

What Schools Are Looking For During Admissions | Kunal Dalal & Pinky Dalal

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SUMMARY

Pinky Dalal, founder of JBCN Schools, shares her four-decade journey in education, emphasizing the need for evolving learning methodologies. She highlights the importance of engaging, concept-driven education over rote learning, aiming to foster well-rounded individuals equipped with essential life skills.

- *Education should evolve continuously to meet the needs of modern learners.*
- *JBCN Schools focus on experiential learning rather than rote memorization.*
- *The importance of developing personal and interpersonal skills alongside academic excellence.*
- *Healthy competition is encouraged, but it should not create stress for students.*
- *Parents should seek schools that align with their educational philosophy and values.*
- *The school prioritizes creating a supportive and engaging environment for both students and teachers.*
- *Future plans include expanding JBCN Schools in Mumbai and potentially establishing undergraduate programs.*
- *The core philosophy of JBCN Schools remains consistent, focusing on relevant education that prepares students for future challenges.*

Speaker 1: At Kidstore Press, I have the privilege of meeting so many different enterprising women, moms, founders. And today I'm really ecstatic because I get to meet a woman who decided to foray into the education space four decades ago. She's a mom, she's an entrepreneur, she's an educationist. She believes that learning has to change and evolve over each passing year. Really excited to meet the founder of JBCN Schools, Mrs.

Speaker 1: Pinky Dalal.

Speaker 2: Hello, everyone.

Speaker 3: And we're really excited because today we're talking with somebody who's been in the education space for the last four decades, and that is none other than Pinky Dalal, who is the founder and chairperson of JBCN Schools. Hello, ma'.

Speaker 1: Am.

Speaker 2: Thank you so much. It's really pleasure talking to you and meeting you.

Speaker 3: Tell me, how did this journey into education start?

Speaker 2: That's great. Actually, as a child, I always wanted to be an educator. I would say teacher, or I wanted to be a judge. And finally, I decided to plunge into one field. And Kunal, my son, has motivated me to get into this in a much larger scale in a professional way. And that's where I started my small little preschool called Children's Nerve.

Speaker 2: And I also believe in the same philosophy and ethos where, you know, I felt that learning should be really fun, it should be very engaging, it should be very involving. And how do I do that? So I started putting my culture and philosophy in my preschool. Right.

Speaker 3: And when was this? What year was was the first children?

Speaker 2: 1988. We started children's book. So it's really, really young. Long time back. I was young, but I definitely had a vision. And not only the vision, but passion, too.

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 2: And fortunately, Kunal was my.

Speaker 3: The guinea pig.

Speaker 2: Right word, guinea pig. Because, you know, I was experimenting lot of different learning techniques, different learning techniques with him. And also as a mother, I felt that I'm a mother first and then an educator. So it's very important for me to know what is important for every child, every human, what every parent wants their child to be. And when people ask me, I first answer I gave is that, yes, academic excellence is important.

Speaker 2: I won't deny the fact, but yes, I want my son to be a good human being and excellent communicator because communication is the key. Right.

Speaker 3: So tell me, starting in 1988, the first school, was it like a premise? Where did you start from? And then now to building four schools.

Speaker 2: For a long time we had preschools, and I was growing. And unfortunately, as a person, I don't believe in a franchisee model because I strongly believe that you're dealing with human beings and you need to have your own personal touch, whatever you do. And from one, I went up to 10, 15 preschool schools, but I was completely involved. And then the time came where Kunal showed interest in my field and we decided to give a birth to JBCN education.

Speaker 2: And today, currently we are successfully running three high schools and we just launched our new fourth baby. JBCN International School Chamber.

Speaker 3: Right. How was your journey as an educator? Did you, did you learn professionally? Did you start, start off?

Speaker 2: Of course I did my qualification which was required. But somewhere, as I've told you that I, I strongly believe in certain philosophy and culture and I, I genuinely feel that after Kunal joined UWC and IB program I did realize that, you know, my ideology or my philosophy matched the IB pedagogy and, and I wanted to start a school with a similar thinking where not for the sake of saying that the all round development of the child is important.

Speaker 2: Yes, but what do you mean by that? How do you get it? How do you achieve? So for that I had to create a school community. Right. Because I personally feel it's not not only about the learners, it's also about the teaching faculty, it's about the management, it's about the heads who are running the program everywhere. There has to be a positive environment, happy environment. Learning how to learn, desire is very important.

Speaker 2: And once that is achieved, it's very easy to pass on or transfer to the young learners. But allow them, Allow them. We have moved away from rote learning to learning by experience or learning by understanding. Understanding. We have moved away from that for a reason. True. Because if you ask me personally what did you learn in grade six, I may not remember.

