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K. P. B. HINDUJA COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

(AUTONOMOUS)

Counselling Cell · Degree College – B.Com. (Aided) Section

EVERY MIND MATTERS

A Compilation of Essays, Poems & Posters

on the occasion of World Mental Health Day 2026 · 10 October

"There is no health without mental health."

— World Health Organization

TALK | SUPPORT | CARE | GROW

Together for a brighter tomorrow

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"The first wealth is health."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Message from the Principal

On World Mental Health Day, I am glad to see our college come together around a cause that matters deeply to every one of us: the well-being of our students.

A college is not only a place for lectures, examinations and degrees. It is a community where young people grow, learn to cope with pressure and discover who they are. Our students carry many expectations – academic, personal, social and professional – and not all of them are visible to others. We therefore believe that caring for the mind is as much a part of education as developing the intellect.

The Management, the staff and the Counselling Cell work together in the interest of our students. The college provides a counselling facility free of cost to students and staff, and our alumni too come to seek help. Our counsellor, Ms. Asha Ambani, is available at the college on Wednesdays and Fridays, and everything shared with her is kept completely confidential. The Counselling Cell, under the dedicated leadership of its Convener, also organised the essay, poem and poster competitions presented in this booklet.

I congratulate and thank every student who took part. By writing and drawing about stress, hope, loneliness, resilience and the need to talk, you have shown sensitivity and courage, and you have helped to break the silence around a subject that is too often avoided. I also thank Prof. Anand Kumta for judging the competitions, the Convener Dr. Chandrashekhar Deore, and all my colleagues who contributed to this initiative.

To our students, I would like to say: you are never alone. If something is weighing on your mind, please speak to a friend, a teacher or our counsellor. Asking for help is a sign of strength. To my colleagues, let us notice, listen and guide with kindness and patience.

Our college remains firmly committed to the cause of mental health and to building a safe, supportive and inclusive campus where every student feels heard and valued. May this booklet inspire us to keep this conversation alive, not only on 10th October but every day of the year.

Prof. (Dr.) Navin M. Punjabi
Principal
K.P.B. Hinduja College of Commerce (Autonomous)

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world."
— Desmond Tutu

Message from the Convener

Every year on 10th October, the world observes World Mental Health Day. It reminds us of something we often forget: our minds need care, attention and understanding just as much as our bodies do.

Mental health issues are far more common than we like to admit. Stress, anxiety, loneliness, low mood and overwhelming pressure touch people of every age and background. Students feel it through academic pressure, comparison, career uncertainty and expectations. Yet many suffer silently, fearing they will be judged, labelled weak or simply not understood. This silence, and the taboo behind it, is often a bigger barrier than the problem itself.

It is time to take mental health seriously. A mind in distress is not a matter of weakness, attitude or willpower. It is a genuine health concern that deserves the same compassion and timely help as any physical illness. Ignoring it can affect studies, work, relationships and, in the worst cases, life itself.

The first step is to talk. Speaking openly with a friend, a family member, a teacher or a counsellor can lighten a heavy burden. Equally important is listening: without interrupting, judging or rushing to give advice. Simple questions like "How are you, really?" can open a door. There are many ways in which we can help:

- Notice the signs: withdrawal, sudden changes in mood or behaviour, loss of interest, constant fatigue.
- Listen with patience and without judgement. Avoid remarks like "just stay positive" or "others have it worse".
- Encourage the person to seek professional help, and offer to accompany them.
- Check in again after a few days. Support often matters most after the first conversation.
- Look after your own well-being too, with rest, routine, balance and time for the people you value.

Our college has made counselling available, free of cost and in complete confidence, to students, staff and alumni. Seeking help is a sign of strength and self-awareness, never of weakness.

I am happy that so many of our students expressed themselves through essays, poems and posters. Their words and art show courage, sensitivity and hope. I thank every participant and everyone who helped to make this initiative meaningful.

Let us commit to speaking up, listening kindly and removing the silence and stigma around mental health. Together, we can build a campus and a society where every mind matters and every voice counts.

Dr. (CA) Chandrashekhar Deore
PhD, CA, LLB, M.Com, M.A.
Convener, Counselling Cell and
Professor, Research Guide and Head of the Department of Accountancy

"Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable."
— Fred Rogers

About this Booklet

On the occasion of World Mental Health Day (10 October), the Counselling Cell of the Degree College – B.Com. (Aided) Section organised an Essay Competition, a Poem Competition and a Poster Competition to create awareness about mental health, emotional well-being and the importance of seeking help when needed. The competitions were open to all students of the college, including the aided, self-financing and junior college sections.

This booklet brings together the entries received, reproduced as submitted, in the participants' own words and artwork. We thank every student who took the time to write, draw and speak up.

OUR JUDGE

Prof. Anand Kumta

The competitions were judged by Prof. Anand Kumta, a retired professor of our college and an ex-convener of the Counselling Cell. He is associated with many NGOs and works for the cause of mental health. He has trained himself in a year-long Mental Health Training Programme (MHTP) conducted by Ummeed Child Development Center.

"Because every mind matters and every voice counts."

01

Essay Competition

Let your words make a difference!

9 entries

02

Poem Competition

Let your words be a ray of hope!

8 entries

03

Poster Competition

Let your creativity inspire change!

8 entries

DISCLAIMER

The views and opinions expressed in the essays, poems and posters in this booklet are the independent and individual opinions of the respective author students. The college and its authorities are not responsible for the same.

Compiled by

Prof. Chandrashekhar Deore

Convenor, Counselling Cell

Degree College – B.Com. (Aided) Section, K.P.B. Hinduja College of Commerce (Autonomous)

"What mental health needs is more sunlight, more candor, and more unashamed conversation."

— Glenn Close

SECTION 01

Essays

Let your words make a difference!

INDICATIVE TOPICS

- It's OK to Talk – Breaking the silence around mental health
- Managing Stress in a Fast-Paced World – Challenges and Coping Strategies
- Suicide Prevention – There is Always Hope
- The Role of Youth in Building a Mentally Healthy and Inclusive Society
- Digital Life and Mental Health – Boon or Bane?

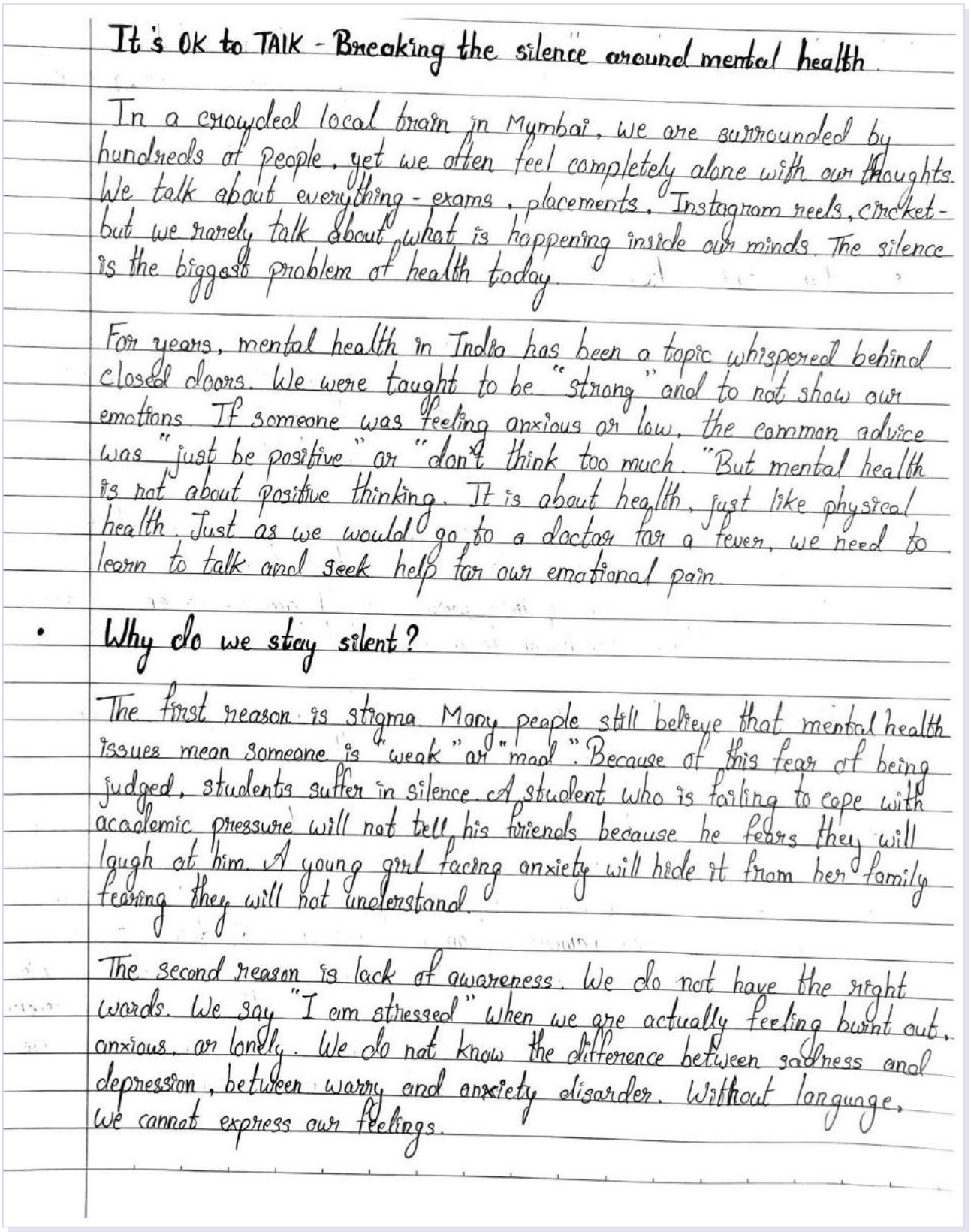
"The pen is mightier than the sword."

— Edward Bulwer-Lytton

ESSAY 01

It's OK to TALK – Breaking the Silence Around Mental Health

Anandi Santoshkumar Rao



It's OK to TALK - Breaking the silence around mental health.

In a crowded local train in Mumbai, we are surrounded by hundreds of people, yet we often feel completely alone with our thoughts. We talk about everything - exams, placements, Instagram reels, cricket - but we rarely talk about what is happening inside our minds. The silence is the biggest problem of health today.

For years, mental health in India has been a topic whispered behind closed doors. We were taught to be "strong" and to not show our emotions. If someone was feeling anxious or low, the common advice was "just be positive" or "don't think too much." But mental health is not about positive thinking. It is about health, just like physical health. Just as we would go to a doctor for a fever, we need to learn to talk and seek help for our emotional pain.

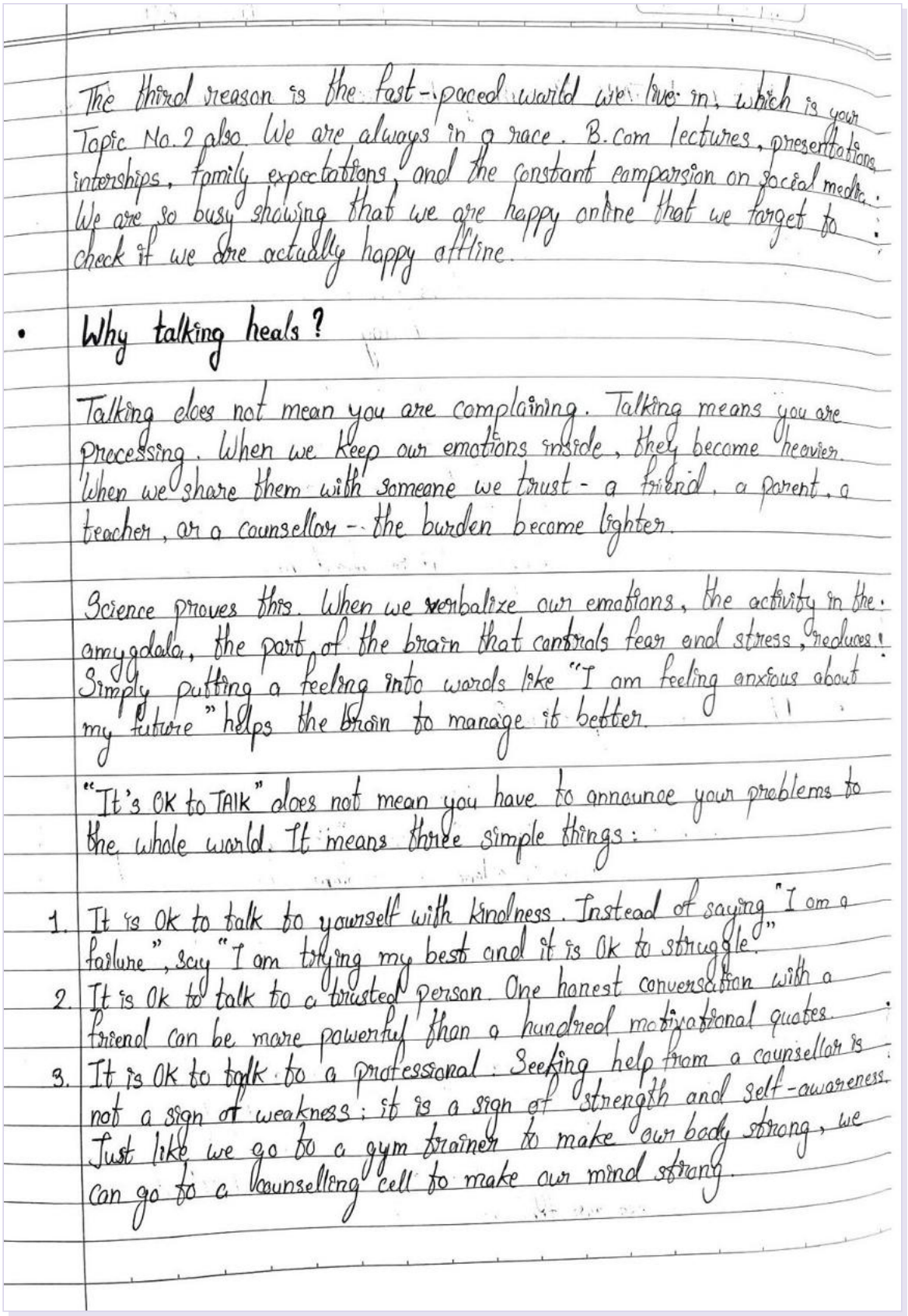
- **Why do we stay silent?**

The first reason is stigma. Many people still believe that mental health issues mean someone is "weak" or "mad". Because of this fear of being judged, students suffer in silence. A student who is failing to cope with academic pressure will not tell his friends because he fears they will laugh at him. A young girl facing anxiety will hide it from her family fearing they will not understand.

The second reason is lack of awareness. We do not have the right words. We say "I am stressed" when we are actually feeling burnt out, anxious, or lonely. We do not know the difference between sadness and depression, between worry and anxiety disorder. Without language, we cannot express our feelings.

"Every man has his secret sorrows which the world knows not; and often times we call a man cold when he is only sad."

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



The third reason is the fast-paced world we live in, which is your Topic No. 2 also. We are always in a race. B.com lectures, presentations, internships, family expectations, and the constant comparison on social media. We are so busy showing that we are happy online that we forget to check if we are actually happy offline.

- **Why talking heals?**

Talking does not mean you are complaining. Talking means you are processing. When we keep our emotions inside, they become heavier. When we share them with someone we trust - a friend, a parent, a teacher, or a counsellor - the burden became lighter.

Science proves this. When we verbalize our emotions, the activity in the amygdala, the part of the brain that controls fear and stress, reduces! Simply putting a feeling into words like "I am feeling anxious about my future" helps the brain to manage it better.

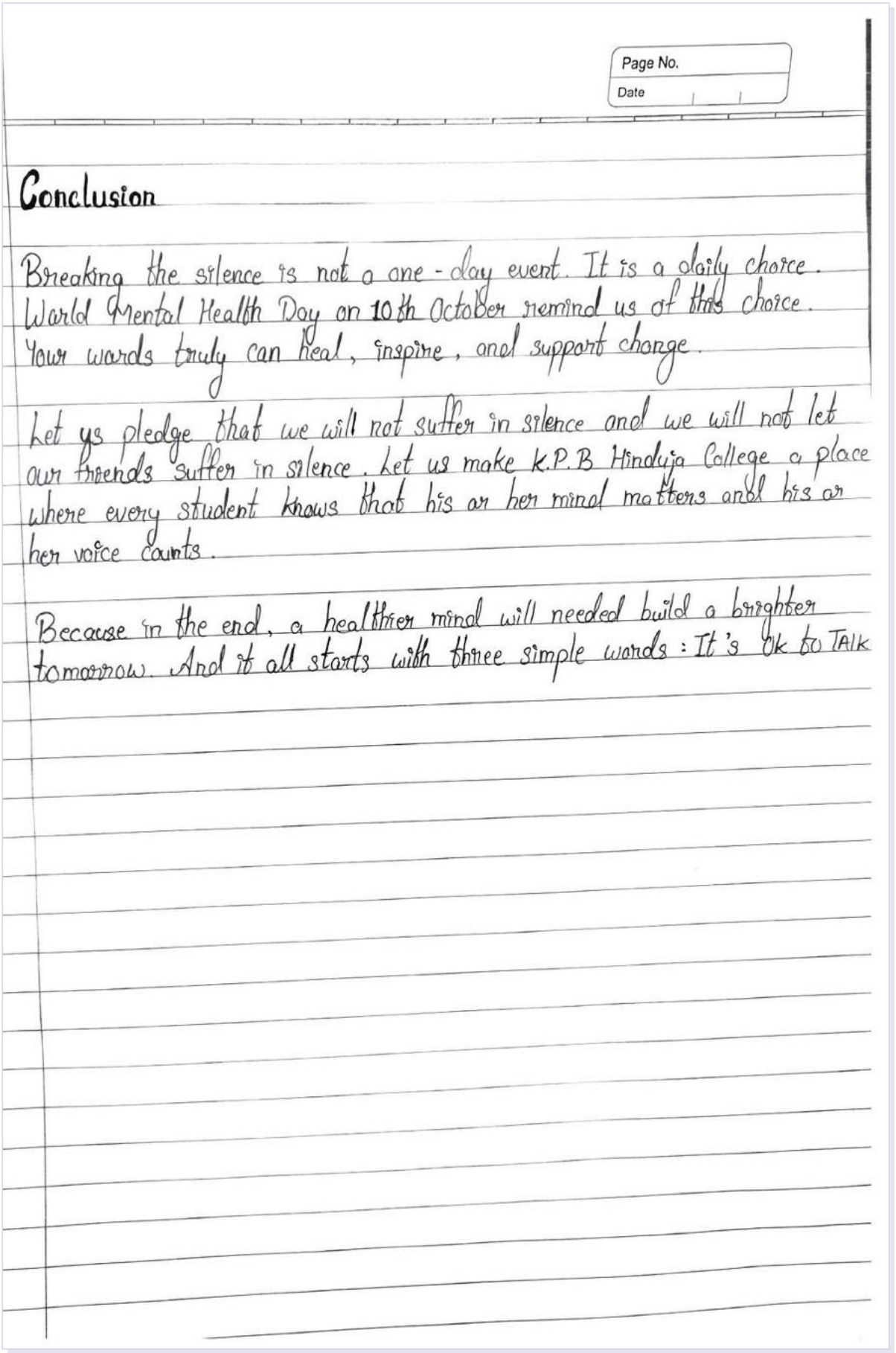
"It's OK to TALK" does not mean you have to announce your problems to the whole world. It means three simple things:

1. It is Ok to talk to yourself with kindness. Instead of saying "I am a failure", say "I am trying my best and it is Ok to struggle."
2. It is Ok to talk to a trusted person. One honest conversation with a friend can be more powerful than a hundred motivational quotes.
3. It is Ok to talk to a professional. Seeking help from a counsellor is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength and self-awareness. Just like we go to a gym trainer to make our body strong, we can go to a counselling cell to make our mind strong.

"A burden shared is a burden halved."

— Proverb

It's OK to TALK – Breaking the Silence Around Mental Health — page 3 of 3



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Conclusion

Breaking the silence is not a one-day event. It is a daily choice. World Mental Health Day on 10th October remind us of this choice. Your words truly can heal, inspire, and support change.

Let us pledge that we will not suffer in silence and we will not let our friends suffer in silence. Let us make K.P.B Hinduja College a place where every student knows that his or her mind matters and his or her voice counts.

Because in the end, a healthier mind will needed build a brighter tomorrow. And it all starts with three simple words : It's Ok to TALK

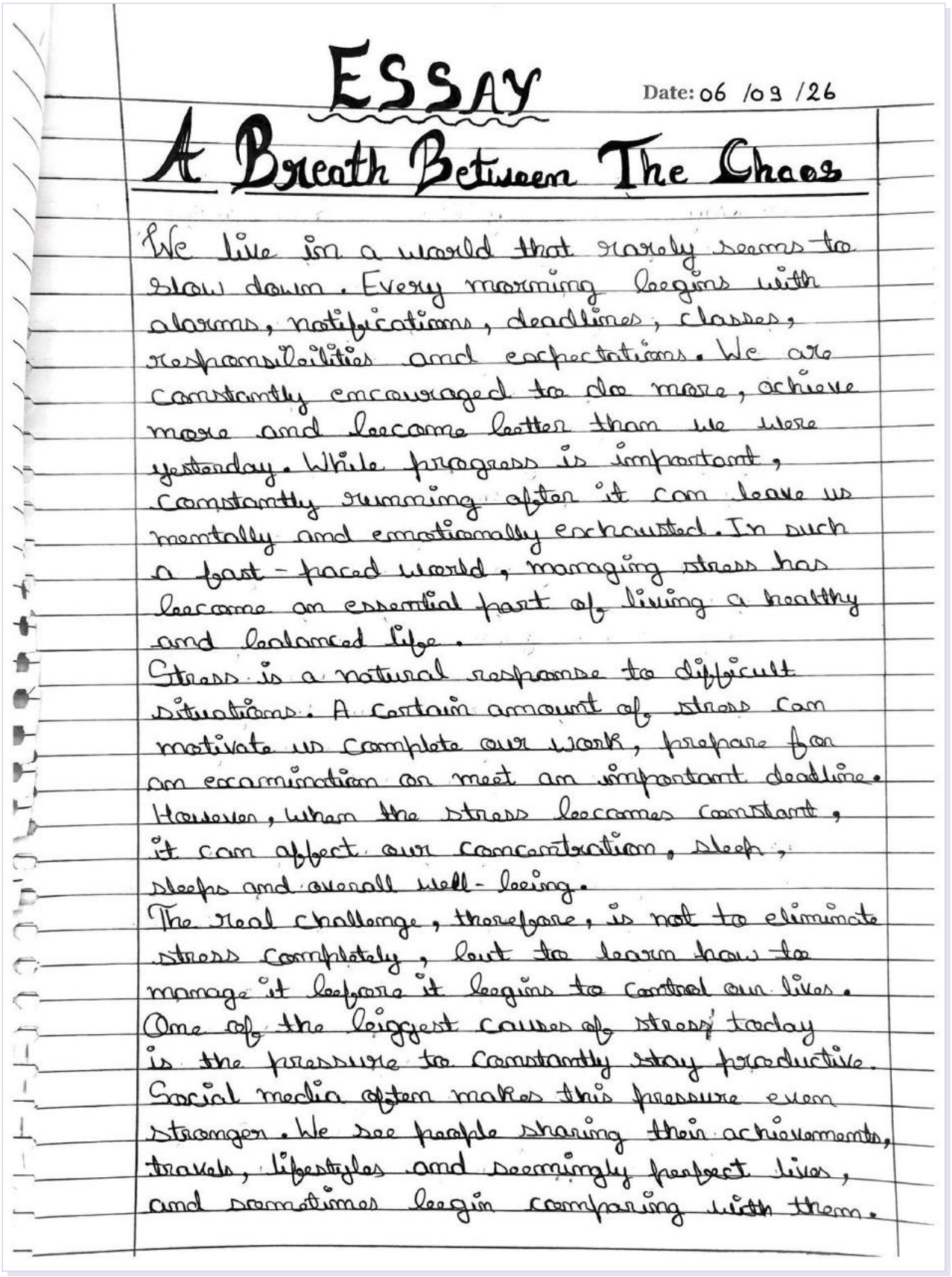
"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now."

