

# OPPAM

ONLY POSITIVE





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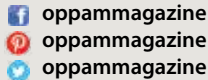
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E mail: [oppammagazine@gmail.com](mailto:oppammagazine@gmail.com)



## OPPAM

Managing Director: Prof Antony P Joseph  
Botswana

(Gaborone University College of Law &  
Professional Studies)

Managing Editors: Benny Abraham

Mariyamma George, Alleppey

Chief Editor: Latnus K.D

## Production Team

Editor in charge : Vinayak Nirmal

Sub Editor: Lincy Jijo

Printed & Published by : Shoby G.V.

Circulation Manager: Antony E.C. Kottamuri

Design : Abraham Thomas

## Office

Oppam Magazine

Jominas Building

Nr. SNBS L.P School

Pullur P.O, Thrissur Dt.

Kerala, India, Pin: 680683

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# Editorial

PROF ANTONY P JOSEPH  
Managing Director

## LEARN TO QUESTION

Once, a tiger was roaming about in search of food in the forest. On the way, the tiger came across a bear.

“He is a good prey,” the tiger said in his mind. Then he said to the bear: “You are my food for tomorrow. So, you should come to my den tomorrow.”

Although the bear was not far behind the tiger in strength, he was frightened seeing the ferocious face of the tiger. He said: “Okay. I will come.”

How stupid and cowardly was the bear! He succumbed to the tiger without even attempting to save his life.

The tiger moved ahead and saw a rabbit. He liked this new prey. “When I have eaten the bear, I can enjoy a different taste by eating the rabbit” the tiger made a plan in his mind.

The tiger said to the rabbit: “I want to eat you tomorrow. So, you must come to my den.”

“What if I don’t come?” the rabbit asked at once.

The tiger did not expect that. “Even the bear was ready to obey him, but this little rabbit is not!” the tiger thought in anger. The tiger stared at the rabbit fiercely.

“What will you do if I don’t come?” the rabbit asked again.

“Then I will look for someone else,” the tiger said meekly.

“Then you go and look...” saying that, the rabbit disappeared into the forest.

There are some people who try to dominate us unnecessarily. They want us to obey whatever they say and behave in the way they like. They enforce their power and influence over us and threaten us to make us obey them and bring our lives under them. Since we are inferior to them in strength or power, we are forced to obey them.

This happens because we do not realize our strength and power. It is here that the rabbit becomes an inspiration. By any standard, the rabbit is inferior to the tiger. But it was ready to challenge when the tiger tried to take control of its freedom and life. Meanwhile, the bear, who did not realize his strength, succumbed to the tiger’s command.

We make a bunch of resolutions in the New Year. Let us add this resolution as well. I will question anyone who comes to take control of my life and dominate over me. We become slaves because we do not dare to ask questions. That will lead us to danger. Hence, let us make a decision that we will question anyone who comes to dominate our lives through power or threat.

Wish you all the success!

Happy New Year!

# TIMED OUT

When the Cricket World Cup of 2023 came to an end, a particular event stood out amidst the wins and losses. It was nothing but the way in which the Sri Lankan batter Angelo Mathews got out. It shocked cricket fans across the world. Mathews was supposed to follow Sadeera Samarawickrama in the batting order. When Samarawickrama was out, Mathews came to the ground a bit late as his helmet had some issue and waited to fix it. Bangladesh cap-

tain appealed for an out claiming that Mathews reached the ground after the permitted time. His appeal was granted, and the umpire called a 'timed out.'

According to the international rule of cricket, once a batsman is out, the following batsman must face the ball within two minutes. Angelo Mathews became the first batsman to be 'out' through the implementation of this rule, because he came late.

Even though there were opinions





**Do not put aside things for tomorrow, but do them at the earliest. We need to make punctuality and doing things at the right time a part of our lifestyle.**

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and arguments supporting and criticizing the umpire's decision, we cannot deny the possibility of a batter to be declared out as per the rule. Perhaps, in life as well, we might have faced situations in which we lost a chance because we

came late. There are people who were expelled from the class because they came late. Some people missed a train or were unable to attend an interview...