Speaker 2: But when you understand the concept, you turn out to be a lifelong learner. Yeah. It remains with you throughout your life. And that is what the learning is all about in today's time. Education is all about learning by understanding. Moving away from content to concept driven learning.

Speaker 3: How has education evolved in these last decades? Right? From kids who join at the preschool, play, school level to kids who are now in doing grade 10.

Speaker 2: So I think the education has completely evolved. The resources available to you to make it happen has also progressed and we are using those resources. If you see in jbcn we have interactive tv. So what we were reading and imagining by reading through books today you can visually see it. And definitely visual learning has its own advantages. So I, I feel that engaging learners is very important.

Speaker 2: Earlier I'm sorry to say this, that we were taught that this is how you have to learn and we were asked to reproduce.

Speaker 3: Yeah, that's true.

Speaker 2: But in today's time that doesn't happen because we don't want to assess our learners by knowing

their ability to memorize it. We want them to actually understand the concept and it's a process. And through this they learn the concept. They understand the concept only once you involve them. It's like a simple example. If you read a recipe doesn't mean that you know how to cook.

Speaker 2: But if you actually engage yourself when making that dish, then it will stay with you forever. So I'm just connecting a woman to woman example. And that is what we do in our school. That is one part. Second part is your personal skills. It's very important. You know, it's very easy to say that, oh, you need to be empathetical or you need to be a problem solver, you don't need to get scared of challenges.

Speaker 2: But it's just all said, it's a process where you imbibe these qualities, these skills. Problem solving, critical thinking, communication, being very confident. It's a process. So you have to have to plan a program in your school, school which involves learners to experience these things and then, you know, it becomes part of you.

Speaker 2: It is your reflexes. You don't even need to actually remind yourself that, oh, you need to be a good listener. They are good listeners.

Speaker 3: True. Tell me, how is competition evolved? Has it. Are we updating our education systems to, to one, for our kids to deal with competition and two, to prepare them for the jobs that may or may not be available tomorrow.

Speaker 2: So I personally feel competition, healthy competition is welcome. But if you are competing all the time with others is not relevant. Education needs to be relevant. You need to know, okay, I am capable of so much and if I have achieved this, there's still scope for me to achieve my own goals. That's the definition of competition in our world. And yes, every learner, when there is a stress free environment, every learner is achieving and there's a healthy competition.

Speaker 2: It's not a stressful competition.

Speaker 3: Also, when you are talking about, you know, like you just mentioned that it's healthy competition. What as an educator, as a person who's now, you know, the custodian of so many schools, what is it that you are looking for in parents? Because I know parents are going to be really intrigued with this question because it's admission season.

Speaker 2: I know, I know. I completely agree with you.

Speaker 3: As parents, you know you have all the experience, but it's our first child, right. And I'm with all the parents on this one one because we don't know what schools are looking for. We don't know how to equip our child because we are barely dealing as parents with sleep schedules and food schedules and you know, learning.

Speaker 2: Very, very natural for every mother to do this. And in fact, sometimes in my conversation with parents, I do ask them that what is important to you?

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 2: So I personally feel choosing an educational institution, institute like ours is important for parents because you now need to understand what is available. Okay. What do you want to do for your child? And I genuinely believe that these are the skills which every learner needs to learn or every child needs to learn. If you, if you focus on academics, personality development and social skills skills, because these things are very, very important.

Speaker 2: Finally, you want your child to be a good human being, successful human being. What is the meaning of success? As I told you earlier, you know, a happy person is always a successful person. And how do you achieve that? So what you need to do is you, you need to imbibe personal skills, interpersonal skills in them through the process of learning, then to put pressure and to put do's and don'ts. Firstly, our teachers are very good listeners.

Speaker 2: We respect every individual as an individual and we, we actually through the learning process they identify the strength and weaknesses. And it depends on you, how you want to work on your strength, on your weaknesses. This is how you learn to handle your success and failure. Right. So these skills are very, very important. And that's one of the reason I'm going to just give you an example of sometimes, you know, in life when you don't try, you don't know how good you are.

Speaker 2: So we in JBC and school give them the opportunity to try it out.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Explore, experience it and then take a decision, a known decision.

Speaker 3: Tell me also when we were talking about the admissions part of it, right. So you know, you've been, you've been, you know, seeing candidates across so many different schools and you know, the admission process, how is it different in different parts of the country and how different?