— Chinese proverb

ESSAY 02

A Breath Between the Chaos

Kumkum Lodhi



ESSAY

Date: 06 /09 /26

A Breath Between The Chaos

We live in a world that rarely seems to slow down. Every morning begins with alarms, notifications, deadlines, classes, responsibilities and expectations. We are constantly encouraged to do more, achieve more and become better than we were yesterday. While progress is important, constantly running after it can leave us mentally and emotionally exhausted. In such a fast-paced world, managing stress has become an essential part of living a healthy and balanced life.

Stress is a natural response to difficult situations. A certain amount of stress can motivate us complete our work, prepare for an examination or meet an important deadline. However, when the stress becomes constant, it can affect our concentration, sleep, sleeps and overall well-being.

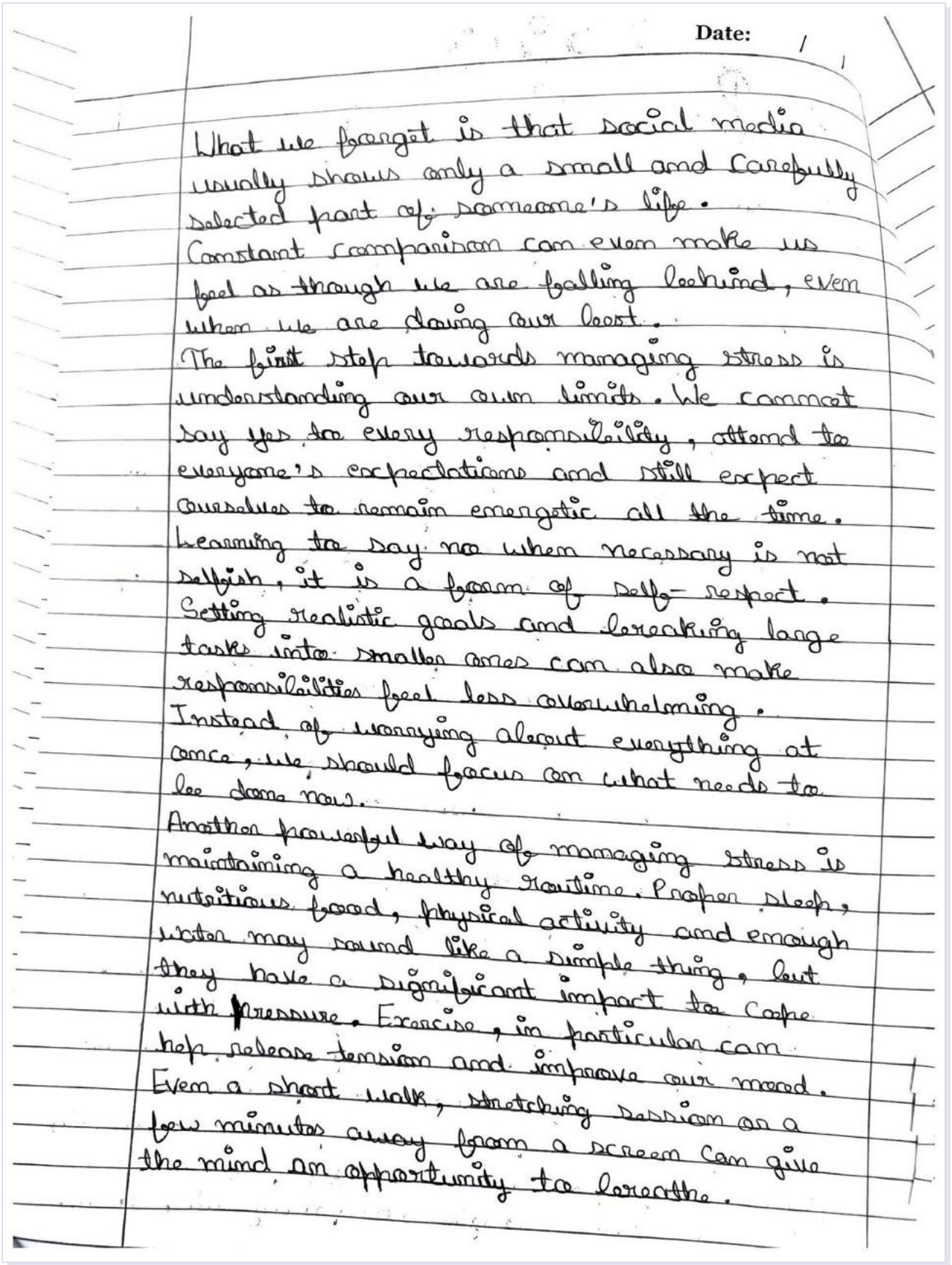
The real challenge, therefore, is not to eliminate stress completely, but to learn how to manage it before it begins to control our lives.

One of the biggest causes of stress today is the pressure to constantly stay productive. Social media often makes this pressure even stronger. We see people sharing their achievements, travels, lifestyles and seemingly perfect lives, and sometimes begin comparing with them.

"There is more to life than increasing its speed."

— Mahatma Gandhi

A Breath Between the Chaos — page 2 of 5



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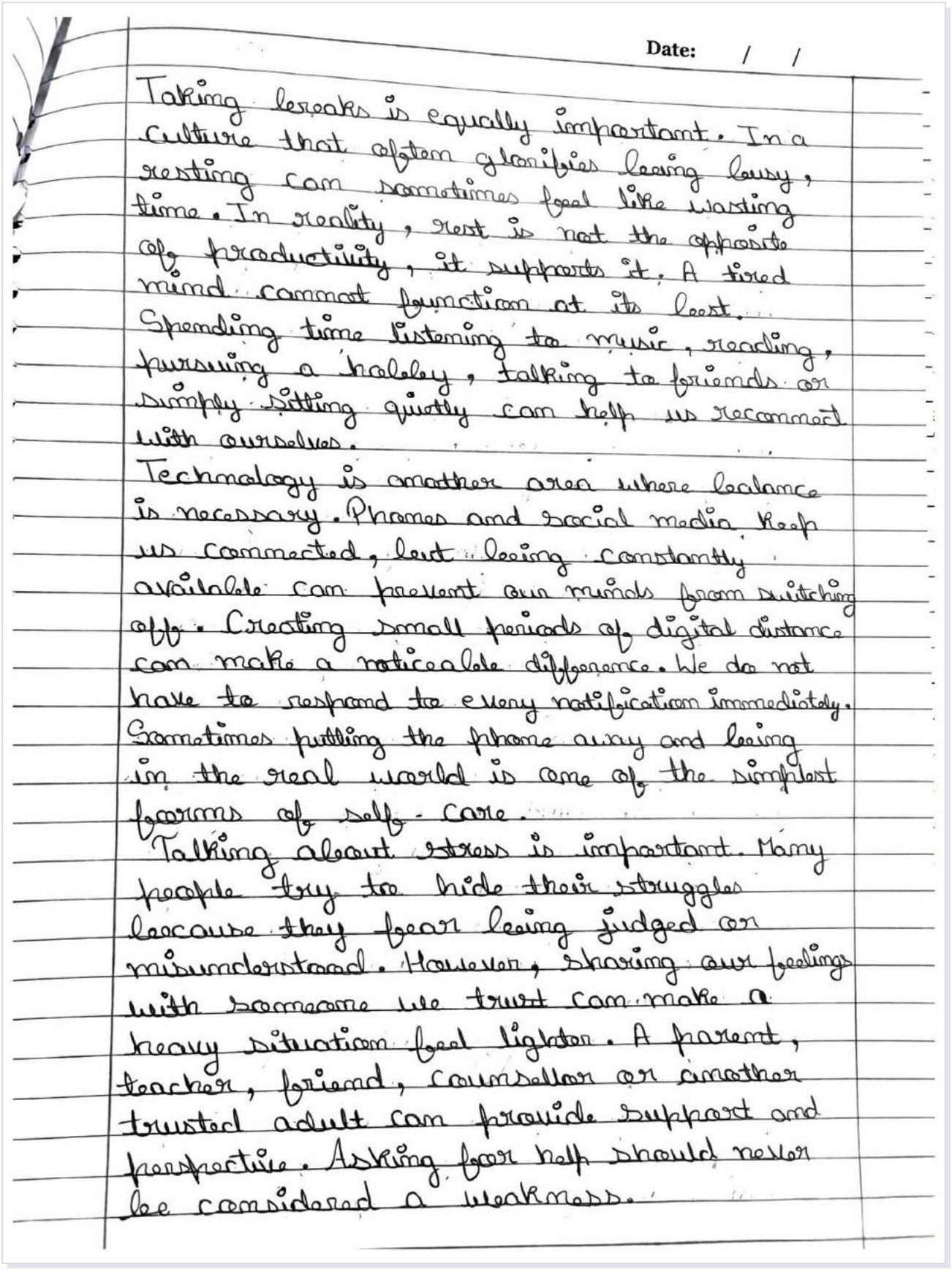
What we forget is that social media usually shows only a small and carefully selected part of someone's life. Constant comparison can even make us feel as though we are falling behind, even when we are doing our best.

The first step towards managing stress is understanding our own limits. We cannot say yes to every responsibility, attend to everyone's expectations and still expect ourselves to remain energetic all the time. Learning to say no when necessary is not selfish, it is a form of self-respect. Setting realistic goals and breaking large tasks into smaller ones can also make responsibilities feel less overwhelming. Instead of worrying about everything at once, we should focus on what needs to be done now.

Another powerful way of managing stress is maintaining a healthy routine. Proper sleep, nutritious food, physical activity and enough water may sound like a simple thing, but they have a significant impact to cope with pressure. Exercise, in particular can help release tension and improve our mood. Even a short walk, stretching session or a few minutes away from a screen can give the mind an opportunity to breathe.

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent."

— Eleanor Roosevelt



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Taking breaks is equally important. In a culture that often glorifies being busy, resting can sometimes feel like wasting time. In reality, rest is not the opposite of productivity, it supports it. A tired mind cannot function at its best. Spending time listening to music, reading, pursuing a hobby, talking to friends or simply sitting quietly can help us reconnect with ourselves.

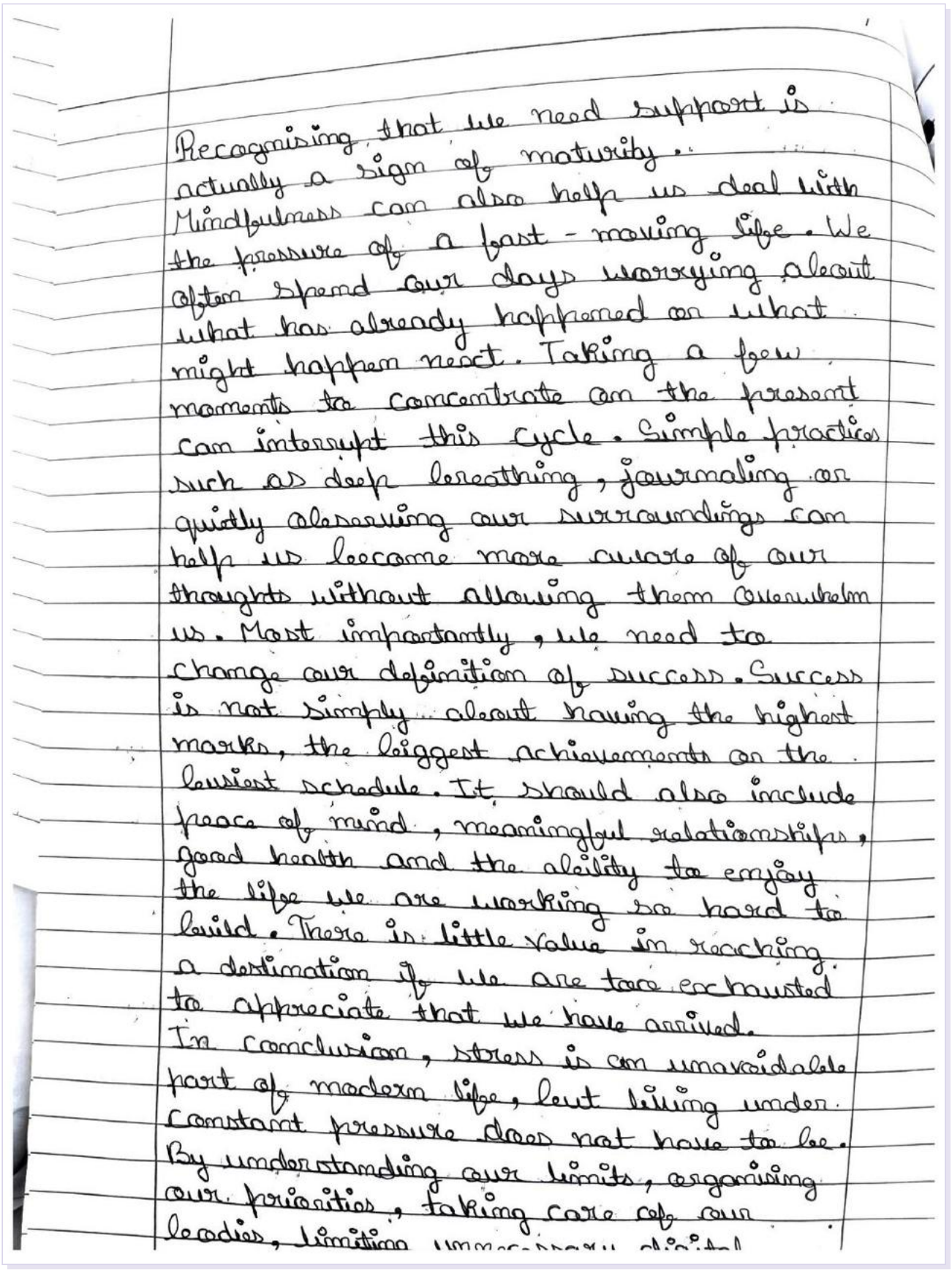
Technology is another area where balance is necessary. Phones and social media keep us connected, but being constantly available can prevent our minds from switching off. Creating small periods of digital distance can make a noticeable difference. We do not have to respond to every notification immediately. Sometimes putting the phone away and being in the real world is one of the simplest forms of self-care.

Talking about stress is important. Many people try to hide their struggles because they fear being judged or misunderstood. However, sharing our feelings with someone we trust can make a heavy situation feel lighter. A parent, teacher, friend, counsellor or another trusted adult can provide support and perspective. Asking for help should never be considered a weakness.

"Rest is not idleness."

— John Lubbock

A Breath Between the Chaos — page 4 of 5

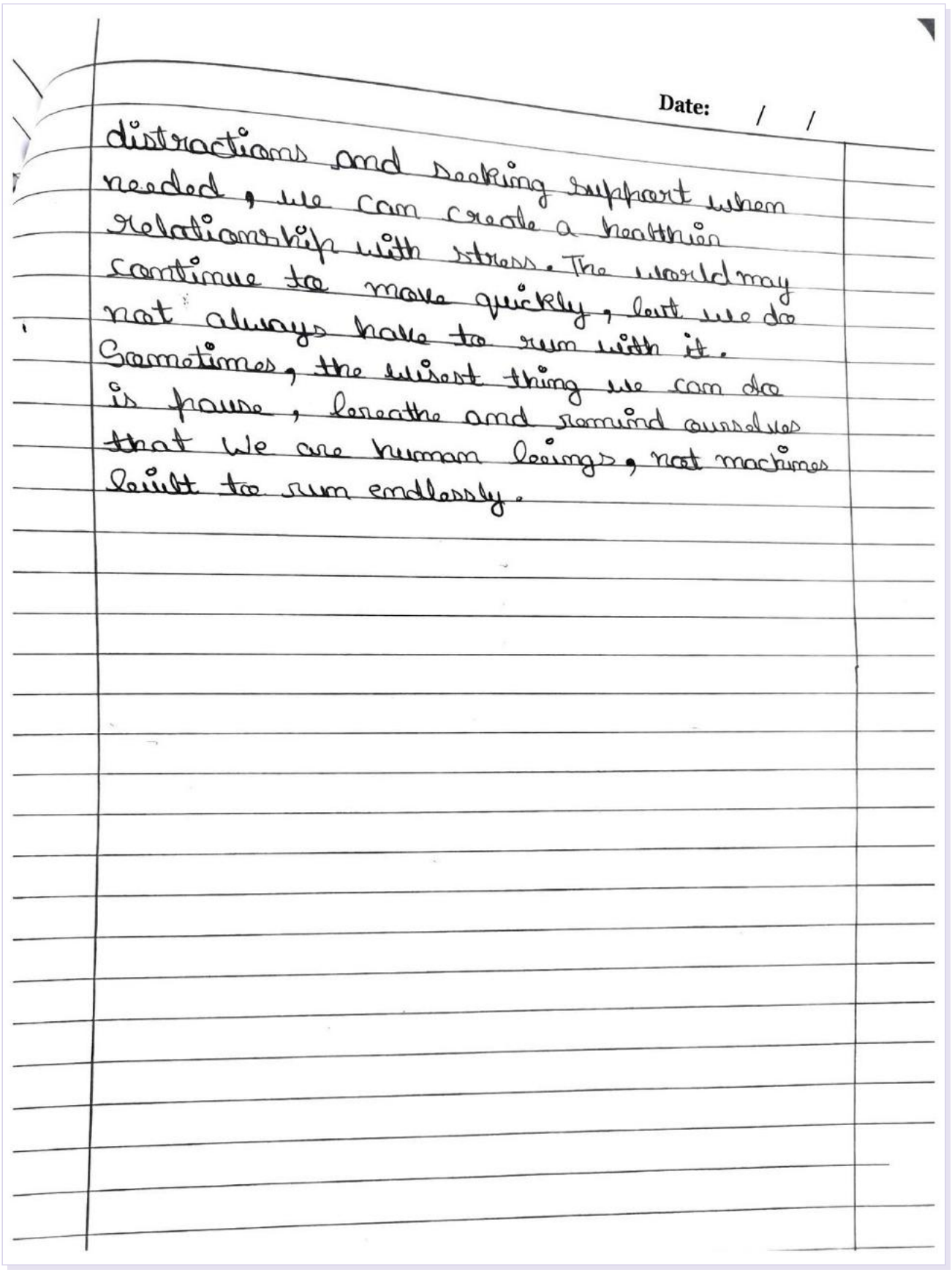


Recognising that we need support is actually a sign of maturity. Mindfulness can also help us deal with the pressure of a fast-moving life. We often spend our days worrying about what has already happened or what might happen next. Taking a few moments to concentrate on the present can interrupt this cycle. Simple practices such as deep breathing, journaling or quietly observing our surroundings can help us become more aware of our thoughts without allowing them overwhelm us. Most importantly, we need to change our definition of success. Success is not simply about having the highest marks, the biggest achievements or the busiest schedule. It should also include peace of mind, meaningful relationships, good health and the ability to enjoy the life we are working so hard to build. There is little value in reaching a destination if we are too exhausted to appreciate that we have arrived.
In conclusion, stress is an unavoidable part of modern life, but living under constant pressure does not have to be. By understanding our limits, organising our priorities, taking care of our bodies, limiting

"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."

— Jon Kabat-Zinn

A Breath Between the Chaos — page 5 of 5



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distractions and seeking support when needed, we can create a healthier relationship with stress. The world may continue to move quickly, but we do not always have to run with it. Sometimes, the wisest thing we can do is pause, breathe and remind ourselves that we are human beings, not machines built to run endlessly.

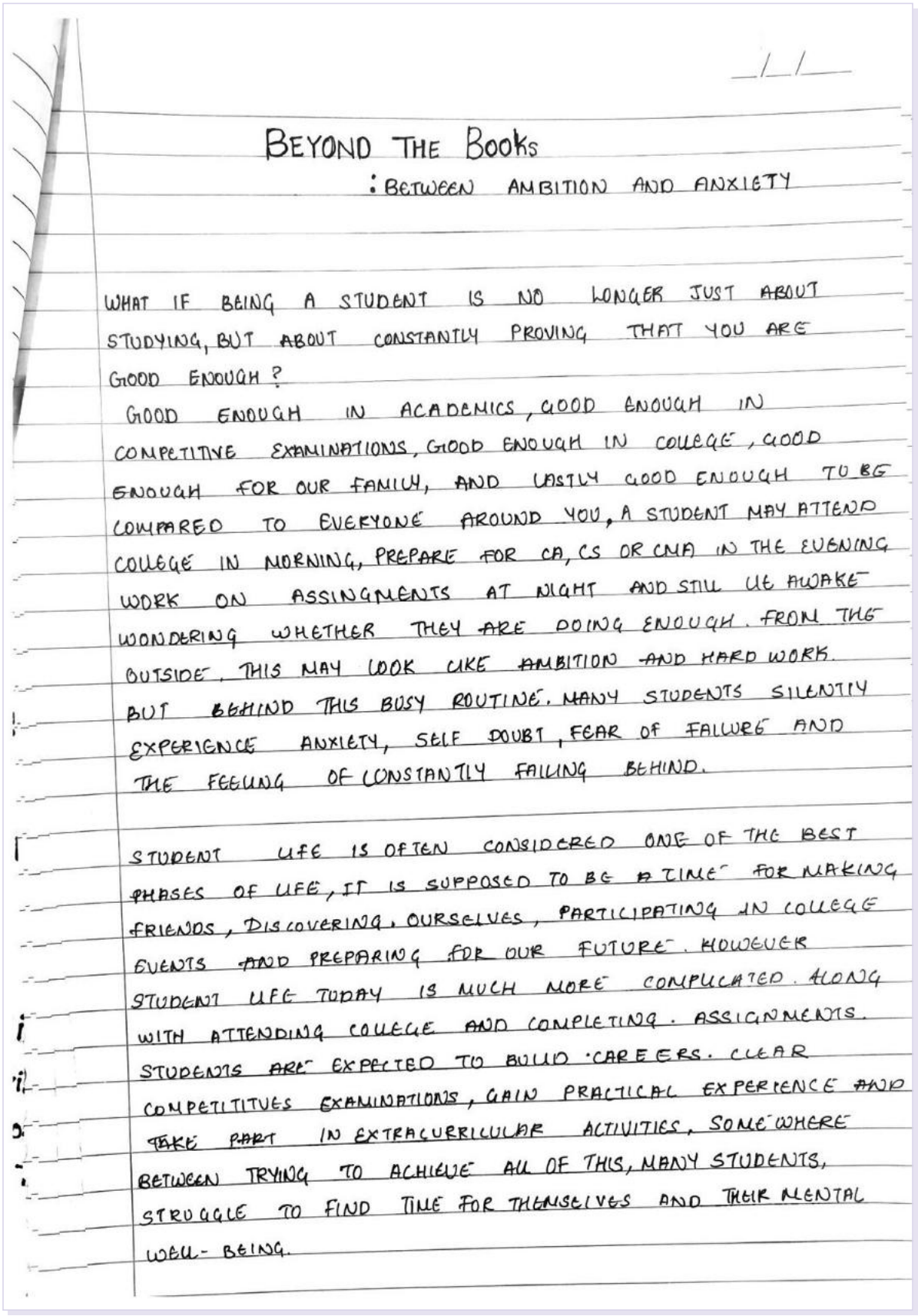
"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."

