Dear Teachers

**Amrita Oval: Is Parental Supervision the Same as Parental Control?**

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of  
Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you yet they  
belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your  
thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,  
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek  
not to make them like you.  
For life goes not backward nor  
tarries with yesterday.  
You are the bows from which your  
children as living arrows are sent forth.  
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the  
infinite, and He bends you with His might that His  
arrows may go swift and far.  
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for  
gladness;  
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He  
loves also the bow that is stable.

– On Children, by Kahlil Gibran

The topic, “Is Parental Supervision the Same as Parental Control?” put light on the way we see societal and parental norms — see the way these work through the instrument of parenthood, and navigate the current challenges to define the bright and new future generation. Bringing up children is a fragile task if one can put it that way, and a task that needs an artisanal touch – no less. Many viewpoints clashed at the Oval, but what emerged from this rebuttal was one verdict. The poem above, explains what parental guidance must look like. Quoted by Ms. Aishwarya Rao, the poem by Kahlil Gibran defines the proper psychology of parenthood in a gist.

Parental Supervision is the necessary backbone...
of any child’s developmental stages and is different from parental control. Parental control, as argued by Ms. Jothi Ravi is an essential evil. Disciplining a child would help a child know the rules of the world, and take decisions that are harmonious with morality. A rule, however, must be kept in mind: as a parent, consistency is important. Consistency in action establishes trust and mutual respect between a parent and a child; if parents discipline a child when they’re mistaken, they must also chastise them when they follow the code of conduct. Actively showing an inconsistency in actions, between what a parent says and does, may lead the children to lose trust and take their parent lightly. Having said this, the right blend of supervision and control is necessary, while taking good care of not jeopardising a child’s ego and privacy.

Ms. Aishwarya Rao, in her verdict on the topic, puts “control” under speculation. “The idea of control comes from a place of ‘power’”, she says; “supervision”, is a rather better route to take. A child requires guidance but controlling someone would mean that we do not believe in their freedom. ‘Control’ is the product of a society that believes that man can never come to good if left to his own devices. ‘Control’ plants fear — freedom gives way to creativity. Hence, ‘supervision’, and not ‘control’ should be the central agenda. Adequate supervision, a supportive environment, and open communication (which only comes when a child feels free to give voice to their thoughts and doesn’t feel the constant pressure to perform) are the holy trinity of creating a healthy environment for a child’s growth.

A big part of a healthy environment is the mindset which prevails around the child. The psychology of the Parent is as important as their method. Many factors affect parental psychology like the equation between the two parents, a parent’s occupation, the time they are able to spend with their child, the habits the parents retain, etc. Having a balanced mindset is the foremost item to tick off the list for a parent, according to Dr. K. Sathiyanarayan. In his opinion, parental supervision is entirely different from parental control. Parents who impose their wishes on their child, without concerning the child are laying bricks of remorse inside the child, which grows into betrayal until the child starts resenting the parent. Children do not like to be controlled; they like to be guided, but when over-controlled, they eventually become over-dependent. “A DEPENDANT CHILD IS A DEMANDING CHILD”.

In conclusion, children become irresponsible when we fail to give them responsibilities. Respecting a child, giving them the freedom to make their own mistakes and learn from them, while guiding them gently, and helping them embrace their mistakes are the building blocks of an independent child. To root a child in responsibilities and give them the wings of independence is the right way to parent them into an individual who is happy and healthy. After all, parents aren’t children’s owners but just their stewards.

**About the Amrita oval**

This is an informative knowledge discussion platform by Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham for Principals, MDs and School Owners. It focuses on currently trending topics and domains and comprises 90 minutes long interactive sessions moderated by Amrita experts discussing the pros and cons of the central theme handpicked by educators.
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham is here with a unique platform for student achievers - an exciting series that would focus on students who have achieved exceptionally well in something beyond studies and their school mentors. A student stands out as an achiever when he or she wins distinction in academics or in any area of extracurricular activities like music, art, painting, sketching, graphic designing, debates, audio-visual flicks, team performances in sports or performing arts like dance and theatre. It could also be team leadership in clubs or social services. Students’ evolution into achievers includes their volunteering, aptitude identification, motivation, goal-setting, leadership, critical thinking, problem solving and persistence. There will be no restriction as to the grade of students. Any young achiever can be highlighted in the session.