Speaker 2: So meeting parents, I've realized one thing. Not only me, the young parents also feel that, oh, we had to go through the process of examination, examination and rote learning and we have to reproduce. We don't want same for our children. Why? Because of course the time has changed. They also want to focus on the skills, personal, interpersonal skills. They don't want to only focus on Academic excellence by memorizing or by learning, rote learning.

Speaker 2: And they just want that experience. They said we want a stress free experience and environment and

safe environment for them, for the learners. But at the same time doesn't mean that there is no rigor in the program. I'm telling you, it's like banker's job. All the bankers, they work 14 hours a day but they love it. They love the job. If you see in jbcn, I can, I can vouch for it. And actually I have experienced that that hundred percent of all learners are very, very happy coming to school.

Speaker 2: Parents will come back saying oh, why are you having holidays? Because they are engaged, they are, they are learning because they are engaged, they are involved. It's fun for them, it's challenging. But those challenges are not by putting pressure on them to achieve something. There is no final goal. You make your own goal and you achieve and you enjoy. The whole process is so enjoyable and it's so positive that they just love coming to school.

Speaker 3: And why you just mentioned it's not just parents, it's parents, administrators, educators and, and 4,000 children that you. We like done with two and sometimes one. He's, he's dealing with 4,000 children. How many teachers?

Speaker 4: We have 470 faculty, about 150 admins. So our total strength is about 700, 650 people.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Wow.

Speaker 3: And, and each child is important because like he rightly said, said that for us it's never one of 4,000 because for the parents it's one.

Speaker 4: It's their only.

Speaker 3: It's their only. So how do you, how do you manage to keep this such a well oil system? You like ever disconnect?

Speaker 4: No, no, I do disconnect. I mean, you know, when I'm with my family or when I'm on a holiday, unless something urgent comes up, I like to kind of take that time off and you know, spend that quality time with my family and my kids. But you know, the way we run it, I think there are multiple ways we do it. Firstly, I think the only thing we do is education. We eat, breathe, sleep. Education. Right.

Speaker 4: So it's not like we have multiple interests and one of them is starting schools. You know, this is what we do, this is what we're passionate about. The other thing is we strongly believe as a family that you know, education is not like a burger. You can't give a recipe and churn it out.

Speaker 3: Oh my God, these guys are

Speaker 4: really. Wow. Okay. So it was not rehearsed. So you know, we strongly believe that when you're dealing with children and kind of shaping their future, there's no margin for error. It's not like, you know, manufacturing Kharab, Malaya, Pek Do, Naya Malbanao. You make a mistake, you're shaping lives, you're shaping the future. So, you know, we get our offer to build a franchisee every six weeks, eight weeks, saying, hey, give us your curriculum, give us your brand name, do this, do that.

Speaker 4: And we're very clear that we will only be involved in schools where we can run the program. So that's another area where we've maintained our quality. Even if you see our growth, it's been very organic. We don't look at building five schools a year because, again, I don't think you can give that kind of personalized attention and detail when you're building so many schools. So we actually build a school every three years, four years. So when a new school comes up.

Speaker 4: So, for example, we've just launched a new school in Chembur. So we're starting JBC and International in Chembur, which is going to be another IB school. You know, it's come up after four years. The last new school we launched was Oshiwara. We've obviously spent enough time building that now we intend to spend enough time in Chembur building a rapport with the parents, building the right team, most importantly, building the right culture and philosophy. Because I think at the end of the day, every, you know, from the security guard to the principal, they all need to be aligned in what we believe in, how we want to run our schools.

Speaker 4: You know, what is our core competence in terms of running programs, in terms of skill development? You know something? I always speak about that. You know, I don't think a learner. At least I don't remember anything I learned in school in terms of formulas in math or chemistry. I think it's the skills that you kind of take away when you leave school, and that's what kind of prepares you for life. You know, we always tell parents that our job is not to get you into the right university, but also ensure that you thrive in the right university.

Speaker 4: You know, if my job is only to say, hey, these are your grades, and I got you into Harvard or Stanford or Cambridge or Oxford, but what you do over there doesn't matter, then I think I failed somewhere as a school. I think our job is also to ensure that they thrive in university. And for that, they pick the right university. You know, not. Harvard is not the right university for everyone. So. So Yeah, I think that's how we've been able to kind of work very closely with our team.

Speaker 4: Yeah, we're fortunate to have really good team members. We're fortunate to have people who stay. Stay with us for many years.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: So. So, you know, the other day we were doing a HR exercise and I think we learned something. Like 28 of our employees have been with JBCN for 10 years or more or seven years.

Speaker 3: It's amazing. In times where we're talking of attrition. Correct and left, right and center.

