed, what is essential, and what is unnecessary.

Whenever money is given to them, children should be taught to divide it into three purposes:

Spend some of it on their needs. Set aside a portion as savings. Spend some of it helping others.

For example, suppose a child is given Rs.100. From an early age, children can be trained to divide it-say, Rs.50 for savings, Rs. 40 for their own needs and Rs.10 to help others.

Haven't we heard some people say, "I have a hole in my hand. Money never stays with me; it disappears like water"?

I have seen people who, despite earning a reasonably good salary for years, do not set aside enough for the common needs of their families and then run around at the end of every month saying that they have no money left. They do not know how to manage their money. They never received any training in managing money at home.

These are people who spend all the money they earn on various things and end up completely failing in financial matters because they cannot set aside even a single rupee for tomorrow. The reason they are unable to save even a very small portion of their income is that they never learned money management from an early age.

When preparing the family budget, involve the children as well. Let them develop an understanding of the family's income and expenses. According to their age, children should be made aware of the essential expenses involved

in running a household- EMIs, educational expenses, water, electricity, gas, petrol, household expenses and so on.

Children who understand that income comes from one source while expenses flow in many directions will gradually learn to control their spending. If a family runs on the income of a salaried person, children should understand that the income arrives only once a month, whereas the need for money exists every day.

This will help them develop financial discipline.

When taking children shopping, do not encourage their tendency to buy everything they see. Teach them that they should choose things that are nec-

essary and of good quality.

Some parents give their children money after making them do small household chores. Financial experts believe this is not a good practice because paying children for their ordinary responsibilities can create an attitude that everything should be done for money.

However, giving children money for certain tasks as a form of encouragement can also be beneficial. It can help establish in their minds the understanding that money is earned through effort and hard work.

When children ask for something they want, do not buy it for them immediately. Give them the freedom to decide whether they really need it or not. If, even after a week, they still feel strongly that they want the item, then be willing to buy it for them.

At the same time, we should not forget that money is also meant to be spent.

There is a difference between staying away from luxury and being miserly. Miserliness sends a negative message to children. But avoiding wasteful spending helps them understand the value of money.

Children grow up watching their parents' habits of saving and spending. Therefore, children of parents who practise financial discipline, saving and investment, while also being willing to spend when necessary, are more likely to become responsible and capable in financial matters.

There is an idea that we should not be afraid of money. But, in the same way, we should not worship money either.

Understand that money is merely a means of meeting our needs and that it gets used up when we spend it. Spend money wisely.



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