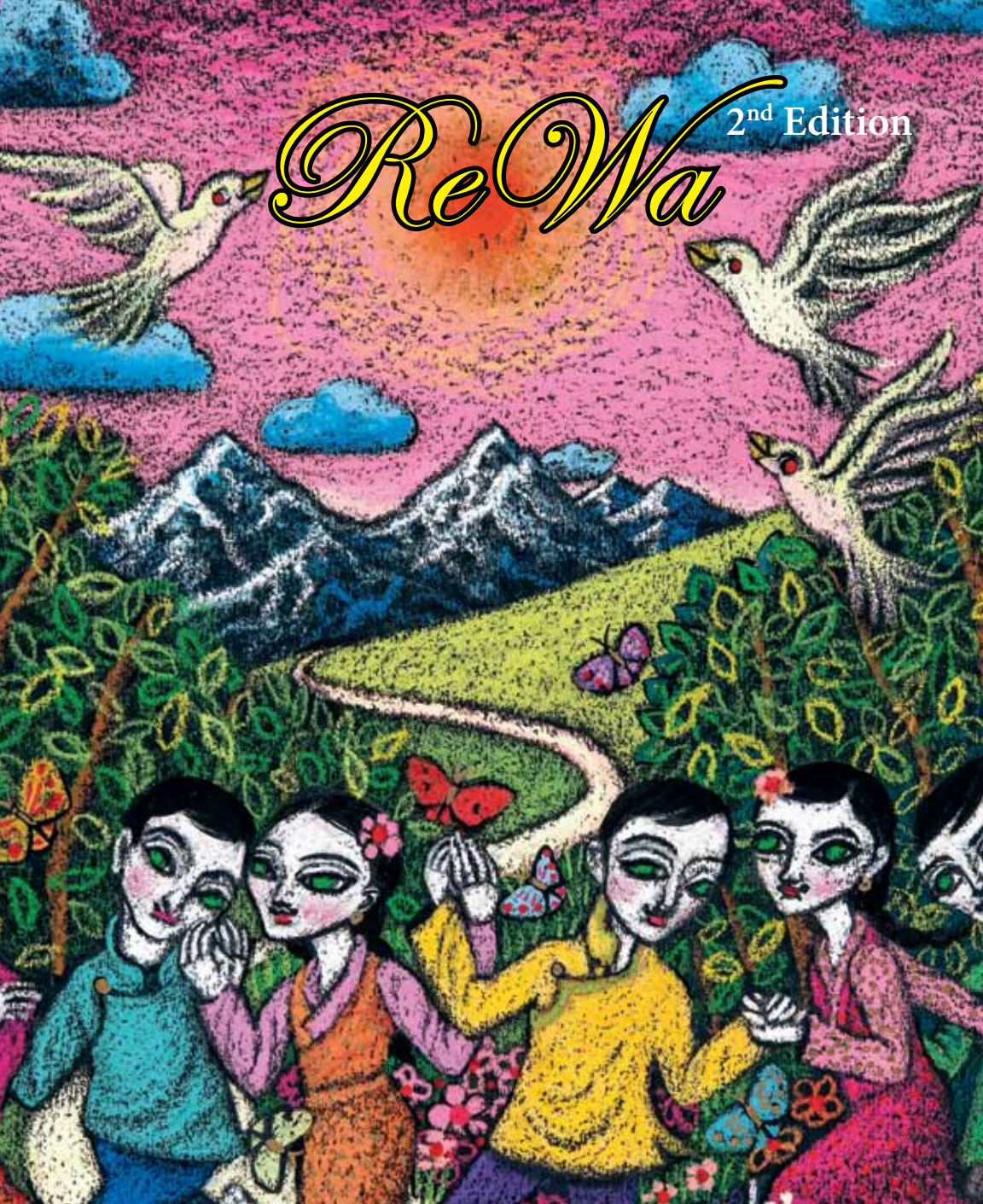


ReWa ^{2nd Edition}



Stories about navigating the journey to adulthood

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Stories about navigating the journey to adulthood



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Foreward

It gives me great pleasure that Department of Health, Central Tibetan Administration, is releasing the second edition of REWA: “stories about navigating the journey to adulthood” during the sexual health awareness workshop on January 10, 2015. We released the first edition of Rewa, both in English and Tibetan, which contained significant informations to promote the health and wellbeing of adolescent and growing Tibetan children in various Tibetan schools and communities, both in India and Nepal in 2013 and 2014. This second edition of Rewa specifically aims to create awareness about positive sexual growth among the teenaged Tibetan children in addition to providing them necessary skills to prevent and deal with sexual harassment and sexual growth related issues.