— Lao Tzu

ESSAY 03

Beyond the Books: Between Ambition and Anxiety

Namira Yusuf Saudagar



BEYOND THE BOOKS

: BETWEEN AMBITION AND ANXIETY

WHAT IF BEING A STUDENT IS NO LONGER JUST ABOUT STUDYING, BUT ABOUT CONSTANTLY PROVING THAT YOU ARE GOOD ENOUGH ?

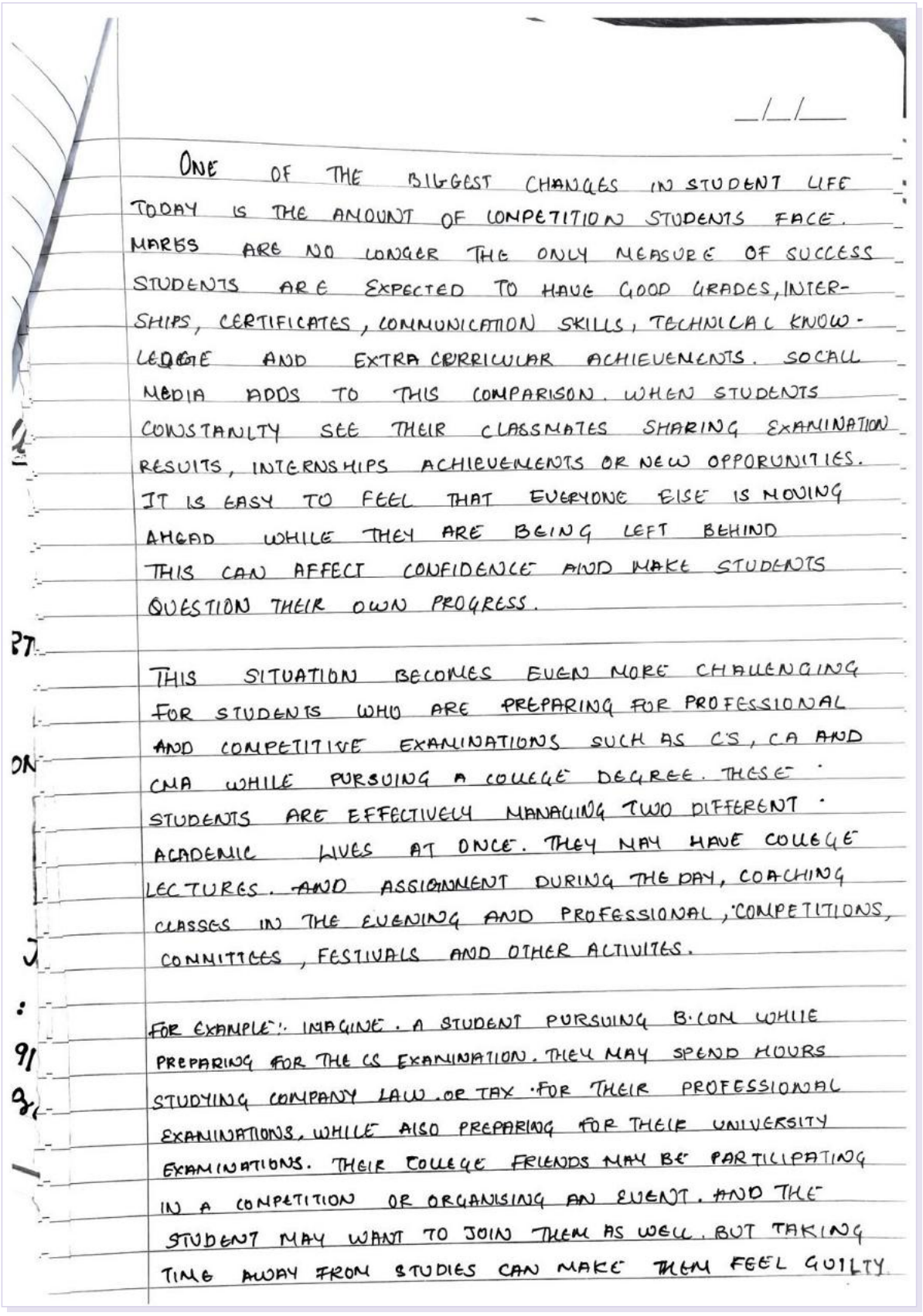
GOOD ENOUGH IN ACADEMICS, GOOD ENOUGH IN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS, GOOD ENOUGH IN COLLEGE, GOOD ENOUGH FOR OUR FAMILY, AND LASTLY GOOD ENOUGH TO BE COMPARED TO EVERYONE AROUND YOU, A STUDENT MAY ATTEND COLLEGE IN MORNING, PREPARE FOR CA, CS OR CMA IN THE EVENING WORK ON ASSIGNMENTS AT NIGHT AND STILL BE AWAKE WONDERING WHETHER THEY ARE DOING ENOUGH. FROM THE OUTSIDE, THIS MAY LOOK LIKE AMBITION AND HARD WORK. BUT BEHIND THIS BUSY ROUTINE, MANY STUDENTS SILENTLY EXPERIENCE ANXIETY, SELF DOUBT, FEAR OF FAILURE AND THE FEELING OF CONSTANTLY FALLING BEHIND.

STUDENT LIFE IS OFTEN CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BEST PHASES OF LIFE, IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE A TIME FOR MAKING FRIENDS, DISCOVERING OURSELVES, PARTICIPATING IN COLLEGE EVENTS AND PREPARING FOR OUR FUTURE. HOWEVER STUDENT LIFE TODAY IS MUCH MORE COMPLICATED. ALONG WITH ATTENDING COLLEGE AND COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS. STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BUILD CAREERS. CLEAR COMPETITIVES EXAMINATIONS, GAIN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND TAKE PART IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN TRYING TO ACHIEVE ALL OF THIS, MANY STUDENTS, STRUGGLE TO FIND TIME FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR MENTAL WELL-BEING.

"Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win by fearing to attempt."

— William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure

Beyond the Books: Between Ambition and Anxiety — page 2 of 6



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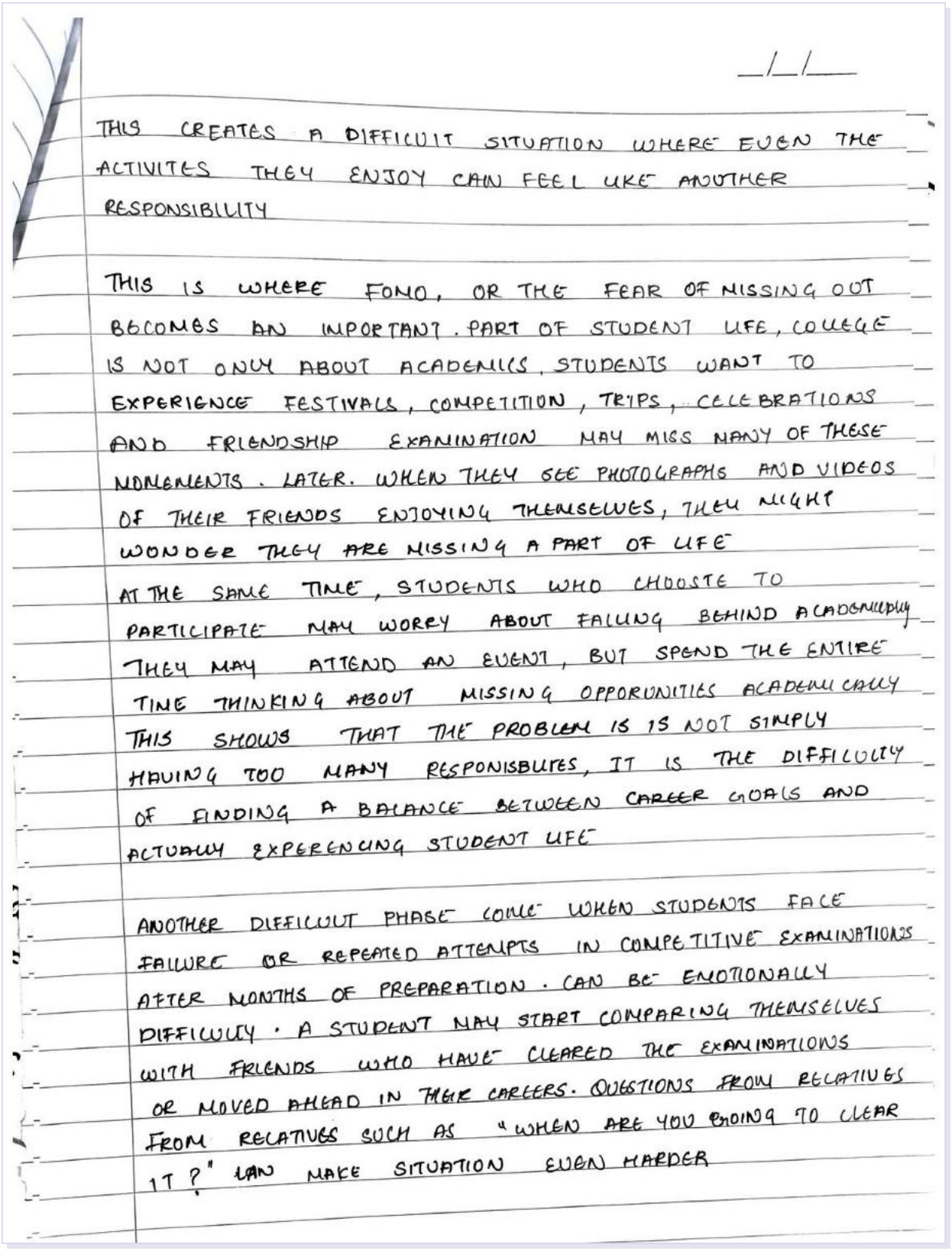
ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHANGES IN STUDENT LIFE TODAY IS THE AMOUNT OF COMPETITION STUDENTS FACE. MARKS ARE NO LONGER THE ONLY MEASURE OF SUCCESS STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE GOOD GRADES, INTERSHIPS, CERTIFICATES, COMMUNICATION SKILLS, TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACHIEVEMENTS. SOCIAL MEDIA ADDS TO THIS COMPARISON. WHEN STUDENTS CONSTANTLY SEE THEIR CLASSMATES SHARING EXAMINATION RESULTS, INTERNSHIPS ACHIEVEMENTS OR NEW OPPORUNITIES. IT IS EASY TO FEEL THAT EVERYONE ELSE IS MOVING AHEAD WHILE THEY ARE BEING LEFT BEHIND THIS CAN AFFECT CONFIDENCE AND MAKE STUDENTS QUESTION THEIR OWN PROGRESS.

THIS SITUATION BECOMES EVEN MORE CHALLENGING FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE PREPARING FOR PROFESSIONAL AND COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS SUCH AS CS, CA AND CMA WHILE PURSUING A COLLEGE DEGREE. THESE STUDENTS ARE EFFECTIVELY MANAGING TWO DIFFERENT ACADEMIC LIVES AT ONCE. THEY MAY HAVE COLLEGE LECTURES. AND ASSIGNMENT DURING THE DAY, COACHING CLASSES IN THE EVENING AND PROFESSIONAL, COMPETITIONS, COMMITTEES, FESTIVALS AND OTHER ACTIVITES.

FOR EXAMPLE: IMAGINE. A STUDENT PURSUING B.COM WHILE PREPARING FOR THE CS EXAMINATION. THEY MAY SPEND HOURS STUDYING COMPANY LAW OR TAX FOR THEIR PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS, WHILE ALSO PREPARING FOR THEIR UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS. THEIR COLLEGE FRIENDS MAY BE PARTICIPATING IN A COMPETITION OR ORGANISING AN EVENT. AND THE STUDENT MAY WANT TO JOIN THEM AS WELL. BUT TAKING TIME AWAY FROM STUDIES CAN MAKE THEM FEEL GUILTY.

"We suffer more often in imagination than in reality."

— Seneca



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THIS CREATES A DIFFICULT SITUATION WHERE EVEN THE ACTIVITES THEY ENJOY CAN FEEL LIKE ANOTHER RESPONSIBILITY

THIS IS WHERE FOMO, OR THE FEAR OF MISSING OUT BECOMES AN IMPORTANT PART OF STUDENT LIFE, COLLEGE IS NOT ONLY ABOUT ACADEMICS, STUDENTS WANT TO EXPERIENCE FESTIVALS, COMPETITION, TRIPS, CELEBRATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP EXAMINATION MAY MISS MANY OF THESE MOMENTS. LATER. WHEN THEY SEE PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS OF THEIR FRIENDS ENJOYING THEMSELVES, THEY MIGHT WONDER THEY ARE MISSING A PART OF LIFE

AT THE SAME TIME, STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE TO PARTICIPATE MAY WORRY ABOUT FALLING BEHIND ACADEMICALLY THEY MAY ATTEND AN EVENT, BUT SPEND THE ENTIRE TIME THINKING ABOUT MISSING OPPORUNITIES ACADEMICALLY THIS SHOWS THAT THE PROBLEM IS IS NOT SIMPLY HAVING TOO MANY RESPONISBLITES, IT IS THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN CAREER GOALS AND ACTUALLY EXPERENCING STUDENT LIFE

ANOTHER DIFFICULT PHASE COME WHEN STUDENTS FACE FAILURE OR REPEATED ATTEMPTS IN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS AFTER MONTHS OF PREPARATION. CAN BE EMOTIONALLY DIFFICULT. A STUDENT MAY START COMPARING THEMSELVES WITH FRIENDS WHO HAVE CLEARED THE EXAMINATIONS OR MOVED AHEAD IN THEIR CAREERS. QUESTIONS FROM RELATIVES FROM RELATIVES SUCH AS "WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO CLEAR IT?" CAN MAKE SITUATION EVEN HARDER

"Fall seven times, stand up eight."

— Japanese proverb

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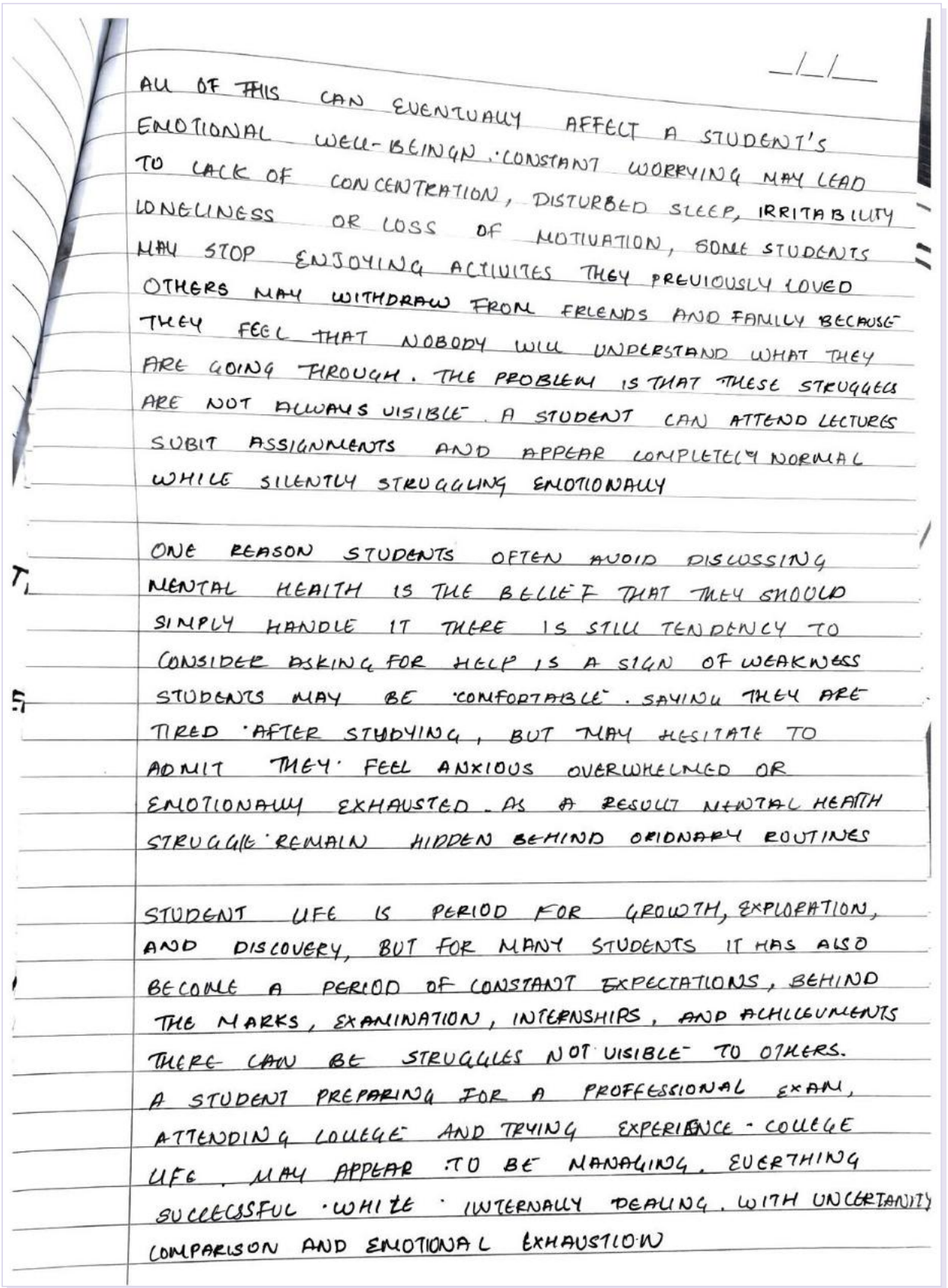
HOWEVER, ONE FAILED ATTEMPT DOES NOT DEFINE A STUDENT'S ABILITY OR FUTURE. THE PROBLEM BEGINS WHEN STUDENTS START TREATING AN EXAMINATION RESULT AS A JUDGMENT OF THEIR PERSONAL WORTH. INSTEAD OF THINKING CAN AFFECT MOTIVATION, CONFIDENCE. AND EVEN THEIR WILLINGNESS TO TRY AGAIN

FAMILY AND SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS CAN ALSO INFLUENCE A STUDENTS MENTAL HEALTH. PARENTS USUALLY WANT THEIR CHILDERN TO HAVE STABLE AND SUCCESFUL CAREERS. BUT MAY SOMETIMES FEEL THAT THEY HAVE TO FULFILL A PARTICULAR EXPECTATION TO MAKE THIER FAMILY PROUD SOME STUDENTS MAY ALSO FEEL THAT THEY CANNOT OPENLY DISCUSS THEIR DIFFICULTIES BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WANT TO DISAPPOINT THEIR PARENTS. SIMILARLY SOCIETY. OFTEN HAS FIXED IDEAS ABOUT WHAT A "SUCESSFUL" STUDENT SHOULD LOOK LIKE. THIS CAN MAKE STUDENTS FEEL THAT THEY ALWAYS HAVE TO PROVE THEMESELVES.

ANOTHER CONCERN IS CAREER UNCERTAINTY. STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WANT TO DO AT A RELATIVELY YOUNG AGE, EVEN THOUGH THEIR INTERESTS, AND ABILITIES. MAY STILL BE DEVELOPING. WITH NEW CAREER OPTIONS, APPEARING, EVERY DAY, CHOOSING THE "RIGHT" PATH. CAN ITSELF BECOME STRESSFUL. A STUDENT MAY BE PURSUING ONE COURSE; AND PREPARING SIMULTANEOUSLY WONDERING WHETHER THEY SHOULD LEARN ANOTHER SKILL OR APPLY FOR AN INTERNSHIP. THUS LIVING WITH FEAR OF MAKING THE WRONG DECISION CAN MAKE THE FUTURE SEEM MORE FRIGTENING.

"You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water."

— Rabindranath Tagore



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ALL OF THIS CAN EVENTUALLY AFFECT A STUDENT'S EMOTIONAL WELL-BEINGN. CONSTANT WORRYING MAY LEAD TO LACK OF CONCENTRATION, DISTURBED SLEEP, IRRITABILITY LONELINESS OR LOSS OF MOTIVATION, SOME STUDENTS MAY STOP ENJOYING ACTIVITES THEY PREVIOUSLY LOVED OTHERS MAY WITHDRAW FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY BECAUSE THEY FEEL THAT NOBODY WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE GOING THROUGH. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THESE STRUGGLES ARE NOT ALWAYS VISIBLE. A STUDENT CAN ATTEND LECTURES SUBIT ASSIGNMENTS AND APPEAR COMPLETELY NORMAL WHILE SILENTLY STRUGGLING EMOTIONALLY

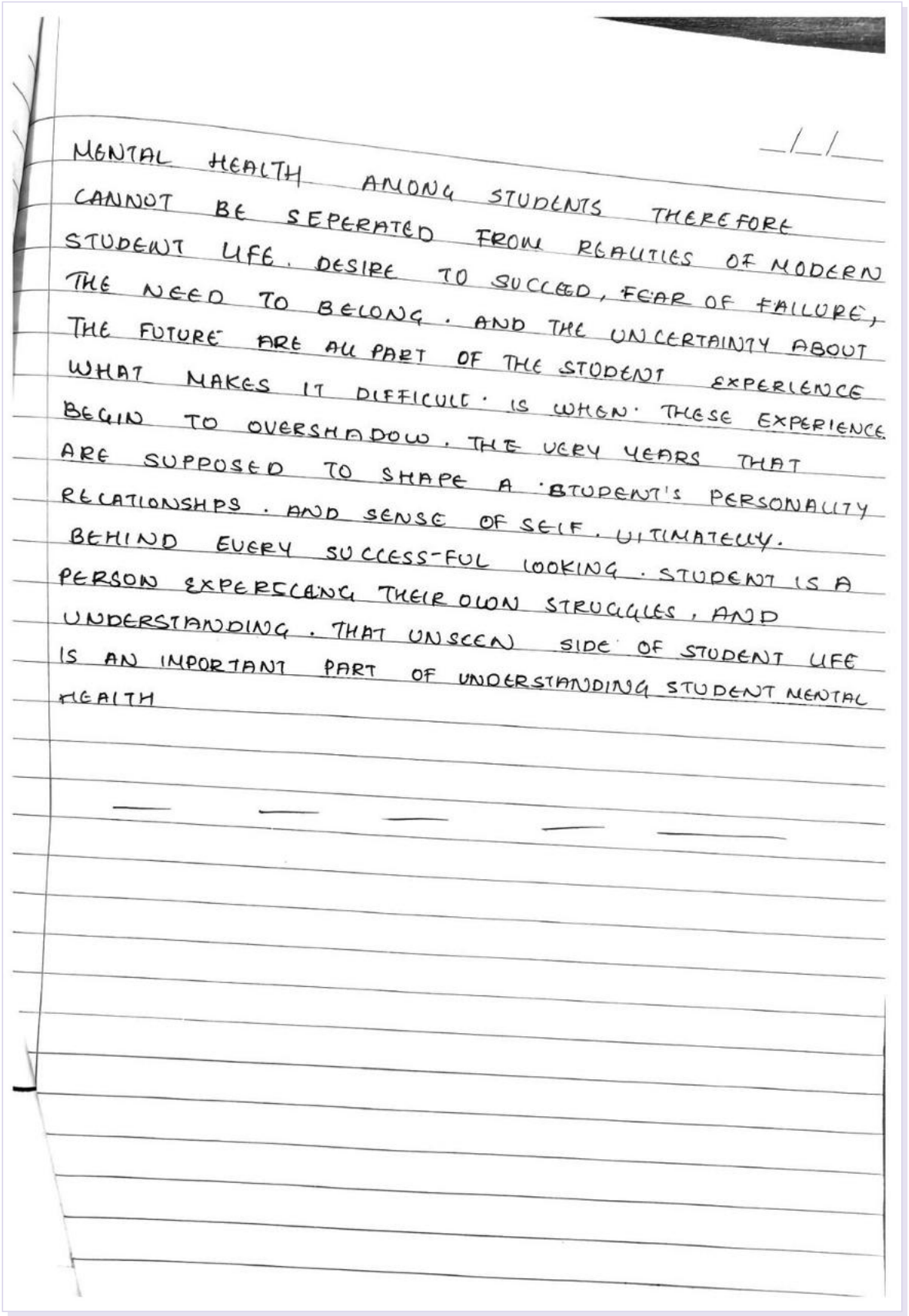
ONE REASON STUDENTS OFTEN AVOID DISCUSSING MENTAL HEALTH IS THE BELIEF THAT THEY SHOULD SIMPLY HANDLE IT THERE IS STILL TENDENCY TO CONSIDER ASKING FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS STUDENTS MAY BE 'COMFORTABLE'. SAYING THEY ARE TIRED 'AFTER STUDYING, BUT MAY HESITATE TO ADMIT THEY FEEL ANXIOUS OVERWHELMED OR EMOTIONALLY EXHAUSTED. AS A RESULT MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLE REMAIN HIDDEN BEHIND ORIDNARY ROUTINES

STUDENT LIFE IS PERIOD FOR GROWTH, EXPLORATION, AND DISCOVERY, BUT FOR MANY STUDENTS IT HAS ALSO BECOME A PERIOD OF CONSTANT EXPECTATIONS, BEHIND THE MARKS, EXAMINATION, INTERNSHIPS, AND ACHIEVEMENTS THERE CAN BE STRUGGLES NOT VISIBLE TO OTHERS. A STUDENT PREPARING FOR A PROFFESSIONAL EXAM, ATTENDING COLLEGE AND TRYING EXPERIENCE - COLLEGE LIFE, MAY APPEAR TO BE MANAGING, EVERTHING SUCCESSFUL WHILE INTERNALLY DEALING WITH UNCERTAINITY COMPARISON AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION

"The wound is the place where the Light enters you."

