

# The Power of Suggestion

Mauna Khan

As a teacher I visually connect with my students. Eye contact is very important to me. This is how I understand their issues and get a sense of who they are.

Shahzad, my student in grade four would just not meet my gaze. He was withdrawn and often lost in day dreaming. I was teaching Shahzad at an elite private school.

I requested his mother to please come and see me. He was a middle child, with an older brother and a younger sister, she told me. She also said he was ‘useless’, that he could not study. I asked her if she helped him with his homework. “No, there is no point wasting any time on that child!” was her response

He was clearly manifesting his mother’s beliefs about him. I told the mother to pay him a little attention. “I know he is not doing well right now, but as a teacher I can tell that he is a topper.”

His mother was a sensible woman and softened her behaviour towards Shahzad. Gradually he started to make eye contact with me. Slowly he went up from getting his usual zero to scoring a few points on tests. We celebrated his milestones in class and cheered for him.

And the journey began...

When Shahzad sat for his O’ Level exams, he got straight As. He did the two year A Level program in just one year.

What happened here? The moment his mother's expectation level went up, he started connecting with himself and with the world around him. That is why you may not be consciously aware that you know something until someone asks you a question; it is their belief in your ability that motivates you to somehow come up with an answer. Such is the power of suggestion. Such is the power hidden in our words, waiting to be unleashed.

*The author is a yoga instructor and mental health expert in Islamabad*