The Department of Health, CTA considers the wellbeing of Tibetan children as very important and has been continuously working towards development of healthy Tibetan children through various school based workshops like substance abuse review meetings, adolescent health workshops along with publication of educational materials like REWA first and second edition this time. In addition, we publish and distribute health brochures and educational materials on TB, Hepatitis B, HIV / AIDS, Sanitation etc.

I want to emphasize the significant role played by parents and caretakers in proper care and nourishment of children and in generating positive sense of physical, mental and social wellbeing among the Tibetan Children. Healthy environment in home, positive learning atmosphere in schools and overall sensitivity of the community for the wellbeing of the children define the trajectory, pathway and events in children's life and their journey towards adulthood. Everyone of us need to be responsible for providing safe, secure and protective space for the children to grow and flourish naturally into capable, healthy and happy Tibetan youths. Most importantly, the parents, teachers and the community need to communicate and discuss with the children routinely and openly about their concerns and curiosity relating to sexual growth and sexual harassment.

Let us all work together to promote a Tibetan community free of sexual harassment and sexual abuse!

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who worked towards the compilation of this book!

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REWA 2: Stories about navigating the journey to adulthood is the second book released by the Department of Health, CTA to educate Tibetan youths about adolescent growth and sexual health. This book contains three stories that provide crucial information, tips and tools on how to cope with issues surrounding body changes during puberty, personal boundaries and sexual harassment. By strengthening the youth's knowledge and skills, the book aims to empower Tibetan youths and students and to contribute to the education and prevention of sexual harassment and abuse.

The second edition of REWA would not have been possible without the significant contribution of the Tibetan students from all major Tibetan schools who participated in a writing contest in 2014. The themes collected from these essays formed the main elements of the three stories. Therefore, the Department of Health, CTA would like to thank the students, teachers and the school administrators for their important contribution. The results of the winners will be informed to the relevant schools very soon. We would like to sincerely acknowledge the cooperation and support of Department of Education, CTA in contacting these schools for this writing contest.

We would like to thank Rima Fujita for her valuable contribution in drawing the illustrations and Anniek Boeijinga for her voluntary contribution in assisting the Health Department's staff members Trinley Palmo and Kapsang in the compilation of the book. We appreciate the contribution of all Health Department's staffs who contributed to reading the essays and in providing valuable comments to the final draft. We would also like to thank Geshe Lakdor la, Director of the Library of Tibetan works and Archives, Dr. Nilesh Chatterjee and Betty Rogers for their guidance during the compilation of this book.

Mostly importantly, we would like to sincerely thank the Swedish Development Partner, also known as SOIR IM, for their funding support. We dedicate *REWA 2: Stories about navigating the journey to adulthood* to the "Spirit and Resilience of the Tibetan children" in their pursuit towards a positive, healthy and responsible living.

Public Health, Division
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Not a girl, not yet a woman

It is early in the morning, a ray of sunlight found its way through a small opening in the curtains. The beam of light lightens up my face and warms my skin. Just when I want to roll over to get some more sleep, I notice a dark red blood stain on my bed sheets. Strange, I do not have any wounds or scratches. Did I somehow hurt myself while asleep? All of a sudden, my stomach hurts and I feel like I have to urinate, and so I get out of bed. The floor feels cold under my bare feet as I walk to the toilet. I sit down on the toilet and lean forward, resting my elbows on my knees – still a little sleepy. When I reach for the flush button, I spot traces of blood in the toilet too. Frantic with worry, I wonder what is wrong with me. Am I sick? Do I need to go to the hospital? Not knowing what is going on and too embarrassed to talk about it, I rush back to the bedroom and try to cover up the stains on my sheets and clothing. I want to keep it a secret, but the bleeding does not stop and I do not know what to do. My older sister notices my awkward behavior and asks me if I am okay. I want to tell her, but cannot find the words. How do I bring up such a topic? Then she discovers my leakage of blood and realizes what is bothering me. Fortunately, she is very helpful and able to advice me as she has also gone through it. She assures me that there is no reason to be ashamed or afraid. She explains to me that it is normal and that, from now on, menstruation will take place each month, for four or



