



HEALTH AND HAPPINESS-MINDFUL CHOICES

Context: The objective of this discussion is to emphasize the importance of setting healthy limits on spending on clothing, accessories, and gadgets.

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

1. How does peer pressure influence our children's desires and choices?
2. In what ways can we introduce and model the practice of "ceiling on desires" at home?
3. How can we create value-based, respectful conversations that strengthen family harmony?

Scenario: Surya (father), Sravanthi (mother), Lasya (daughter)

The school district that Lasya goes to is popular in the neighboring cities for its fashion models and latest trends as well as for its grades. Clothing, accessories, gadgets, you name it, the students are the first to get it and post on popular social media. This is how they define themselves.

Lasya's parents, Surya and Sravanthi, moved here after hearing about the academic success of the school. Lasya, a jovial, social girl, immediately jumped into school dynamics. In the beginning trying to keep up with the social circle and the fashions didn't seem hard for her as she felt she could easily ask her parents whatever she wanted, and they would easily afford it. Slowly, the standards went up in school, so did Lasya's desires and her desires started bossing over her inner voice, starting some ripples of disturbance in her mind. Those inner ripples grew into the external world, leading to noticeable disagreements and conversations with parents.

Weeks rolled into months, and Sravanthi noticed Lasya's closet space, in this big house, shrinking, and clothes worn, just once, moving to the unseen corners and calling it home. A weekend dinner time seemed the right time to open a conversation which, while being still pleasant, was enriching, enlightening and educational to Lasya.

While serving food, Surya seemed to have hesitated to serve food on his plate, which amazed Lasya. She never saw her dad do that. With a puzzled face, she questioned her dad.

Lasya: Dad! Why aren't you serving yourselves more food?



Surya: Lasya, I do not want to take more than what I can eat. I do not want to get sick by eating more than I should. This food might as well be saved for tomorrow or packed and donated at a homeless shelter once served on a plate, it cannot be eaten by anyone else.

Lasya was very much confused by her dad's response, as she is very much aware her dad doesn't waste food. She knew he was trying to say something more than words.

Sravanthi: Lasya, I see you have more questions than answers. Haha. Let me throw some light on this. This all stems from the topic "Ceiling on Desires" that is very much being discussed at study circles at Sai center. Swami says *"Desires are the root cause of man's disturbance. Sense control and ceiling on desires will help him to see God all around and experience bliss."*

Surya: Mom and I are trying to exercise a ceiling on desires in terms of food, time, money, energy and nature. Not wasting food is part of this. Also, if I may suggest, we all can do this together. How about we identify one thing where we are not practicing ceiling on desires?

Lasya: As I am thinking, I understand I must exercise the ceiling of desires on my clothing, accessories and fashion. I do realize I went overboard after moving here. Thanks mom and dad for bringing this to my attention in such a gentle way.

Mom and Dad together: We are so proud of you Lasya for grasping the message, understanding our intent and accepting it without resistance.

Questions:

1. If you were in Lasya's place, how easily do you think you would understand and accept the message being shared? What might make it easier—or harder—for you?
2. Thinking as a parent now, what strategies or approaches have you personally tried to help your child manage desires or expectations? Were they effective?
3. Can you share one example where you modeled moderation ('ceiling on desires') for your child—something that also brought more well-being and happiness to your family?
4. As a parent, how can you proactively help your child avoid forming unhealthy habits in the early stages?

**SWAMI SAYS ...**

... Our desires also should be limited. Women are usually desirous of adding to their wardrobe any number of sarees when they go to a shop or an exhibition. You should have a reasonable number of sarees, but not a huge collection for pomp or show. Misuse of money is a great evil. Even men will have to do their own bit in controlling the expenditure on unwanted and unnecessary things.

-Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 16 (1983) 19 January 1983 Chennai.

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 modeling mindful choices and nurturing a home where contentment, simplicity, and shared values guide our family life.