There are certain people who always arrive late. They arrive late in schools, offices, churches or temples, or for public functions. They become late comers everywhere.

Timeliness is a quality we need to nurture in our lives. We should be aware that if we reach late somewhere not only us but also others lose time. If the chief guest arrives late for a public function, all the hundreds of participants and



the audience lose their time. If a child arrives late for the practice of a play, all others lose their time as well.

When setting out on a journey, if someone comes late, everyone else lose his or her time. This not only occurs in the matter of individuals, but also in public matters like a public vehicle, public decisions, court orders, prayer meetings... and so on. The late comers indeed upset all of us.

The commuters complain that the train is late. The faithful complain that the prayer meetings are too lengthy. The applicants complain that files are not settled on time. The witness complains that court procedures are incessantly long. Students complain that the portions are not completed before the examination. The teachers complain that the students do not enter the classroom

on time. We can see a long list of people who do not follow timing.

I think we need a proper time table not only for our presence, but also for making our decisions and meting our responsibilities.

We should be able to take decisions at the right time. We must give replies at the right time. We should finish our tasks in the specified time frame. When we procrastinate things without proper awareness of the value of time, we are the losers.

Do not put aside things for tomorrow, but do them at the earliest. We need to make punctuality and doing things at the right time a part of our lifestyle.

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, let us make a decision: I will never cause trouble for others with my carelessness and laziness.



# SHADOWS OF GREEN TREES

**G**reen is the color of life. It signifies the fullness of life. Green is also the odor of life. Green does not destroy anything nor put down anything. Instead, green keeps sprouting. It sprouts from the earth and fills the earth with green. Open your eyes and see. Open your heart and listen. Now let a grain of green grow also in your veins. The shade we enjoy today is the result of the heat of the

Sun someone bore.

In certain language, we use the term 'green person' as a symbol of transparent persons. It is because they do not hide anything. They open up their life before us. A scanning of their lives will reveal their inside and outside. 'To live means to be alive.' It also means to help others to live.

In whatever way we cut off, uproot



**Let us not be like bonsai trees that cannot run their roots deeper, but be like huge sequoia trees that conquer the boundaries of the earth with their roots and the sky with their height.**

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or wither, there are some relationships in our lives that sprout up again. Relationships of love, friendship and care. Relationships that nurture us when we are down. If not, we must have such relationships. If we do not have them, remember that our roots have withered. A fruitless tree may provide shade. But it is a burden to the earth in the eyes of

the world. One day, it will be cut down and cast into the fire. If we are not able to produce good fruits of sharing, compromising, reconsidering and being humble in our family and society, remember that it is time to prune the branches and apply manure.

All the whims of life will not satisfy us always. Nevertheless, if we are able to become an oasis for others, our life becomes meaningful. Seasons may change. Even during the season of fall, when all the leaves have fallen, let us try to keep a green space within us. In a poetry book, the poet writes “The roots embrace beneath the soil when we planted them separately to avoid the leaves touching each other.” Let us unite in love.







On the verges of rural pathways, there are trees that never bear fruits, whom people condemn as a burden to the earth. We have sat beneath them occasionally.

Come, let us sit beneath the shades of these green trees. Let us share our hearts, disclose the things we have forgotten to tell. The green tree will witness our confession. Perhaps we will also be judged like this. Our own people may abandon us thinking that our roots have withered.

We will be alone. Perhaps, there won't be anyone to wait for us one more time. We would blossom once again if only we received a pat or encouragement. But more than the heat we bore in the summer, it is criticisms and farewells that are left over.

Once you feel that you are withered from within, do not hesitate any more. Create springs of care and caress. Let us be one among the trees planted on the banks of a river. Let us recall the good old days we lost. It is not yet late. Even though we are not able to give shades, let us sow new seeds. Seeds of love and friendship.

Let them grow. Let us meet again under the shadow of these green trees. Let us lovingly remember the green trees that offered us shade. Because "human life is like a grass. It spouts up in rain and wither in hot wind." Nothing but gratitude for all.