seven days. “The number of days may vary from girl to girl and from time to time”, she says. She further explains that this is part of growing up and becoming a woman. At the end of our talk she gives me some sanitary napkins for the bleeding and stresses that girls should take special care of their hygiene and cleanliness during their period.

Although I am relieved, I feel strange and confused. Everything about me seems to have changed. I glance in the mirror and look at myself. A different person seems to be staring back at me. Since the past months, my body has been undergoing some major changes. Little breasts are starting to show through my shirt and my hips are growing wider. Some weeks ago, I noticed body hair on my private parts, armpits and legs, and today I found out that I had my first period. The changes are taking place so rapidly and so sudden that my emotions can hardly catch up and cope with them. I often feel overwhelmed with insecure and disturbed feelings. I start crying for no reason and get upset over tiny, insignificant things. Everything that has been so familiar now seems so different, dreary and scary. Why are all these strange things happening to me? All my friends seem so normal.

Not only do I feel different about myself and my body, but also about the opposite sex. Whenever I am with a boy, I get a strange feeling. When I was younger, I played and talked with boys, without ever giving it a second thought. But now,

as a teenager, being around boys is much more awkward. I am always wondering whether I am doing the right thing and questioning whether it is ok to interact and talk freely with boys. Another thing I am really struggling with is my status as an adolescent. If I act as a grownup, a mature woman, then adults will say: “Do not act like an adult, because you are too young to act this way”. On the other hand, when I behave as a young girl, they will comment: “Do not act like a child, you are not a child anymore”. This situation is very difficult, both physically and mentally. I sometimes want to do things in a way that adults do. However, I lack experience and habit to tackle or challenge things at that level. For example, the fact that I personally like a boy, does not mean that I am matured enough to have a relationship. Other times, I want to feel like a child, if only for a moment. But at the same time, I am afraid that this will destroy my image as a teenager that I have been working on so hardly. At this point, I feel stuck: I am neither a girl, nor a woman. I feel helpless and hopeless, which has a bad influence on my concentration and my school results.

Every time I want to clear my thoughts and deal with my doubts, I seize up with crippling shyness and embarrassment. I feel lonely and a little lost and depressed sometimes, but I do not know whom to turn to. Therefore, I decide to keep a diary in which I can write about my private thoughts and feelings. This really helps me to better understand my emotions and to gain

more control over them. However, a diary does not talk back... In need for some answers and a listening ear, I open up to one of my friends. "How are you?", I ask her. "I'm fine, and you?", she replies. I tell her honestly that I feel a little confused lately. I share my doubts and experiences with her, about all the recent changes – both physically and emotionally. At first, it is a bit uncomfortable, but soon I realize that she is going through the same thing and dealing with the same issues. She tells me that all these changes are caused by changing hormones, the body's natural chemicals, and that these changes are called 'puberty'. During puberty the body starts changing, to turn you from a girl to a woman; like a flower that starts to bloom. We talk about our appearance, mood swings, boys, and much more. My friend tells me in confidence that she always feels embarrassed about her heavy breasts and overweight. I tell her not to worry about her sizes, "every body is unique", and come up with the idea of wearing loose shirts instead. Knowing now how comforting it is to share my feelings and thoughts, I wish I had opened up much earlier.