Speaker 4: Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 3: Everybody. And, and especially when. Tell me, you know, you said 400 odd teachers, how do you ensure that your vision and your love and your passion translates to the lowest common denominator in the system?

Speaker 2: Can I answer that? I. I personally feel, you know what, when we are interacting with every teacher, there is a teacher in every human being. Yeah, but, but you have to identify that they are passionate about what they are doing. And if that passion is there, then it just happens. Yeah. I'm going to add one more thing. When I'm. We are talking about community, it's more like a family. So even whether at a management level or any teachers, a family member is unwell.

Speaker 2: It comes to us and we are still concerned about her or his family situation. And that, you know, human test we never want to do away with because that's very important.

Speaker 3: Would you agree with that? Because that may come in between scale.

Speaker 4: No, it doesn't. Because I think, you know, mom always says that we got to be a school with a heart and that's our core focus. And you know, yes, scale is important. Building new schools is important, but not at the cost of relationships. So I think as long as, you know, keeping, I think a happy teacher keeps a child happy. You know, so if, if a teacher in the classroom has baggage, has issues and is, you know, she cannot, she's not a.

Speaker 4: She can't deliver. She can't have that vibe. I mean, we're all human beings, right? So for, for us, I think that's more important than scale. And it doesn't matter if the next school is. Comes up two years later or five years later. The schools that we have and the people we have, I think they need to kind of grow and learn and be progressive. And I think that's more important with

Speaker 3: so many schools coming up. What, what is, what's that one thing that's unique to jvcn.

Speaker 4: So let me tell you, let me answer this in two parts, Mansi. So the first part is, you know, for us, I think we are very progressive in our thinking and progressive is a very loose, easily used term today. Because if you do robotics, you're progressive and if you do Lego, then you're a progressive school. But I, I'll tell you a little bit about our thinking. It's very different. The when I communicate with art, with my teachers, with my principals, with my heads and this is what I genuinely believe.

Speaker 4: You know, today's learners, if they're joining me in nursery, they are only going to become relevant members of the society in 2035. 2040.

Speaker 3: Yes.

Speaker 4: Right. That's when they'll contribute to society. I don't know what the world is going to be then. I don't think anyone knows what jobs are there, what jobs aren't there. You know, it's gonna, like they say, it's a VUCA world right out there. So today if you tell me, do you know what to teach them so that they are relevant in 2035? I don't know what to teach them. You know, I genuinely believe today people change jobs.

Speaker 4: Eventually people are going to change careers because you know, certain jobs are just not going to be there. You know, I keep telling parents that the only jobs in my mind that are going to be available are ones that cannot be automated or digitized.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: So this is the philosophy with which we run our schools. So what are the skills that are required that cannot be digitized and cannot be automated? Leadership, Entrepreneurship. Communication. Ethics. Honesty. Integrity. We genuinely believe that our curriculum, whether it is a co curricular program, whether it is the academic program, these are the skills. And you know, we have a core set of skills attributes, whatever you want to call them, that every learner has to build.

Speaker 4: And our curriculum is designed around this. So today if we are doing Lego and robotics as part of our schools, it is not because he or she will go and make the next Google or join Google. If they do, we hope they do, but because they actually get to know or they understand problem solving. So without actually teaching them, how do I teach a five year old problem solving? They don't understand the concept. So we build things in our program to teach these skills which we believe in good stead, irrespective of what the world is, irrespective of what jobs are in 2035, 2040, and I'll give you another example.

Speaker 4: How do I teach a child leadership? How do I teach a child entrepreneurship?

Speaker 3: Right.

Speaker 4: I can't. I mean if I can ask you Mansi, and if I can reverse the interview and ask you A question. What in your mind is the most important skill? You're an entrepreneur. What is the most important skill you need to be a successful entrepreneur?

Speaker 3: I think it would just be disciplined. And I, I would say lifelong learning.

Speaker 4: Right.

Speaker 3: Constantly evolving and learning.

Speaker 2: That's.

Speaker 3: That's what keeps me going.

Speaker 4: Right. So lifelong learning, working with people.

Speaker 3: Nothing with entrepreneurship. That's what nothing I studied is entrepreneurship. Right.

Speaker 4: The other thing which I believe is the most important thing to be entrepreneur, entrepreneur or a leader is risk taking ability.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 4: Can I teach my grade one student, what is risk? How do you take risk? I can't. It's not possible. Right. The concept, how do I imbibe this in them in my school? I'm just giving you an example. When you said, how are you unique? We teach and we talk to our teachers about this and we do a lot of sessions. We say, let's remove the fear of failure in children.

Speaker 3: Absolutely.