— Rumi

Beyond the Books: Between Ambition and Anxiety — page 6 of 6



MENTAL HEALTH AMONG STUDENTS THEREFORE CANNOT BE SEPERATED FROM REALITIES OF MODERN STUDENT LIFE. DESIRE TO SUCCEED, FEAR OF FAILURE, THE NEED TO BELONG. AND THE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE ARE ALL PART OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE WHAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT IS WHEN THESE EXPERIENCE BEGIN TO OVERSHADOW. THE VERY YEARS THAT ARE SUPPOSED TO SHAPE A STUDENT'S PERSONALITY RELATIONSHPS. AND SENSE OF SELF. ULTIMATELY. BEHIND EVERY SUCCESS-FUL LOOKING. STUDENT IS A PERSON EXPERECING THEIR OWN STRUGGLES, AND UNDERSTANDING. THAT UNSEEN SIDE OF STUDENT LIFE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF UNDERSTANDING STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

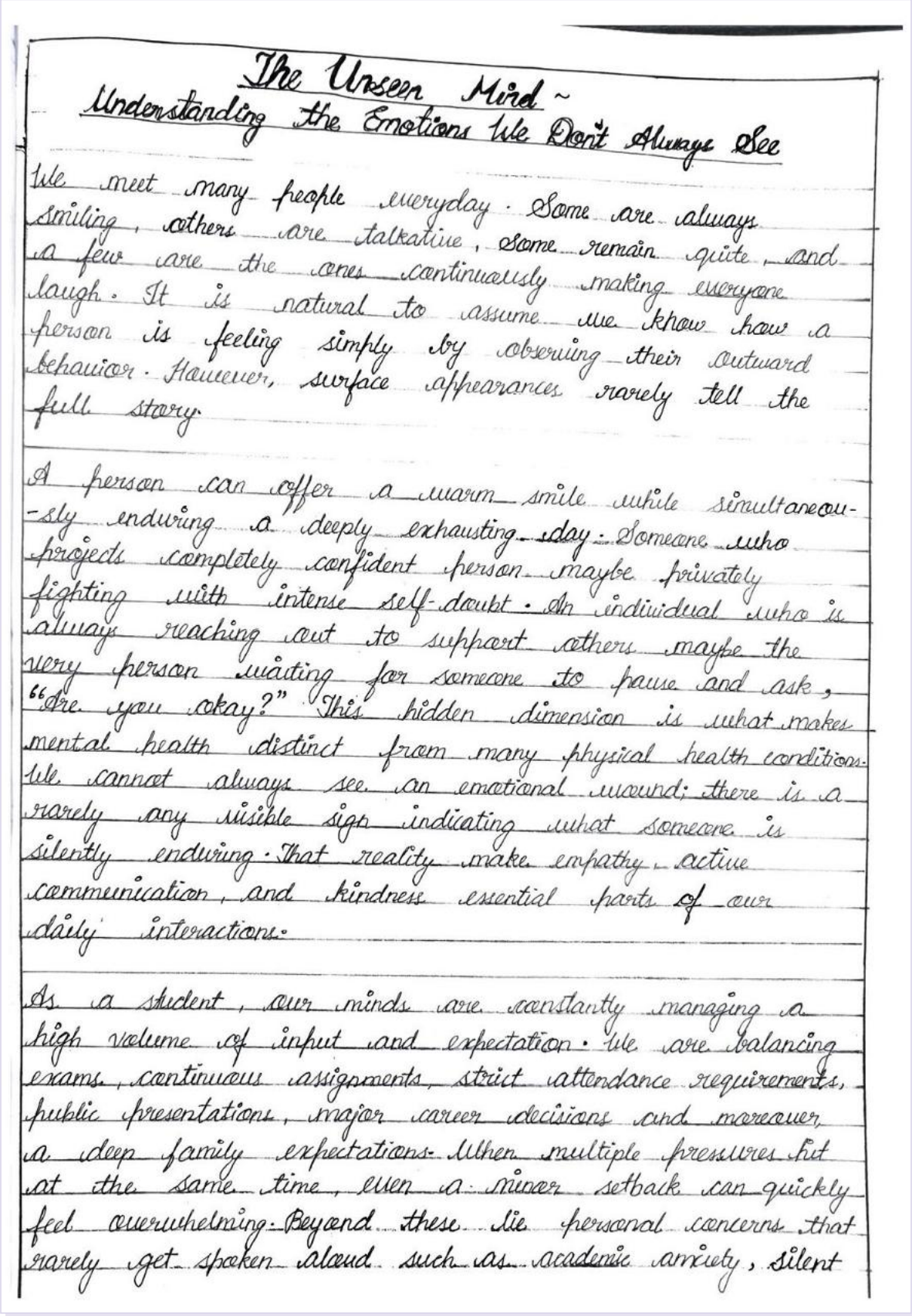
"Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it."

— Helen Keller

ESSAY 04

The Unseen Mind: Understanding the Emotions We Don't Always See

Aish Rohit Jain



The Unseen Mind ~
Understanding the Emotions We Don't Always See

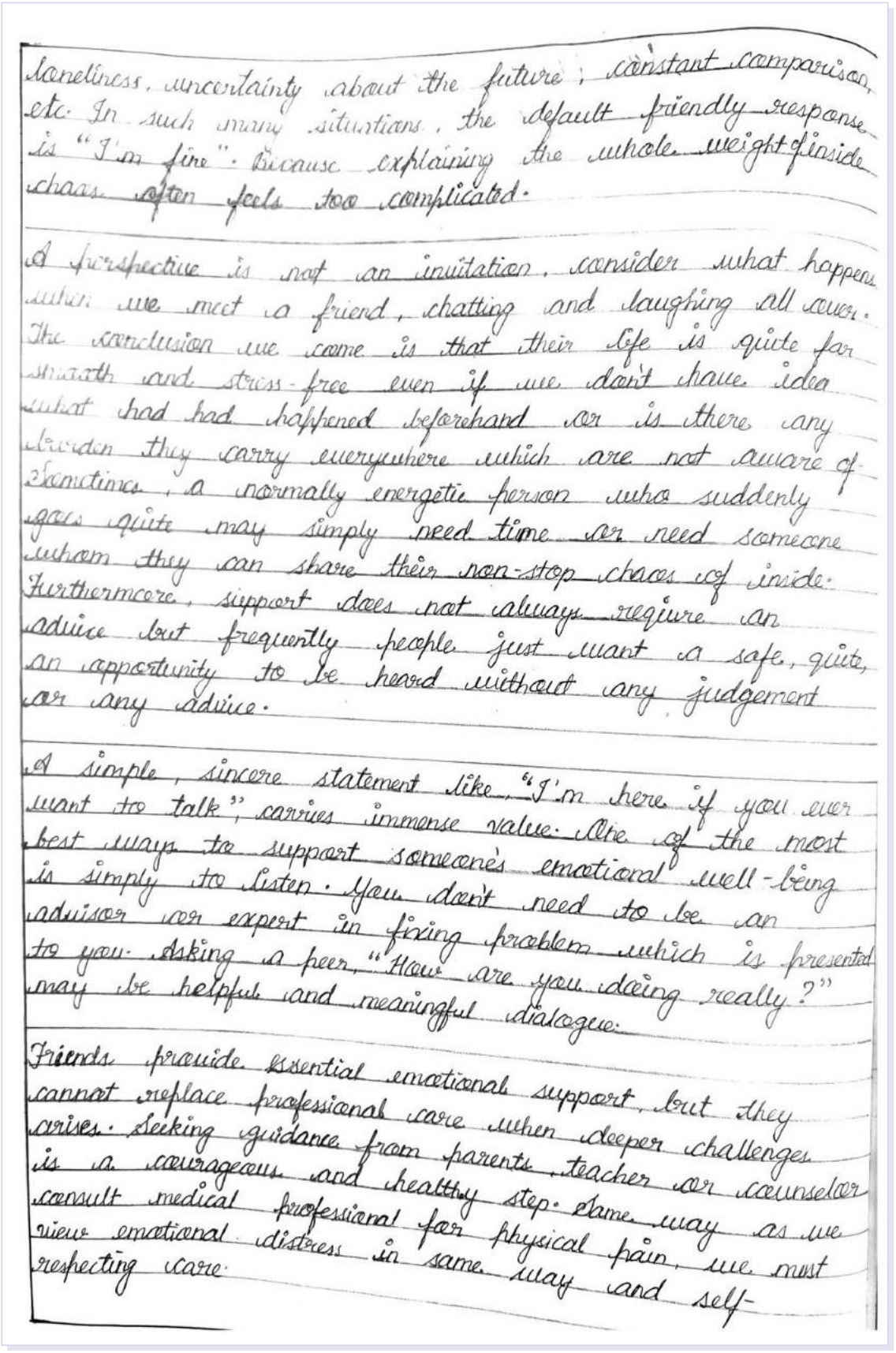
We meet many people everyday. Some are always smiling, others are talkative, some remain quite, and a few are the ones continuously making everyone laugh. It is natural to assume we know how a person is feeling simply by observing their outward behaviour. However, surface appearances rarely tell the full story.

A person can offer a warm smile while simultaneously enduring a deeply exhausting day. Someone who projects completely confident person maybe privately fighting with intense self-doubt. An individual who is always reaching out to support others maybe the very person waiting for someone to pause and ask, "Are you okay?" This hidden dimension is what makes mental health distinct from many physical health conditions. We cannot always see an emotional wound; there is a rarely any visible sign indicating what someone is silently enduring. That reality make empathy, active communication, and kindness essential parts of our daily interactions.

As a student, our minds are constantly managing a high volume of input and expectation. We are balancing exams, continuous assignments, strict attendance requirements, public presentations, major career decisions and moreover, a deep family expectations. When multiple pressures hit at the same time, even a minor setback can quickly feel overwhelming. Beyond these lie personal concerns that rarely get spoken aloud such as academic anxiety, silent

"Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding."

— Kahlil Gibran



loneliness, uncertainty about the future, constant comparison, etc. In such many situations, the default friendly response is "I'm fine". Because explaining the whole weight of inside chaos often feels too complicated.

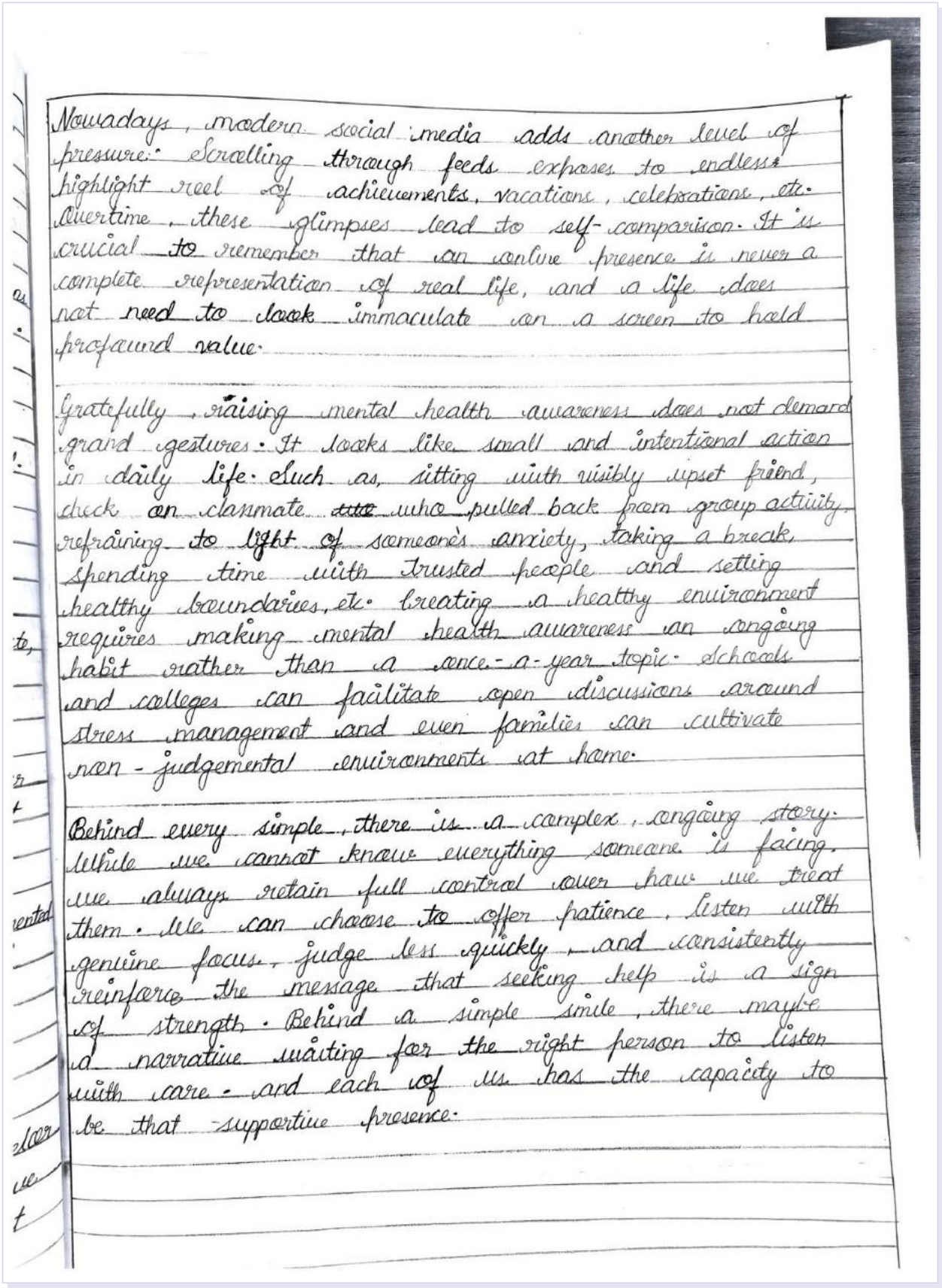
A perspective is not an invitation, consider what happens when we meet a friend, chatting and laughing all over. The conclusion we come is that their life is quite far smooth and stress-free even if we don't have idea what had had happened beforehand or is there any burden they carry everywhere which are not aware of. Sometimes, a normally energetic person who suddenly goes quite may simply need time or need someone whom they can share their non-stop chaos of inside. Furthermore, support does not always require an advice but frequently people just want a safe, quite, an opportunity to be heard without any judgement or any advice.

A simple, sincere statement like "I'm here if you ever want to talk", carries immense value. One of the most best ways to support someone's emotional well-being is simply to listen. You don't need to be an advisor or expert in fixing problem which is presented to you. Asking a peer, "How are you doing really?" may be helpful and meaningful dialogue.

Friends provide essential emotional support, but they cannot replace professional care when deeper challenges arises. Seeking guidance from parents, teacher or counselor is a courageous and healthy step. Same way as we consult medical professional for physical pain, we must view emotional distress in same way and self-respecting care.

"The most basic of all human needs is to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them."

— Ralph G. Nichols



Nowadays, modern social media adds another level of pressure. Scrolling through feeds exposes to endless highlight reel of achievements, vacations, celebrations, etc. Overtime, these glimpses lead to self-comparison. It is crucial to remember that an online presence is never a complete representation of real life, and a life does not need to look immaculate on a screen to hold profound value.

Gratefully, raising mental health awareness does not demand grand gestures. It looks like small and intentional action in daily life. Such as, sitting with visibly upset friend, check on classmate who pulled back from group activity, refraining to light of someone's anxiety, taking a break, spending time with Trusted people and setting healthy boundaries, etc. Creating a healthy environment requires making mental health awareness an ongoing habit rather than a once-a-year topic. Schools and colleges can facilitate open discussions around stress management and even families can cultivate non-judgemental environments at home.

Behind every simple, there is a complex, ongoing story. While we cannot know everything someone is facing, we always retain full control over how we treat them. We can choose to offer patience, listen with genuine focus, judge less quickly, and consistently reinforce the message that seeking help is a sign of strength. Behind a simple smile, there maybe a narrative waiting for the right person to listen with care. and each of us has the capacity to be that supportive presence.

"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible."

— Dalai Lama

ESSAY 05

The Lingering Hope: Reimagining Suicide Prevention

Shivi Sharma

There exists a peculiar cruelty in the way despair operates , it convinces the sufferer that the present moment is eternal. A person standing at the edge of unbearable psychological pain rarely believes that tomorrow could feel different from today. This is the central falsehood that suicide prevention must dismantle not just through platitudes, but through a deliberate, collective refusal to let anyone face that falsehood alone. The conviction that there is always hope is not a naive sentiment scrawled onto a motivational poster; it is a testable, defensible truth, provided society builds the scaffolding to make that hope reachable.

People tend to tread through volatile emotions every now and then, and it is arduous for a person to navigate those thoughts, let alone act upon them. In moments like these, what feels permanent may only be the intensity of the present moment.

To understand why hope so often feels inaccessible, one must first understand the architecture of suicidal despair. Clinical research on suicidality repeatedly identifies a phenomenon called 'cognitive constriction' which is narrowing of perceived options until only one course of action seems visible. The tragedy is not that alternatives do not exist, but that the mind in crisis becomes temporarily incapable of perceiving them. This is precisely why external intervention matters so profoundly. A single conversation, a single moment of being truly heard, can widen that narrowed field of vision just enough for a person to glimpse a future they could not previously imagine. Prevention, then, is not merely about stopping an act; it is about restoring sight to someone who has been rendered temporarily blind to possibility.

Everyone is entitled to help: to make them feel seen, to validate their emotions, and to make them feel that, no matter what happens, it is never the dead end.

In the Indian context, this task is complicated by layers of cultural silence. Mental anguish is frequently reframed as a private failing rather than a legitimate health concern that is something to be endured stoically rather than voiced openly. Young people, in particular, absorb the unspoken lesson that vulnerability invites judgment rather than support. Academic pressure, competitive examinations, uncertain career trajectories, and the relentless comparison enabled by social media compound this burden, creating an environment where struggling silently is mistaken for strength. Breaking this silence is not a small cultural shift; it is a fundamental renegotiation of what courage means. True courage lies not in concealment but in the willingness to say, plainly and without shame, 'I am not coping.'

None of these inherent feelings are irrelevant. Experiences, no matter the bad ones or good ones, are all meant to shape the person we become, but nothing should have such significant bearing on our thoughts as to make us think that it is as significant as our lives.

The role of the listener, therefore, cannot be overstated. Suicide prevention is too often imagined as the exclusive domain of psychiatrists and helplines, when in truth its first line of defence is ordinary human attentiveness like a teacher who notices a student's sudden withdrawal, a friend who asks a second time after receiving the reflexive 'I'm fine'' a family

"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul."

— Emily Dickinson

member who chooses curiosity over criticism. Gatekeeper training programmes across the world have demonstrated that equipping non-specialists with the basic skills of recognition and response saves lives. One does not need a medical degree to ask someone directly whether they are thinking of ending their life; contrary to popular myth, this question does not plant the idea , it often provides the very relief of finally being seen.

Language itself deserves scrutiny in this endeavour. The words we use to discuss suicide shape the shame surrounding it. Phrases like 'committed suicide' borrowed from the vocabulary of crime, subtly frame a person's death as a moral transgression rather than the tragic culmination of an illness. Responsible language , speaking of someone who 'died by suicide' rather than one who 'committed' it may appear a minor semantic adjustment, but such adjustments accumulate into a culture either of compassion or of condemnation. Media reporting guidelines, increasingly adopted by responsible outlets, similarly aim to prevent the sensationalising of such deaths, recognising that careless coverage can inadvertently normalise or even romanticise an irreversible act.

Institutions bear a particular responsibility here. Colleges and universities, as spaces where young adults navigate identity, independence, and immense academic pressure simultaneously, must move beyond token gestures of awareness. Counselling cells ought to be visible, adequately staffed, and stigma-free, treated with the same institutional seriousness as a library or a placement cell. Peer support systems, mental health literacy woven into orientation programmes, and faculty trained to recognise distress can transform a campus from a site of silent suffering into a genuine community of care. Hope, after all, is rarely restored in isolation; it is restored relationally, through networks of people who refuse to let one another disappear unnoticed.

None of this diminishes the necessity of professional intervention. Therapy, psychiatric care, and crisis helplines remain indispensable, and expanding their accessibility be it geographically, financially, and linguistically this must remain a policy priority. But professional care functions best when it is the second step, not the first plea for help ignored.

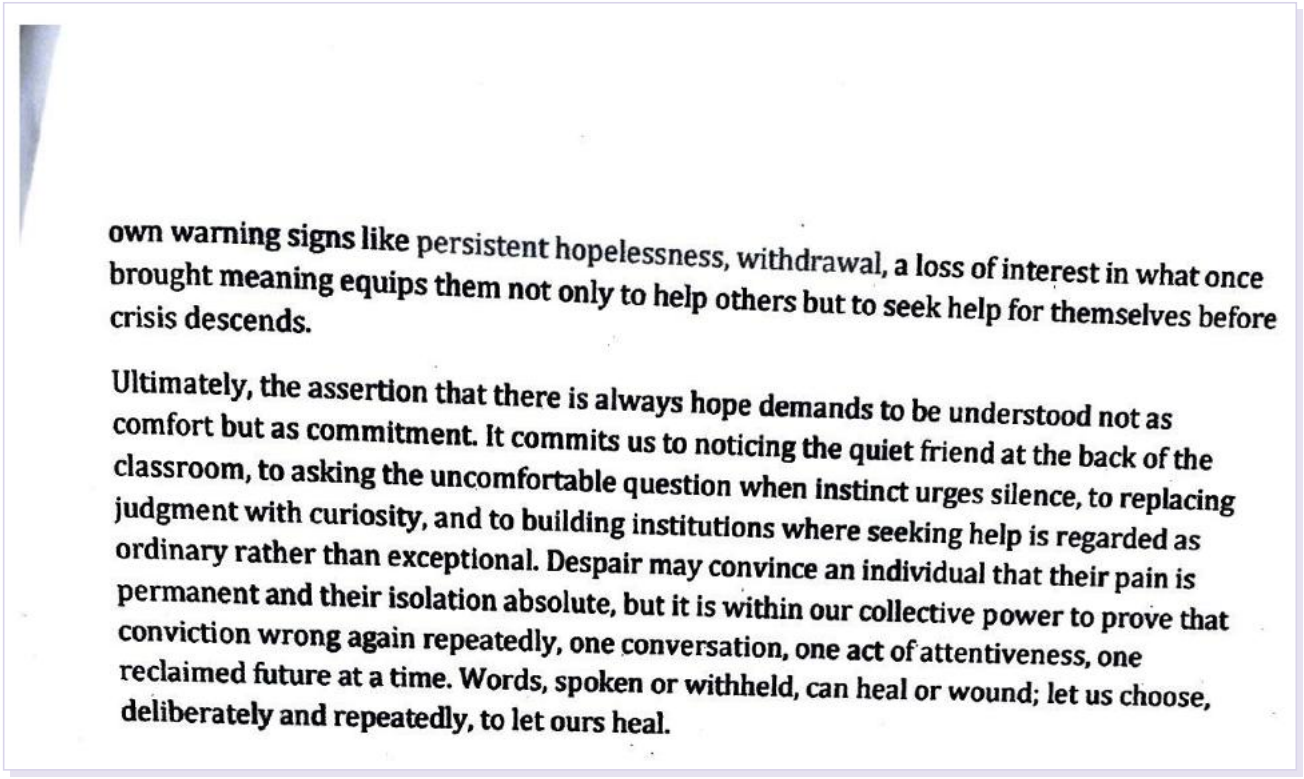
The community around a struggling individual must be equipped to notice, to ask, and to accompany that person toward the professional support they need, rather than waiting for a crisis to escalate before anyone intervenes. Equally important is what happens after a crisis has passed: recovery is rarely linear, and continued, unglamorous support that is a follow-up message weeks later, patience with relapse, the absence of judgment when progress falters , often matters as much as the initial rescue. Hope sustained is a longer labour than hope kindled.