This issue features the pistol championship qualifier, Bhavya Chetwani, from La Martiniere Girls’ College, Lucknow. A Competitive Shooting qualifier for state-level air pistol and pistol shooting. Bhavya was inspired to become a shooter after seeing the Marvel film, Hawkeye, which instilled in her a love for target-based sports. Since having won her qualifiers, she has grown immensely as a person and as a shooter. Her coach, Mr. Vikar Kumar, says “for a sportperson to excel, discipline and attitude are a must, and Bhavya promised these at practice since day one. She wasn’t just ambitious, but also emotionally involved in the game. Fusing emotions and ambitions lights a unique fire within her, which propels her to success.” An undying will to get better with each day is what gives Bhavya her unique formula for success. She shows up at practice each day with a goal set, and practices even after hours if she has to, to match the goal she fixes — competing only with her day-old self as her biggest contender. “It’s commendable to note that she juggles between school, tuition and sports practice seamlessly at such a small age.”, adds her coach. Bhavya gets her persistence and love for sport after her father, who was himself a boxer at a young age and wanted his daughter to join a sport for the spirit it inculcates within a person. He was right. He says he has seen Bhavya become better at time management, get more disciplined and carry patience since she started shooting. For Bhavya herself, the sport has taught her a big lesson about victory and loss. She now sees those two just the same and is not overwhelmed by either.

Truly, with hard work and persistence, anything is achievable, and Bhavya hones those two qualities very effortlessly. Her father wishes to see her represent the Indian flag in the future, and there is no doubt that this daughter will make not only herself but the whole nation proud someday.

Bhavya Chetwani
Class 7 Student
La Martiniere Girls’ College, Lucknow.

Vikash Kumar
National and State shooting champion

A webinar series mapping the journey of Young Achievers and Outstanding Students who have brought name and fame to their schools.

Mail your entries to
doaoutreach@amrita.edu
Parents have long wish lists, and they are pretty unique. It is more common for parents to request a teacher's attention on their child's academic growth; than it is for them to seek a teacher's help restricting the child's screen time, healthy eating, and picking the right books. Reading is an incredible habit and is a super rewarding and fantastic way to learn new things. In these times of 'gadget-based learning,' it may be a Herculean task for teachers to cherry-pick the right books and introduce them to various age groups. Yes! Most schools have libraries stacked with multiple books and journals but are these enough to satiate a child's curiosity? Just like we all grew out of our favourite TV shows, children too may move on from colourfully illustrated books to story books - to whimsically written ones! Unfortunately, the era of Chandamama books is gone; thankfully, Amarchitra Kathas are still in the market. Mark Twain and Conan Doyle are also getting ousted by J K Rowling and Jeff Kinney from our shelves. It is no exaggeration to find a 7-year-old flipping through the illustrated pages of the Harry Potter series – getting excited about wizards and waiting for their letter to Hogwarts!

Besides parents, teachers also have a role in helping the child make the right book choice, and here are a few tips on how they can nudge a child's mind towards the right books.

**Educators’ Corner**

**Right Books For Right Reasons.**

**How to Nurture A Reader In A Classroom Environment**

Through a variety of insightful, informative, and encouraging live programmes, Amrita Café is here to help you cope with the present educational landscape.

For Students, Teachers and Parents
Handling a classroom is without a doubt, a task; no day is the same as another. Only those in the teaching profession understand how things can take an unpredictable turn and may lead to a rather unpleasant event. It is not unusual for teachers to feel anxious and helpless when faced with one or more students who are hard to control. One student with behavioural peculiarities is enough to make the class run amok, and punishment may not serve any purpose. It can make the child feel alienated and slow down the learning process. While teachers should not hesitate to act tough on bad behaviour, they should also try to strategize exciting ways to handle this task.

**Talk To Parents:**
And do it immediately if you feel that the entire classroom environment is getting disturbed because of one child. You don’t have to sound harsh but get the facts right. Try and understand if that behaviour is getting influenced by excessive pampering, exposure to television shows, movies, or any other factors. If you feel the child would require counselling, gently convey the same to the parents.

