

Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference (W. Churchill).

In all kinds of relations the way one treats another determines the whole picture of communication. Misunderstanding comes on surface in result of the absence of common viewpoints on a matter and reluctance in accepting anybody's contrary idea. The strongest walls between people are built not of stone or concrete. Rather, they are made of miscomprehension. Such a consistent pattern of life is quite fair in regard to all forms of interaction between individuals, let along mention the family circle where the most solid foundation of harmonic home is mutuality and integrity. So, in what way we build up our behavior? What is a model for us to follow? The roots of this "tree of knowledge" are in our childhood.

A child is brought into this world like a blank canvas to apply all the paint possible on it to gain the picture desired. Thus, the work of an artist is incumbent on parents. The child's incipient cognition of the boundless and many-faceted world starts when contacting mom and dad. These people appear to be the nearest, the most credible and trustworthy humans for their babies and that is why they have to be the best sample to emulate. Naturally, children unwittingly absorb like a sponge both good and bad information in a process of character formation. Still, why with time passing many parents are challenged by the fact their child is different from their expectations? In quest for an answer to such a topical question of all times the family factor is not the only one on the list though it takes a considerable niche in an upbringing process. There is a multitude of reasons stipulating the making up of personality, these being the outer factors that count: educational establishment, attitudes with peers and friends and on the whole the time the off-springs live in. Hence we deal with the thorny issue of generation gap.

As a matter of fact, the very term 'gap' comprises something lacking like unfilled space or a kind of split that divides two sides, i.e. the discrepancy of views. The underlying presupposition for such gap to arise is time and age difference which is always evident and inevitable. We, children of our own parents, intuitively expect the latter to be our stronghold and support. We don't want them to be too strict in their judgments, thus in most cases we try to avoid their reprimanding, decrying and scolding us for our missteps and misdeeds. We show our will and reject their officious moral lectures of 'how we should live'. Virtually, they do it with only good intentions saying a sort of 'take care to get what you like or you'll be forced to like what you get' (G.B. Shaw). Indeed, the wise words of a wise man. However, we repudiate to accept them what is explained by a teenager's unstable character rather than hatred to our parents. We believe we know everything ourselves and need no advise. Still, we happen to ask for it very often in confusing situations. Up to a point, the book I've recently read, one episode in particular, reveals the parent and child topic of misunderstanding and communication gap.

The title of the book is Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan. The author depicts diverse, complicated and tough life paths of four Chinese women who moved to America in search of better life. Actually, I am not going to encompass the whole plot of the book, but that very one which skillfully reflects the problem mentioned above, namely the conflict between mom and her daughter and endeavors of the former to instill best things in her child.

The struggle is around the issue of becoming better if not the best as Suyuan Woo continuously repeated to her daughter "you could be anything you wanted to be..." She was desperately trying to make her child incredibly successful and famous. A grand idea, isn't it? A generous attempt to teach a child diligence and assiduousness, to bring up a strong will on the way to a cherished dream. But

was it really Jing-Mei's wish of the life? The girl was suffocating of her mom's persistence. Frankly speaking, my parents also sometimes happen to overplay their hand imposing overprotection that irritates. Still, we manage to find common language.

On the one hand, Jing-Mei's mother can be justified of her craving to embody the best qualities in her daughter. Unfortunately, she didn't manage in her own life to reach the heights. Moreover, she had undergone severe losses – a husband and two little twins she had to abandon in China. The previous life was a burden for her and with the birth of her daughter she got a second chance to fix the faults of the past. It seems even that the child was living not her own but her mom's life.

The mother was so passionate and obsessed with the idea to make her girl perfect that involuntary the girl started to believe in the “prodigy part” in hers and tried to please her mom in any way possible: “In all of my imaginings I was filled with a sense that I would soon become perfect: My mother and father would adore me. I would be beyond reproach.” It's my firm belief that while growing up children are rather vulnerable and emotionally unstable. When they are exposed to pressure they often become aggressive and begin to show rebellious and indignant inner nature. So do I at times. Their parents seem to them completely ‘deaf’ and by no means heedful but extremely demanding. All what we want is just understanding of us as we are, maybe not genius but still smart and to an extent talented, maybe not celebrated “dainty ballerinas” or those with “the sauciness of a Shirley Temple” or pianists or chess winners. We, just as we are, the kids of our parents who still need support but not a sulk expression on their faces if we don't succeed right away.

