



EXPECTATIONS- BALANCE

Context: The objective of this discussion is to emphasize the importance of setting healthy limits on parental expectations to foster emotional well-being, balance, and mutual respect within the family.

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

1. How can we recognize when our expectations—from our children or ourselves—are becoming unrealistic or emotionally burdensome?
2. What does it mean to value effort, well-being, and character over performance and perfection in a family setting?
3. How can we model and encourage a balanced approach to responsibilities, achievement, and rest in everyday family life?

Scenario: Areendum (father), Pallavi (mother), Anaya (daughter)

A modest, middle-income home in a suburban neighborhood. It's a Saturday afternoon, and the family gathers in the living room after lunch. Anaya sprawls on the carpet with her textbooks open.

Areendum: *[glancing at Anaya]:* Anaya, your exams are coming up. I see that you are working very hard with your preparation. I know you always make your best effort. As a dad, I just wanted to let you know that your best is good enough. Do take time for yourself and for us. We don't want you to burn yourself out trying to be perfect.

Anaya: *[looks up, visibly relieved, blinking back some pressure]:* Thanks, Dad. I am aware that I'm not getting a high A in math like some of my classmates. Therefore, I am giving a little bit more to play to my potential. I go to my teachers for extra help, and I've been practicing past papers. I'm fine Dad. And thanks for checking in. You and Mom always set an example of giving your best to whatever you do. I am learning from the best.

Pallavi: That is very nice of you to observe and express. We expect you to be the best you can be — focused on becoming the best version of yourself. Stay true to yourself. For us, who you are and how you approach things you take on is more important to us.



Areendum [*nodding*]: I know I used to push hard when I was younger. I thought achievement was everything. But I’ve seen too many students—bright, capable ones—break under pressure. No marks are worth your peace of mind.”

Anaya: [*softly*]: It helps to hear that. Sometimes, it feels like everyone else is in a race and I’m just trying to breathe.

Pallavi: [*smiling*]: You don’t have to run anyone else's race. We’re proud of you just as you are. And remember, it's okay to ask for help—whether it's with studies or stress.

A few moments pass in silence as Anaya returns to her notes with a lighter heart.

Questions:

1. In what ways might we, as parents, be unknowingly overextending our expectations of our children?
2. How can we model contentment, resilience, and self-acceptance in a way that still encourages growth?
3. What small shifts can we make in our language and actions to foster a more emotionally secure environment at home?
4. Do you relate to how this situation is approached? Have you encountered something like this in your home?

SWAMI SAYS ...

Home is the temple where the family, each member of which is a moving temple, is nurtured and nourished. - Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 9, Discourse 13, July 1969.

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 recognizing that our hopes and ambitions must never come at the expense of our children's well-being. May we resist the urge to live through them or push them too far, and instead support them with love, balance, and respect for their individual limits and dreams.