Even if time transplant us to new places, let us grow up and help others to grow. Let us not be like bonsai trees that cannot run their roots deeper, but be like huge sequoia trees that conquer the boundaries of the earth with their roots and the sky with their height.





# TOUCH

A touch becomes right or wrong based on the attitude of the person who is touched. Thus, a loveless caress and unpermitted touch become wrong. Is there any reason to find fault with the hands that caressed and the person who was caressed? What is important is what one feels from that touch. My thought and my views compel me to assess in my own way whatever happens in front of me. I am not able to think how my assessment is affecting the other adversely. There an innocent person becomes

a culprit. Because it was my mind that prepared the charge-sheet. It was my mind that conducted the trial and my court proved him guilty. That is how an innocent man is subjected to public trial.

I remember a person who told about his discomfort when he is travelling sitting behind someone, whether the other is a dear one or a close friend. It is true that we are sometimes disturbed by touch or hug. Especially if our heart is not formed to accept a touch or when

**I was afraid to touch you. Because I was worried not knowing how you were going to assess my touch. Every hug opens a possibility of reading between the lines.**

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someone who we know well touches us with too much freedom.

I have not yet understood why some people label the celebrities are arrogant when they evade from any attempt from their fans to hug them. Why should they bear a hug from a person they do not know or have never met before? Being a celebrity does not mean to bear everything.

Another observation is that we are more prone to define touch in relation with sex. We can understand from the comments on social media that even a hug between a mother and son or a fa-

ther and daughter is not seen transparently by some people. "Can they touch so? Can they kiss so?" This is the pattern of those comments. Because we look at things in this way. Our minds have not grown wide enough to accept things beyond these constrains. Our way of thinking is the real culprit.

How many times I have desired to hug you and wished for your kiss on my forehead whenever we met! But you turned away from me with an apathy seen never before. If only you hugged me as earlier and put your hand on my shoulder, I would be much relieved. But you...

No, I did not say anything. I was afraid to touch you. Because I was worried not knowing how you were going to assess my touch. Every hug opens a possibility of reading between the lines.

How distant are we now! The bridge of touch between us has crumbled. Can I hug you ever? Will you hug me ever?



# WOMEN ARE NOT PERMITTED TO ENTER HERE



Can you believe if I say that there is a place on the earth where every female, including men, animals and birds have no permission to enter? Actually, there is such a place and it is Mount Athos. It is a mountain on the Athos peninsula in northeastern Greece and an important center of Eastern Orthodox monasticism.

Mount Athos is also known as the Holy Mountain. It is an autonomous nation where about 2000 men live. It is also known as men's republic. This place is 2033 meters above the sea level.

For the last thousand years, Russian

Orthodox monks are the residents here. Women are not permitted beyond 500-meter distance from the island. Mount Athos is considered as the epicenter of monasticism and spirituality. In this place rich in natural beauty, there are 20 monasteries functioning under the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. Mount Athos was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1988.

Women are banned from entering this area to safeguard the celibacy of men. Many emperors were strict about this matter. Monks, who live here, are engaged in prayers for the world, im-





mersed in meditation. They do not want anything here that perturbs their prayer life.

History says that Christian monks arrived here before AD 850. But it was in AD 963 that the monastic life was streamlined and the monastery came into being. In later times, the monastery underwent many changes and eventually the building we see today was formed.

