



## MY ENCOUNTER WITH A COUNSELOR



It was December 2015, I remember when I first heard the words, "you have brought shame to the family". Let me explain. I had joined my college about 5 months back. My parents expected me to be studious and get placed in a top company with ideally a 7 figure salary. So, I would study hard, even at the cost of being made fun of and bullied. But I also made sure that I socialised, made friends, and pursued a sport.

A semester went by. I was at home for the sem break when my exam results were announced. I had scored an 8.75 GPA. It was decent, or so I thought. Then my parents saw it and suddenly it felt like someone had died in the house. "You have brought shame to the family", my dad said. My heart sank. I was in the top 20 of my class, and here I was being treated like a failure by my own parents.





For the next year, my parents would check up on me at least 5 times a day. If I didn't answer my phone, they'd call my roommate. If I was out with friends, I would get yelled at for throwing away my life. I wasn't allowed to have fun anymore. I slipped into depression, skipping classes, meals, and even socialising. My self-confidence and self-esteem hit rock-bottom. I had no idea what to do and had to finally consider the idea of counseling.

But I wasn't ready to meet with a counselor in person. That's when I came across a poster on my campus about an online counseling portal. I decided to give it a shot. I got onto the portal and was connected with Ruchi. Will she judge me?", "How can she ever help me?", "This is a bad idea", were some of the thoughts running in my head. But Ruchi made me feel so comfortable. I can tell you that with her, I got exactly what I needed, compassion, empathy, guidance and a patient ear, without even a tinge of judgement.



As I got more comfortable with her, I took her suggestion and we moved to sessions over Skype. At her request, I asked my parents to speak with her. At first, they were angry. "Why do you need counseling?" "What mistakes did we ever make to see this day?", they said. But on my repeated pleadings, they gave in. The change in their behaviour was miraculous. It was like I had lost my parents and had now found them again. Three months later, I emerged from counseling with renewed vigour, confidence, and self-worth. Most importantly, I felt hope - hope that I could be happy again.



In July 2019, I joined my first job in one of the world's foremost consultancy firms with a 7 figure salary. In the end, I just have one thing to say, neither is counseling something to be scared of nor is it something to be ashamed of.

**Got something on your mind that's troubling you?**

**We're here for you.**

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