CASE STUDY

From "I Always Thought It Was Two-Way" to "The Communication Has Become Two-Way"

How a **psychotherapist-mother and her 14-year-old daughter learned to trust** each other differently.

*When a parent overprotects and a child people-pleases, communication looks **harmonious** – until you realise only one person is driving.*

THE FAMILY

Shruti, Mother

An existential psychotherapist and a firm believer in inner work. She had already watched her elder daughter go through a year-long programme with Aparna. She believed her relationship with her younger daughter was open and two-way.

Aadi (14 years old/ daughter)

Naturally confident, but prone to holding herself back. The only child at home among three adults. A people-pleaser, "like me," in her mother's words.

Program: Inside Out Labs (90 days), Parallel Parent + Child Track, with two parenting workshops.

THE HEADLINE OUTCOME

The **daughter** who went along with everyone learned to say what she wanted, and why. The **mother** who couldn't stop protecting learned to see a child who was growing up. The quiet engine behind it all? Shruti did her own work in parallel.

> **"Her shift has been to becoming confident in sharing what she's feeling, without fear. And my shift has been to trust that, to be able to hear her."**
>
> *Shruti, Mother*

THE CHILD'S PATTERN

What Was Happening to Aadi

There was **no crisis**. Aadi was capable, sociable and well-liked. But a survival pattern was quietly shaping her choices.

> **"She is a people pleaser like me. Unfortunately, one of her best qualities, but also a quality that doesn't serve her too well all the time."**
>
> *Shruti, Mother*

How it showed up

1 At school

She held back in class, worried that her friends would think she was asking too many questions, or that she was "too interested", edging towards being called a **nerd**.

2 At home

With three adults in the family, **Aadi went with the flow**. If everyone wanted Chinese, she went along.

3 With her mother

She found it **hard to say no**. If Shruti suggested something, Aadi was likely to accept it just to keep pleasing her.



THE PARENT'S PARALLEL PATTERN

What Even an Expert Couldn't See

Shruti had the training and the clinical language. What she didn't have was a **clear view of her own pattern**.

> ***"One of my qualities that I didn't accept before is overprotection. I felt I didn't have that quality, but it's not even subtly there. It's very obvious. First, I never accepted it."***
>
> *Shruti, Mother*



THE PATTERNS SHRUTI WAS CARRYING

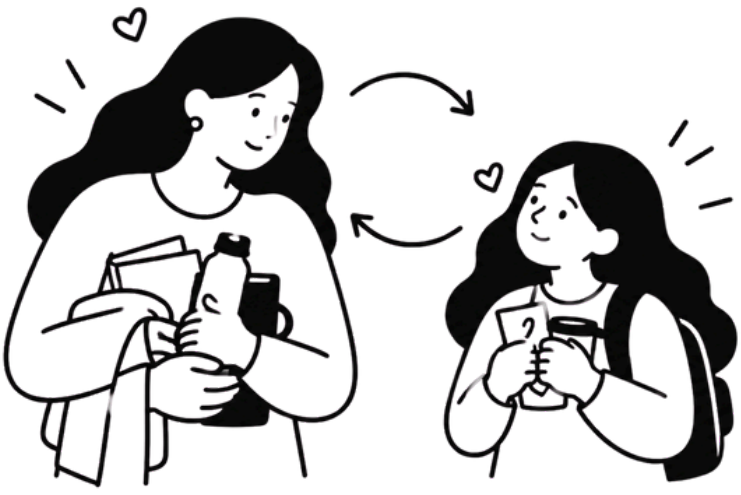
Overprotection

It surfaced in the parent workshops, **"when I talked a lot about my fears of what can happen to my child."** It showed up every day. When Aadi started walking to her school bus alone, Shruti admitted: **"I used to tell her, 'I'm going to walk behind you and observe you."**



