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OPPAM

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

A photograph of two young boys with brown hair and blue eyes, smiling and hugging each other. They are wearing white short-sleeved shirts with grey patterned collars. The background is a solid bright orange.

Siblings: A Lifelong Asset



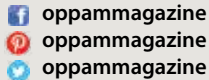
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Editorial

PROF. ANTONY P. JOSEPH
Managing Director

Should we fear humans?

Once a merchant set out to a distant place to trade in gems and money. He was accompanied by a group of servants. Together they had devised a plan to steal the merchant's wealth and valuables. If they couldn't manage that by some method, they were not averse to killing him either. This was their plan. But the merchant, unaware of all this, took them along on his journey.

Their path led through a forest. After traveling a long distance everyone was exhausted. They decided to rest for a while. The merchant lay down under a tree. Before long he fell asleep. The servants then planned to rob him while he was sleeping. Their idea was to shout "snake, snake!" loudly, causing the merchant to wake up in fear and flee, leaving behind his money. That way they could steal it and escape.

However although the merchant woke up, he did not panic or abandon his moneybag. The servants tried many other tricks to scare him and steal the money. But nothing worked.

Then one of the servants asked him, "Why aren't you afraid? Not even of a snake or a lion?"

The merchant replied:

"We all know that snakes and lions are dangerous. So we can take some precautions to protect ourselves from them. That is why I don't fear such creatures. But what I truly fear are the kind of humans who live sweetly on the outside while hiding poison inside. Because you never know when they will strike."

What the merchant said holds deep truth. Many around us are like that-people we believe to be trustworthy, who behave affectionately. But we don't know what lies within them. We don't know if they will put us in danger when a favorable opportunity arises.

It is wise and sensible to stay away from those who show their venom outwardly-they are less likely to truly harm us. But those who appear sweet outwardly and carry poison inside are the ones who can harm us when circumstances allow. Hidden malice is far more frightening than open cruelty. We can love and trust people-but if we recognize those who hide their poison, we should not hesitate to run away from them.

Regards
Prof Antony P Joseph

A young man and woman are smiling and posing together in front of a large, multi-paned window. The man, on the right, has dark hair and a light beard, wearing a dark blue t-shirt. The woman, on the left, has long brown hair and is wearing a red sweater. They are both looking towards the camera. The background shows a blurred view of trees and a modern interior space.

**Wait
for it
to cool
down**



The absence of conflict in a marriage isn't necessarily because both partners are similar, but because they show tolerance and genuinely try to understand each other. Good responses often come not from reacting quickly, but from stepping back from impulsive reactions.



Every food needs to cool down a little to truly enjoy its taste. Even if we say food should be eaten hot, excessive heat can burn the tongue and throat. That is why we usually let it sit for a bit to cool down before eating.

The same logic applies to problems in relationships.

Whether it is between spouses, friends, or even a boss and an employ-

ee-conflicts, both big and small, are inevitable. The key is not to react or make decisions immediately in the heat of the moment. Like we let hot food cool, we need to give a little time for emotions to settle. Or at least wait until the 'river clears.'

The way we respond when angry is very different from how we respond once the anger has subsided. Sometimes people rush to eat food the moment it is served without even letting it cool down, just because they are eager. The result? Burned fingers and tongue.

It is the same with hasty reactions to conflict—they usually end up worsening the problem and increasing distance. Suppose your husband or wife bursts out in anger over something. The best course isn't to match that intensity with your own outburst.