There is also a quieter, more personal dimension to prevention that deserves acknowledgment: the practice of self-compassion. Many who struggle silently have internalised an unforgiving inner critic, one that interprets their pain as weakness rather than as a signal worth heeding. Learning to treat one's own suffering with the same gentleness one would offer a friend is not indulgence; it is a skill, and like any skill, it can be taught, practised, and strengthened over time. Encouraging young people to recognise their

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

— Mark Twain

The Lingering Hope: Reimagining Suicide Prevention — page 3 of 3



own warning signs like persistent hopelessness, withdrawal, a loss of interest in what once brought meaning equips them not only to help others but to seek help for themselves before crisis descends.

Ultimately, the assertion that there is always hope demands to be understood not as comfort but as commitment. It commits us to noticing the quiet friend at the back of the classroom, to asking the uncomfortable question when instinct urges silence, to replacing judgment with curiosity, and to building institutions where seeking help is regarded as ordinary rather than exceptional. Despair may convince an individual that their pain is permanent and their isolation absolute, but it is within our collective power to prove that conviction wrong again repeatedly, one conversation, one act of attentiveness, one reclaimed future at a time. Words, spoken or withheld, can heal or wound; let us choose, deliberately and repeatedly, to let ours heal.

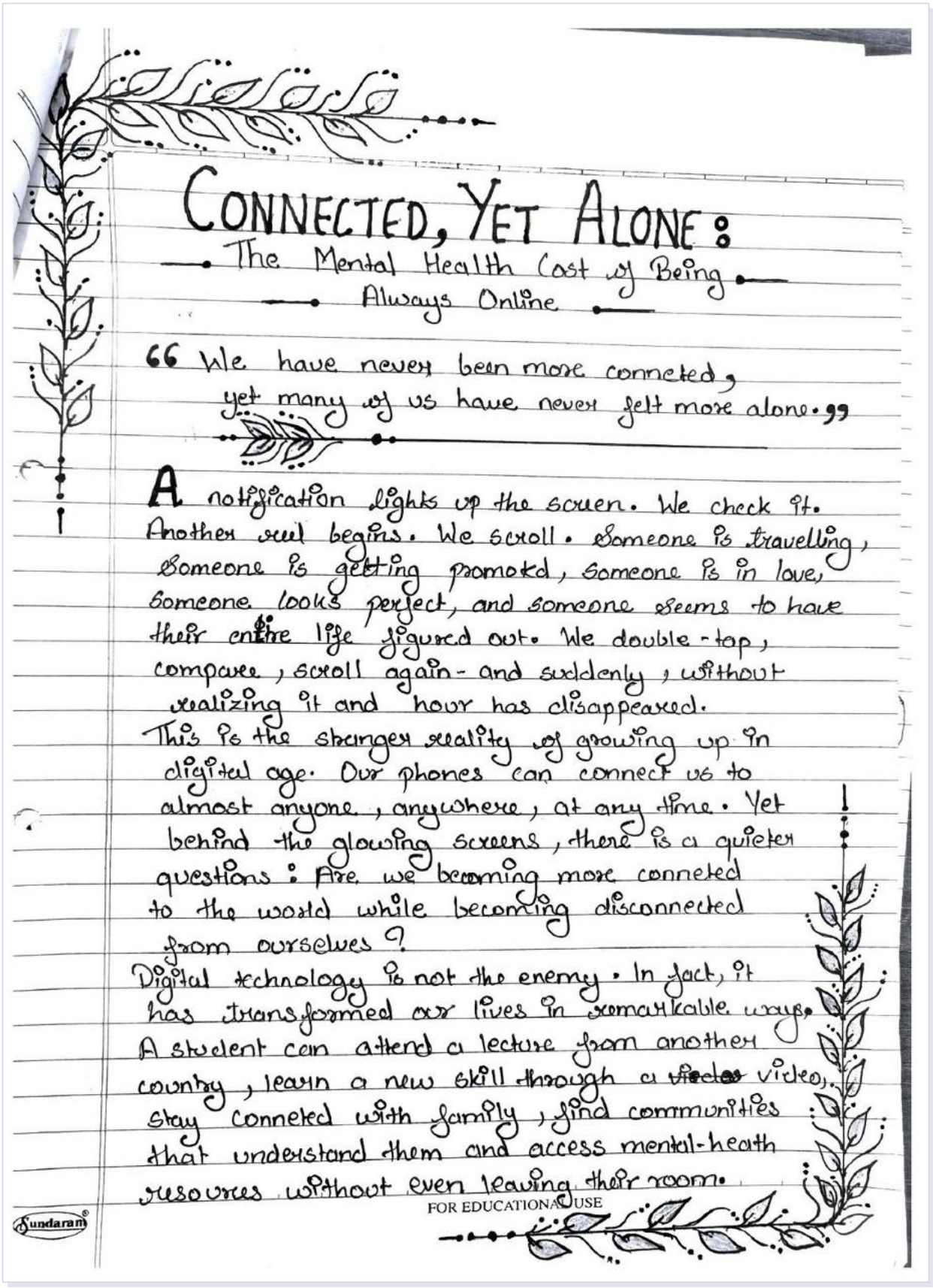
"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer."

— Albert Camus

ESSAY 06

Connected, Yet Alone: The Mental Health Cost of Being Always Online

Suhani Gupta



CONNECTED, YET ALONE:
The Mental Health Cost of Being Always Online

"We have never been more connected, yet many of us have never felt more alone."

A notification lights up the screen. We check it. Another reel begins. We scroll. Someone is travelling, someone is getting promoted, someone is in love, someone looks perfect, and someone seems to have their entire life figured out. We double-tap, compare, scroll again - and suddenly, without realizing it and hour has disappeared.

This is the strangest reality of growing up in digital age. Our phones can connect us to almost anyone, anywhere, at any time. Yet behind the glowing screens, there is a quieter questions: Are we becoming more conneted to the world while becoming disconnected from ourselves?

Digital technology is not the enemy. In fact, it has transformed our lives in remarkable ways. A student can attend a lecture from another country, learn a new skill through a ~~video~~ video, stay conneted with family, find communities that understand them and access mental-heath resources without even leaving their room.

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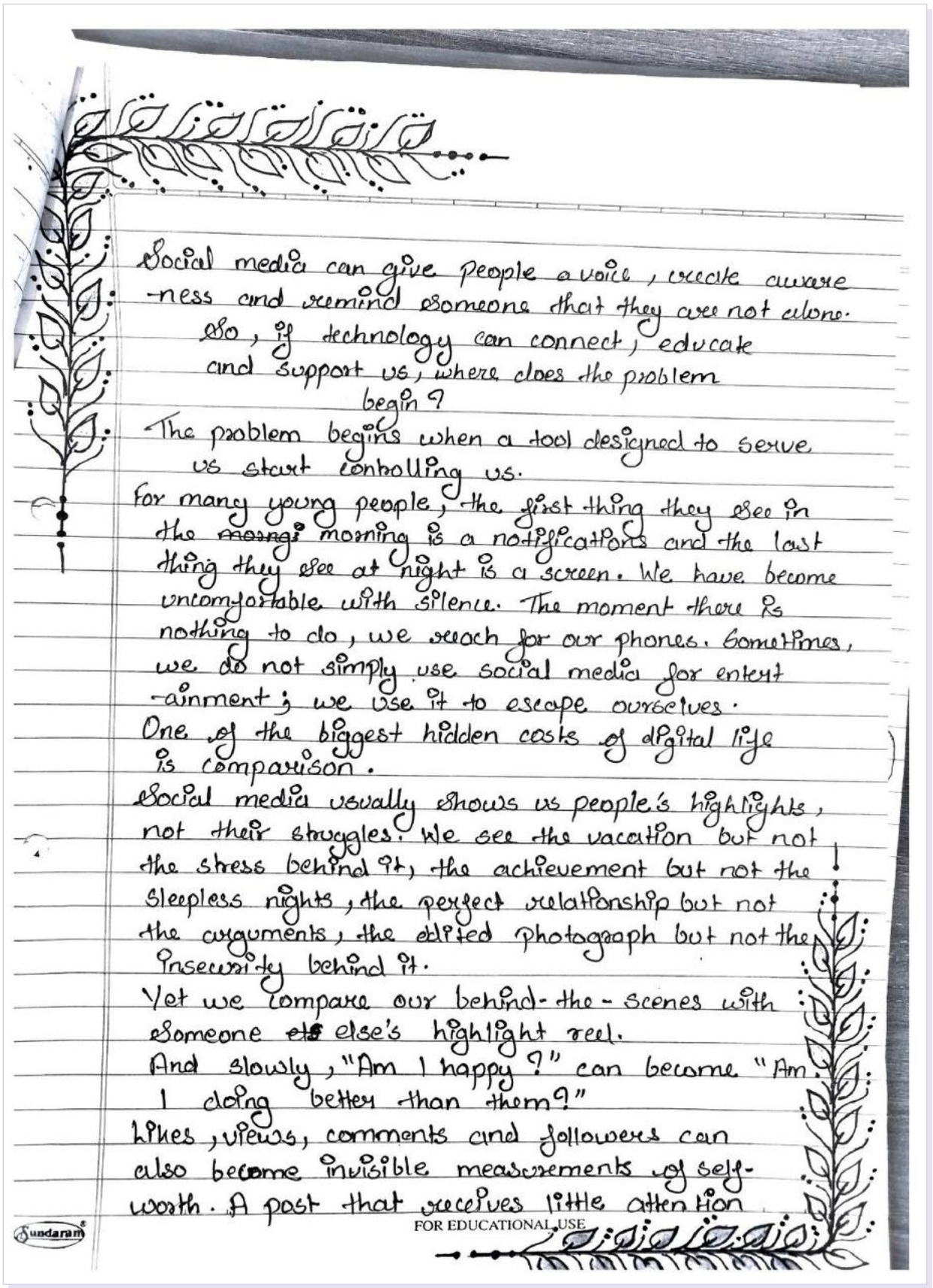
"Loneliness and the feeling of being unwanted is the most terrible poverty."

— Mother Teresa



Social media can give people a voice, create awareness and remind someone that they are not alone. So, if technology can connect, educate and support us, where does the problem begin?

The problem begins when a tool designed to serve us start controlling us.

For many young people, the first thing they see in the ~~morng~~ morning is a notifications and the last thing they see at night is a screen. We have become uncomfortable with silence. The moment there is nothing to do, we reach for our phones. Sometimes, we do not simply use social media for entertainment; we use it to escape ourselves.

One of the biggest hidden costs of digital life is comparison.

Social media usually shows us people's highlights, not their struggles. We see the vacation but not the stress behind it, the achievement but not the sleepless nights, the perfect relationship but not the arguments, the edited photograph but not the insecurity behind it.

Yet we compare our behind-the-scenes with someone ~~else~~ else's highlight reel.

And slowly, "Am I happy?" can become "Am I doing better than them?"

Likes, views, comments and followers can also become invisible measurements of self-worth. A post that receives little attention

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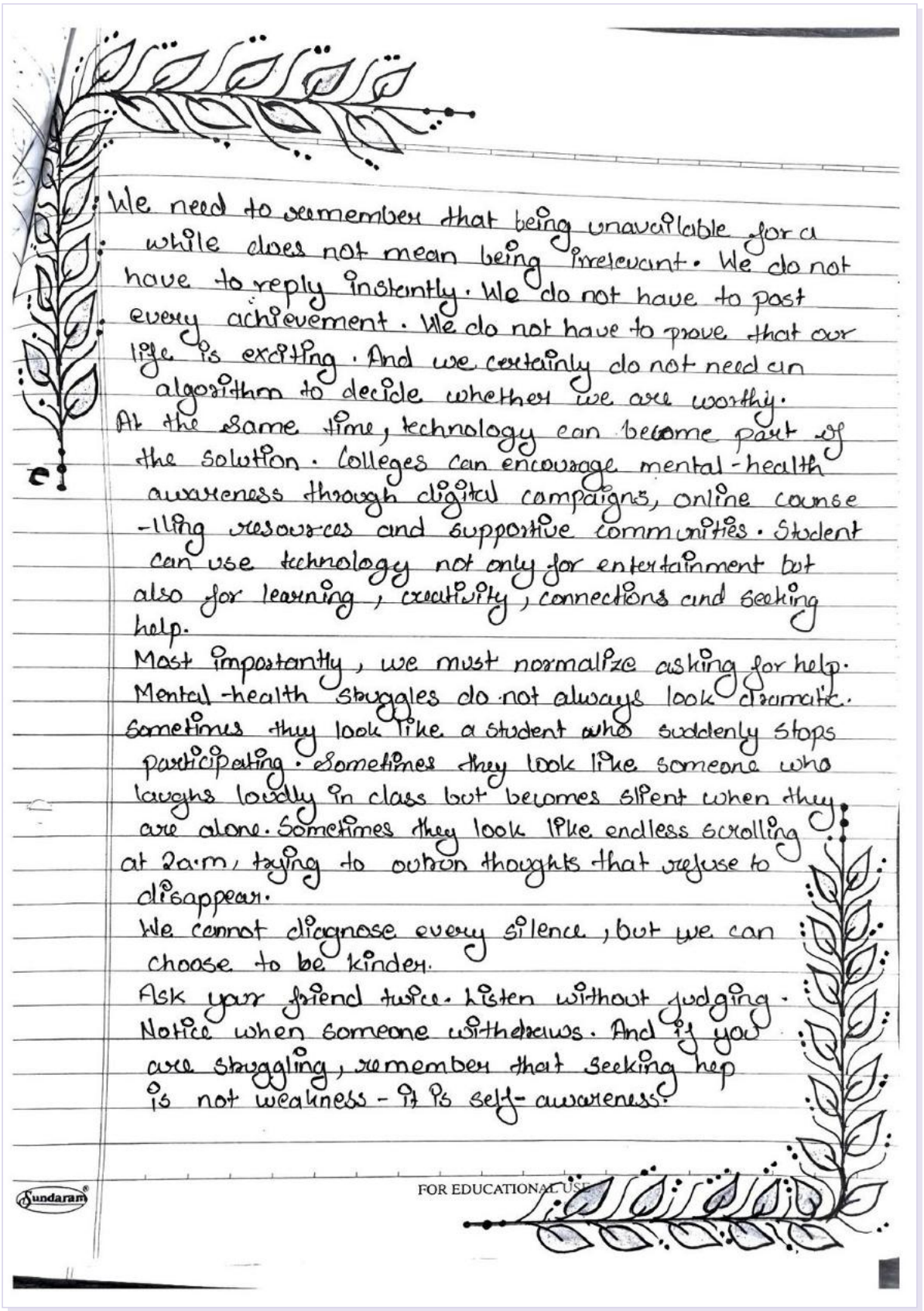
"The curious paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change."

— Carl Rogers



We need to remember that being unavailable for a while does not mean being irrelevant. We do not have to reply instantly. We do not have to post every achievement. We do not have to prove that our life is exciting. And we certainly do not need an algorithm to decide whether we are worthy.

At the same time, technology can become part of the solution. Colleges can encourage mental-health awareness through digital campaigns, online counse-lling resources and supportive communities. Student can use technology not only for entertainment but also for learning, creativity, connections and seeking help.

Most importantly, we must normalize asking for help. Mental-health struggles do not always look dramatic. Sometimes they look like a student who suddenly stops participating. Sometimes they look like someone who laughs loudly in class but becomes silent when they are alone. Sometimes they look like endless scrolling at 2a.m, trying to outrun thoughts that refuse to disappear.

We cannot diagnose every silence, but we can choose to be kinder.

Ask your friend twice. Listen without judging. Notice when someone withdraws. And if you are struggling, remember that seeking help is not weakness - it is self-awareness.

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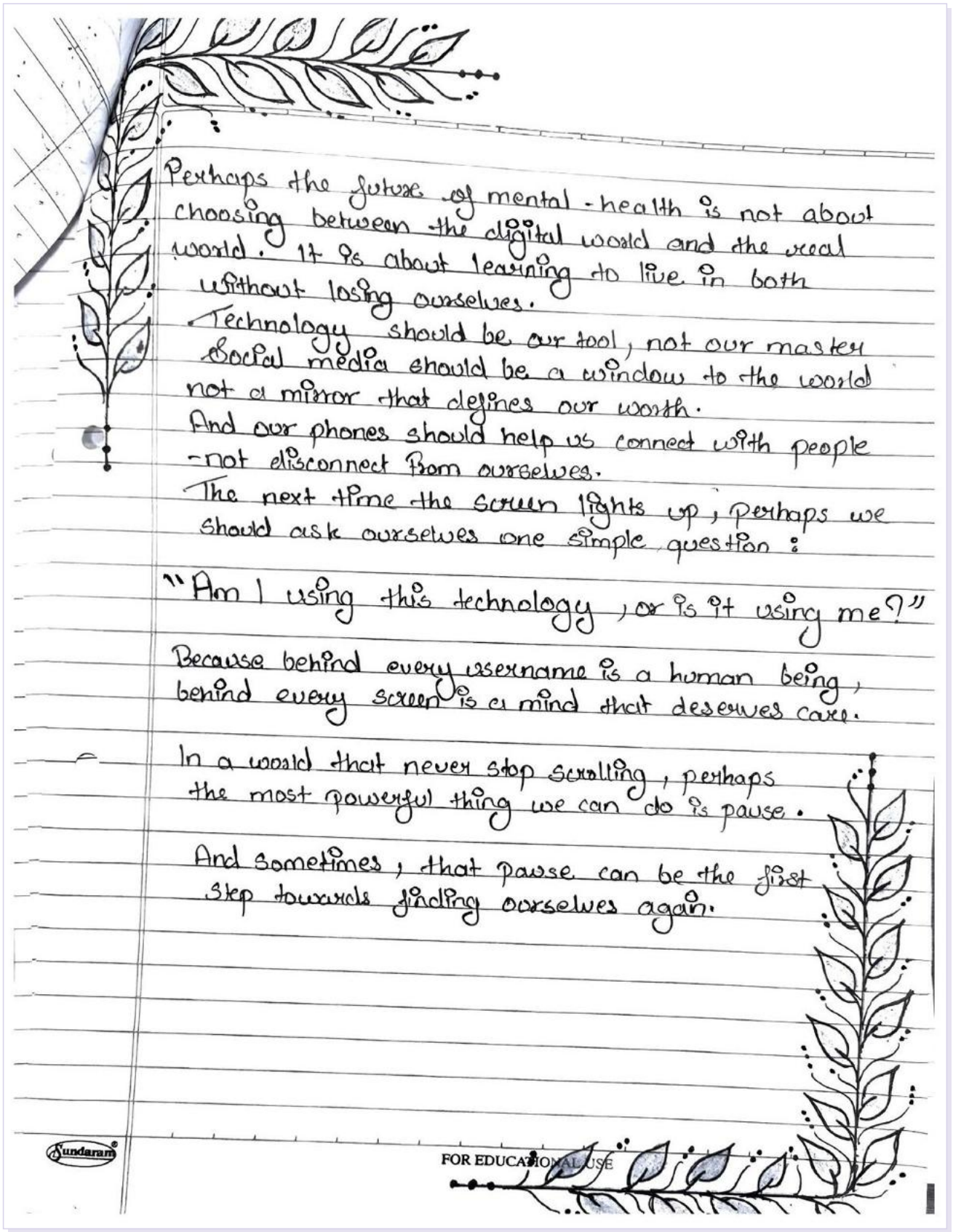
"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

— Stephen R. Covey



Perhaps the future of mental-health is not about choosing between the digital world and the real world. It is about learning to live in both without losing ourselves.

Technology should be our tool, not our master. Social media should be a window to the world not a mirror that defines our worth.

And our phones should help us connect with people - not disconnect from ourselves.

The next time the screen lights up, perhaps we should ask ourselves one simple question :

"Am I using this technology, or is it using me?"

Because behind every username is a human being, behind every screen is a mind that deserves care.

In a world that never stop scrolling, perhaps the most powerful thing we can do is pause.

And sometimes, that pause can be the first step towards finding ourselves again.

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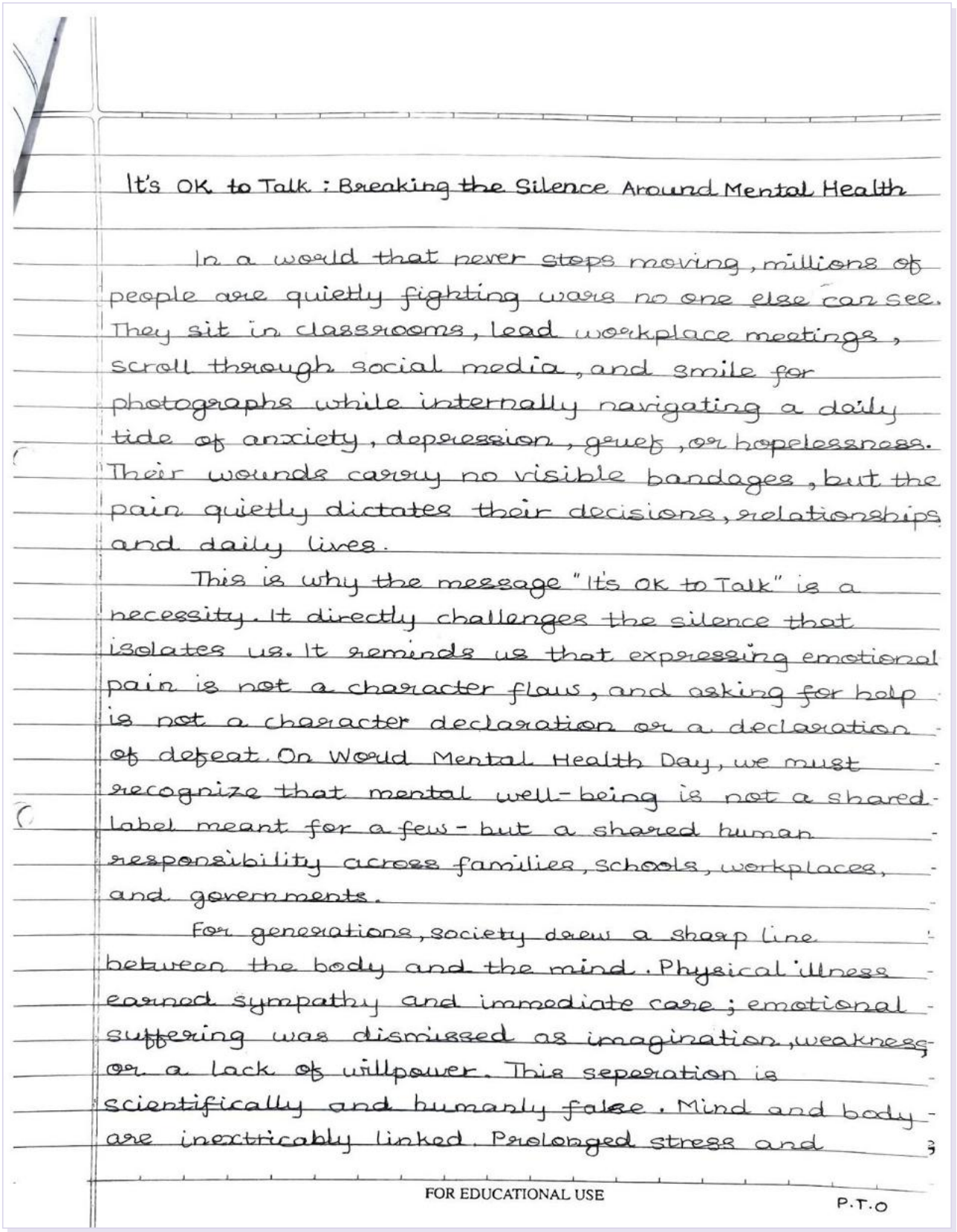
"Men have become the tools of their tools."