A Shared People-Pleaser

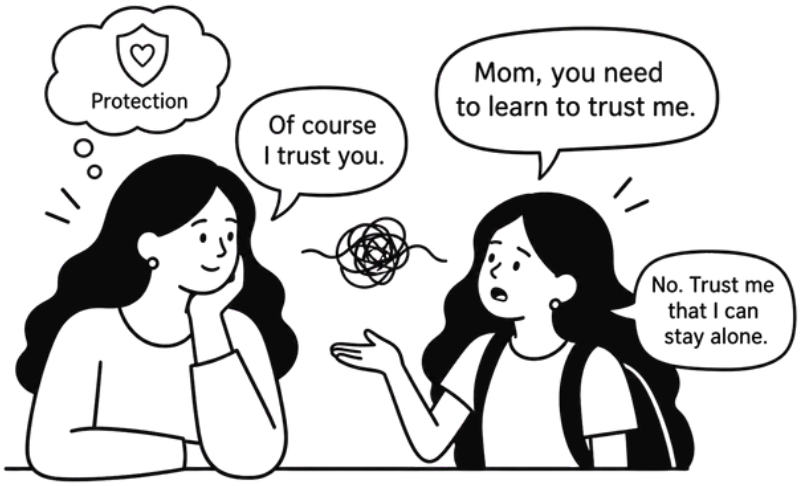
Mother and daughter shared the same pattern, running in both directions. **"In our relationship, we can overdo things for each other."**



A Gap Between *Intent* and *Impact*

Shruti saw protection. Aadi saw something else entirely.

Aadi: "Mom, you need to learn to trust me."
Shruti: "Of course I trust you."
Aadi: "No. Trust me that I can stay alone."



WHAT LOOKED FINE FROM THE OUTSIDE

Nothing had gone wrong. There was **no fighting**. **"Our relationship wasn't one where we would fight, or I'd get angry and say, 'Why aren't you doing this?' We had a very nice way of talking to each other,"** Shruti notes.

Shruti wasn't sceptical about the methodology either. **"I'm a firm believer and advocate for this kind of programme."** She enrolled Aadi because she had seen the impact on her elder daughter, and because **"the teenage years is a good time to learn these things... they get absorbed in your being."**

That harmony is exactly why the **gap stayed** hidden.

WHAT INSIDE OUT LABS DID DIFFERENTLY

Two tracks, in parallel

Aadi did the **90-day Lab** while Shruti attended the **parenting workshops**. Shruti's own pattern only became visible because she was doing the work alongside her daughter.

A shared language at home

"Because of the parent workshops, the parent also has a s**imilar language** to what the child is learning. If Aadi's talking about her learning from the Labs, I'm talking about my learning from the workshops. There's **alignment** in that, which is quite crucial."

A community without judgement

What Aadi wanted most from the programme was a community, and she found one. **"I don't think she ever felt judged by anyone else in the programme."**

Built for a teenager's life

At 90 days, requiring just a few hours at a time, the format was: **"short and sweet... more punchy."**

THE SHIFT

The Boiler Incident

One evening, while Shruti was occupied with a client, the boiler that heats their house suddenly stopped working. Aadi found a YouTube tutorial and fixed it herself.

Shruti found out as she was getting into her car and panicked. "I started shouting at her. This is really dangerous. This is the reason I don't leave you alone."

Aadi stayed completely calm. **"Okay, Mom, I need to eat my dinner. Let's talk about it when you get home."**
And when they did, she said:
"But did you notice that I could fix it? I am old enough."