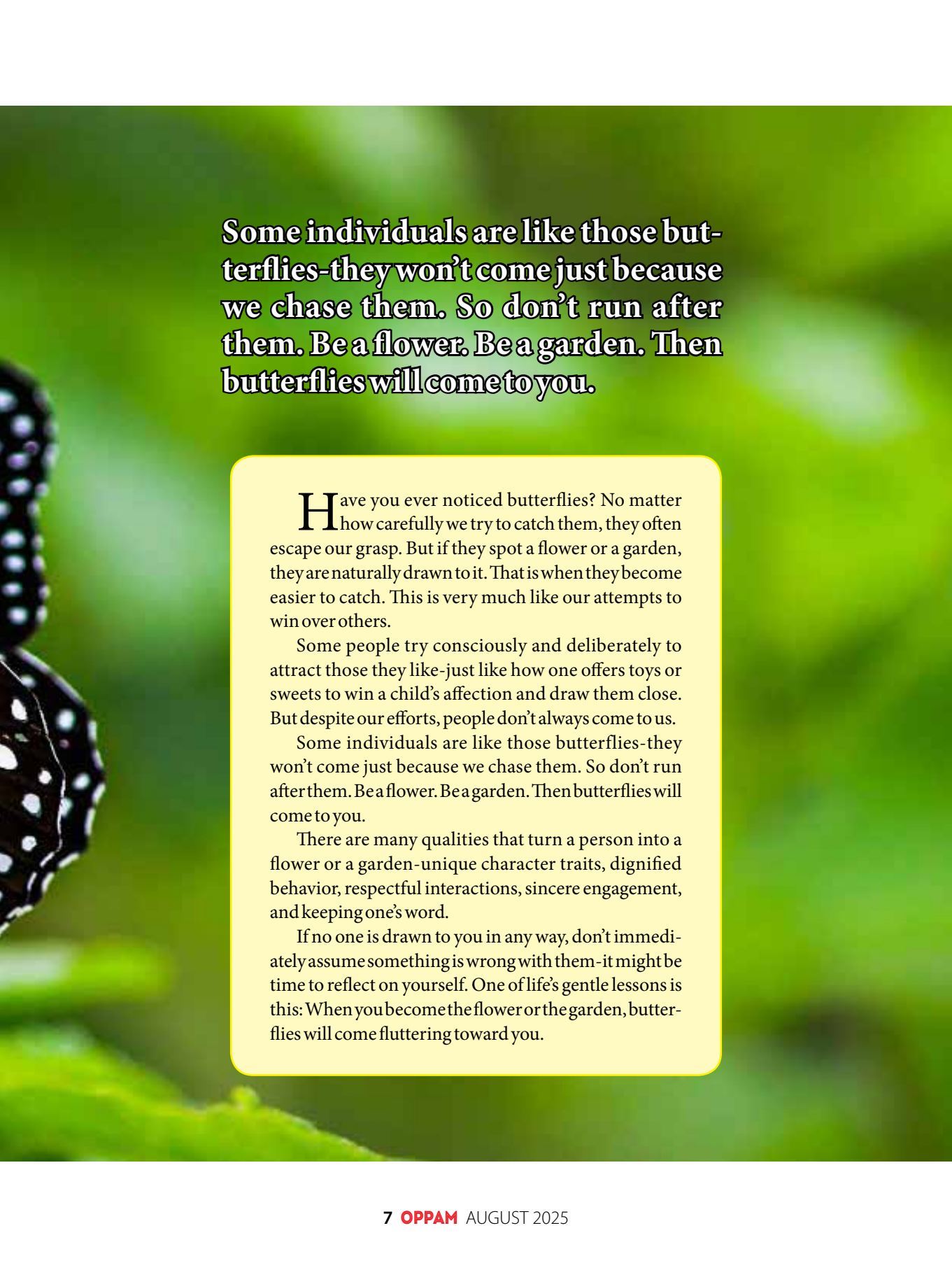
Some people calm down after a while. Then they are able to realize their mistakes and either correct themselves or even say sorry. But then there are others who never apologize, never admit fault. They stubbornly believe they are always right. With such people trying to correct them or argue is pointless.

Everyone is different. When we understand that others also have character flaws just like we do, many issues in relationships can be avoided. The goal should be to understand each other's personalities and find ways to adjust and coexist.

The absence of conflict in a marriage isn't necessarily because both partners are similar, but because they show tolerance and genuinely try to understand each other. Good responses often come not from reacting quickly, but from stepping back from impulsive reactions.