Speaker 4: We've been brought up to say, hey, you can't make a mistake. Tell me one guy, you know, who's never made a mistake in his life. Unless you don't fall, you can't get up. Unless you don't lose. You don't know the joy of winning. So for us, only when we remove the fear of failure in children, let them make mistakes. This is the age to make mistakes. They will not be costly.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 4: You know, at our age, if we make a mistake, it can be a very costly mistake. This is the skill that we'll develop them which will eventually get them to have an appetite for risk if they want to build, become an entrepreneur.

Speaker 3: No, that's so true.

Speaker 4: So there's a lot of deep thinking that needs to go into building curriculums and programs. You don't do robotics and music and drama and all these other wonderful programs that all schools are doing for the sake of it. It's not, hey, there's a checklist or this is what other schools are doing. So let us do this. There has to be a reason behind it and there has to be skill development behind it.

Speaker 3: Right. No, I think the, the very first step. You don't call children children. You always call them

learners.

Speaker 4: Absolutely.

Speaker 3: Both of you guys, both of you all have mentioned learners versus students or.

Speaker 4: Absolutely.

Speaker 3: And you know, if I may add,

Speaker 2: but they are actually, actually learners and not students.

Speaker 3: Yeah. Which I think, and I hope they remain lifelong learners.

Speaker 4: Absolutely.

Speaker 3: You know, I, I was interviewing you all. Nua Hararis written 21 lessons for the 21st.

Speaker 4: Oh, wow.

Speaker 3: And he said that the only ability, somebody asked him what Will you need for jobs in 2040 or 2030? And he said, well, I can't tell you that because I don't know what those jobs will be. But I know the only skill that you will need to survive or, you know, provide for yourself is the ability to learn, relearn and relearn again.

Speaker 4: Again. Absolutely.

Speaker 3: You're going to constantly be fluid in all the roles that you're going to play.

Speaker 4: Absolutely. And that's the way the world is going.

Speaker 2: And I have, I have experienced that from the age of 22, I started my career to now I'm learning from

Speaker 3: the time that, that, you know, you started to. Now taking it forward. Four schools, the fourth one coming up. How has the vision evolved or changed from her time to yours?

Speaker 4: So I think there are two parts to it. One is the core philosophy and second is the vision. The core philosophy doesn't change. So the core philosophy of how we want to build schools, how we want to run schools, the skills or the attributes that we want to instill in our team and our learners, you know, school with a

heart, those are things that haven't changed. And I hope they don't change. You know, in terms of vision, I think it's changed.

Speaker 4: You know, the way it's changed is in terms of what we perceive over the next five years or seven years. So whether it is a certain amount of skills that a learner may require or would have required 10 years ago versus what they require now.

Speaker 2: What is relevant?

Speaker 4: What is relevant? Yeah, you know, you know, we keep saying that relevant education is more important than quality education. You know, in our times, quality education was, you had a good teacher who taught you math, physics, chemistry. You did. Well, that's not, that's important today. But I think relevant information or relevant education is more important today. So keeping up with times, keeping up with what we feel is important without compromising on our core philosophy, I think that's how our vision has changed.

Speaker 4: So today we genuinely believe, irrespective of the admissions we get, irrespective of, you know, starting a new school or having existing schools, one of the core areas of our vision has to be constantly upgrading, updating and progressing. That's something that is part of our vision. Whether it is recently we did a, you know, six week workshop on augmented reality with our kids in another school. We did, you know, short programs where they build drones.

Speaker 4: We've got IIT professors and they do design thinking programs in our school because we believe that this is now the kind of skill or the need of the hour of what these learners need to build, moving forward into whatever they do in life. So I think that's how the vision changes, but the core philosophy doesn't change, and I hope it never changes. Changes.

Speaker 3: I'm. I'm actually quite overwhelmed with, with the programs that you're instilling. And she was telling me about the. And we last spoke about the Columbia one.

Speaker 4: Yeah, Columbia.

Speaker 3: So how do you get inspired to start all of these? Or how do you realize that this is so.

Speaker 2: I think we have a strong research team also with us who is researching everything and what is suitable to our program. We want to tie up with them and we want to move forward and we want to help our learners to experience that program. That's very important.

Speaker 4: Also, somewhere in our mind, there's always a burning desire of what next? You know, what next can we do? What next can we.

Speaker 3: He's not done before.

Speaker 4: So. So when the what next question comes in my meetings, you know, you. You should see all my heads. They're looking at me saying, oh, my

Speaker 3: God, oh my God again.

Speaker 4: What is that happened with my team today?