The past few months have been quite confusing, distressing and weird for me. I know this is normal for all human beings: The path of puberty is a road that everyone travels, and it certainly has its bumps. But I found out that sharing this journey with family and friends makes it much easier to overcome the ups and downs along the road! Whenever I am dealing with

doubts, questions or confusing feelings, I, from now on, try to express and discuss these matters with friends or one of my family members instead of bottling them up. Sometimes I like to talk to my friends as they are going through the same phase as me, whereas with other issues I feel more comfortable talking with someone who is a little older and experienced, such as my aunt, mother, sister, home mother, or teacher. The other day, I asked my mother: "Can we have a private talk tonight?". After dinner we sat down and she took the time to really listen to me. We talked quite some time about puberty and growing up and as the conversation moved along, I dared to ask more and more questions. My mother gave me a great piece of advice: "Do not run away from your problems, they will not become smaller and they cannot be cured by all your worries. It is important to share your problems with people who you feel close to, because there is no way or path for those who do not speak up."

Although I felt a little embarrassed at first, I am very happy that I had opened up the conversation; the talk was very helpful and comforting. I was surprised how much better I felt. I went to bed with my mind completely at ease, had a wonderful sleep and woke up with the sun in my eyes.

Tips for talking about puberty:*1) Share your feelings*

Sometimes the toughest thing about feelings is sharing them with others. However, bottling up your emotions is not the answer and can even lead to depression. Open up: discussing your feelings, questions and/or doubts will help you handle the situation and will relieve your burden. You will feel much lighter.

2) Pick the right person

Talk to someone you feel comfortable talking to, such as your mother. If you are a boy and do not feel comfortable talking to your mother about certain things, talk to your father. If this is not possible, talk to your grandma/grandpa, aunt/uncle, or an older sister/brother. If that is still not possible, do not worry. Even an opposite gender parent or a teacher can help you. If it is difficult to bring up a private topic like sex with your parents, discuss it with someone like your teacher or a friend you feel most comfortable and open with.

3) Pick the right time and place

Make sure it is a good time to talk. When you talk about puberty, it is usually a long conversation. You do not want to rush things; there is so much to go over. You can prepare your parents or guardians by saying something like, “Can we have a private talk tonight?”. This will let them know that something is on your mind, and will give them a chance to finish whatever they are doing before sitting down to really listen and talk with you.

4) Be prepared

Come prepared with any questions you have. Start the conversation with asking a question, like “Mom/Dad, what is puberty?”, “What is going on with my body?”, etc. Chances are, they will go over everything and see if you have any questions. Do not feel hesitant and just share your feelings.

5) Realize you are not alone

Ask around. You will find that many others are going through the same and are experiencing (or have experienced) the same difficulties. Puberty is a normal part of growing up; there is nothing to be ashamed of. Talk about it with them and share your feelings and experiences. They will understand you and may have even more suggestions for how to cope with it.

Looking in the mirror...

I am surprised and take another look, a little closer. I see myself in the mirror and notice that I look different. My body has changed. I see a light moustache above my upper lip and also notice some hair growth under my armpits and on my private parts. I hear my voice; it sounds strange, a little deeper. I smell some weird odors that I have not smelled before. My clothes no longer seem to fit me; my sleeves are too short and so are my pants. I have outgrown all my clothes, as my body keeps growing taller and bigger. All these changes have happened in only a short period of time. I guess this means I am growing up. I am excited about it, but at the same time I feel strange and confused. I see things that I do not want to see on my body and I have been doing things that I do not want to do, because of weird ideas and out of curiosity. Also hanging out with my friends is a bit different now, they are talking about girls and involve me in doing meaningless things like smoking or flipping through strange magazines.

I am divided by strange feelings and thoughts. I want those brand shoes and clothes, but my parents cannot afford these. I want to send her a letter expressing my feelings, but I am afraid that she will reject me, which would be really embarrassing. I am worried about what other people will think of me and feel really insecure about my physical features: I hate those hairs hiding every corner of my body and the pimples on my face.