— Henry David Thoreau, Walden

ESSAY 07

It's OK to Talk: Breaking the Silence Around Mental Health

Zobia Zahid Kazi



It's OK to Talk : Breaking the Silence Around Mental Health

In a world that never stops moving, millions of people are quietly fighting wars no one else can see. They sit in classrooms, lead workplace meetings, scroll through social media, and smile for photographs while internally navigating a daily tide of anxiety, depression, grief, or hopelessness. Their wounds carry no visible bandages, but the pain quietly dictates their decisions, relationships and daily lives.

This is why the message "It's OK to Talk" is a necessity. It directly challenges the silence that isolates us. It reminds us that expressing emotional pain is not a character flaw, and asking for help is not a character declaration or a declaration of defeat. On World Mental Health Day, we must recognize that mental well-being is not a shared label meant for a few - but a shared human responsibility across families, schools, workplaces, and governments.

For generations, society drew a sharp line between the body and the mind. Physical illness earned sympathy and immediate care; emotional suffering was dismissed as imagination, weakness or a lack of willpower. This seperation is scientifically and humanly false. Mind and body are inextricably linked. Prolonged stress and

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"The part can never be well unless the whole is well."

— Plato, Charmides

emotional exhaustion erode physical immunity, disrupt sleep, and strain the heart. Conversely, physical illness, financial instability, or social isolation shatter mental peace. Treating one while ignoring the other is incomplete medicine. A mental health condition is not a moral failing; it is a health condition requiring empathy, understanding, and, when necessary, professional care.

Despite growing awareness, stigma remains a formidable barrier. Stigma thrives when society attaches shame and negative stereotypes to emotional distress. Labels like "unstable," "attention-seeking," or "weak" are not harmless jokes - they force people to hide their suffering and blame themselves for falling ill. In many homes, mental health struggles are treated as a threat to family honor. Students fear being marked as incapable by their teachers; employees fear losing promotions. These anxieties force people to wear a mask of strength precisely when they are most vulnerable. But silence does not cure illness; it isolates the sufferer. Shame demands secrecy, secrecy feeds loneliness, and loneliness deepens the crisis.

Opening up is terrifying. Many people hesitate because they lack the vocabulary to explain what they feel. Others worry about being dismissed with superficial advice like "Just stay positive," "You're thinking too much," or "Others have it worse". Young people face a unique storm. Academic pressure, career instability, body-image

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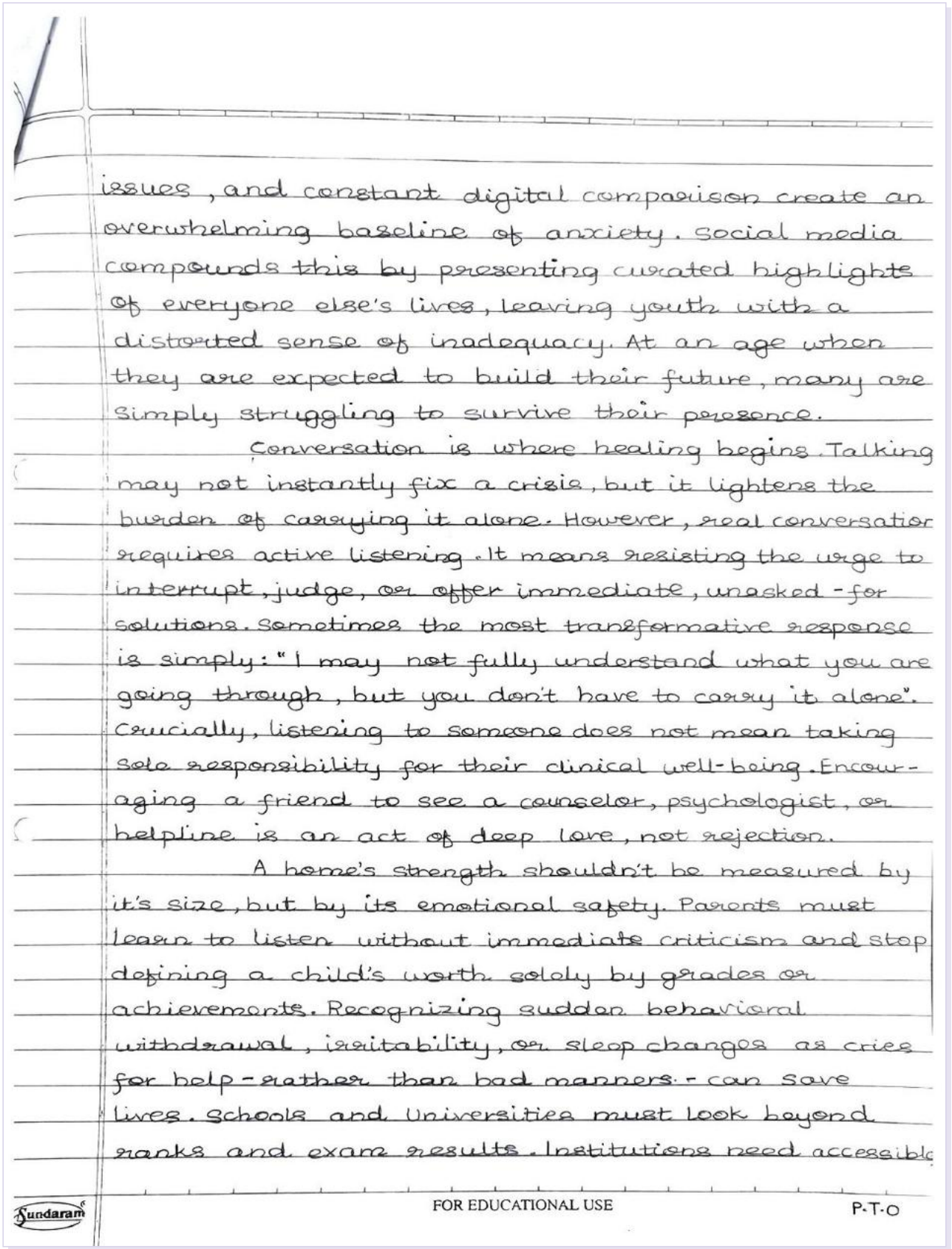
"The greatest sin is to think yourself weak."

— Swami Vivekananda



issues, and constant digital comparison create an overwhelming baseline of anxiety. Social media compounds this by presenting curated highlights of everyone else's lives, leaving youth with a distorted sense of inadequacy. At an age when they are expected to build their future, many are simply struggling to survive their presence.

Conversation is where healing begins. Talking may not instantly fix a crisis, but it lightens the burden of carrying it alone. However, real conversation requires active listening. It means resisting the urge to interrupt, judge, or offer immediate, unasked-for solutions. Sometimes the most transformative response is simply: "I may not fully understand what you are going through, but you don't have to carry it alone". Crucially, listening to someone does not mean taking sole responsibility for their clinical well-being. Encouraging a friend to see a counselor, psychologist, or helpline is an act of deep love, not rejection.

A home's strength shouldn't be measured by it's size, but by its emotional safety. Parents must learn to listen without immediate criticism and stop defining a child's worth solely by grades or achievements. Recognizing sudden behavioral withdrawal, irritability, or sleep changes as cries for help - rather than bad manners - can save lives. Schools and Universities must look beyond ranks and exam results. Institutions need accessible

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"It takes a village to raise a child."

— African proverb

confidential counseling services and peer support networks. Classrooms should be spaces where mistakes, doubts, and emotions are handled with dignity.

Mental health cannot be solved by individual resilience alone in deeply unequal environments. Governments must ensure that mental healthcare is affordable, confidential, and accessible in rural areas not just major cities. Workplaces must stop glorifying burnout, and media outlets must report on mental illness and suicide responsibly - focusing on help, safety, and recovery rather than sensationalism. When crisis peaks, silence can convince a person that there is no way forward. Conversations about self-harm or severe distress must never be avoided out of discomfort. They must be handled calmly, directly, and with immediate actions. If someone expresses thoughts of suicide, take them seriously. Hope does not mean pretending the pain isn't real; hope means believing that circumstances can change and that support exists, even when the person in the dark cannot see it yet.

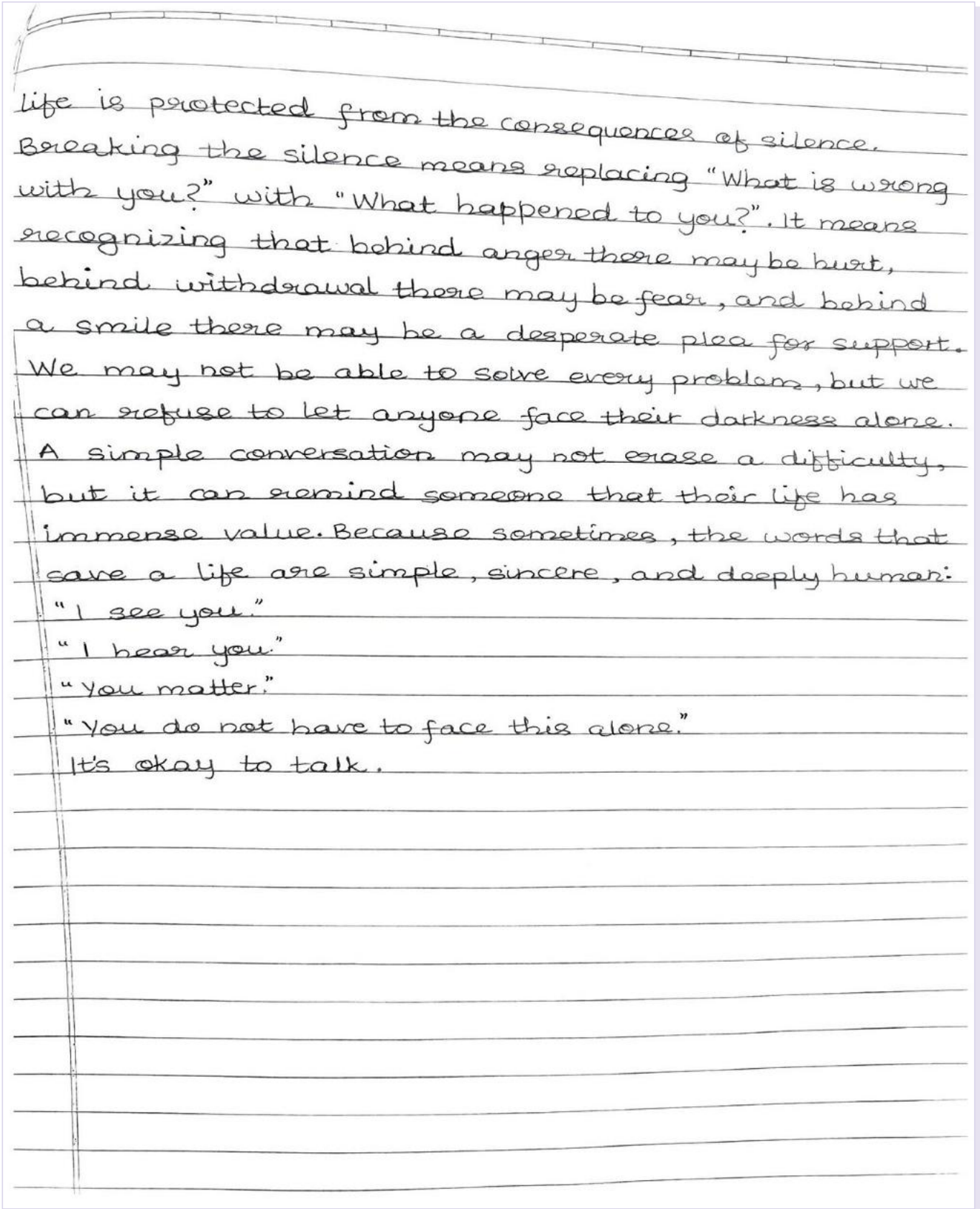
World Mental Health Day must be more than one-day speeches, slogans, and social media posts. Its true success won't be measured by the number of events held, but by whether one more person feels safe enough to speak, whether one more family responds with understanding, and whether one more

FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

P.T.O

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

— African proverb



life is protected from the consequences of silence. Breaking the silence means replacing "What is wrong with you?" with "What happened to you?". It means recognizing that behind anger there may be hurt, behind withdrawal there may be fear, and behind a smile there may be a desperate plea for support. We may not be able to solve every problems, but we can refuse to let anyone face their darkness alone. A simple conversation may not erase a difficulty, but it can remind someone that their life has immense value. Because sometimes, the words that save a life are simple, sincere, and deeply human:

"I see you."
"I hear you."
"You matter."
"You do not have to face this alone."
It's okay to talk.

"In a gentle way, you can shake the world."

— Mahatma Gandhi

ESSAY 08

It's OK to Speak – Breaking the Silence Around Mental Health

Maitri Chaturvedi

It's OK to speak- *Breaking the silence around mental health*

Have you ever noticed that how common it has become when you ask someone 'How are you doing?' and they simply reply with "I am doing fine" when they are clearly not. We, as a society, also ignore the emotional pain and discuss the physical injuries openly without any hesitations. But for emotional damage? There's hardly anyone to reach out to. Someone who is wearing a cast can easily be questioned about it and can be taken care of. But for someone who is struggling emotionally, one would hardly notice their pain. And even when they'll do, the person struggling would hesitate. Here's a question, "What if the hardest words to simply say are: 'I am not OK'?"

As we discuss about emotional struggles, which includes mental health, let's briefly review it. Mental health is a state of mental well-being that allows people to cope with life stress, realize their abilities, learn and work well, and help their community. Everyone goes through a phase in their lives which includes emotions such as stress, fear, loneliness, grief, frustration or anxiety. Having a proper and healthy mental health is very uncommon, and having a difficult period doesn't make you automatically "weak" or "broken." It's all in your head. If you guide your mind in a positive way, then you can have a healthy and stable mental well-being, just like physical health. Also, feeling emotionally overwhelmed ≠ being weak. Asking for support ≠ failing.

While we are discussing about how people hesitate to open up about their emotional struggles, so we shall also overlook the reason why they are not ready to speak.

1. Stigma: People feel stigma because they fear of getting some labels as an attention-seeker, dramatic, weak or unstable. The ones struggling emotionally are often misunderstood and that's what makes them lose their confidence.
2. Fear of Judgement: They hesitate to speak up as they have a fear of getting judged. There is always a thought lingering in the minds of people struggling emotionally and that is: "Will they understand my problem? What would be their reaction after listening to me?" and so on... Some people tend to judge others quickly without even hearing them out and that's another reason why they hesitate to break the silence.
3. Fear of becoming a burden: Some of the individuals care so much about others that they completely forget about their mental health and put their concerns about others on the

"Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, 'I will try again tomorrow.'"

— Mary Anne Radmacher

top of their priority lists. They don't speak because they don't want to worry their friends, parents, family, teachers or colleagues.

4. Social Expectations: People, especially the young generation, feel a constant pressure of being the "perfect" one and craving for the love that the other influencers get. They are always in the race for being a successful, happy, confident and productive person. And if they unable to be that person, the pressure on them increases and they become someone they are clearly not. In pretending to be someone else, you are wasting someone who you already are.
5. Lack of Awareness: Sometimes what happens is people don't know how to express what they are feeling. They simply can't get their thoughts or feelings out in open, leading to constant anxiety.

Keeping silent and not expressing your feelings may to lead to some serious issues and can also prevent people from receiving support and help. When people suppress their struggles, the problem to communicate can become harder as they would like to maintain their comfort zone and rather not talk about the struggle than solving it. Talking to each other can reduce the level of misunderstandings, but if the silent treatment goes on then eventually fights may occurs in between. Keeping things to yourself and not opening up may result in loneliness. After keeping silent for a while, even if you want to seek support, you may not be able to find appropriate support system. Having something in mind, keeping your opinions to yourself can cause suffering to a relationship because others don't know what you are going through. Silence doesn't always mean that everything is fine. Sometimes it simply means that someone doesn't yet feel safe enough to speak. Try and approach the people who seem too quiet, make them feel comfortable around you and make them express their feelings.

To make someone express their feelings, it's also very important for you to be a good listener. A good listener means someone who does not immediately dismiss someone's feelings out. Someone who does not compare their problems with someone else's. Someone who does not say, 'Other's have it worse.' Someone who does not rush to give solutions. Someone who simply says, "I'm here. You can talk to me." These are all the qualities that a good listener should have. They don't need advice; all they need is someone who can listen to their frustrations. Speaking requires courage. Listening requires compassion.

People need safe spaces to speak. Families, friends, workplaces, colleges and society all have an important role play. For an example, a college must provide the comfort and the safety to a student as well as the staff members, so that the college's environment is

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."

— Aesop

It's OK to Speak – Breaking the Silence Around Mental Health — page 3 of 3

homely and the students and staffs feel safe to speak freely about anything appropriate. The increase competition among students also results in the loss of confidence who lack in qualities. Teachers should find ways to balance them instead of making them feel superior or inferior to each other. It has happened a lot of times that a person enters the college alone in the hopes of finding a proper friend-circle or just a friend, but instead ends up getting ignored by the crowd and then wanders the campus on their own being lonely and having no one to talk to. All classes should conduct introductions of every student individually at the first day of college, so it becomes easier to make friendships and build relationships. Colleges should also not pressure the student about making a successful future. It should be the students' choice and the college staff should only advice and guide them through. But here's an actual question: 'Is a college truly successful if it develops students academically but ignores their emotional well-being?'

They can help the students by providing accessible counselling services, conducting mental-health awareness programs, training faculty to respond sensitively, creating peer-support initiatives, encouraging conversations rather than stigma and making students aware of professional help when needed. The responsibility isn't just on the person struggling; it is also on everyone around them to create an environment where vulnerability isn't punished. I would also like to add that a friend are not substitutes of a mental-health professional. Supporting someone means helping them connect with a counsellor, psychologist, doctor or another trusted adult/professional.

At last, I would to conclude this topic with a few lines saying that, we teach children to speak when they are hungry, hurt, frightened, confused or having any sort of emotions. As we grow older, however, society sometimes teaches us to hide those same feelings. Perhaps it is time to unlearn that silence. It is OK to speak. It is OK to say "I need help." It is OK to admit that we are struggling. And perhaps, most importantly, it is our responsibility to make sure that when someone finally finds the courage to speak, they find someone willing to listen.

"Mental health should not be a conversation reserved for moments of crisis; it should be part of everyday conversations about being human."

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

— Anne Frank

ESSAY 09

When "Busy" Becomes a Badge: Managing Stress and the Art of Coping

Mandhra Mohd. Owais

TOPIC: Managing Stress in a Fast-Paced World: Challenges and Coping Strategies

WHEN "BUSY" BECOMES A BADGE; MANAGING STRESS AND THE ART OF COPING

The alarm rings before the sky turns bright.

A phone lights up before the mind has fully awakened.

By night, the body is still moving, but the mind is asking for silence.

Somewhere between these two moments, we forget to simply breathe.

Mahatma Gandhi once observed that "***there is more to life than increasing its speed.***" The ***American Psychological Association*** defines stress as ***"the physiological or psychological response to internal or external stressors."*** Stress, therefore, is not simply the feeling of being busy. It is the mind and body responding to the demands placed upon us. A deadline, an examination, a difficult conversation or an uncertain future can all become stressors. In small and temporary doses, stress can sharpen attention and motivate action; when it becomes prolonged, however, it can begin to affect both well-being and everyday functioning.

Our difficulty today is that pressure has become woven into ordinary life. Somewhere along the way, being busy stopped being merely a description of our lives and became a description of our worth. A packed calendar can become a symbol of ambition, while late nights are quietly mistaken for dedication. Even being constantly available can begin to feel like proof of our importance. For students, the pressure may arrive through marks, examinations, competitions and expectations about the future. For adults, it may come through work, finances, family responsibilities and the inability to truly switch off. When demands keep arriving but recovery keeps being postponed, stress management becomes essential - not to make life effortless, but to make it sustainable.

Perhaps the first part of managing stress is ***learning what deserves our attention.*** We often experience pressure as one enormous pile when it is actually a collection of smaller demands competing at the same time. An assignment, an examination, a competition and a dozen unanswered messages can all begin to feel equally urgent. Prioritising breaks that illusion. Asking what must be done now, what can wait and what can be left altogether gives the mind a sense of order. Breaking a large task into smaller steps can make it less intimidating too. Good time management is not about filling every minute; it is about preventing everything from fighting for the same minute.

"It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters."

— Epictetus

That naturally leads to another skill: ***knowing when to say no.*** In a culture that celebrates constant involvement, every opportunity can feel too valuable to refuse. We accept another responsibility, another invitation, another deadline, believing that one more thing cannot possibly make a difference. But small commitments accumulate. Protecting our time sometimes means declining something we could technically do. It means understanding that an opportunity is not automatically an obligation. Ambition does not become weaker when it has boundaries; it becomes more sustainable.

For young people, stress management also requires ***separating achievement from identity.*** Marks matter. Career choices matter. Hard work matters. But when every result becomes a judgement of personal worth, pressure becomes much heavier. A disappointing grade is a result, not a definition. Someone else's success is not evidence of our failure. Setting realistic goals, accepting mistakes and measuring progress against our own previous efforts can make ambition healthier. The aim is not to stop striving; it is to stop making every setback feel like a verdict on who we are.

Then comes something we often treat as optional: ***recovery.*** We postpone rest until the work is finished, although the work is rarely completely finished. Sleep, regular meals, movement and genuine breaks are not rewards for being productive; they help make productivity possible in the first place. A walk, a game of sport, music, reading, prayer or an unhurried conversation may occupy time that could have been spent working, but that does not make it wasted. Sometimes an empty hour is precisely what allows the next few hours to function better. A mind that never gets to recover eventually struggles to give its best even to ordinary tasks.

In the same way, our attention needs protection. The modern world rarely stops asking for it. A phone can become a classroom, workplace, social space and entertainment centre within seconds. Its convenience is valuable, but constant access can quietly become constant availability. Turning off unnecessary notifications, keeping the phone away while studying, protecting mealtimes from screens and creating a calmer period before sleep can help restore control. The purpose is not to reject technology. It is to ensure that every notification does not automatically become an instruction.