The Butterfly and the Garden





Some individuals are like those butterflies—they won't come just because we chase them. So don't run after them. Be a flower. Be a garden. Then butterflies will come to you.

Have you ever noticed butterflies? No matter how carefully we try to catch them, they often escape our grasp. But if they spot a flower or a garden, they are naturally drawn to it. That is when they become easier to catch. This is very much like our attempts to win over others.

Some people try consciously and deliberately to attract those they like—just like how one offers toys or sweets to win a child's affection and draw them close. But despite our efforts, people don't always come to us.

Some individuals are like those butterflies—they won't come just because we chase them. So don't run after them. Be a flower. Be a garden. Then butterflies will come to you.

There are many qualities that turn a person into a flower or a garden—unique character traits, dignified behavior, respectful interactions, sincere engagement, and keeping one's word.

If no one is drawn to you in any way, don't immediately assume something is wrong with them—it might be time to reflect on yourself. One of life's gentle lessons is this: When you become the flower or the garden, butterflies will come fluttering toward you.

Children who do not receive enough love or acceptance at home, from friends or from society and those who fail to achieve what they hoped for may start using intoxicating substances to cope with their disappointments and frustrations-eventually becoming addicted.

To Help Children Become Better

Renowned psychologist Erikson says that in every stage of a child's development, certain values must take root. When there are disruptions in this value formation it leads to learning difficulties, emotional problems and behavioral issues.

For example, from the age of one to three the child goes through a developmental stage of autonomy versus doubt. Suppose a child tries to put on their own shoes. If the mother encourages them saying, "You can do it, try," it builds self-confidence. But if she constantly dismisses the effort by saying "That is not something you can do," or keeps correcting and scolding, the child begins to feel incapable and loses confidence. According to Erikson, when children don't develop confidence during this phase, they may later become susceptible to harmful habits such as smoking, alcohol consumption or drug use.

When children show signs like spelling mistakes, guessing while reading, lack of reading clarity, disinterest in studies, very poor handwriting, delays in writing, reversing letters, skipping lines while reading or writing, or adding words that aren't there, these may be signs of learning disorders. These concerns should be assessed and addressed with the help of clinical psychologists.

Sadly, today many parents don't hesitate to use alcohol as part of celebrations. Special care should be taken to not drink

in front of children. Parents must never offer alcohol to children, not even as a taste or for smelling. These seemingly minor seeds, planted in early childhood, can grow into addiction later in adolescence.

Children who do not receive enough love or acceptance at home, from friends or from society and those who fail to achieve what they hoped for may start using intoxicating substances to cope with their disappointments and frustrations—eventually becoming addicted.

Some common signs that a child may be using drugs include: Emotional distancing from family and loved ones, poor academic performance, weight loss, fatigue, excessive sleeping or insomnia, obsessive desire for money, avoiding old friends and forming suspicious relationships with older or unfamiliar people.

In such situations, do not isolate or blame the child. Instead show love, assure them: "We are with you," and if necessary, seek professional help. The focus should be on building a peaceful, happy and loving family environment.

In short, parents should recognize and encourage the goodness in their children. It is not enough to appreciate them only for good grades. Praise them when they do their tasks neatly, obey instructions even in small matters and offer help to others. This kind of encouragement helps build their self-confidence and strengthens their bond with their parents.

Reclaim Your Life

When terrifying, traumatic or deeply painful experiences happen in life, it often takes immense effort for people to move past them, to survive them. For some it may even feel impossible.

If someone has survived sexual abuse, if they have lost a loved one at a very young age, if they have lost a child, if they have waited years longing for a child but never had one or if they have gone through physical and emotional wounds that seem beyond healing- at such moments, it can feel like life, in its best form, is lost forever.

Often we try all sorts of ways to run away from our pain or to hide the true meaning behind our suffering. It is like hearing someone crying outside and silently shutting the door.

The crying still continues. It is real. It needs to be acknowledged

and responded to. But when we close the door, we are simply running away from it.