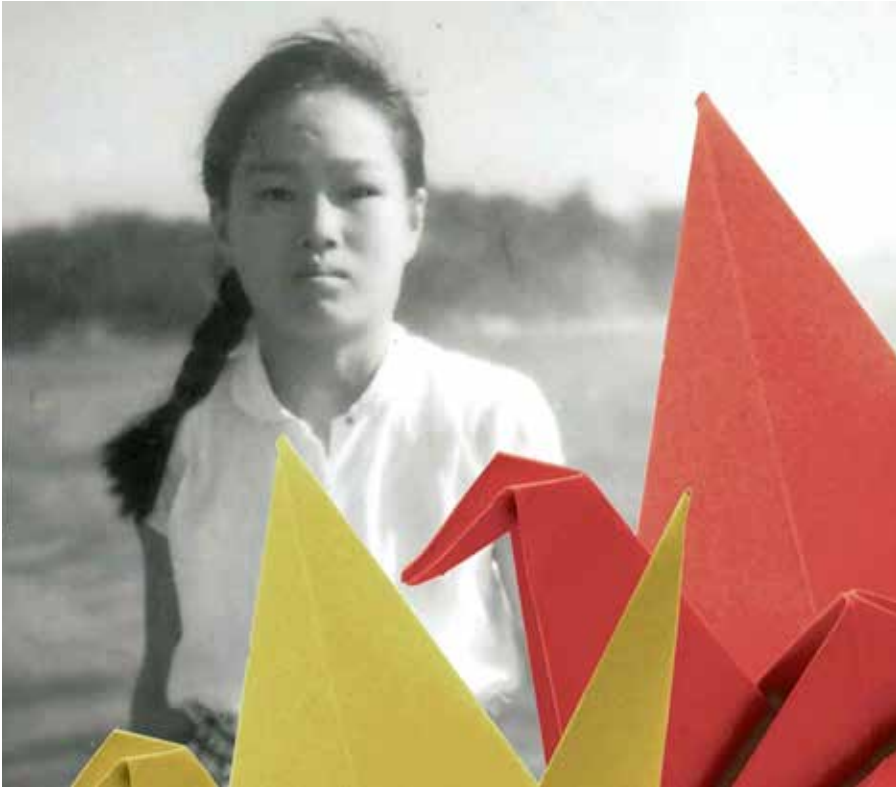
The inmates of the monastery had their own constitution in 1924. It was a part of the Greek constitution. A holy community consisting of 20 monks from 20 monasteries is governing Mount Athos. There is an apex body consisting of four monks. About 2000 monks are residing here. The rest are officials engaged in various tasks.

The monks depend on agriculture,

fishing, handicrafts, etc. for their livelihood. Their diet consists of vegetables and seasonal food. Although there are English-speaking monks, they generally speak Greek.

Even though women are not permitted to enter, there are incidents when some women stealthily entered here in disguise. Greek journalist Malvina Caroli is one of them. Caroli claimed that she entered here in 1990, dressed as a man. Women who enter here are punished with a year's imprisonment. Nevertheless, there is news that during the Greek Civil War, some girls and women, running for life, found shelter here.

100 Greek Orthodox men and 10 non-orthodox men are permitted to visit this place in a day. Nonetheless, men from any religion can visit this monastery.



# SADAKO SASAKI AND ORIGAMI CRANES

**A**ugust, 6, 1945. On that day the United States detonated an atom bomb named Little Boy over Hiroshima. The number of those who lived bearing the explosion's impact was greater than the number of those who died in the bombing. Sadako Sasaki, a girl who lived at a mile's distance, was

one among them.

One day, Sadako was playing with her classmates in the compound of the school as usual, when she collapsed. She was taken to the hospital and at the end of the detailed tests, she was diagnosed with blood cancer. The medical science concluded that she was a victim of radi-



ation exposure. Her life was confined to bed. She was only twelve years old then.

Even though she had no clear idea what disease had befallen her, she guessed from the sad faces of her parents and the subdued talks of the doctors that she had some serious issue. Even though she felt sad, she made a decision: No one should cry because of me.

From that day onwards, she began to lead a life that implemented her decision. Her smiles and laughter relieved and alleviated the sorrows of others as well. She became an inspiration for other patients. Only a few people can smile and live happily in the midst of serious

diseases.

On one of those days, a program was conducted in the hospital under the aegis of Red Cross Youth. Sadako won prizes in singing and dancing contests. That day she got origami cranes as prizes along with a greeting: everything will be fine.

His father told her the story behind those paper cranes. A crane is believed to be a creature that can live for a thousand years. From this story, a belief was derived among the Japanese people. Those who are able to make thousand cranes a year will get their desires fulfilled. Paper cranes were one of the main





gifts presented to patients. It was a part of greeting them for speedy recovery and wishing them a long life.

