

From our Chief Executive



Lt. General Arjun Ray, PVSM, VSM (Retd.)

Dear Friends,

Parenting in the Knowledge Age

The school is closed for the summer vacation till mid August. This gives me time to share with you conceptual aspects of parenting in the Knowledge Age. The social changes brought about by the Internet, the economic boom, and rising expectations of people, are straining the traditional fabric of the family.

The challenges before parents and schools are myriad: nuclearisation of the family, the breakdown of the extended family, alienation by technology, Internet safety issues for children, the paucity of quality time, and the archetypal traits of Generation Y (those born after 1995). Generation Y suffers from boredom, they live in the present, they believe more in images and less in concept, and get distracted early – even in moments of pleasure.

Given these realities what should be the **role of parents** in the 21st century?

To begin, parents have to be role-models. Children learn in three ways: example, example and example. During a discussion on why the four-letter word must never be used in conversation, an eighth grader's logic seemed convincing. The boy said, "My father uses it; so does my mother. Their friends also use it. My favourite actors use it. If it was bad why would they use it anyway?"

In role-modelling, parents should consider four key areas: personal and social values; righteous conduct wherein means are as important as the ends; reverence for all life; and the power of forgiveness.

Central to the need for whole-education, parents must next address the most fundamental issue of human existence – the meaning of life. This is not easily teachable in schools. Schools are unable to bring out the inner potential of a child by themselves; they need the help of parents. Parents can cooperate by providing an example to their children by seeking a higher purpose in their own life.

The third role for parents is to provide their children a rich work ethic by creating a collaborative learning atmosphere at home. Children must realise that school is not the only institution that values mental efforts in achieving an enduring work ethic. The home is equally important. Parents could discuss current political and economic challenges facing society, moral issues like corruption, news events and great ideas. Collaborative learning is also an excellent medium to impart value-education and making children lifelong learners.

The fourth key role parents can play is by nurturing specific intelligences their children are strong in. Human beings are endowed with a range of multiple intelligences. These are: logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, natural and existential. Each and every person has these intelligences in varying measures. The function of schools and parents is to identify the specific intelligences the child is strong in and then nurture that talent.

Parents can fulfil their responsibilities provided the concept of 'quality time' is correctly implemented. Quality time should conform to what is 'quality' for the child; and not what parents can spare. Parents have to be around when the children need them. Only then will they be able to take a keen interest in what the children are doing. It is equally important for parents to also share with their children what they are doing in life.

Given our fast-paced society and changing attitudes of the youth, re-education on parenting is very much a necessity for the sake of the future of our children.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arjun Ray". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

**Lieutenant General Arjun Ray, PVSM, VSM (Retd.)
Chief Executive Officer,
Indus Trust.**