This is what happens when we try to turn away from sorrow in life. We can mask it in different ways but the pain still remains. So, instead of hiding it we must face it, address it, and move through it.

You can take pills to forget or numb the pain. But the pain remains. It is only when we try to face the pain without relying on pills that we become fighters. There are some kinds of pain that can be avoided- those we must learn to avoid. But there are also kinds of pain that cannot be avoided.

These must be slowly accepted and absorbed, however difficult that may be.

Pain is real. Because pain is a sign of life. So instead of running from it, accept the pain and reclaim your life.





Can You Be Trusted at Work?

A person's qualifications or experience alone are not enough to prove their competence or excellence in a job. What truly matters is how they interact with others, the respect they give and the value they place on people. These factors are what determine a person's effectiveness at work and whether they are someone others can truly trust.

Here are some key signs that show you are a trustworthy person in the workplace:

Listen with Full Attention: In any conversation, the body reveals whether we are genuinely listening. Eye contact, a slight lean forward and subtle nodding are all signs of active listening. These nonverbal cues help calm the other person's limbic system, reduce emotional distance and promote openness. Being willing to truly listen to someone significantly increases the chances that they will trust you.

Accept and Value Others: Warmth is not just about friendliness—it is also about recognizing and respecting others. Acknowledge others' good work with genuine praise, clear away anxieties with reassurance and offer meaningful gratitude to your coworkers. When you recognize someone's contribution, it activates the brain's oxytocin-related neural circuits, which strengthen bonding and trust.

Focus on the Other Person in Conversations: Even when sharing your

Warm gestures like smiling when greeting a colleague or using appropriate humor make you seem more likable and trustworthy.

own experiences or ideas, make sure to ask questions and give space for others to speak about their thoughts and experiences. Research shows people view conversations more positively when they feel heard. This kind of behavior is strongly linked to increased perceptions of trust and likability.

Be Approachable and Easy to Connect With: Being someone others feel comfortable approaching is no small matter. A smiling face, a calm voice and a non-threatening presence help reduce stress hormones like cortisol in others and encourage gentle, open behavior. Warm gestures like smiling when greeting a colleague or using appropriate humor make you seem more likable and trustworthy.

Never Dismiss Small Acts: Small gestures—like remembering a coworker's birthday or offering help without being asked—can make a big difference in how others perceive you. These actions strengthen relationships and build a solid foundation of trust.



Just 15 Minutes to Read Aloud



Surveys indicate that the number of children who regularly read books is steadily declining. In a time when TV shows, online videos and mobile games are all competing for (and winning) children's attention, reading is taking a back seat. Yet most reading

experiences begin at home.

According to recent data, the increased screen time among young children may be significantly reducing such foundational experiences. One reason is that today's parents themselves read less compared to the previous genera-



tions. A UK survey shows that in 2014, 11% of children under the age of 2 were spending 1 to 3 hours a day on screens. By 2019, this number had jumped to 42%. Similarly, a 2019 study by the National Institutes of Health (USA) revealed that 1-year-olds spent an average of 53 minutes daily on screens, which increased to 150 minutes a day by the time they turned 3.

In such a context, the act of parents reading aloud to children becomes all the more important.

Reading aloud at home was once a common and cherished activity. But today, for a variety of reasons, it is becoming increasingly rare—busy lifestyles, working parents, mobile distractions and changing attitudes toward reading top the list. Parents who grew up surrounded by screens often don't read for enjoyment themselves. As children's screen time increases, the likelihood that parents will read to them decreases.

In a 2025 UK survey, only 41% of parents said they read regularly to their children aged 4 or under. In 2012, this number was 64%. Among parents of 5 to 7-year-olds, only 36% reported reading to their children consistently.

Yet, one point was unanimously agreed upon by the parents who participated in the survey: Reading aloud to children is a truly delightful experience.