Stress management also involves ***learning to handle the pressure*** we create within our own minds. Perfectionism can turn a small mistake into a personal verdict. A missed deadline becomes "I am irresponsible." A low mark becomes "I am not good enough." Such thoughts add another layer of stress to the original problem. Reframing them more accurately- "I struggled with this," "I need another approach," "I can improve" does not mean lowering our standards.

It means keeping one difficult moment in proportion. A problem is easier to solve when we are not simultaneously using it to judge ourselves.

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

— Aristotle

And sometimes, the most responsible form of coping is ***asking for help.*** A trusted parent, friend, teacher, counsellor or mental-health professional can offer perspective when our own thoughts have become crowded. Support does not have to wait until everything feels impossible. Speaking early can make a difficult situation easier to understand and manage. There is no achievement in carrying a burden silently simply because everyone else appears to be carrying theirs.

Yet stress is not always an individual problem with an individual solution. A student cannot simply organise their way out of an overloaded timetable. A worker cannot genuinely disconnect if constant availability is expected. Families, schools and workplaces therefore have a role in shaping healthier expectations. They can encourage ambition without glorifying exhaustion, expect effort without demanding permanent availability, and make room for rest without treating it as laziness. Personal coping matters, but the environment around a person matters too.

Perhaps that is what managing stress in a fast-paced world really demands: not a slower life, but a more deliberate one. We cannot control every deadline, examination, notification or expectation that comes our way. We can, however, decide what deserves our attention, what deserves our energy and what can wait. We can work without worshipping busyness, rest without feeling guilty and ask for support without seeing it as weakness.

The alarm will still ring tomorrow.

The city will still hurry.

The phone will still light up.

But perhaps we do not have to match the world's speed at every moment.

Perhaps the real art of coping is not learning how to carry more and more. It is ***learning what we can put down.***

"Nothing can bring you peace but yourself."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

SECTION 02

Poems

Let your words be a ray of hope!

ILLUSTRATIVE THEMES

- Self-care and self-love
- Overcoming stress and anxiety
- Hope and resilience
- The importance of seeking help
- Building a kinder and more inclusive society
- Breaking the stigma around mental health
- A brighter tomorrow

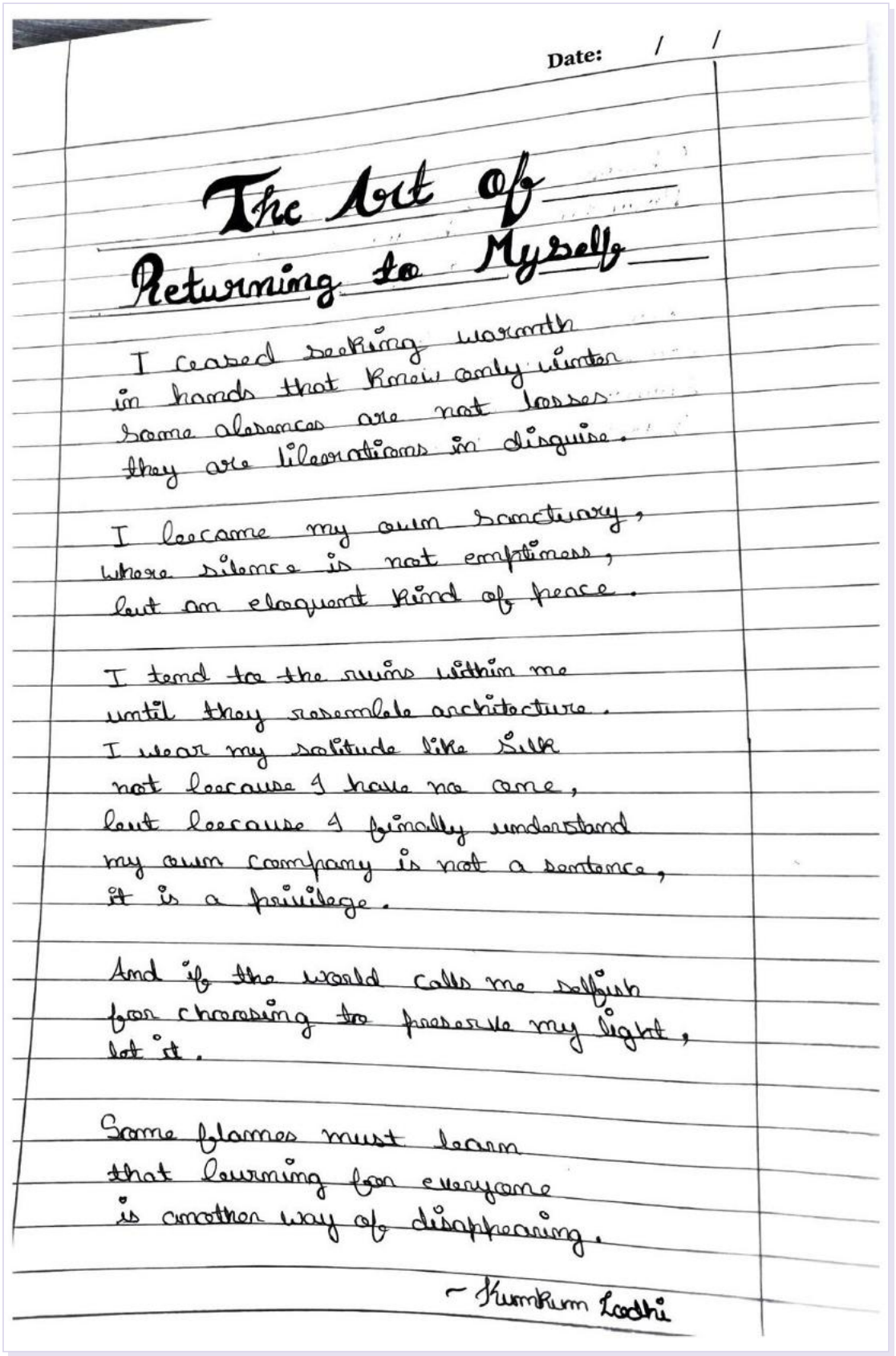
"Faith is the bird that feels the light and sings when the dawn is still dark."

— Rabindranath Tagore

POEM 01

The Art of Returning to Myself

Kumkum Lodhi



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The Art of Returning to Myself

I ceased seeking warmth
in hands that knew only winter.
Some absences are not losses—
they are liberations in disguise.

I became my own sanctuary,
where silence is not emptiness,
but an eloquent kind of peace.

I tend to the ruins within me
until they resemble architecture.
I wear my solitude like silk
not because I have no one,
but because I finally understand
my own company is not a sentence,
it is a privilege.

And if the world calls me selfish
for choosing to preserve my light,
let it.

Some flames must learn
that burning for everyone
is another way of disappearing.

— Kumkum Lodhi

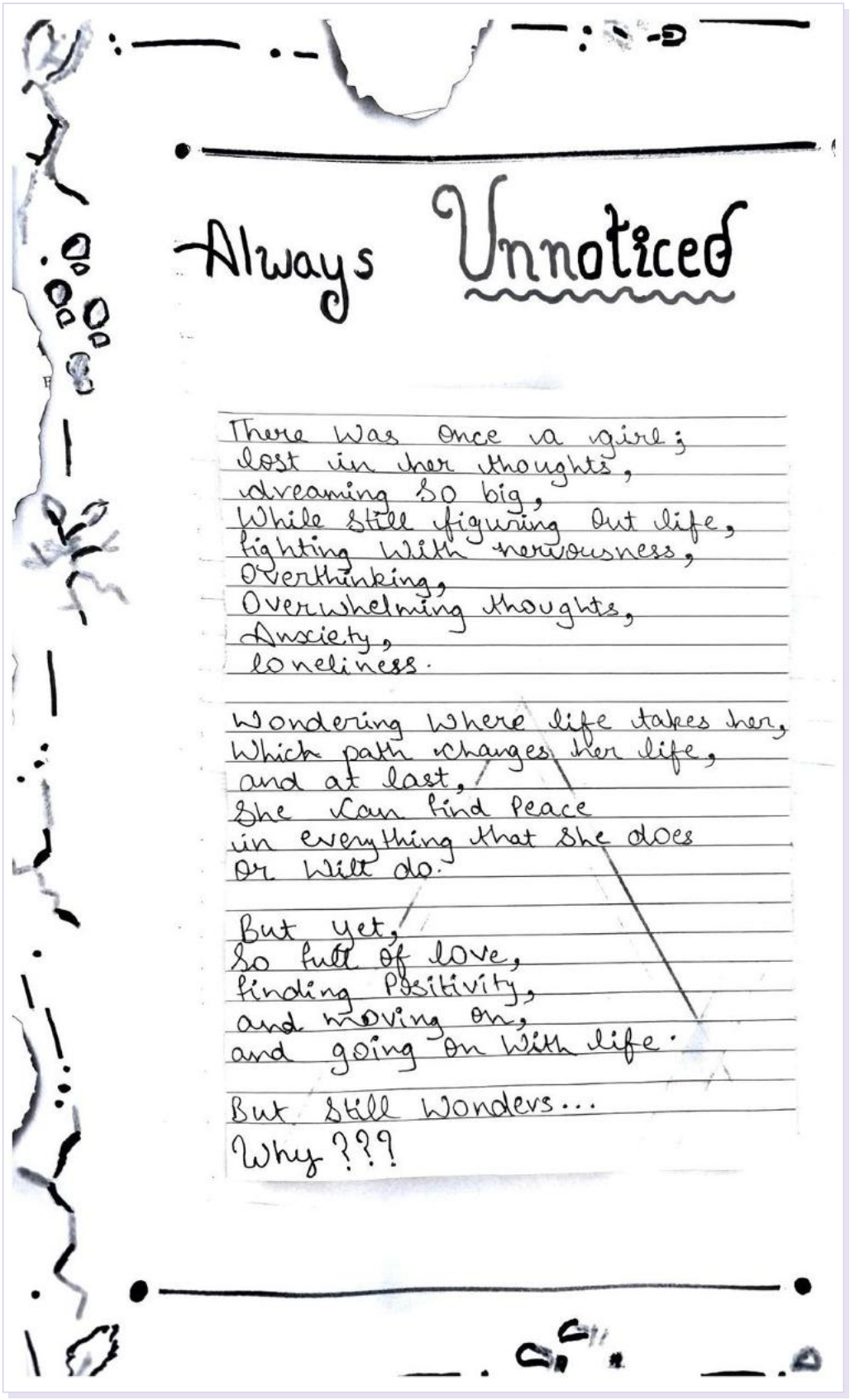
"You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself."

— Swami Vivekananda

POEM 02

Always Unnoticed

Anshika Shukla



Always Unnoticed

There Was once a girl;
lost in her thoughts,
dreaming so big,
While still figuring out life,
fighting With nervousness,
Overthinking,
Overwhelming thoughts,
Anxiety,
loneliness.

Wondering where life takes her,
Which path changes her life,
and at last,
She can find peace
in everything that she does
Or Will do.

But yet,
So full of love,
finding Positivity,
and moving on,
and going on With life.

But Still Wonders...
Why ???

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."

— Maya Angelou

POEM 03

A Brighter Tomorrow

Karishma Sandeep Kanade

A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

SLOW DOWN, THERE'S NO PLACE TO BE,
BREATHE AS IF IT TAKES , THE BURDERN FREE
THINGS MAY BE HEAVY AS THEY OFTEN SAY,
BUT HOLD YOURSELF CLOSER THROUGH THE DAY.

BE PROUD OF YOURSELF FOR MAKING IT THROUGH.
FOR MAKING IT HERE, FOR ALL THAT YOU DO.
TODAY MIGHT NOT BE YOUR DAY,
BUT THERES ALWAYS TOMORROW TO FIND YOUR WAY.

LIKE A BESTFRIEND YOU QUIETLY CRAVE,
TOMORROW WILL COME, GENTLE AND BRAVE.
IT WILL TEACH YOU FROM THE DAYS GONE BY,
AND LEAVE YOU WITH THE REASONS TO STILL TRY.

THERE'S ALWAYS A BLANK PAGE,
FOR US TO WRITE AT ANY AGE.
ITS OK TO HOLD ON TO THE PEN,
EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO WRITE AGAIN.

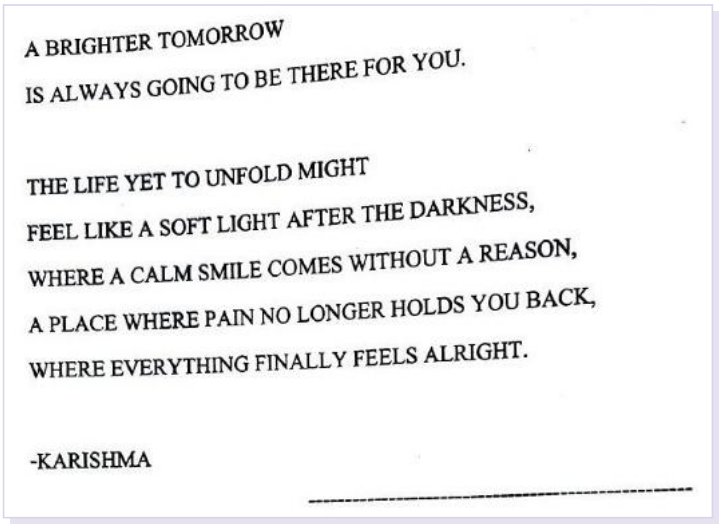
BREAK, FALL AND RISE THROUGH IT ALL,
YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE MAIN CHARACTER
OF THE LIFE YOU WISHED ALL ALONG.
YOU MAY STUMBLE, YOU MAY FALL, BUT YOU'II FIND
YOUR WAY THROUGH IT ALL.

TOMORROW BELONGS TO YOU,
NOT TO THE VOICES TELLING YOU WHHAT TO DO.
BUILD A LIFE THAT FEELS RIGHT AND TRUE,
A LIFE THAT FEELS LIKE IT BELONGS TO YOU.

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

— Nelson Mandela

A Brighter Tomorrow — page 2 of 2



A BRIGHTER TOMORROW
IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE THERE FOR YOU.

THE LIFE YET TO UNFOLD MIGHT
FEEL LIKE A SOFT LIGHT AFTER THE DARKNESS,
WHERE A CALM SMILE COMES WITHOUT A REASON,
A PLACE WHERE PAIN NO LONGER HOLDS YOU BACK,
WHERE EVERYTHING FINALLY FEELS ALRIGHT.

-KARISHMA

"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that."

— Martin Luther King Jr.

POEM 04

The Walls I Built

Shivi Sharma

THE WALLS I BUILT

I gnawed in ire, while I sought my comfort in plight,
petrified that someone would notice,
someone would strive to tend my blight.
For I was taught to tread alone, alone with all my might,
when I thought I'd scour my wounds and wage a private fight.
I built a fortress out of silence, mortared it with pride,
told myself that iron walls were safer than a guide.
I called it strength to bear it all, to never let it show
I did not know that strength, unshared, is just a slower blow.
Oh, and how I'd wring my tears dry through all those nights,
for I saw no hope to light, nor dawn within my sight.
I mistook my silence for a shield, a sturdy, guarded gate
not knowing it would turn, in time, into the walls of fate.
But there's a kinder truth I learned, one I was slow to find ,
that reaching out is not defeat, it's tending to the mind.
A voice that trembles asking help is braver than it knows,
for courage isn't silence kept , it's a wound that finally shows.
And so I learned to loosen, stone by stone, the walls I'd made,
to let another's hand undo the damage silence had laid.
The world did not grow soft for me, nor did the night turn kind ,
but somewhere in the asking, I began to ease my mind.
Now I no longer curse the dark for keeping dawn at bay,
I've learned that healing rarely comes in one triumphant day.
It comes in small, unhurried steps, in choosing to stay whole ,
a brighter tomorrow built not on fire, but on a steadier soul.

-shivi

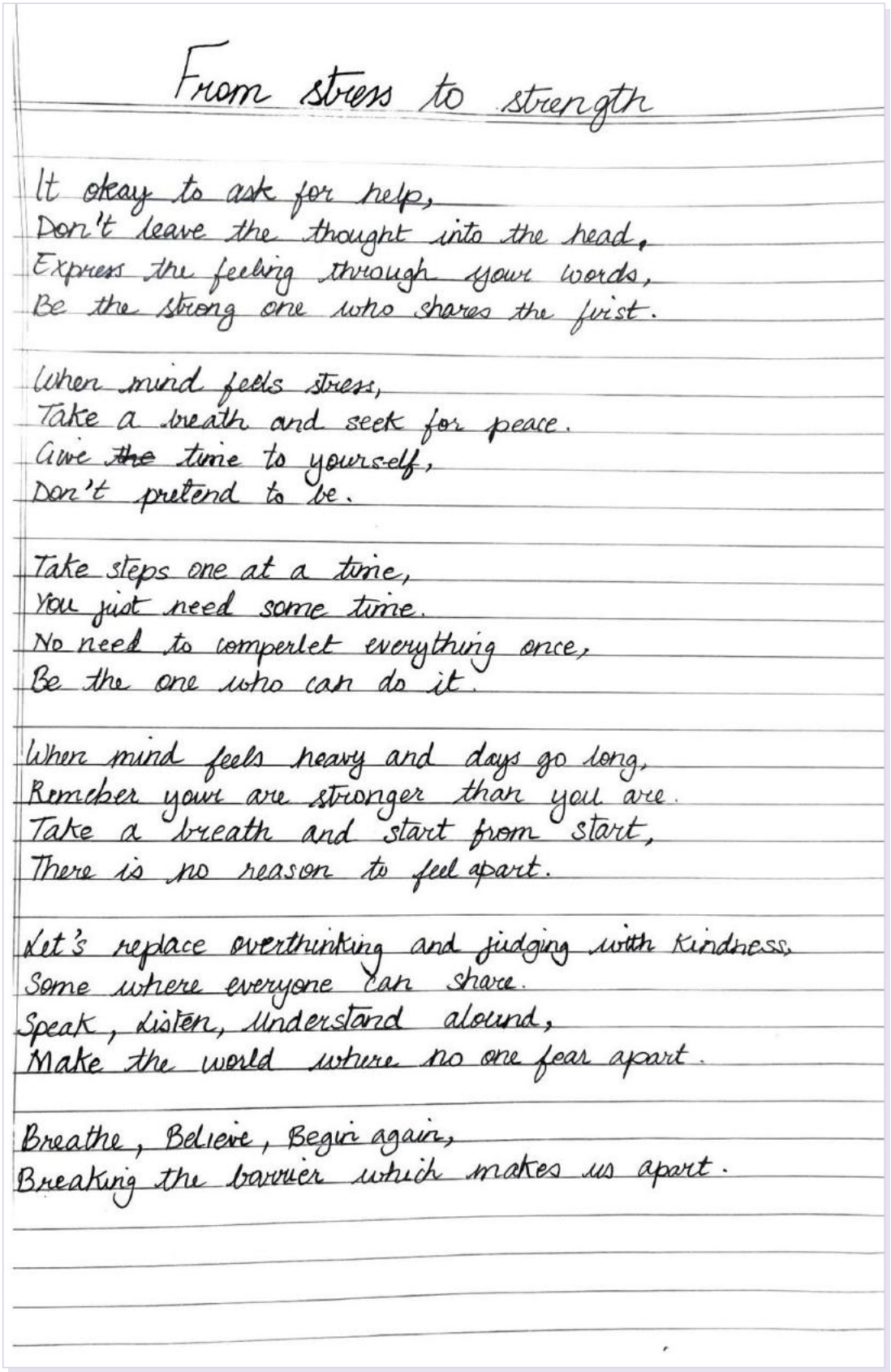
"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves."

— Viktor E. Frankl

POEM 05

From Stress to Strength

Tanishka Gupta



From stress to strength

It okay to ask for help,
Don't leave the thought into the head,
Express the feeling through your words,
Be the strong one who shares the fvist.

When mind feels stress,
Take a breath and seek for peace.
Give the time to yourself,
Don't pretend to be.

Take steps one at a time,
You just need some time.
No need to comperlet everything once,
Be the one who can do it.

When mind feels heavy and days go long,
Remeber your are stronger than you are.
Take a breath and start from start,
There is no reason to feel apart.

Let's replace overthinking and judging with Kindness,
Some where everyone can share.
Speak, Listen, Understand alound,
Make the world where no one fear apart.

Breathe, Believe, Begin again,
Breaking the barrier which makes us apart.

"We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated."

— Maya Angelou

POEM 06

Hope & Resilience

Maitri Chaturvedi

Hope & Resilience

Stress once rested heavily upon my shoulder,
While every passing day made my heart colder.
Anxiety had slowly become my guide,
As I carried all my worries deep inside.

No helping hand, no voice to make me stay,
I walked through all the darkness on my way.
Alone in the dust, with nowhere to turn,
I hid all the feelings that continued to burn.

Then came a hand that reached out to me,
A gentle voice that helped me breathe free.
Those endless sighs began to fade away,
And nights till three slowly turned into day.

The healing journey has only begun,
Yet now I know I don't have to run.
I'm finding my way, one step at a time,
Leaving my old self somewhere behind.

For now, I have learned what I couldn't see:
Sometimes speaking is the first step to being free.

"He who has a why to live can bear almost any how."

— Friedrich Nietzsche

POEM 07

A Brighter Tomorrow

Saleha Imran Maknojia

A Brighter Tomorrow

When today is filled with shadows and rain,
I'll hold on to hope through every pain.
The night may be long, the path may be unclear,
But every new dawn brings tomorrow near.

I'll leave my fears where yesterday ends,
And walk with the lessons that time has sent.
I may not know where the journey will go,
But I'll keep moving, trusting I'll grow.

Tomorrow will come with a light of its own,
A chance to become more than I've known.
For every ending can lead to a new start,
And brighter tomorrows begin with a hopeful heart.

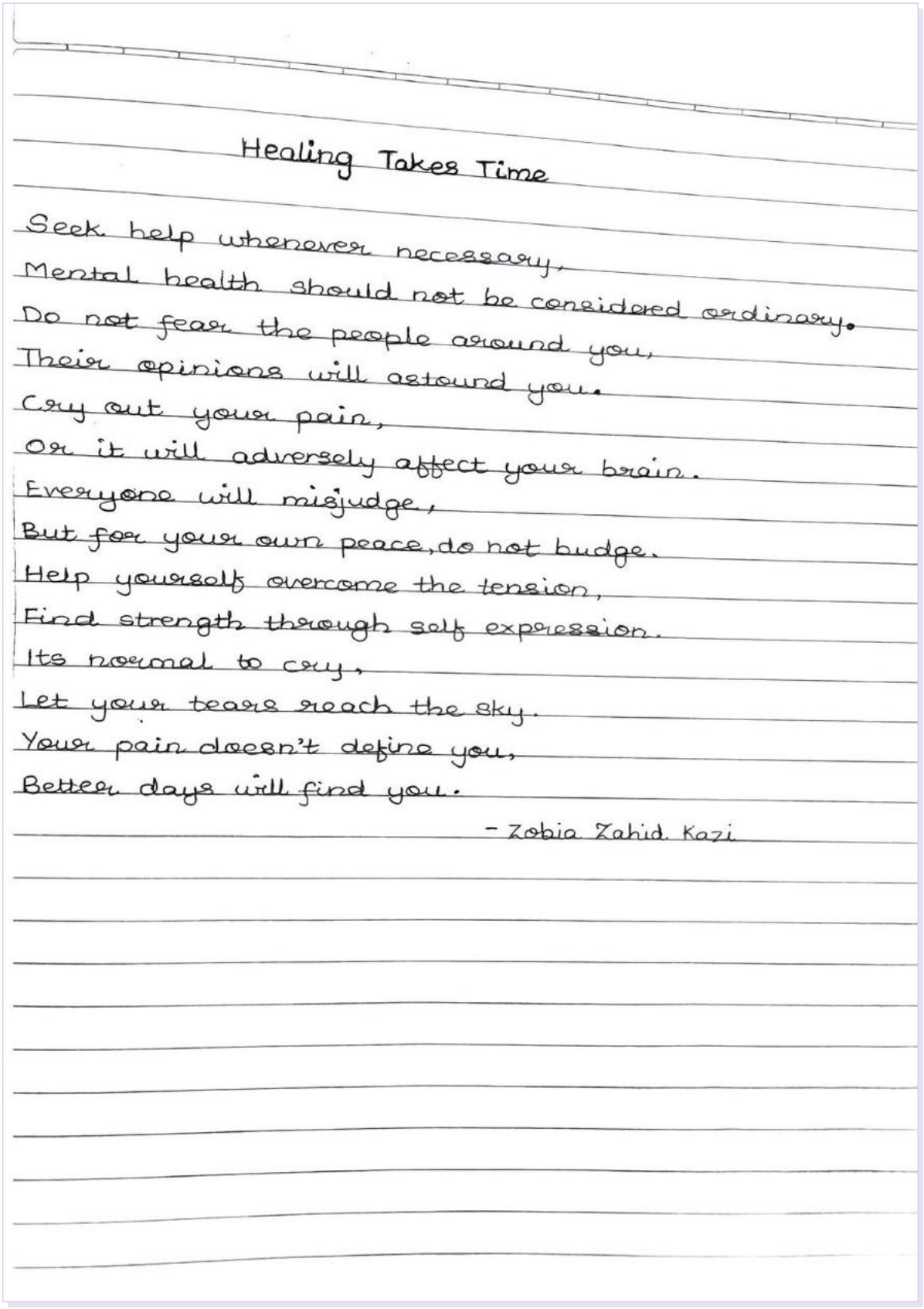
"Dream, dream, dream. Dreams transform into thoughts and thoughts result in action."