Speaker 3: I'm really charged and I'm sending her, like, multiple, you know, texts or everything. She's having like a super D day.

Speaker 4: So like even inspire us as a concept. And you were part of it last year, Mansi, and you're gracious enough to come and judge one of them. The concept was, I mean, it was not Easy to run 53 different programs for four different age groups. The sub juniors, juniors, seniors, super seniors. So that's, you know, effectively 220 programs running. So from a Rubik cube challenge to theater to journalism to music to sports, within four days. But the idea came, and when I told the team, obviously they were like, are you kidding me?

Speaker 2: How are we going to execute it?

Speaker 4: No, in my mind, I was like, every year we do an annual concert, and that is only one skill that we're building in terms of confidence. Speech and drama, theater, music, to a certain extent. I said, what about all the other skills? And what if I'm not good in theater? What if I'm not good in singing? How do I get an opportunity as an individual in the school to showcase what I'm good at and add points to my house?

Speaker 4: And that's how inspire us came up. And, you know, it was a huge success. I think parents were, you know, really appreciative and overwhelmed. Again, you were part of it.

Speaker 3: And I saw the rapport that you share with them. Is that, is it hard to Be their age and also be on the other side.

Speaker 4: You know, yes and no. You know, sometimes, yes, there may be a situation where they get too friendly. And again, I feel as, as long as I'm being honest with them and honest to myself, it doesn't matter. So I'm, I'm happy to be friends with them. I'm happy to go out socially if required, and meet them. But if something comes up where school policy has to be implemented or we feel it's the right decision for the learner, I think we just got to stick to.

Speaker 4: And I think somewhere they've seen that as parents, they also do not cross the line. I must give the due credit and respect to our parent body. They do not cross the line or they do not call me and say, hey, you know, the school's not allowing me this. Can I, can you get this done? I think they're very respectful of the fact

that they can reach me or mom and we are available to them when the need really comes, rather than, hey, I'm not getting leave and you know, I want to go for a wedding.

Speaker 4: Can you help me out?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 2: You know, so I'm going to add one more thing. That Kunal, besides being md, he's a parent of the school, too. School and we, I won't say we. Everyone treats him like a parent and he himself behaves like a parent of the school.

Speaker 4: So if I go to pick up my son, I stand outside with the ID card. No, literally. Or for sports day, you know, I won't sit in the management area. When it's my son's sports day, I'll sit with the parents. If it's the higher classes, we may sit together. So I think I've given that comfort and I, and it's not for any other reason. It's not for optics. I genuinely believe that that day I'm going as a father, not as a.

Speaker 3: And I want to be treated. I think so.

Speaker 4: Absolutely. I want to be a father. I'm here for my son. I also want to push that parent in front of me so I can see my son race. And I want to be one of them. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Speaker 3: I think that's, that's such a relief. And I, and, and I feel you. Because I know sometimes, you know, like you said, that people may think that, oh, it's all optics, but it's not. Because at the end of the day, your parents, after all.

Speaker 4: Absolutely. I mean, my son had a soccer tournament this weekend and I was there and I was, you know, I'm not gonna lie. I was stressed out watching his game. There were, there were 12 teams of JBCN playing and I was obviously hoping that every team wins and does well. But I was stressed out for my son's team because there I was as a father, not because he was part of jbcn.

Speaker 3: Interesting. Tell me. You know, this is a question that I'm actually asking on behalf of the parents because now it's admissions time and everybody is trying to figure what do the schools look for? So when you are accepting children or accepting forms and admission forms, what are, what are schools looking for?

Speaker 4: So I'm going to answer this in two ways, Mom. I think, you know, the first thing that a parent needs to get in his mindset, which, which is un, you know, slightly unfortunate. I feel a lot of parents believe that in smaller schools which, with smaller numbers or, you know, smaller vacancies, if you can't get admission, it's a good school. So I think it's reverse psychology where, oh, if I can't get admission, it's

Speaker 2: a good school, I want that school.

Speaker 3: It's desirable. But that's human nature.

Speaker 4: It is, it is human nature. But I feel when it comes to a school for a parent, I think they need to understand the philosophy. And I say this often, that if you're taking admission in nursery or committing to a school for almost 15 years, I mean that's longer than most marriages last. So, you know, so I think that commitment can't be on the basis of, oh, it's tough to get admission or my friend's kid or my cousin's kid is in the school.

Speaker 4: I think that has to be on, hey, what do I want as a parent for my child and what is the school offering for their learners in their school? And does that match?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: And then they take admission.

Speaker 3: No, I totally, I totally agree with that.