He added that by giving that gift they were actually greeting her a long and healthy life. The story of the cranes touched Sadako's heart. From that day onwards, she began to make paper cranes in various colors. She set apart some time for making these origami cranes in the midst of her treatment and suffering.

Before long, her room in the hospital was full of origami cranes. Even though the doctors saw her making them, none of them prevented her. They

knew that she was a candle that could extinct at any time.

When she began making the cranes, her wish was not to obtain a long life, but for the cure of patients like her, for those who suffer from the impact of war, and for the peace of the world...

If there was peace in the world, wars would have ended. If there was no war, nations would not attack their neighboring countries. So, the absence of peace is the reason for all problems in the world. Thus, Sadako fixed peace of the world as her sole prayer intention.

Sadako forgot her own sufferings when she made the cranes and im-

mersed in prayer for the world's peace. Meanwhile, all others continued to pray for her cure and long life. But one day morning, her mother who went to her to wake her up, saw her lying dead!

When she was dying, Sadako was working on her 644th crane. Realizing that they should make 1000 cranes before sending her to the tomb, the doctors, nurses, and all her near and dear began to make cranes. They completed those cranes and bid her last farewell with a thousand origami cranes. Today there is a memorial erected in front of the hospital in which she died, and a golden origami crane is displayed in the Hiroshima Museum.

No one can hear her story without getting their eyes moistened. Her life story still inspires the world. Why does her story inspire us so much?

Primarily, it was her decision not to cause pain to anyone. Just examine in which all ways we hurt others. We become a cause for the pain of others knowingly or unknowingly by our behavior, talk, and by denying what they deserve. If only we make a decision not

to cause pain to others, we will be able to bring solace into the lives of many people.

Secondly, Sadako challenges the nature of prayer. We often pray for our own needs. I want this. I want that. But Sadako's prayer intention was the peace of the world. It was with this motive that she began to make origami cranes. How great is that mind which is willing to work for the peace of the world selflessly!

Whether they are fables or myths, some beliefs bring solace to men. It is a myth to believe that making a thousand cranes can make your desires a reality. But Sadako believed it. That belief was a feeble branch on which she held tight for keeping her hope alive amidst all uncertainties and despair. We should have some beliefs to cling to, which console us and not harm others.

How long have we been living in this world? Have I been able to do anything for the peace of the world like Sadako? What mark will I leave in this world when I leave this earth? What will be the epitaph on my tomb?



# ARE YOU THE BOSS? YOU MUST KNOW ALL THESE



You may be the boss of hundreds of employees, heading famous companies. He will have the educational qualifications and experience to be in that position. But even such people have something missing. Communication with many of them will not be effective enough. Because of this, even if the person has new ideas, they will have less influence among their colleagues. Failure to communicate well as a team leader is also a possibility.

Effective communication is the bedrock of any organization. It should be enforced between staff and clients. It takes cooperation and trust to form policies, keep the team motivated, and create an inclusive culture. At least some leaders fail to achieve the success they deserve because they don't understand the importance of communication.

Let's see what are the pitfalls in communication. Lack of clarity in what is communicated, a misinterpretation in what was said, reluctance to listen, interrupting what is being said, excessive emotional communication.

Now let's examine how communication can be improved.

Try to be a good listener, become a good listener. Only then will it become clear what was said. Pay full attention to



what is being said. Understand tone of voice, body language, and facial expressions. Do not interrupt while speaking.

In difficult circumstances, manage emotions. For the ideas expressed to be clear and fruitful, one must have control over one's emotions. Self-control over emotional expressions is necessary. Do exercises such as deep breathing if you are feeling emotionally stressed when you have to say something important. Concentrate your thoughts in one place and refocus.

Be transparent, for a manager or a leader to be accepted and respected by his subordinates, he must feel transparent. Anyone who behaves in a way that nothing is outside, does not have to be a manager or a team leader, others feel alienated. Be transparent in this situation. Respond honestly. Be open about things. For example, if the target is not being met, explain why? And ways to make more profit, also talk about meth-

ods on how to increase revenue.