— A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

POEM 08

Healing Takes Time

Zobia Zahid Kazi



Healing Takes Time

Seek help whenever necessary,
Mental health should not be considered ordinary.
Do not fear the people around you,
Their opinions will astound you.
Cry out your pain,
Or it will adversely affect your brain.
Everyone will misjudge,
But for your own peace, do not budge.
Help yourself overcome the tension,
Find strength through self expression.
Its normal to cry,
Let your tears reach the sky.
Your pain doesn't define you,
Better days will find you.

- Zobia Zahid Kazi

"This too shall pass."

— Proverb

SECTION 03

Posters

Let your creativity inspire change!

INDICATIVE THEMES

- It's OK to Talk – Breaking the silence and stigma around mental health
- Manage Stress, Choose Peace
- Choose Life, Seek Help – Suicide Prevention: There is Always Hope
- You Are Not Alone
- Stronger Together – Building a mentally healthy and supportive college community

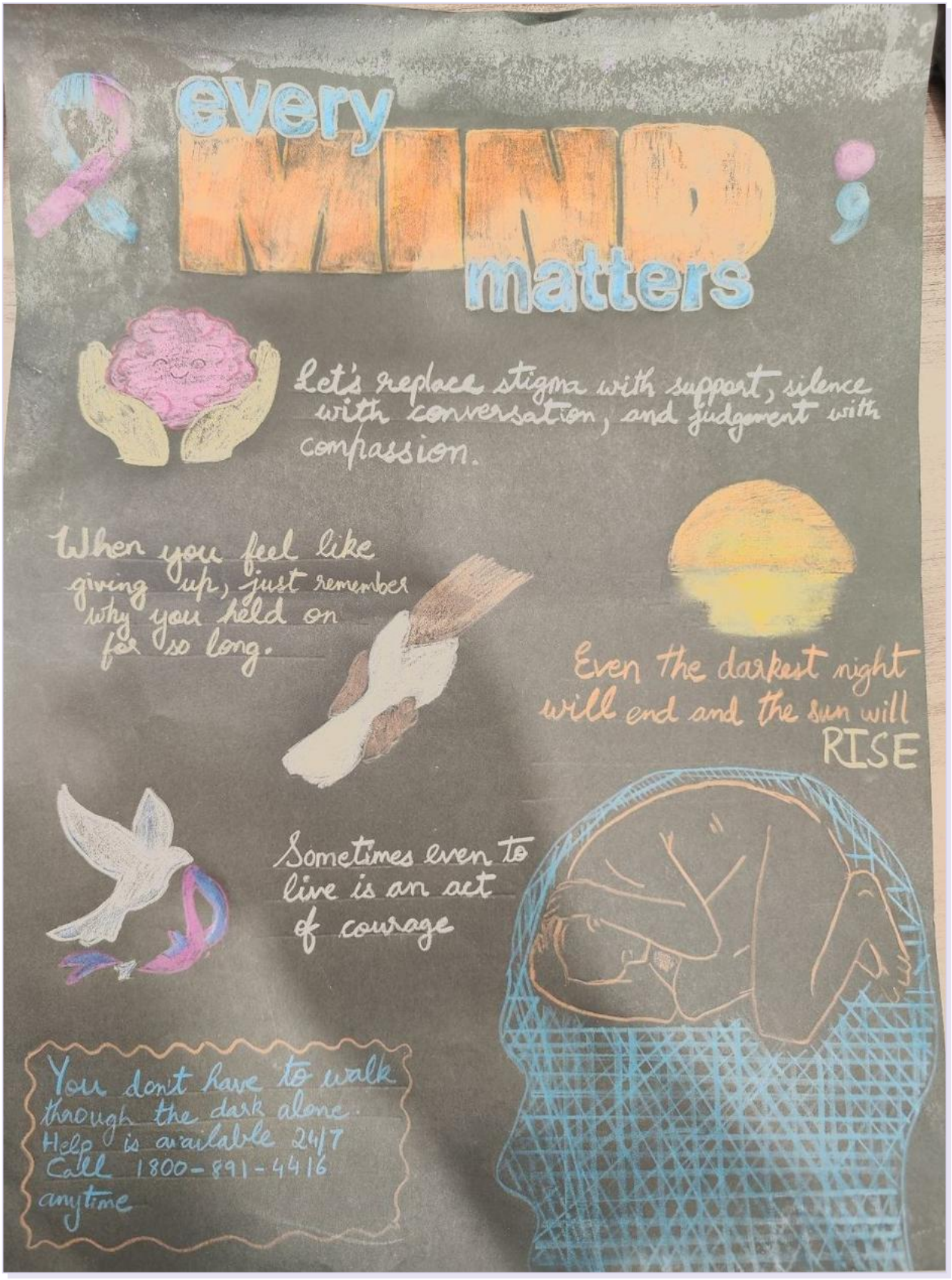
"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."

— Pablo Picasso

POSTER 01

Every Mind Matters

Danah Fernandes



"The darkest hour is just before the dawn."

— Proverb

POSTER 02

Let Go

Anshika Shukla



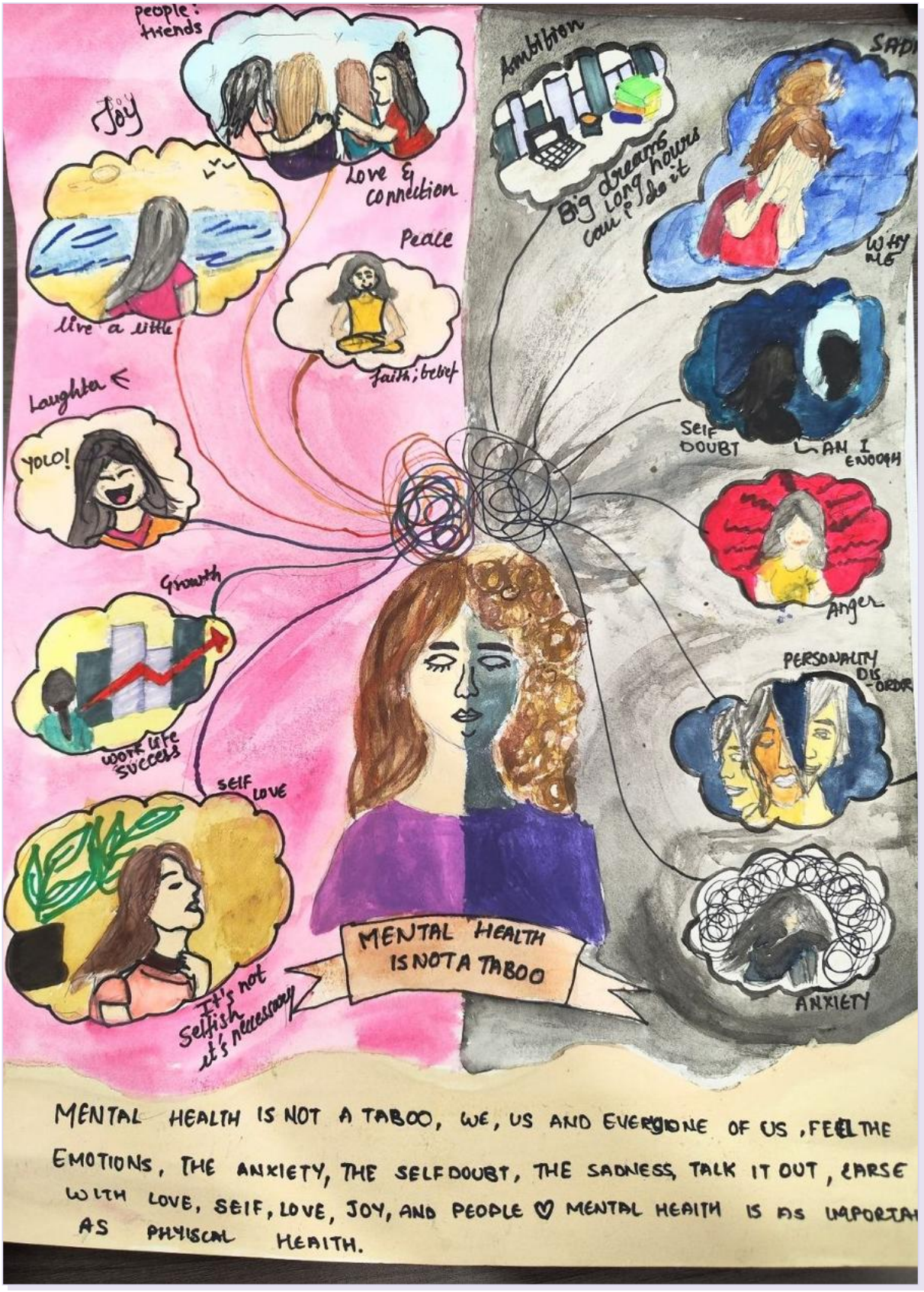
"When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be."

— Lao Tzu

POSTER 03

Mental Health Is Not a Taboo

Namira Saudagar



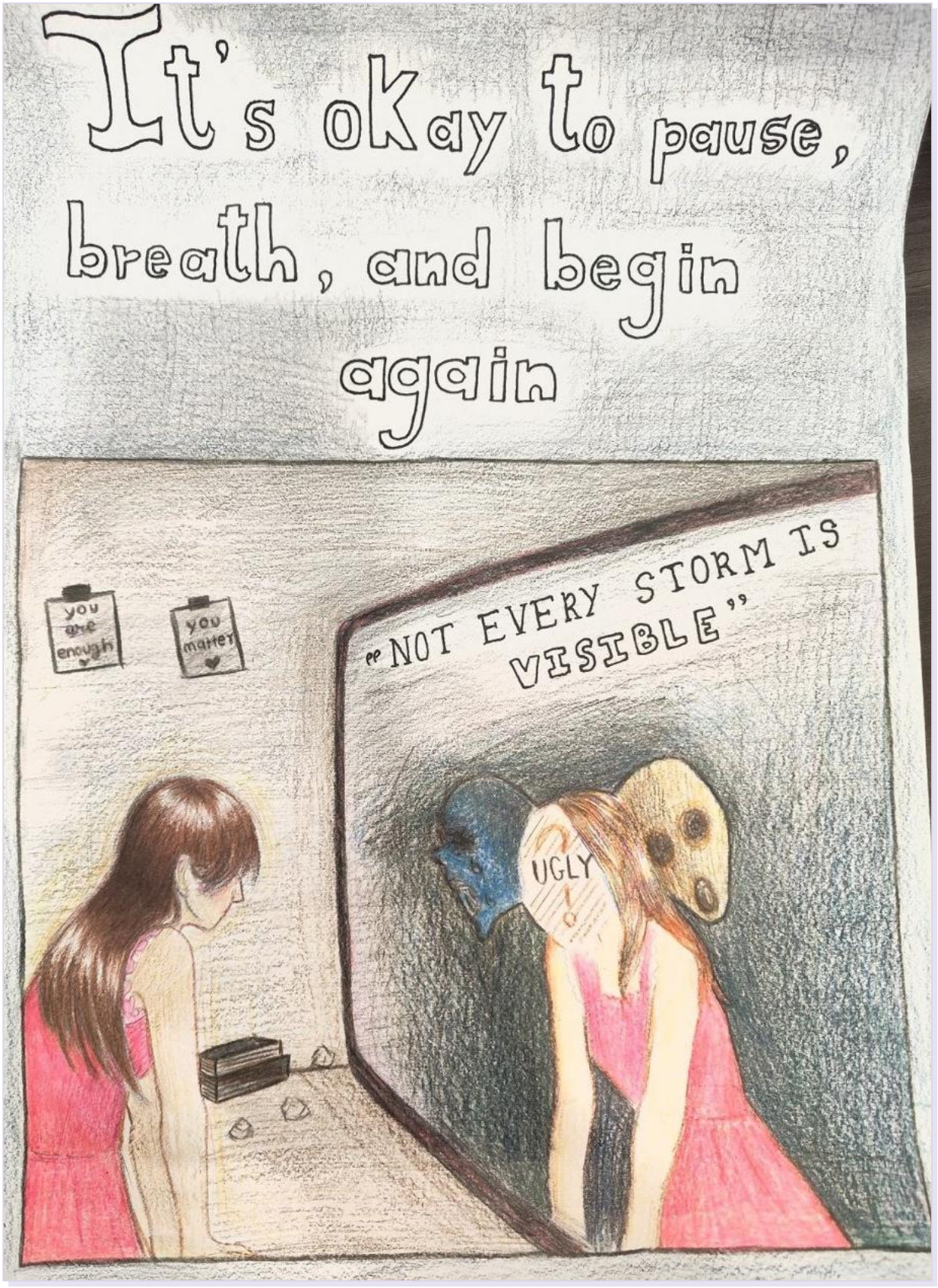
"Where there is love there is life."

— Mahatma Gandhi

POSTER 04

It's Okay to Pause, Breathe and Begin Again

Sejal Ravindra Tribhuvan



"Breathing in, I calm body and mind. Breathing out, I smile."

— Thich Nhat Hanh

POSTER 05

Choose Peace – Strong Together

Tanishka Gupta



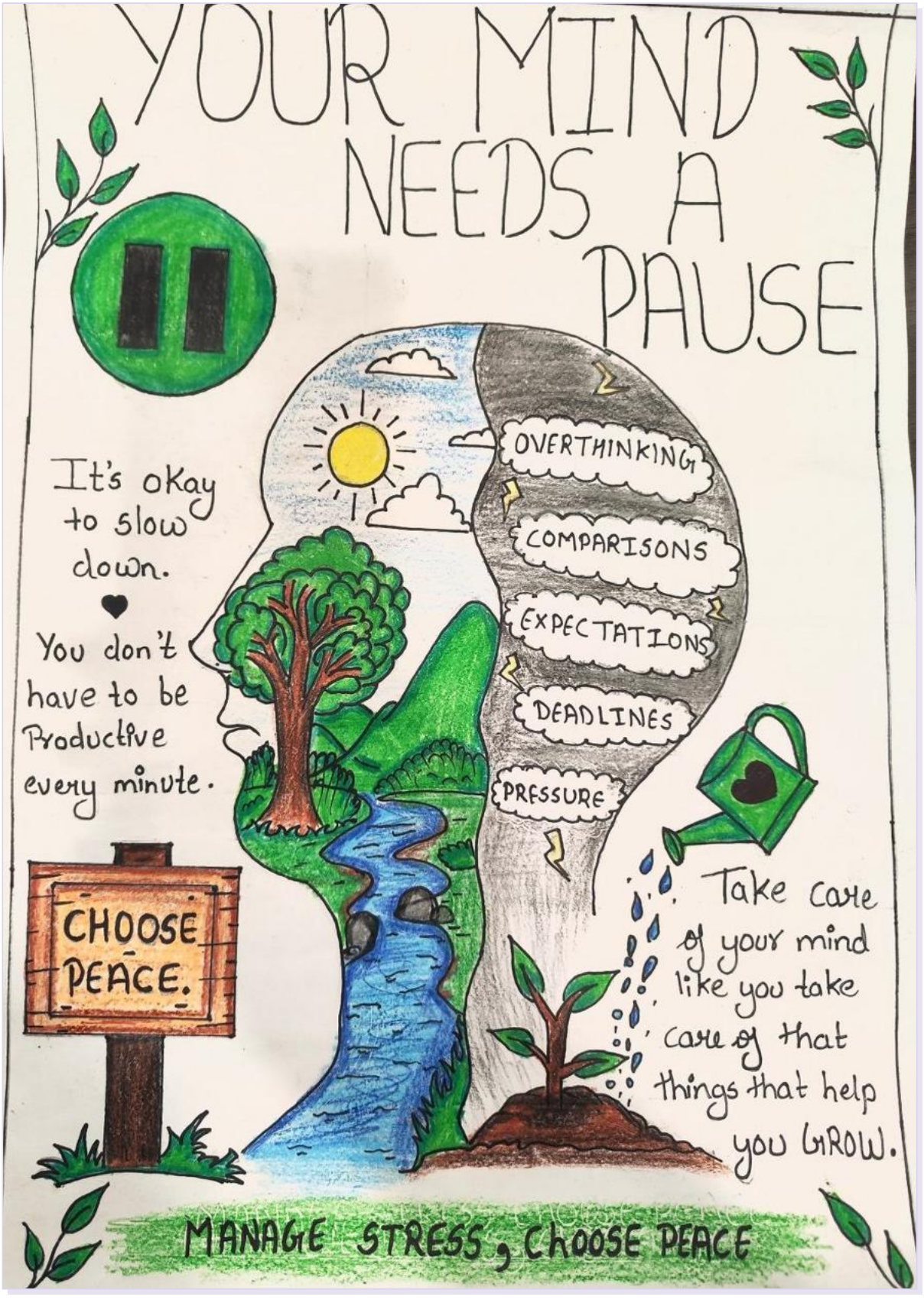
"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

— Helen Keller

POSTER 06

Your Mind Needs a Pause

Suhani Gupta



"Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you."

— Anne Lamott

POSTER 07

It's OK to Talk

Mandhra Mohd. Owais



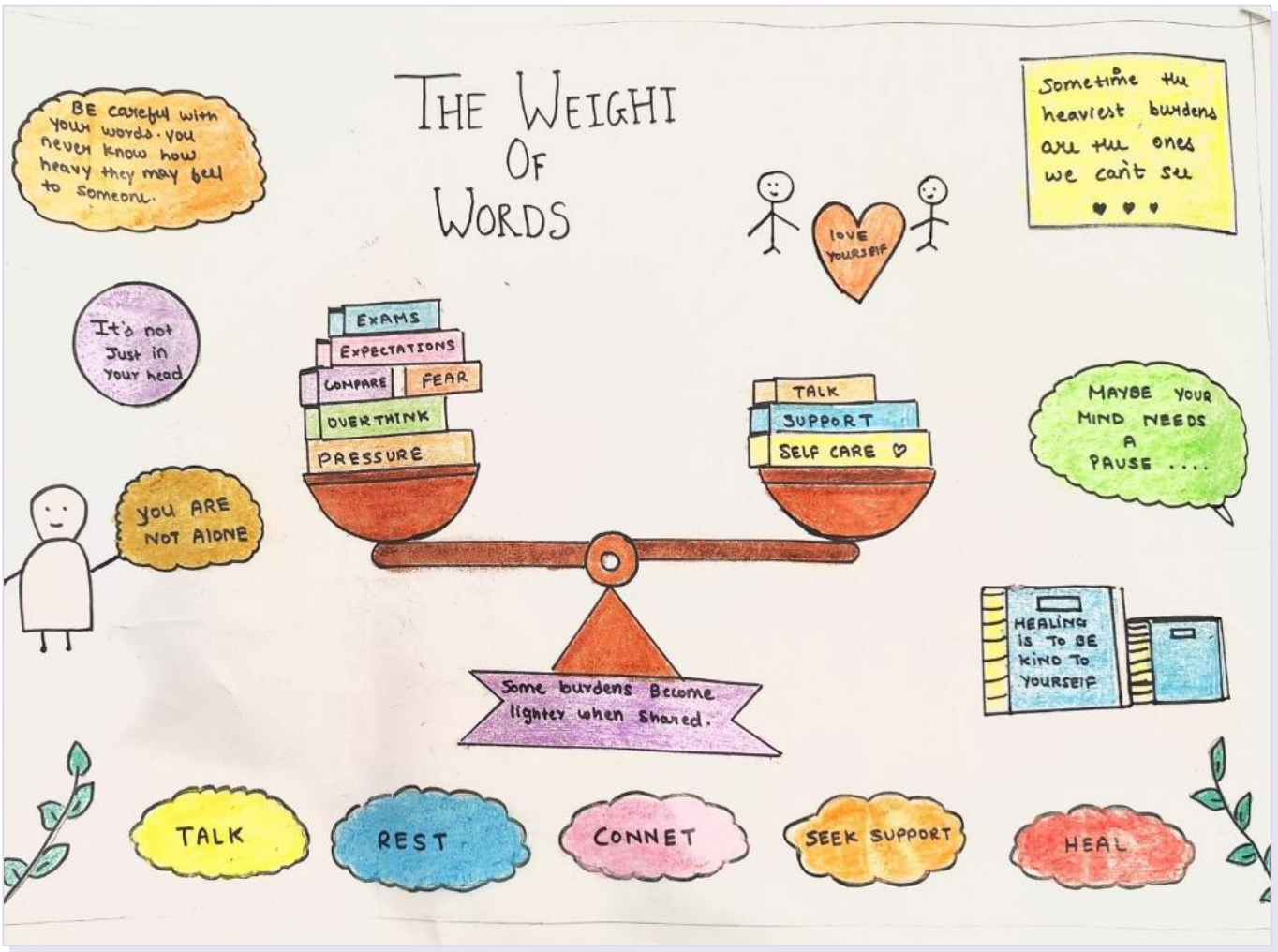
"Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break."

— William Shakespeare, Macbeth

POSTER 08

The Weight of Words

Arya Salunkhe



"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

— Mother Teresa

THANK YOU

Mental health matters as much as physical health. Many people around us may be struggling silently, behind a smile or a busy routine. Let us stay aware of mental health issues, listen without judgement and respond with empathy towards those who face them. A kind word, a patient ear or a gentle push towards help can make a real difference, and our support can help someone heal and find their way back. If you are struggling yourself, please reach out. You are not alone, and help is available.

WITH GRATITUDE

We sincerely thank the Management of our college, our Principal Dr. Navin Punjabi and our Vice Principal Dr. Chandrakala Joshi for their constant support and encouragement.

COUNSELLING AT OUR COLLEGE

Ms. Asha Ambani

Counsellor

Our college and its management care deeply for the students and for the cause of mental health. They have therefore provided a free-of-cost counselling facility for the students as well as the staff. Even our alumni take help regularly.

Many staff, students and alumni seek help regularly, and all their data is kept completely confidential.

WHEN
Wednesdays & Fridays, 10 am – 12 noon

WHERE
2nd Floor, Computer Lab

Let us make this world a better place for all by caring for each other and working for the cause of Mental Health.

"May all be happy; may all be free from illness."

— Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah – Vedic prayer