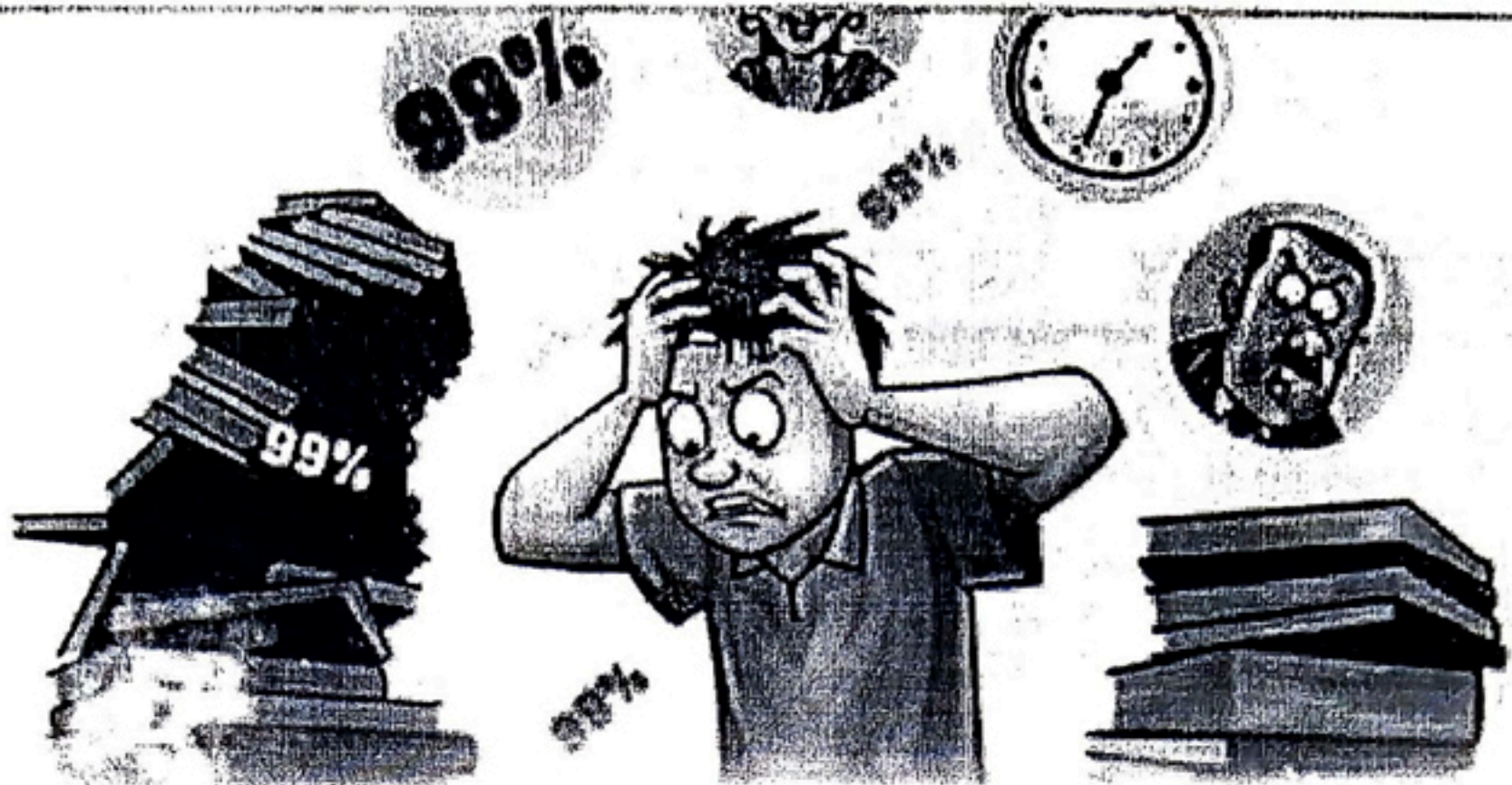


During exam time, kids go through several stressful situations that bring forth troublesome emotions like anger, depression, anxiety, palpitations. There are several tips and tricks to help them overcome their fears...

BY MINOO JOKHI



Renowned English Journalist and author, Rudyard Kipling, had wisely said: "Of all the liars in

the world, sometimes the worst are our own fears." Fear must never be there as it is a hindrance to one's growth. And one very well known fear, especially for young students, is exam fear.

During exam time and just before the exams, kids go through several stressful situations that bring forth troublesome emotions like anger, depression, anxiety, palpitations, sweating, eye discomfort and watering etc.

GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

At least an hour before the exam starts, the student should learn to laugh about something funny and must have a broad smiling face. Pranayam breathing exercises like Anulom Vilom and Kapalabhati would help a lot. Practice of Brahmī as well as sacred mantra chanting like "Yatha" or "Ashem" is very beneficial.

All the above tips help a student to relax and remain calm and cool. Last moments thoughts will always be there like what questions will come and what answers will be forgotten, but since that is not in a child's hands it is better not to bother and have no anxiety. A student should be told to avoid contact with friends who are very panicky as they simply spread panic and fear all around.

PREPARATION IS KEY

For students who are appearing for exams, here are some tips that can help minimize the stress:

1) Do your revision well and in time

While revising a par-

Enabling Students to Overcome Exam Fear

ticular subject, practice writing. This would be an actual preparation of the examination itself. Plan your revision and complete it in allocated time. This will give you a sense of achievement and build your confidence.

While revising vary different subjects and their difficult parts so you don't get bored or disheartened. Set realistic targets of what you can achieve in the time available.

2) Take regular breaks, it helps

To prevent mental fatigue, take a short break as soon as you notice your mind is losing focus and your concentration is being affected. Stick to

activities that do not break your study continuum during these breaks. Avoid television and very loud music. You will then be able to come back to your revision refreshed and recharged and will instead be totally distracted and mentally scattered. It is important to relax. Your mind and body perform at their best only if you get adequate rest and recreation.

MATH TRICK

If you take a 3 digit number and multiply it with 11, e.g. 136 times 11, then write 136 and put a 0 before 1 and after 6 and add the figures. 0+6=6; 3+6=9; 1+3=4 and 0+1=1 and the answer is 1496.

Similarly 254 times 11= 2794

If you take a 3 digit number and multiply it with 11, e.g. 563 times 11 then write 563 and put a 0 before 5 and after 3 and add the figures. 0+3=3; 6+3=9; 5+6=11 so write 1 and 1 carry over. 5+1=6 and the answer is 6193.

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3) Maintain a proper sleep pattern

A regular six to seven hours of sleep is manda-

4) Avoid all distractions

Keep all trivial issues at bay. During exam time, the examinations should be the only focus of a student's attention. Stay away from distractions that

5) Be full of positive thoughts

Spend time with friends and family who have a positive effect. It will rub off on you. And avoid negative thoughts such as "Everyone else seems better organized, while I'm struggling." Challenge such thoughts with positive thinking. For example, "I have done well in exams before and will do well this time too"

6) Eat good, nutritious food

Also, with your hectic study schedule, it is imperative to have good and proper eating habits. One important thing to avoid totally is caffeine. It is okay to have a cup or two of coffee or tea, but too much of it causes headaches, acidity insomnia etc. Avoid too much sugar and chocolate too. And please don't skip your breakfast; it's the most important meal of the day. And eat healthy stuff at regular intervals to get energy. Do ensure you have proper protein, carbohydrates like rice, vegetables, fish etc. Fruits too help. Nuts, whole wheat bread sandwiches also are good to have.

7) Breathe deeply and fully

Try prior to the exams use the 5-5-5 breathing technique to prevent anxiety. Breathe in slowly to a count of 5, completely expanding the lungs. Hold air in for a count of 5, then slowly release to a count of 5. Repeat until you are calm. This will enable the student to recall information that has been stored in the brain's memory more easily so that the child doesn't "go blank" when seeing exam questions.

Talking of "going blank", at times you can get into such situations. In

such situations be patient and go through that question again and again and also think of some related topic; you will be able to recollect the correct answer.

8) Do mock tests before the exam

Try doing mock tests as they build self-confidence and maintaining that confidence throughout the exam is very important in order to excel. Focused preparation is the key here. It is a good idea to spend time solving previous years' papers. This helps students to become familiar with the exam pattern of each subject in advance. But make sure you attempt those mock tests in the same format and with the same time limitations, which you will face on exam day.

9) Right attitude of parents

Parents, too, must not pressurize their kids but be supportive of them. Give them moral support and do not pass your anxieties on to the students. An important relaxation mantra for parents is to recite numbers slowly backwards like e.g. 50 to 1. Not very fast, but in a slow and relaxed manner.

SUMMING UP

In conclusion, if a student has done his or her preparation properly, there is nothing to fear. Do your work with confidence. As Oprah Winfrey has rightly said: "It is confidence in our bodies, minds and spirits that allows us to keep looking for new adventures."

Life is nothing if not a grand adventure and exams are but small challenges for students to overcome, in order to prepare them for life's real tests!