Next to the changes I have noticed in my body, I also notice that my mind is changing. I am experiencing confusing feelings and mood swings. I am going from joy to sadness or anger in only the blink of an eye, which gives me the feeling that I have no longer control over my own emotions and behavior. Lately, I have been hearing about the sexual harassment cases and have experienced that the emotion surrounding sexual curiosity is strong. So, this makes me think: Is this how a man loses his mind and gets so confused that he does these horrible things to the opposite sex? Then again, I am thinking: everyone is growing up. Every one of us goes through this period and faces such problems. So, maybe it is a common thing to all growing up teenagers. Therefore, there is nothing to be shy or ashamed of, right?

But my mind is not agreeing. The more I think about this, the more I feel uncomfortable. I feel more and more anxious about my body and mind, and the changes I am going through. Then, I start asking myself: Is this really normal? Am I normal? Questions like these are clouding my mind and my thoughts go deeper and deeper... At last I have the feeling that my brain just stops working. Can one be any more confused than this? I want to share all these questions within my mind with my parents and friends, but fail to do so because every time I feel too embarrassed when standing in front of them. How can someone like me share such things? I usually do not open up

easily and fear that people will judge me. Already the thought of discussing such private matters makes me feel uncomfortable.

Some days later, I am hanging out with one of my best friends. In need of some answers, I gather all my courage to ask him whether he ever feels strange or insecure. "Strange or insecure about what?", he replies. "About the changes we are going through as growing up teenagers", I explain. While talking about our feelings and experiences, I am surprised to find out that my friend struggles with some of the very same matters. He too feels sometimes confused and insecure about his body. He tells me that he had a good talk with his father about growing up and the changes that happen during puberty. His father explained to him that all these changes are caused by the body's natural chemicals, called hormones, and that there is nothing to be embarrassed of: "The changes of your body signifies that your body is transforming from a boy into a man, like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly". My friend admits that he did not really know how to start the conversation and that he got a little red in the face when he asked his dad if he remembered what it was like when he was growing up and starting to change. Although it felt a little awkward and uncomfortable at the beginning, he was really happy that he started the conversation. Talking with someone who already went through puberty, made him better prepared about puberty and what to expect. I realize that the same is true for me: Although I was very nervous and even a

bit embarrassed to discuss such a private topic with my friend, I am very glad that I did. I realize now that puberty is natural and that having confusing feelings and thoughts is normal. I feel much better now. I have learned how comforting and important it is to open up, and to discuss these matters with one of my friends, parents, or teachers. Although they cannot change anything about the physical and emotional process of growing up, they can advise you, help you to put things in perspective and building your confidence.

I have also learned that – especially during teenage, when your mind is troubled and fragile – it is important to have good friends in your life. When feeling confused, strange and uncomfortable with their body and growth, some teenagers innocently or unknowingly start experimenting with tobacco or alcohol for example. It might look innocent at first, but I experienced firsthand how friends may unintentionally influence you. I felt quite uncomfortable while hanging out with friends the other day. They were making fun of others in an disrespectful way. At the beginning I was laughing along with them, although I did not find it funny at all. At one point, when one of them offered me a cigarette, I finally spoke up and said “no, thanks”. I never had the confidence to say no before, because I was afraid that they would reject me or start making fun of me. But now that I did say no, it felt surprisingly good: It felt good to stick to what I believe in and what I stand for. At first they kept offering

me, but as I kept saying no, they realized that no means no and that there is no point in trying to convince me. At this point, they accept me as I am, which makes me feel good and makes hanging out with them much more fun.

When I am looking in the mirror right now, I see a teenager who is more at ease, more confident, and more joyful. I see my mirror image smiling back at me.

Tips for dealing with puberty:

1) Get informed

Read about it: You will be better prepared if you know about puberty and what to expect. The more you know, the better you can cope.

2) Realize that puberty happens to everyone

Puberty is natural, everybody goes through it. If you feel comfortable enough to talk about the changes with friends, just go ahead. They may be feeling the same way, or they may know how to help you.

3) Take good care of your body

Keep your skin clean and shower regularly. During puberty you will start sweating (more). Washing well with soap and hot water can get rid of any sweat odor – especially after sports. You will smell better, look cleaner, and feel refreshed. If you think your sweat is a little smelly, try deodorant.