Speaker 4: In terms of the other side, what are schools looking for? I can talk about JBC and I may not be able to comment on the other schools. I think we're looking for like minded parents. We're looking for so like minded parents

Speaker 2: who, having said similar vision.

Speaker 4: Similar vision, similar philosophy. You know, all the things I spoke about today. I tell parents, if you want to communicate, you have an issue. There are two, two ways of solving it. One is you approach the school with an intention saying, hey, let's solve the problem. The second is put it on your mom's WhatsApp chat.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: I promise you the other moms on the chat can't solve your problem. Only we can as a school.

Speaker 3: So put it out to us.

Speaker 4: Put it out to us and we'll, we'll find a solution if we can. So parents who are like minded, who believe in the same philosophy, who believe that yes, learning is about skill development, education is about getting the right experiences and skills to move to the next step of Life. Yes, the 90% and the A stars and whatever else you get are important. But that's not the only purpose of education. These are philosophies that we want parents to share with us and also parents

Speaker 2: who are not in the rat race. You know, my friend's child want. No, very often it happens my friends kids are in a particular school so I want to put them in a particular school. But today we also come across parents and I met them in chamber. They said for us this is what we want. And, and we think the parents come and say that we think that our philosophy or the way we want the education system to be relevant for our children is aligning with gbcn and that's why we've not applied anywhere else and we just want to come to your school.

Speaker 3: How do you, with those 10 questions that you ask, how do you know the parent?

Speaker 2: I personally feel, you know that the thing is that, that when you're meeting parents and I'm talking about myself, I don't know, Kunal is still young. But when you're meeting parents, you know the personality, you know their thinking, you know how you can identify what is real, what is fake, what is honest, what is dishonesty. Yeah. The same way you can identify people and when they speak from their heart, you can identify that they are actually meaning it.

Speaker 2: Whether they are meaning it or they don't mean it or they have heard other parents and that's what they are saying. Because that pleases us to hear. Yeah. I mean it's the experience that helps

Speaker 3: us agree with the both of you all because I truly believe that, you know, school rankings and you know, like she said, peer pressure of schools etc is great but I always tell parents go see the school. If you just get the, you know, like you said, it's like a marriage, you get that vibe and you know that the philosophies and the value system is what I want and is what you're looking for. It is absolutely, it is the right

Speaker 4: school for you, you know, so I'll give you, I'll give you two extremes in terms of examples. So you will have, you know, a parent who will come in with both mother and father from Harvard And Stanford. And we have a whole bunch of parents like that across our JBC and schools who've done really well. They're either professional or highly qualified professionals or running their own business or entrepreneurs. And you know, they obviously have a similar philosophy and they'll talk to you and you'll say, hey, this is, this is someone we'd like to have in our school as a parent and obviously they're their children and you will also get parents.

Speaker 4: And I'm being honest with you, who will come to us who can't speak

Speaker 3: English, which is okay.

Speaker 4: And they actually come and tell mom saying, hey, you know what? My parents couldn't afford a good education

Speaker 3: for me or they didn't have the vision.

Speaker 4: I made it in life. I don't know English, I don't understand international education, but I know I want this for my child. I want them to be happy. I want these cultures don't reprimand my child because I'm not

educated.

Speaker 3: That is so true.

Speaker 4: And you know, those are also the kind of parents you want in the school because they are so true and honest.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: And you know, whatever they've said, they'll probably say in Hindi.

Speaker 3: Yeah, okay.

Speaker 2: For us, honesty works. That's what I'm saying. We identify.

Speaker 3: I think that is so true because you know, and you're right, you're going to meet all sorts of people, all sorts of people from all walks of life. But I don't think that right to the right education or the best quality

Speaker 4: education should be between. And we're happy to have both sets of parents and both sets of kids in the school. You know, both of them. Yeah.

Speaker 3: No, that is absolutely incredible that you guys managed to get that mixed together before we.

Speaker 2: And the best part is that our parent body also support us. So I have to add that to you that you know that their parent body is also something.

Speaker 3: But. But that's great validation for you that they're on the same page.

Speaker 4: Absolutely.

Speaker 3: Before we conclude, two things. One is I want to know what next for schools? Is Bombay done or is there a plan to go another city, another state, another program? What's next?

Speaker 4: Firstly, obviously doing a few more interviews on kidstop Press. I think in terms of what next. I still believe we can build a few more schools in Bombay, but again, it's going to be organic, I think.

Speaker 3: You're sure?