**Teach To Regulate Emotions:**
It is hard but not impossible. Classrooms are where students learn the most, not just academics. Let the child realize that every adverse action will have consequences, and every positive step will be rewarded. Try using a behaviour chart and keep adding points for every positive job done.

**Remind Responsibility:**
One of the exciting ways to make kids focus on practising good behaviour is to remind them of their responsibilities. Give freedom to take up tasks like keeping the classroom clean, stacking up books in the cupboards, and freedom to pick sports during extracurricular activities. This generation of children loves their space and needs it in the right quantities.

**Pick A Calm Corner:**
If you have a child displaying challenging behaviour frequently, find a quiet corner in the classroom. Make it a habit to sit there when the child feels anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed. Place some puzzles and colouring books in the quiet corner, immediately diverting the attention from bad behaviour to something productive.

**Speak in Private:**
While punishment of some orders is acceptable, please refrain from doing it in front of the class. Children with challenging behaviour also tend to be sensitive and emotional, and it can cause...
Every single one of us has the potential to be so much more than we are. Throughout our lives, we stumble upon ideas and take up great initiatives for our growth and well-being, while going to extraordinary lengths to get started and get things going. We have many thoughts and positive intentions and mostly know what we should do for a better quality of life. If we could consistently follow some of our life's callings, our lives might transform beyond our imagination. Alas, so many great ideas and initiatives get stomped into the ground before they even bear fruit. So many people who have the potential to achieve greatness, never make it -- all for the lack of consistency, which ultimately leads to:

1. Self Doubt: Doubting one's own ability to be consistent and follow through
2. Leading to our image being inconsistent for people.
4. Loss of Trust: This leads to losing trust in ourselves, becoming afraid to commit to anything, and ending up in a negative self-belief.

Some of the principles for building consistency are:

1. **Commit IF You Want To Do It:**
   People often commit to things in the heat of the moment, and their decision is based on the face value of things. Before committing to anything important, think the following questions through:
Are you willing to face the challenges that would come along the way?
Are you willing to go through the learning curve and develop all the necessary skills that you might need along the way?
Are you willing to take time out for this even if it means making some sacrifices on other things?
What is your real WHY behind wanting this? Be honest with yourself.

2. **Make it Simple and SUSTAINABLE. Do not Complicate.**
   A lot of people, when starting something, get into too much fuss and tiny details. They make it way more complex than it should be. Remember, the key to Sustainability is Simplicity. If you get too much into detail in the beginning - trying to make everything perfect and fretting over tiny details, it will be difficult for you to last long after the initial hype fades. First, just get in the habit of getting things going.

3. **Choose EFFICIENCY Over CREATIVITY (where needed):**
   Creativity – in the right place – is certainly a must and has its place but sometimes, unnecessary creativity can affect the efficiency and flow of things, making it difficult to sustain in the long run. Do not waste your creative efforts on petty things, especially as you are starting. Choose flow and efficiency in routine tasks so that you don't have to waste your mental energy on the small stuff. Reserve your mental energy and creativity for things that matter in terms of your progress.

4. **Avoid ‘Paralysis by Analysis:***
   With SO MUCH information out there, many of us get caught up with all the details and analytics. When you analyze things too much, especially when they are in their initial phases and not producing many results you'll get fed up and eventually give up.

5. **Set Realistic Goals And Expectations:**
   Many people, after seeing other people's overnight success stories, expect results too early. They overestimate what they can achieve in 6-12 months. Things take time to develop. The success stories we hear of people who blew up overnight are exceptional cases, not the norm. Aim the highest, but set realistic goals and expectations.

6. **Pace Yourself To Avoid Burnouts:**
   The initial hype can make us work too hard to the point of burnout. See this beforehand and avoid it. Work hard but remember to pace yourself and take time to breathe, enjoy and relax along the way. Switch things up a little to refresh your mind and spirits.
   "You throw a bucket of water on a rock and it doesn't do anything.
   You let a drop of water fall onto a rock every day and it creates a hole in that rock."