Encourage giving feedback. Continuously provide encouraging feedback for the growth of subordinates. That's part of supporting them. A tendency to work more diligently will be created among the employees as they realize that they are being promoted at the management level.

Pay attention to body language. Both speaker's and listener's body language are important in communication. While speaking, the tone of speech, body posture, and facial expressions should all be taken care of. The physical condition should be such that an open approach is felt.

The method of holding hands is not desirable. It's also a good idea to smile even if you want to warm up the situation if you can. Don't forget that the ability to understand and communicate ideas effectively is essential, not words or physical appearance.

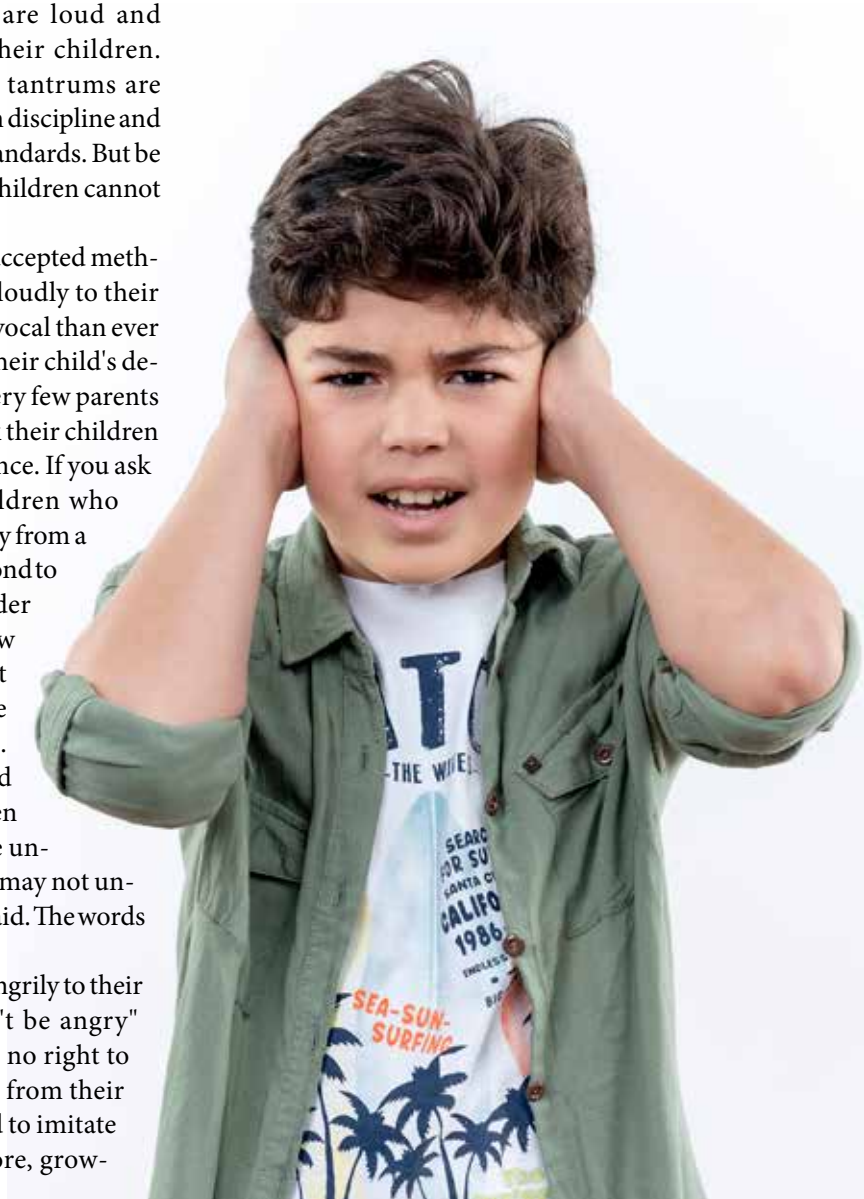


# WHY SO MUCH NOISE?

Many parents are loud and angry with their children. Loud reprimands and tantrums are part of teaching children discipline and holding them to their standards. But be clear about one thing. Children cannot be cured by anger.