Studies show how perceptions of reading have evolved. Generation Z parents (born between 1997 and 2012) are more likely to see reading as something children have to do for school, rather than a rich or enjoyable experience—a shift compared to older generations like Millennials or Gen X.

But reading aloud offers a beautiful bonding experience between parent and child. It helps build relationships and introduces children to the joy of storytelling and language especially when the reader brings the story to life with a little drama or expression.

Children who are read to regularly not only begin to enjoy the experience but often feel inspired to read on their own. In fact, children who are read to daily are three times more likely to choose independent reading than those who are only read to weekly.

Listening to stories read aloud brings tremendous developmental benefits. According to Carol St. George, Director at the Warner School of Education and Human Development, University of Rochester, reading aloud builds vocabulary and enhances a child's understanding of the world.

And it only takes 15 minutes a day. So, here's the real question: Are you willing to set aside just 15 minutes a day for your child?

Misleading Examples

How many times have we fallen before learning to walk?

How many times have we lost balance before mastering the bicycle?

How many times have we failed before obtaining a driving license?

How many times have we swallowed water while learning to swim?

We often justify our failures by citing such examples of persistence and eventual success. And yes, these examples hold true. However not all examples work the same way. Some analogies can be misleading.

For instance, the idea of 'falling and getting back up' does not apply to climb-

ing trees. No one learns tree climbing by repeatedly falling. No one ever says, 'I learned to climb trees after falling multiple times,' because falling from a tree can mean either severe injury or death. There is no in-between.

The point is, not every explanation or analogy that circulates around us is practical for real-life application. Not every example is relevant to every situation. What truly matters is understanding which lessons are applicable to our lives and where corrections need to be made. Let go of impractical positivity. Instead, embrace realistic and meaningful lessons that genuinely help in life.



A photograph of two young boys of South Asian descent lying on their stomachs against a white background. They are both resting their heads on their clasped hands. The boy on the left is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression, wearing a brown patterned shirt. The boy on the right is smiling slightly, looking towards the camera, wearing a dark blue polo shirt.

Siblings: A Lifelong Asset

In families where siblings are born within one or two years of each other frequent quarrels, small fights, bonding, and reconciliation are common. However many parents often respond to such situations with intolerance without realizing that these sibling dynamics play a crucial role in emotional and social development.

Science tells us that these relationships—marked by fights and forgiveness, teasing and sharing—can become one of life's greatest emotional assets.

Despite occasional conflicts, if siblings share a strong emotional connection, this bond can evolve into a significant source of emotional resilience as they grow. Studies show that a healthy sibling relationship can help individuals stay away from depression, anxiety and emotional isolation. In fact, close sibling relationships can reduce vulnerability to mental health issues by up to 60%.

Among Indian students studying abroad, emotional wellbeing is often linked to the strength of sibling bonds they have nurtured. Similarly, children from countries like Germany and Japan have shown better emotional outcomes where strong sibling ties are present.

A study conducted by Brigham Young University, involving 395 families, found that adolescents with strong sibling relationships exhibited lower levels of depression, loneliness and anxiety, greater ability to recover from trauma, improved social maturity and interpersonal skills.

Siblings are seen as equals, unlike parents or teachers who are viewed as authority figures. This makes it easier for children to learn empathy, resolve conflicts peacefully and stand up for