7. **Value PROGRESS Over PERFECTION:**
   To attain perfection can take a long time if there is such a thing as perfection in the human world. When we start on something enthusiastically,
Steps to build the skill of Being Consistent:

Every year people make new resolutions. For the first couple of days, they ride that wave of motivation. They show up, do the work, and move on. Another day won. But then the novelty wears off. It does not have to be that way. Being consistent is a skill that can be developed. Here are ways to build the skill.

Our inner perfectionists and critics tend to come out and pinpoint all the flaws and errors. Things don't always have to go smoothly or the way we expect. It is okay to make mistakes. It is not a big deal if we mess things up sometimes.

Also, the “All or Nothing” mindset is very unproductive and inefficient. We cannot always give our best all the time. Sometimes we have to perform on an average level to be able to maintain consistency. Don't make it a habit. We are humans, we have our ups and downs. Nothing is 100% perfect. If you think being consistent means never faltering, then you need to reshape your perception of consistency.

8. Learn To Say ‘NO’:

Learning to say ‘No’ is an essential part of being consistent. It is very hard for a Yes-Man/Woman to be consistent at something because they occupy themselves with things that are not necessary. Prioritize; don't let any distractions drag you away from your priority tasks. If you committed to a certain thing, keep it high on your priority list and say no to anything that might get in the way. Don't make promises you can't keep; neither to yourself nor to other people.

Sometimes life can get in the way no matter how hard we try to commit, and that is natural. The thing that determines your consistency is not how perfectly you follow through, but how fast you come back to your commitment if you get off track.

9. Create a System and Automate Your Work:

Whether you're seeking consistency in your personal life or professional life, make it a point to set a specific system so that everything clicks, instead of you thinking about the order of things or the tiny details every time you do something. When you set a system, you don't have to waste your mental energy thinking or worrying about everyday stuff.

Also, look towards automating as many things as you can through apps and online services. Use technology at your dispense and delegate as much work to it as you can. Automation will tremendously simplify your life, save you from being overwhelmed, and free up time, which you can utilize for other important things.

Steps to build the skill of Being Consistent:

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Step 1: Choose a Goal:
This is the easy part: Choose something you want to achieve. You have something already on your mind. Maybe you want to start writing. Or lose weight. To maximize your odds of success, bind it to personality change. You’re not looking to achieve --- you want to become. Connect your goal to a personality change to make it permeate. For example, you are someone who writes, or, a healthy person that eats clean and exercises. What would you say?
“I want to become______.”

Step 2: Tie It to an Action:
How are you going to reach your goal? What does success look like? This is the rep — the action you’ll be doing consistently to achieve your goal. Focus on the process rather than the outcome. For Example, a writer writes. There’s nothing else to it. Your action is sitting down to write for 30 minutes every day. A healthy person exercises. Commit to making 10 pushups per day, no matter what. Choose easy actions. First, you need to master showing up, or getting started. The habit of consistency isn’t about grand gestures or quick results. It’s about incremental progress over a long period. It’s 1% for years.
“I want to become _____ by _______ every day/week.”

Step 3: Commit to a Time and Place:
It’s now time to set intentions: choosing a time and place to perform your action. The easiest place to start is to insert your new action into your routine. You must choose a non-negotiable time to practice and be consistent. The location can be as simple as “at the desk” or broader like “the park”. Come out of this step with a time and place for your habit.
“I will become_____ by_______every day/week at_______ am/pm at_______.”

Step 4: Track Your Progress:
You want to make yourself accountable. All you need is a calendar and a marker. It has to be physical and you’ll understand why in a minute. Remember the consistency formula is: “I will become (GOAL) by (ACTION) every day at (TIME) at (LOCATION).” Write your consistency ‘affirmation’ at the top of your calendar. When you practice your habit, draw a big X on top of that day. Every X on your calendar is a vote for whom you want to become.

Step 5: Don’t Break the Chain:
After a few days, you’ll start seeing a chain of Xs. Visual progress pleases the brain. Keep the chain going. It doesn’t matter if the result is good or bad, you just do it. No excuses. If you do fail, get back on track as quickly as possible. One day is a lapse. Two is the beginning of a new habit — the habit of not being consistent. You’ll struggle. That’s part of the process. Accept it, embrace it, and move ahead.

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