4) Wear clean clothing

Your clothes absorb some of your body smells because they are in direct contact with your skin. Therefore, it is important that you get them washed often. Your underwear also needs changing more often than before. When your clothes are clean, you feel better and more relaxed to take control of other things.

5) Embrace the changes

During puberty, you cross over from child to an adult. Boys become men and girls become women. This can be a stage in your life where you find yourself developing new talents and interests. Exploring your interests will help you to find yourself and discover who you are. Make an effort to try new hobbies.

The hero within me

It is early in the morning. As I walk outside, I feel the fresh air on my face and the wind blowing through my hair. I hear the birds chirping and the sound of the prayer bells from the nearby monastery. I am on my way to my classes; it is a day like every other. I love going to school and reading books about different people and cultures. Recently, for example, I read a book called “I am Malala” that was very inspirational. I also love hanging out with my friends. Every evening, we play at the nearby playground in our settlement. Life has been good so far. My family has many close friends and my parents are good and hardworking people. They love me a lot and I love them a lot too. My Pala and Amala have raised me well and taught me to respect my elders and to be obedient. They have made me who I am today: a honest and loving person.

After school, I am home alone, sitting on a chair and watching my favorite TV serial. Soon after, I hear some knocking and open the door to see who is there. I am happy when I see that it is one of my parents’ friends. I am really close to him and always call him “uncle”. He is always very nice to me. Often, he brings me sweets or other presents. Also this time; when he comes in, he hands me a package of my favorite chocolates. I am very pleased and thank him for his kindness. “Come on over here, come sit on my lap so we can watch TV together”,



he says. When I sit with him, he slowly starts touching my hair and hand. Firstly, I just ignore it as I do not fully understand it. He then starts rubbing my shoulders in an unusual manner. I am starting to feel a bit uncomfortable as he never used to touch me like that. I turn around to look at him. Suddenly, I see him in a different form. He looks like a different person: The warmth and tenderness that I normally see in his expression and eyes are gone. Instead, he looks quite aggressive and authoritative. He starts to touch my back again and forcefully tries to kiss me on my face. I feel like I am frozen in time.

It takes me some time to figure out what is going on and what he is doing to me. I am scared and my eyes are filling with tears, all kinds of fearful feelings and thoughts are coming to my mind and make me almost give up. I am shocked at his unusual, strange behavior and shocked at myself for not being able to recognize his real nature in time. I just cannot understand how someone so nice can suddenly behave like a monster. I am in a complete state of disbelief and paralysis. Suddenly, my previous conversation with my school friend flashes through my mind: A few years back, something similar happened to my friend who told me privately about the sexual harassment she experienced and how she suffered alone as she could not bring herself to tell it to her near ones and also because she did not fight back in time. At that time, she really did not understand the meaning of what was happening to her as she understands it now. She was

too young to understand what was going on, she was innocent. Nowadays, the guilt and self-blame still troubles her and she is unable to fully forget the incident. She told me: “I have never told someone what happened to me, not even a single person. I tried my best to forget about it, but I cannot. Because of him, I cannot look people in the eyes. And, even today, I find it hard to trust anyone because the one that I thought I knew was a shameless abuser.”

So, when he starts touching me again, I start visualizing my friend’s agony and everything that happened to her and realize that if I do not raise my voice in time, I might be the next victim. And, I certainly do not want to become a victim. There is, however, another part of me who is telling me to keep silent. I am wondering whether my actions like taking chocolate from him or talking nicely with him have triggered his actions. I am doubtful about whether I am responsible for all of this. Do I have to pay a price for being nice? How can I go against one of my parents’ friends? I am scared about what people will think and what they will say. Will they believe me? Will my classmates make fun of me? I am afraid that people will judge me and see me as a girl with bad character. I am also worried that I will embarrass my parents and that it will affect the good and cordial relationship our family have with them. What can I do?