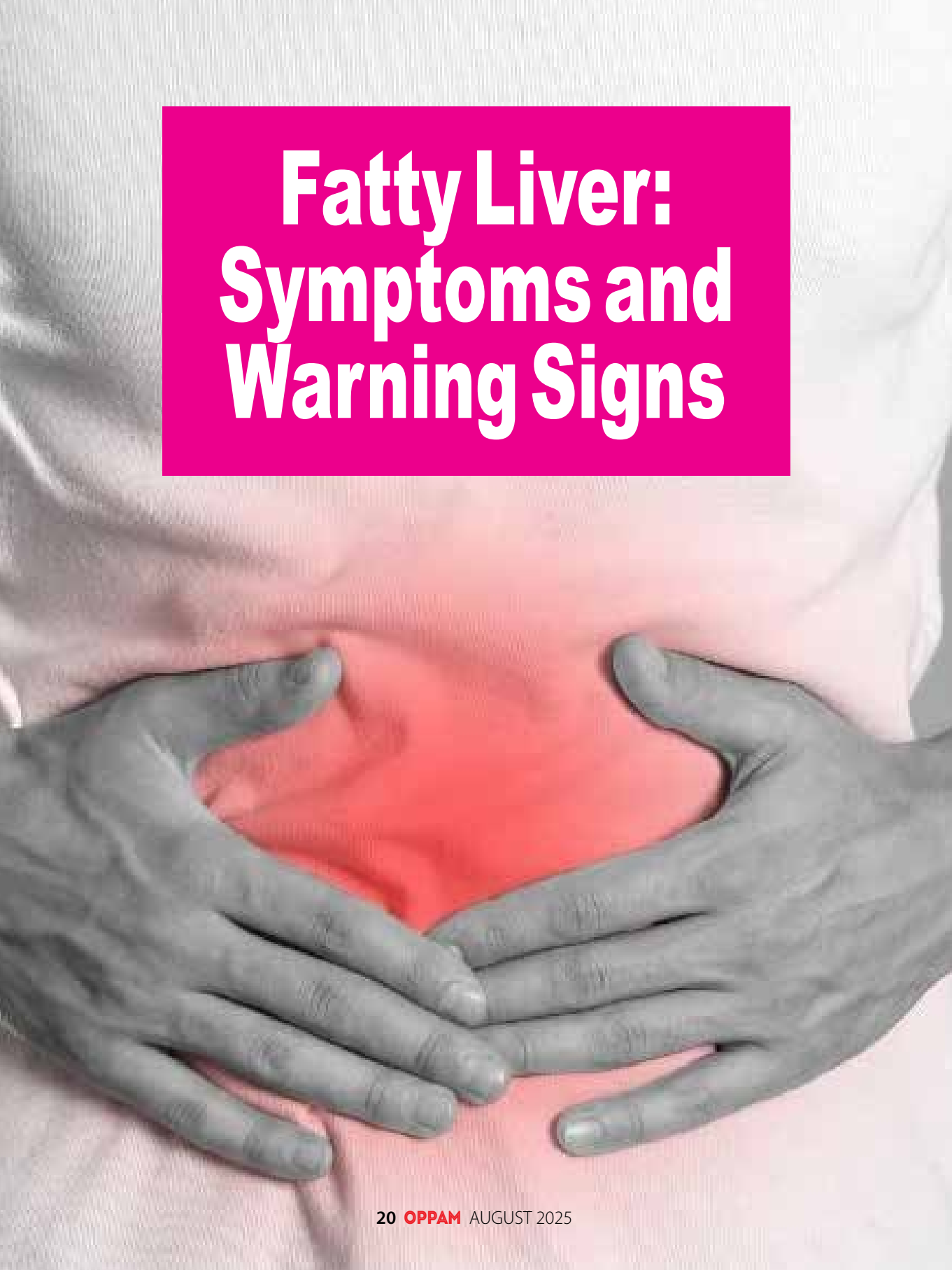
justice and fairness.

Older siblings, especially elder sisters, often act as mother figures, while elder brothers may take on fatherly roles, especially in emotionally sensitive households. Even though they live under the same roof, siblings build a relationship that is uniquely their own—rich with friendship, shared experience, and loyalty.

Siblings are often the first 'other person' a child learns to interact with. The competition, sharing, and social learning that happens between siblings prepares them for future relationships—in marriage, work, and friendships. Most importantly, sibling bonds last longer than most other relationships—including marriages, friendships and romantic relationships.



Fatty Liver: Symptoms and Warning Signs



Fatty liver disease, especially Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), has become a global health concern, now affecting over 30.2% of the world's population. NAFLD refers to the abnormal accumulation of fat in the liver in people who consume little or no alcohol.

