



EXPECTATIONS- MUTUAL RESPECT

CONTEXT: Walking into a joyful home – is always a good feeling. A house filled with laughter, scattered toys, books, and craft supplies is a joyful place. The giggles of children, intense conversations on current topics, hearty family dinner laughs, and affectionate chuckles between spouses reveal that a house is truly a home.

OBJECTIVES: During this session, parents will focus on transforming their living spaces into a joyful place – a home, by

- a. Aligning expectations through open and empathetic conversations.
- b. Fostering mutual respect and cooperation within the family.
- c. Encouraging responsible behavior by modeling openness and understanding, creating a safe space for children to express themselves.

SCENARIO: Veena (mother), Jay (father), Adi (son), Maya (daughter)

[Setting: Living room. Toys are scattered, a half-finished drawing on the coffee table, open books on the dining table and clutter of shoes by the door. Jay walks in, sidesteps a Lego.

Jay: (sighs) Okay... guys – you got me again. I stepped on a very important Lego piece that was in a place – not expected. Was that a trick to get me? It hurt as I stepped on it! Can we please guide the Lego piece to its designated home?

Veena: (calling from the kitchen) I just asked them to clean this up an hour ago.

[Adi walks in with a soccer ball, Maya is behind him humming, holding markers.]

Jay: Adi, Maya—come on, guys. We’ve talked about this. This place looks like a tornado hit it.

Adi: Sorry, Dad. I was just showing Maya how to do a rainbow kick. We forgot about the Legos.

Maya: And I was making a birthday card for Aunty Priya!

Veena: (calmer) I love that you’re both creative and playful. But we need to work on cleaning up too. It’s becoming a bit much.

Adi: We do try! But sometimes, it’s like—right when we finish one thing, we get excited about another.

Jay: (rubbing his forehead) We get that, but the house isn’t going to clean itself. Your mom and I have work, cooking, laundry...

Veena: (pauses, then softer) You know what—maybe we need to rethink how we’re asking. We don’t want you to stop being yourselves... but we also need some help keeping things together.

Maya: (hesitantly) Can I say something?

Jay: Of course, sweetheart.



Maya: Sometimes when you guys get mad about the mess, I feel like I'm messing up all the time. Even when I was trying to do something nice, like the card.

Adi: Yeah... it makes me not want to say anything. I just clean in secret, so I don't get in trouble.

Veena: (sits down) Oh, honey. That's not what we want at all.

Jay: We've been so focused on the mess, we forgot why there's a mess—it's because you're learning, playing, creating. That's a good thing.

Veena: Maybe we can make a better system—like a "clean-up song" or a 10-minute family tidy-up after dinner?

Adi: That would be cool. We could race to see who finishes first.

Maya: And you guys can help too! It's more fun when we do it together.

Jay: Deal. We'll be the Clean-Up Crew. But we're keeping score. Loser does the dishes.

[Everyone laughs. Veena gives Maya a hug.]

Veena: Thanks for sharing how you feel. We're always here to listen, okay?

Adi: We'll try harder.

Jay: And we'll try to be more patient. Let's make this house feel like home—messes and all.

[Fade out with the family picking up toys together and laughing.]

SWAMI SAYS ...

Love Sustains; Love Strengthens. Love is the urge behind all adventures, all sacrifices, all success. When love is the lever that operates the mind, only good can result. Live in love; love is life.

- SSS, Vol 9, Discourse 30, August 1971

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What were the parents' expectations, and were they realistic or unrealistic?
2. How did the children feel about those expectations, and what helped them express their feelings?
3. Discuss parents' approach during the conversation, and how did empathy play a role?
4. How can families balance maintaining order with encouraging self-expression, and improve communication of expectations?

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 commit as parents to fostering a supportive, empathetic environment where creativity and responsibility are balanced, communication is open, and the whole family shares in maintaining a home together.