



COMMUNICATION- THE FAMILY CIRCLE

Context: The objective of this discussion is to emphasize the importance of clear, consistent and timely fit for purpose and need to know communication to ensure that the family circle becomes a safe space for everyone to express their point of view, state of being – supporting the overall family support system.

Objectives: In this session, parents will explore questions like:

1. When and how to communicate essential family information to ensure all impacted members are informed and prepared for changes in daily routines.
2. Understand the importance of family awareness and unity in facing challenges with mutual respect and support.
3. Develop strategies to model and encourage shared responsibilities that promote individual well-being and reflect core family values.

Scenario: Samay (father), Ganga (mother), Ritu (daughter) and Pavan (Son)

In a middle-income home in a suburban neighborhood this family finds themselves around routinely seated in a family room – for their weekly family time for open conversation and dialog. This is a special time set for all to gather and share their weekly topics – whatever is on their mind. All members are comfortable sharing relevant things that are on their mind – topics include relationships, school, work, friends and their schedules / plans for the week. It is always a listening session and not a judgement session. Things are going well in this family, and everyone is looking forward to this family circle / conversation time. This day – the conversation is a bit different – albeit it flows in same manner...read on: After the children had their share, it was time for parents to go, and this is an excerpt from the conversation including context.

Samay: *[in his usual calm voice]*: Ritu and Pavan, thank you for sharing your perspectives. It is great to hear from Pavan that he is enjoying his chess classes and more importantly how it helps him focus on improving his math score.

Ritu – that was very brave to say that you want to help some of your classmates with their work – in subjects they are struggling with. At this young age, that is a very nice thought turned into an action. We are very proud of you both – and feel like you are really making some good choices.

Talking about making choices, it is my turn to make a choice. One good news, I will be able to spend a lot more time with you both and bring you to and back from school in the near future.

Ritu: Yeah



Pavan: Yeah – that is great. Ritu and I will take turns sitting in front of you dad. Does that sound OK Dad?

Ritu: Hey Wait – Dad – does this mean that you do not have to work as hard as you are working at your company.

Ganga: Children. Good to see your joy in learning that Dad will spend more time with you both.

Ritu: That is a very good question, and this is exactly what Dad, and I want to talk about during this family circle.

Ritu and Pavan: We are all ears. Dad – you're IT!

Samay: On that note, YES –

I will not be working as hard in my current company. That is why I will have some more time on my hand to spend with you both and be of help to Mom – where I can provide my support. It will be a good change – and I am looking forward to it. Now to the point, I want to let you know that due to recent organizational changes and budget cuts at work, I will be leaving my job in three weeks. While this was a tough decision made by the company, mom (Ganga) and I understand these things happen.

Ganga: *[looks up, nods in support and puts her hand on Samay's hands]*: Samay, that was very clearly stated. Here, I would like to point out that it may seem like a situation of concern – Let us assure you that at this time there is nothing to worry about. We will walk through the situation and how this family can easily navigate through the next 6-8 months. I am so proud of your dad – in the way he has accepted this situation. We all need to understand the situation and what it means. Tune into the circle guys – and remember this family circle is our safe space – and sacred space. Dad and I will share some information with you both as this will help us all navigate this situation as one family unit.

Pavan and Ritu: *[hugging Mom and Dad]* Mom and Dad – thanks for sharing this with us and trusting us.

Samay: *[Smile on face – proud of the children]* We are sharing some high-level info around our financial situation as of today. We are in a good position and no immediate changes need to be made in our lifestyle. We are good with our savings for 6-9 months and it may take me a few months to find a comparative job for me. We are planning to be mindful and proactive about how we allocate our savings into eight groups – one for each month. Each group is represented by money we need for food, house payment, gas, electricity and so on.

Ganga: We are sharing this with you so that you can clearly see where the money was going and how little was left each month for non-critical expenses. We do not want you to panic



(contd) We will be ok. We will all support dad by doing house chores, keeping our house clean – and we may have to pause on outside dining and entertainment.

Pavan: We are good with the plan. We will do our part. Right Ritu?

Ritu: Yes Pavan, we will pitch in and help where needed. Also, we will continue to stay focused on schoolwork.

Samay: (everyone is seated in relaxed mode) Very proud of you all. This family is my strength. This is extremely helpful – and will allow me to focus on my job search without any additional stress.

Questions:

1. How do you see the regular family time helping this family to have open and transparent communication? Are you having regular family time with your family for open dialog?
2. How can we model clarity in communication to help the family appreciate the circumstances and be ready to face the uncertainties / challenges with an unplanned change?
3. What small shifts can we make to include all family members (as appropriate) in understanding certain situations that arise – and work out solutions together so that we all are committed to it.
4. Samay emphasizes that the family is strong and will manage together. How does this message reinforce the idea that emotional security comes from family bonds—not material comforts—and how can this mindset support a ceiling on desires?

SWAMI SAYS ...

Family is the most important unit in the world. If the family is running on sound lines, the world will also run smoothly. - Divine Discourse, 2nd March 2003, Prashanthi Nilayam.

WRAPPING UP ...

- Facilitator to summarize the highlights from discussions as well as individual reflections [Brief takeaway by facilitator.]
- Reflections- request attendees to share anything that was interesting or intriguing or inspiring. Reflective prompt: *Let's go around and quickly hear from everyone in one or two words, your takeaway from today's Parenting session.*
- Commitment- Let us, as parents, commit to fostering a home where open conversations are routine, challenges are faced together with calm and clarity, and where our children learn that strength, security, and joy come not from what we own, but from how we support one another.