While having all these sorts of thoughts, he continues to touch me. His hand is changing direction, this time descending towards the lower part of my back and my private parts. I am absolutely shocked! Not even in my wildest dream, I could have thought up this scenario. I have always trusted him a lot and, now, all of a sudden, something like this is happening. I do not know what to do. Should I shout? Should I try to run away? My mind is blank, totally blank. Suddenly, I clearly hear a voice in my head telling me: “You cannot remain silent like me, fight back.” It is the voice of my friend. A surge of powerful feelings comes over me. I start shouting as loud as I can. I have never shouted so loud in my life. I am not longer going to remain silent, I will fight back. I will not look back in fear or look forward in doubt, I will look around in awareness. As I look around the room, I start searching silently for some things like a stone, a compass or another object that I can hit him with. I also look for something like sand or chilli powder to throw in his eyes. I am mentally preparing for ways to defend myself. I point my finger towards him and clearly tell him to stop touching me or else I will shout again to alarm the neighbors. He looks surprised and says: “Calm down and sit down, what is happening to you? We are just playing a game.” I tell him that I do not like this game and that I no longer will remain silent if he does not stop immediately. I further add: “We girls might look quiet and fragile, but there is a hero within us and when the

time comes, this hero rises up and fights.” I warn him to leave the home at once and to not come back ever again. The message seems to be getting across. He leaves.

When my parents come back home, we gather around the table for dinner. I cannot eat much and find it hard to look directly into their eyes. My mother senses that something is wrong and asks me if everything is ok. Although I want to share it, I am feeling too reluctant to tell her about what happened to me. But then I realize that remaining silent is not an option and that if someone would be able to understand me, it will be my mother. So, after dinner I ask my mother if we can talk. “Today something strange happened”, I started speaking. I told my mum about uncle’s visit and that he was not being himself today. I told her that he was touching me in a way he had never done before. Overwhelmed by anxiety and shame, I start crying and bury my face in my hands. My mom hugs me tightly. She tells me that none of this is my fault and that there is nothing to be ashamed of. “If anyone should be ashamed, it is him!”, she says. My mother tells me: “Never forget, my child, that everyone should always respect your personal boundaries. Anyone. Even your future husband. If you do not feel comfortable doing certain things, then you have – at all times – the right to say no. It is the responsibility you have towards your own being, your own body. I am really proud of you that you spoke up for yourself and told him to stop.” I thank my mother for her understanding

and ask her to keep it silent, but my mother assures me that it is important to share this with my father as well and to solve the problem together as a family. So, she decides to inform my father and calls him into the conversation.

Talking about such an experience is not easy, it is hard to find the words to describe what happened to me. But I do feel much lighter now I have shared this with my parents. They believe in me and support me fully. They were absolutely horrified by this incident and reported the incident to the settlement officer and the police station. Although I am still a bit shaken, I realize that this incident is not my mistake and that there is no reason for blaming myself. I will never understand what he wanted from me, I was like a daughter to him. When someone with whom you feel safe, does such inappropriate things, it is so hard to believe so. But, some truths are hard to be accepted. This man asked me the previous day about the whereabouts of my parents and I told him that they would go to visit our relatives in the nearby town. Now, I realize that he had planned everything and knew that I was alone at home that day. Still I feel like a fool for not understanding his motive behind asking me this question. There is a saying, all is well that ends well. Well, I found the hero within me: I rose up, I fought back and I was able to save myself from the abuse. It was not easy at first but it was not too difficult either. And, I am happy that I did not keep quiet. Otherwise, I would be encouraging him to do it again. Since

this day, I am more careful about maintaining one's personal boundaries and trusting someone fully, however we must never lose the faith in humanity either.

Looking back, I think I did the right thing. I did not let that beautiful, sunny day turn into a black cloudy day for me. I chose not to be a victim, and I fought back. But I wonder about others like my friend who never speak despite the abuse. They are either too scared or embarrassed to report the abuse which can happen to both boys and girls. I would like to say to every girl and boy, do not be scared, speak up because if we do not, then who will? If you do not speak, it will continue. Yesterday it was my friend, today it was me and tomorrow, it might be you and later someone else's daughter or son. I have learned that in such situations, sharing is the most helpful method, sharing your feelings and experiences openly with your friends and family members. If you do not feel comfortable enough to share face to face, you can always choose to write a letter or a note to them. Finally, I would like to say to all my friends that in a glimpse, you see your past, in a glance you watch your future, never forget to share your feelings along the journey to your loved ones, and things will be just alright.