There is a generally accepted method. Parents who speak loudly to their children become more vocal than ever before at each stage of their child's development. There are very few parents who have not had to ask their children 'are you deaf?' at least once. If you ask why this happens, children who are used to talking loudly from a young age can only respond to it when they hear it louder as they get older. Now let's think about what can happen when we get angry and scolded. When speaking out loud and angry, ideas are often not clear. Words will be uncontrollable. Even they may not understand what is being said. The words will be out of order.

Parents who speak angrily to their children such as "don't be angry" and "speak softly" have no right to expect a calm response from their children. Children tend to imitate their guardians therefore, grow-



ing up with angry, yelling parents, how can they speak with gentleness and calmness? Let me repeat what I said at the beginning, don't think that you can fix your children by getting angry and shouting. Not only this, the mental health of the children will be at risk in the future.

Behavioral disorders, anxiety, stress, emotional problems, withdrawal tendencies, depression, academic laziness etc. may occur in children growing up in such an environment continuously. They lose confidence and are unable to lead a better social life. Studies show that even young children can understand the angry tone of their parents' speech. Parents transmit their stress to their children when they are angry. Studies have also shown that it has a negative effect on the brains of children. When angry parents talk, the words they use and the angry punishments lead them to think that the home is not a safe place. They assume that they cannot live here

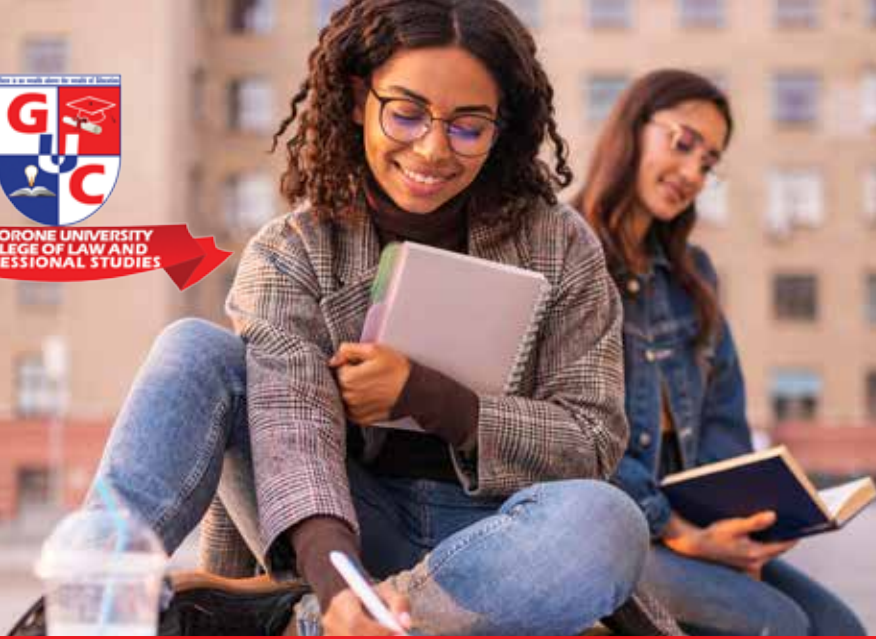
peacefully and are not safe.

Many times, in life they have to hear the harsh words and harsh manners that they have to hear for no reason and when the time comes, they respond to their parents in the same way. Children should not be victims of their parents' anger, unreasonable blame, and punishments. They are our treasures. It is also the greatest wealth that parents have received. It is the duty and responsibility of the parents to keep these treasures and to use the wealth properly. So, control your anger and talk to your children as gently as you can. Well, there is every possibility of being blown away when you see some of the ways kids are doing these days. But trying to spank them or reprimand them to silence them is not a healthy parenting approach. There is another thing that parents who are angry with their children should understand. Not only themselves but also their children are angry. Don't try to suppress their anger with anger.





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Main Campus: Lot 6398, Lejara Road, Broadhurst Industrial  
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