This condition is closely associated with: Obesity, type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome.

If not diagnosed and treated in time, NAFLD can progress silently and lead to severe complications such as liver cirrhosis. However by recognizing certain symptoms early, effective treatment and even reversal is possible.

Common symptoms to watch for: Poor or insufficient sleep is a commonly observed issue in those with fatty liver. Chronic insomnia can impact liver function by affecting glycogen storage and release, leading to fatigue and systemic imbalance.

Many patients experience uneasiness, especially in the lower abdomen during night time. This may be accompanied by loss of appetite, reduced interest in food and unintended weight loss.

Fatty liver may also manifest as mental fatigue, difficulty focusing, memory problems, confusion or cognitive fog and swelling in the legs and feet, along with itching and yellowing of skin or eyes (similar to jaundice). These are warning signs that the condition could be progressing toward advanced liver damage.

What you can do: follow a balanced, nutrient-rich diet, engage in regular physical exercise, avoid alcohol and smoking and monitor and manage blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

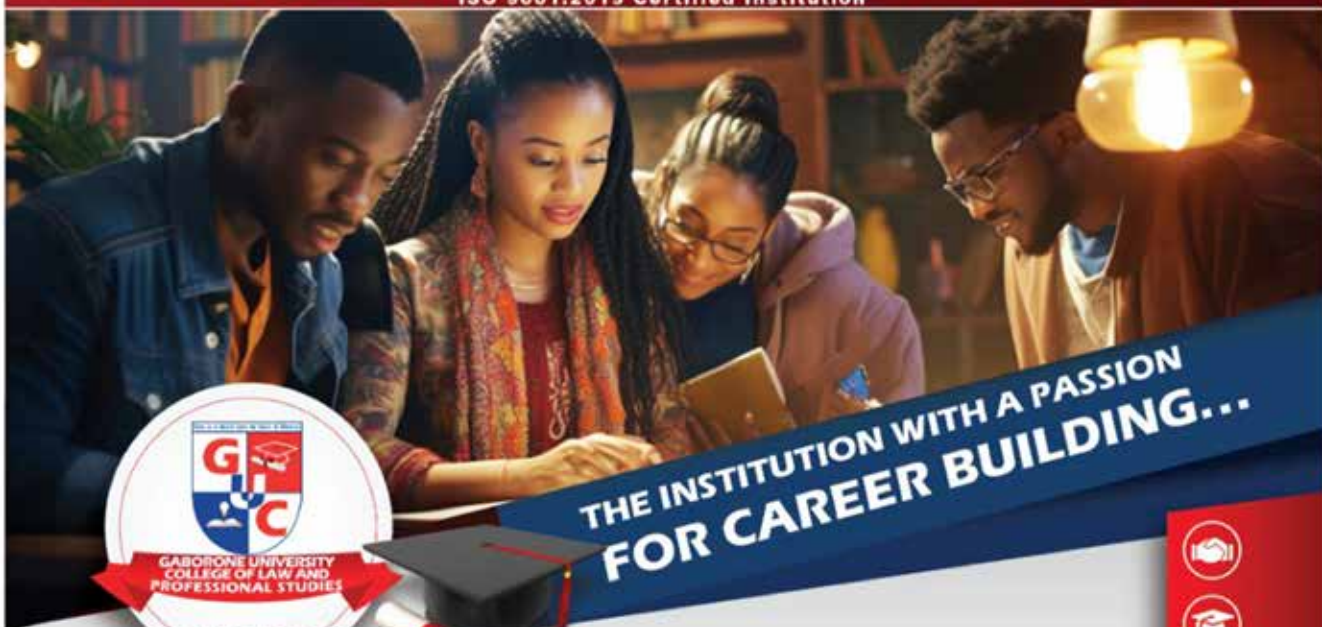
But more importantly, if you notice any of the above symptoms-especially if they worsen at night-consult a doctor immediately. Early diagnosis is crucial to avoid long-term complications.

(Source: Internet)



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