Tips for dealing with sexual harassment:

1) Understand what sexual harassment is

Just like other kinds of bullying, sexual harassment can involve many forms, including: name-calling, unwanted touching, and forced sexual behaviors. Sexual harassment is illegal. It does not just happen to girls and is not limited to people of the same age, either.

2) Communicate your boundaries

Make it clear that you consider the behavior harassment. Sometimes just telling the person “I do not like it when you do that and I want you to stop” can prompt an embarrassing wake-up call. A decent person will immediately apologize for his or her behavior and back off.

3) Dare to speak up

Speaking up might be hard if you are generally a polite, reserved person who hates hurting someone else’s feelings. However, do not express your feelings in sweet, friendly terms. You need to make it absolutely clear that this is harassment, or else the person might not get the message.

4) Defend yourself

If the person continues the bad behavior, start screaming to alarm others. Defend yourself by aiming for the harasser’s eyes with your nails or everyday objects like a pen or chili powder. Or kick or punch on his groin with your knee.

5) Do not blame yourself

Do not blame yourself. You did not ask to be harassed. Likewise,

you should not deny what is happening, or downplay the effects of the harassment. If you are being sexually harassed, you are not overreacting!

6) Share your experience

For you and your health, it is very important to tell the people in your life about your experience. They can help you figure out what happened and how to deal with it.

7) Keep a record

Take note of who harassed you, what the person said or did, and how you responded. Write down when and where it happened. Keep any harassing emails, texts, or online postings, too.

8) Report the harassment

It is essential that you take action to stop the harassment.

Tell a family member, tell a teacher, a school principal, or the police. Share your records of what has happened. If you do not take action, the sexual harassment will likely continue and probably get worse.

9) If you see something, say something

Bystanders play an important role in stopping sexual harassment. If you see someone who is being harassed, take action.

10) Trust and believe in yourself

You are the highest authority on you. You know yourself best. You know what you need, want, and value. Do not let anyone else make the decisions for you. Healthy boundaries make it possible for you to respect your strengths, abilities and individuality as well as those of others.



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My Body Is My Temple

Profile of Volunteers

Rima Fujita: Artist/Author

Rima was born in Tokyo, grew up in New York City and she studied at Parsons School of Design (N.Y.) In 2001 Rima established “Books for Children,” an organization that creates children’s books for the Tibetan refugee children in exile, and has created four books (*Save the Himalayas*, *TB Aware*, *Wonder Garden* and *Wonder Talk*) and has donated more than 12,000 books to exile in order to help preserve the Tibetan culture and its language.

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Anniek Boeijinga is a consultant specialized in communication strategies and behavior change, and is currently working as a PhD candidate on the research project ‘Narrative Health Communication’; exploring the potential of stories within health education and health promotion activities. During her visit to McLeod Ganj in 2013 she was touched by the warmth of the Tibetan people and developed a great passion for the Tibetan culture. Ever since, she has been working pro bono for the Health Department of the Central Tibetan Administration. Anniek believes that change starts with ourselves and lives this truth by supporting projects like the Rewa project:



“We must be the change we wish to see in the world” – Gandhi

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Profile of Staff



Trinley Palmo has been working in the Tibetan community for more than nine years in the field of education and public health. A graduate of Public Health from Stony Brook University (USA) and with an advanced graduate certificate in health communications, she currently works in the Department of Health, CTA as the Public Health Programme Officer. She specializes in the design and delivery of community based health education and communication strategies. As an educator, she firmly believes in the essence of education and constructive participatory dialogue within the communities to solve underlying social problems. The Rewa-II edition Book Project is inspired by such a belief!

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Kapsang is currently working as the health education coordinator in the Department of Health, CTA, Dharamsala. He designs health education's pamphlets, posters, book etc. and coordinates Health Education Workshop. He studied B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Technology from Rajiv Gandhi University in Mangalore. Rewa first edition is also designed by him.

REWA-II: A Sexual Health Education Book

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