When the accumulated rage and offence become overwhelming there is a boiling point when one can't stand this total miscomprehension and indifference to the feelings of one's own and then you flare up as Jing-Mei did with words “Why don't you like me the way I am? I'm *not* a genius!” Later on such outbursts against a mom or dad may seem excessive or exaggerated but this is the way to evoke a response from them, to make them look closely at their children and penetrate into the soul, the inner willingness and inclinations but not fastened and made compulsory.

So, apparently parents just need to create friendly conditions of amiable environment at home. Outspoken and sincere conversation can help escape mutual insults and create credibility in relations. I very much adhere to the point that “people generally quarrel because they cannot argue” (Gilbert Keith Chesterton) since it is widely believed that thought thrives on conflict. The truth can be found through conflict which both sides strive to resolve amicably, through sound intercourse and by ‘sound’ I mean not only to be able to make your ideas audible, but also to make communication ‘healthy’.

After all, in contemplations on the topic of conflict and gap between parents and their kids we should always mind certain circumstances under which such splits may occur. There is a critical note that the conflict we witness in the novel has its grounds in such notions as high and low context cultures. By this it's meant that misunderstanding between older and younger characters is driven by cultural and traditional peculiarities of the world perception. Here, the mom, born in China, has difficulty in communicating messages of her own since she was raised and lived a considerable part of her conscious life in the country quite different from the US – the country of high context culture. This kind of culture is designated by group over individual approach to social organization and more instinctive feature and predisposition to mutual understanding that is why the mother of the novel supposes her daughter to belong to this very type of culture perhaps forgetting that Jing-Mei was born in America, contrasting low context culture. In effect, the daughter thinks differently, her mentality was influenced more and might have much more in common with Americans rather than

Chinese. Such gap is clearly showing itself in the abstract when the mother shouts “Only two kinds of daughters... Those who are obedient and those who follow their own mind! Only one kind of daughter can live in this house. Obedient daughter!” To follow one’s own mind is natural for low context cultures what exemplifies their self-, not group dependence.

Whatever the factors may be, the phenomenon of ‘GAP’ exists and will obviously exist in future. The protest that many parents happen to encounter, restraint or rampage are the forms in which children, especially teens, claim their self-importance even pompousness. Even though it were not for “piano lessons”, there would have been dancing, chess, singing or any kind of lessons that would be hated and objected. I know it by myself, disagreeing with something just on grounds I was not thoroughly listened to and heard. It happens here, there and everywhere – the specificities of growing up gradually reaching the adult line. Unless our mind is mature we are prone to be deluded, uncontrolled and sometimes even unbearable. We may often hear our mom saying “So ungrateful!” Really, we *are* at times. We read in the novel the mother’s words “Only ask you be your best. For your sake. You think I want you to be genius? Hnnh! What for! Who asks you!” and realize maybe it’s not genius that our mothers want us to be in their eyes, but just happy without knowing what losses, pains and grievance mean. They are trying to protect us from villains and evils, indigence and lacks – all bad things imaginable. Indeed, isn’t it experience, that is the mother of wisdom? So, to some extent we, in our turn, must make all possible steps forwards and not be stubborn because understanding is the two-way traffic.

The established unity and solidarity in a family will help evade the situation which happened to Jing-Mei after her piano recital ‘fiasco’: “...my mother's expression was what devastated me: a quiet, blank look that said she had lost everything”. The kid’s realization that she didn’t manage to come up to her parents’, even more her mom’s, expectations made her feel totally depressed, to the extent that she let the frustration and rage go outside: “I’ll never be the kind of daughter you want me to be! I wish I weren’t your daughter!” I don’t think the girl really meant what she said. With many years passing, sitting on the piano bench, Jing-Mei found the piano “sound even richer”. Actually, in my opinion, the two parts of the ‘failure’ composition symbolize childish and mature Jing-Mei who reconsidered her previous mistakes and missteps.

Nowadays, we comprise a new generation Y, dynamic, swift, smart and dexterous. We hardly know what real hardships are. By saying this certainly I tend to generalize. On the whole, we qualitatively different – we are the generation of technologies and virtual global web. We spend innumerable hours in front of monitors of our pc or even more sophisticated devices of the modern day. We socialize via internet which unites us with regard to our interests, needs, tastes etc. Our education became indispensably connected with network and now we have e-learning and e-life at all! Evidently, there will be a gap dividing us and our parents. The way we live and the life style we follow may go in contrast with their lives. Still, it is not the reason to arouse a conflict. Rather, it is the reason to find as much understanding and attention from each other as possible. Then even a little failure of ours would not be our last defeat what subtly underlined F. Scott-Fitzgerald in his utterance “Never confuse a single defeat with a final defeat”.