

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

“We love you child!” - Four words that can mean the world to a stressed child. The piece below is a written dialogue between the parent and child highlighting the reassurances that the child needs says **Dr. Seema Tatwawadi** through two simply written letters.

Dear Mom, Dad,

After the annual examination my result is due soon and I am very anxious about the outcome. My career depends on my performance. The likelihood about a gap between my expectations and the actual result haunts me every moment. In a situation where my academic performance takes precedence over everything else, I am sure you appreciate my state of mind.

You provided me the best possible education from nursery school upwards and underwent hardship for my school admission thereafter. My schooling and tuition classes accounted for a good portion of your hard earned money. In a bid to make me academically strong, you provided me personal coaching and also sacrificed many small pleasures of life to ensure my high morale and performance. All this was for my good performance during those crucial three hours in the examination hall - for a memory test that is soon going to decide my fate! Which brings me to the logic of it all. Admittedly, the efforts taken must bear fruit.

Mom, I know that ‘not failure but low aim is crime’. I am certain that I shall not fail but even failure cannot be the end of the road for me. At this time I need your reassurance that regardless of the outcome of the exam, you will standby and support my future efforts. If I pass but secure fewer marks than expected, I am confident you will exhibit solidarity.

Your constant encouragement and standing by me during my blues has been my strong emotional support system. The same system will, I am sure, lead me on to a sound academic career and good quality of life.

Luv you mom, luv you dad.

Rahul

Rahul Dearest,

Are you scared of us? From our side, you have the liberty to watch MTV and Channel V, go to pubs and discos, discuss what is hot and what is cool and yet, if you do not communicate your worst fears and apprehensions in academics, education, examinations and results it is perhaps because you do not consider it appropriate!

You know Rahul, your dialogue and discussion with us is the basis of our family's openness and transparency. For you, we have provided the best schooling. We are equally committed to provide you the finest college education and a most promising career in your chosen field. So get rid of that depression and your phobias. Do not overburden yourself at a time when your results are imminent. Do not be distressed dear child.

We aspire for your better education and a higher living standard than the one we could provide. Maybe we do not talk about these aspirations very frequently. Maybe, when anguished over your poor performance, we express anger! Remember that we retain your best interests at heart! The communication and dialogue within the family must continue and ensure transparency. We will truly appreciate your difficulties if you approach us with sincerity and honesty because we know that the competition and consequent stress level is very high today.

All children are not born with the same level of intelligence and so we accept that their performances will vary. If the child has consistently put in good efforts and yet the result is not as expected, there may be a thousand unforeseen reasons behind it. As parents, do expect us to be reasonable and understanding.

Rahul, today, all that matters is what you have reproduced in those crucial three hours of the examination. Your sub-optimal performance may cause depression, but don't get disheartened. Take it as a challenge for the future. Take us into confidence to jointly explore your options for better future performance. Also, do remember that performance in the examination is not everything in life. Tomorrow belongs to you. Make us a proactive part of your career development process. We shall welcome your mature approach and your vulnerability and gladly lead you on to your destination.

Love you always,
Mom and Dad

Dr. Seema Tatwawadi, Psychologist and Professor at MET Institute of Management has authored this article.