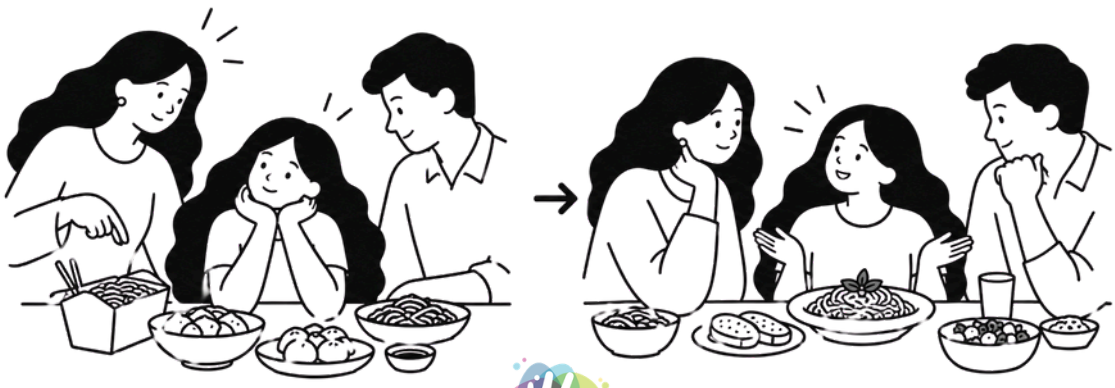
Looking back, Shruti reflects: **"This overprotection, for me, is possibly also not seeing that she's growing up. And for her, she feels, 'Mom doesn't trust me'**

THE SIGNS SHRUTI NOTICED

Before the Lab (Then)	After the Lab (Now)
At School *Worried about asking too many questions in class; feared friends would label her a "nerd."*	**At School** *Comfortable with her own curiosity, even if peers aren't interested.*

Before the Lab (Then)	After the Lab (Now)
Family Decisions *Passively went along with whatever the adults preferred.*	**Family Decisions** *Expresses her preferences: "If I don't want Chinese, I'm at least going to say it. Even if I'm not listened to."*
Mother's Suggestions *Accepted activities automatically to keep the peace.*	**Boundaries** *Sets clear boundaries: "Not all activities have to be academically aligned, Mom. It can be fun." She chose climbing, and gave her reasons.*
Conflict & Needs *Could not say no to her mother.*	**Communication** *Says no, and explains why in an open, two-way dialogue.*
Self-Reflection *Ruminated on her day silently in her head.*	**Daily Regulation** *Keeps a journal; knows she can pause and reflect whenever overwhelmed.*

The daughter who **went along with everything** now says **what she wants, and why.**



THE PARENT'S PARALLEL SHIFT

What Shruti Unlearned

1 She accepted the pattern

"I definitely became **conscious** and started to **accept it**. It still comes up, being a mother."

2 She learned to see it from Aadi's side

"Whenever my **overprotection** comes up, I'm able to also see from the other side, and I can ask her how she's feeling."

3 She learned to trust what she had already taught

"Trusting that when your child is alone, she has the **knowledge** you taught her ages ago... That she actually learned it from you."

4 They both learned to say no to each other

"We both learned **boundaries** around each other, to be able to say no. 'Okay, we've done five things together today, now I don't have capacity.'"

5 She stopped expecting it overnight

"It's a **work in progress**. It's not going to happen overnight for me... **Trust** in a child is a very big thing."

EXPERT ANALYSIS

Why This Worked

By Aparna Gupta, Founder — Inside Out Labs Curriculum, Helping Kids Thrive



Shruti is a trained professional. She had the knowledge. But knowledge is not self-awareness. The intellect doesn't run our survival responses; your nervous system does.

When the call came about the boiler; it wasn't the psychotherapist who answered. It was the protective pattern, and it spoke before she could choose.

What moves me about this family is that it didn't take a crisis. It took **willingness**.

Most parents who come to me are not in crisis. They are close, loving and functioning well, yet quietly holding back on both sides.

The **gap** between a parent and a teenager is rarely about love. It is almost always about the **pattern** that love is being filtered through.

Here, two people shared the same pattern, and that's exactly why it worked to change it together. When the parent and the child are learning the same language at the same time, the work doesn't fade at the front door. It becomes the way they talk.

Trust means the parent has to be okay with the child sometimes getting a little hurt or falling, because that is the learning process.

The **shift** isn't in your child. It's in the conversation.