

- Analyse the methods by which the writer shares his values in this letter.

Akshata,

Becoming a father transformed me in ways that I could never have thought possible. I could never go back to being the person I used to be before. Your arrival in my life brought unimaginable joy and a larger responsibility. I was no more just a husband, a son, or a promising employee of a fast-growing company. I was a father, who had to measure up to the expectations his daughter would have of him at every stage of her life.

Your birth raised the benchmark of my life, in every aspect. My interactions at the workplace became more thoughtful and measured; the quality of my transactions with the outside world more considerate, dignified, and mature. I felt a need to deal with every human being more sensitively and courteously. After all, some day you would grow up and understand the world around you, and I didn't want you ever to think that I had done anything even remotely wrong.

I am often asked about the qualities that I have imparted to my children. I tell them that it is your mother who shouldered this great responsibility and I am ever so grateful to her for bringing you up to be the fine individuals you are. She communicated values more by action than by talking about them. She taught Rohan and you the importance of simplicity and austerity. There was this one instance, in Bangalore¹, when you were selected for a school drama for which you were required to wear a special dress. It was in the mid-eighties, Infosys² had just begun its operations, and we did not have any money to spend on non-basic goods. Your mother explained to you that we would not be able to buy the dress and that you would have to drop out of the performance. Much later, you told me that you had not been able to understand or appreciate that incident. We realize it must have been a bit drastic for a child to forgo an important event in school, but, we know you learnt something important from that – the importance of austerity.

Life has changed for us since then and there is enough money. But, you know, our lifestyle continues to be simple. I remember discussing with your mother the issue of sending you kids to school by car once we were a little comfortable with money, but your mother insisted that Rohan and you go to school with your classmates in the regular autorickshaw. You made great friends with the "rickshaw uncle" and had fun with the other kids in the auto. The simplest things in life are often the happiest and they are for free.

You would often ask me why there was no television at our home when the rest of your friends discussed stuff they watched on TV. Your mother decided early on that there would be no TV in our home so that there would be time for things like studying, reading, discussions, and meeting friends. She insisted that it was important to create an environment conducive to learning at home. Therefore, every night we dedicated the time between 8pm and 10pm to pursuits that brought the family together in a productive environment. While Rohan and you did your schoolwork, your mother and I read books on History, Literature, Physics, Mathematics, and Engineering, or did any office work.

It is quite a well-known fact that when a daughter gets married, a father has mixed feelings about it. He hates the fact that there is somebody else in his daughter's life with whom she
40 shares her affections – a smart, confident, younger man who gets the attention that was earlier his alone. I, too, was a little sad and jealous when you told us you had found your life partner. But when I met Rishi and found him to be all that you had described him to be – brilliant, handsome, and, most importantly, honest – I understood why you let your heart be stolen. It was then that I reconciled to sharing your affections with him. A few months ago, you made me a
45 proud grandparent. If holding you in my arms for the first time gave me indescribable joy, seeing Krishnaa, your lovely daughter, for the first time at your home in Santa Monica³, was a different experience altogether. I wondered, whether from now on, I would have to behave like a wise, grand old man! But, then I realized the bonus to growing older and becoming a grandparent. I would have the joy of pampering a child! Besides, you know what they say about grandparents
50 and grandchildren having a common enemy – the parent! I am convinced Krishnaa and I will eventually exchange notes about you and be completely on the same page when it comes to criticizing you!

As you pursue your goals and live a contented life, remember that there is only one planet for us to live in and that planet is now becoming endangered. Remember that it is your responsibility to
55 pass on this planet to Krishnaa in a better condition than you got it from us.

Take care, my child!
Lovingly, Appa⁴

Adapted from Infosys Founder N R Narayana Murthy's letter to his daughter from
Sudha Menon's *Legacy: Letters from eminent parents to their daughters*.
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¹ Bangalore: city in Karnataka, India

² Infosys: successful global consulting and IT services company

³ Santa Monica: city in California, USA

⁴ Appa: father