Speaker 4: No, honestly, I think every suburb, every area of Bombay has a potential for a good school. And we want to build those also somewhere logistically. Like I said earlier, we want to Be we want to build schools that we can be involved in. Logistically, we feel it's easier to be involved, manage, build a rapport with the parents, be involved with the teachers, the learners, etc. So definitely we would want to, you know, hope to build a few more schools in Bombay before we think of moving outside.

Speaker 4: And even outside Bombay we would want to build if we feel the right opportunity comes along, not just for the sake of expansion or for the sake of, you know. So I think for us that's important eventually once we build enough schools. So you know, the way it started and it just again it happened organically. I don't know, I don't think this was planned is we build children's nooks as in mom built the base, she built children's nooks and then she moved to high schools.

Speaker 4: So there was opportunity for those learners to move into high schools. And I think once we have enough high schools, at some point mom is very keen, you know, as her vision to have something in the undergrad space so that learners who move out of grade 12 from JBC and have a further opportunity to continue getting quality and relevant education. So hopefully at some point we would like to build some kind of university and you know, the government is opening up, opening up towards this in terms of laws, in terms of processes.

Speaker 4: Absolutely. And there's, I think there's a huge potential over there and eventually we would hope to have some kind of campus or campuses that run good, solid undergraduate programs that kind of bridge the gap between good education at a schooling level. Because I feel there are lots of good schools now and lots of good postgraduate schools and job opportunities. I think it's that, that four years or three years of undergrad is something that we feel that.

Speaker 3: Yeah, I really hope that you breathe because I don't know what I did in those three years. It's just a blur. And I'm sure you were studied in

Speaker 2: Bombay and lot of, lot of.

Speaker 4: No, I actually did the IB program I was in. It wasn't a blur for me. I remember all my internal assessment deadlines

Speaker 2: and today lot a lot of vocational courses are available which gives you an opportunity for your job. So something like that also. So skill based learning can happen after the age of 18 years and that's what you need to focus. So again, you need to be progressive thinker.

Speaker 3: That's incredible. And the last one, which is not actually on the cards, but I'm very intrigued after this interview. What are the things you guys disagree on?

Speaker 4: Oh, almost everything. Almost Everything. Yeah, but I want to know that

Speaker 3: from the both of you.

Speaker 4: I, it's, it's a tough one because eventually one of us managed to convince the other. But yeah, we, I mean, on a personal level, mom disagrees with some of my food habits. For example, she feels I need to eat more. On a personal level, that's an Indian mom.

Speaker 2: No, it's not that. I personally feel that even if you want to maintain yourself, there are ways of maintaining yourself. So choose the right path. By starving? By not eating. If you are able to look young and slim, it's fine. It's temporary.

Speaker 3: Don't look like her at her age.

Speaker 2: Don't look for temporary solutions.

Speaker 4: No. But to give you a more serious answer, you know, whenever we are trying to problem solve, and I've noticed this a lot, some issue comes up which is, you know, important enough for us to get involved and we need to kind of put our mind to it. For me, typically, I think I'm more process driven. So for me there has to be some logic saying, hey, let's do step one, step two, step three. This is how we should go about it.

Speaker 4: These are the pros, cons, etc for mom, given her experience and the fact that she's an educator at heart, it's intuitive.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Speaker 4: And I'm not gonna lie, her intuition is right 9 out of 10 times. Okay, if not 9 and 9.9 out of 10 times. So the disagreement comes saying, but, but mom, what's the logic? And she's like, you know what, I just know it. And I'm like, but how?

Speaker 2: No, so, so I feel. So for her, no, I feel in life logic is important, but there is something like intuition also because it's just somewhere, somewhere we are not robots, we are not computers. We are human beings with a heart. So somewhere you have to go with your gut feeling also.

Speaker 4: And how we come to a consensus is because fortunately the underlying philosophy that we work with is the same. It's just for that issue or that problem or that strategy where we have a differing view, but the end result or the outcome we want out of that is the same.

Speaker 3: Thank you so much to both of you.

Speaker 4: Thank you so much again, Mansi, for coming here, doing this talk with us.

Speaker 3: I'm, I'm literally, I need to like listen to this a couple of times for me to like invite this because this is really like incredible knowledge.

Speaker 2: Touchwood by grace.

Speaker 3: I don't know how many because you just corrected your age.

Speaker 4: I joined, yeah, full time. I joined JVCN in 2003, 2004. So it's been about 15 years now, within half.

Speaker 2: Half of it.

Speaker 3: But really, thank you so much.

Speaker 2: And I think it was just pleasure being with you, me and seeing you. Yes, absolutely. I genuinely feel that's the need of the hour and I've got to focus on that now.

Speaker 3: Thank you.

Speaker 4: Thank you, guys.