

# **"A Silent Yet Profound Morning Assembly"**

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As a character-building instructor at an elementary school in southern Tehran, I was responsible for organizing the morning assembly. Schools in Tehran are situated within residential areas, with many elderly and ill residents living nearby.

Every morning at 7:30 AM, the school bell would ring, and students, full of energy, would rush to their designated spots—marked circles on the ground. The assembly was conducted in a military-like order: "Stand at attention!" Following this, the Quran was recited, a morning hadith was read, the national anthem was played, and the students loudly chanted political slogans before heading to their classes.

One day, after the assembly, a man stormed into the school, shouting in an agitated and threatening manner. He was looking for the person responsible for conducting the morning assembly. The principal and assistants quickly withdrew to their offices, leaving me alone in the courtyard. With honesty, I admitted, "It was me."

The man, his voice filled with anger, exclaimed, "Are you insane to conduct such a loud assembly every morning, disturbing the entire neighborhood?"

I paused for a moment and realized that pride or confrontation would not resolve the situation. Instead, I calmly responded, "I sincerely apologize."

Taken aback by my response, he softened slightly and said, "Had you not apologized, I would have handled this matter differently."

Now that the students had entered their classrooms, I invited him to the school library, which served as my office. I offered him tea to help him calm down. As we talked, he explained that his father suffered from a heart condition and was highly sensitive to loud noises. Since their house was adjacent to the school, the morning assembly's loud recitations and slogans caused him great distress every day.

I apologized once again, and after he left, I started reflecting on the situation. Could I conduct the morning assembly differently? If I was responsible for it, was there a way to create discipline and convey educational messages without excessive noise?

I approached the principal and said, "If I am in charge of the morning assembly, I will implement a new approach starting tomorrow."

The next morning, instead of ringing the bell, I stood on the assembly platform and used hand gestures to signal students to line up. To my surprise, there was no more rushing or pushing—students quietly and orderly took their places. We eliminated the loudspeakers, and I explained to the students that the change was made out of respect for our neighbors. The Quran and hadith were recited in a calm and measured tone, and the national anthem was softly hummed instead of being shouted. At the end of the assembly, rather than commanding them, I politely asked the students to proceed to their classrooms.

The results were astonishing. Not only were the neighbors relieved, but a sense of tranquility and mutual respect also developed among the students.

## Introduction

Schools are not just institutions for imparting knowledge; they are also spaces for socialization, discipline, and responsibility-building. The morning assembly, a traditional practice in many schools, is designed to instill a sense of unity, discipline, and motivation among students. However, the way it is conducted can significantly impact both the learning environment and the surrounding community. This narrative recounts an

experience of transforming a loud, rigid morning assembly into a calmer, more effective practice that benefited both students and the local residents.

## Scientific and Educational Analysis

### 1. The Impact of Social Environment on Educational Practices

Schools function within broader communities, and their activities can influence local residents. In this case, the high-volume morning assembly caused distress to a neighbor with a heart condition, highlighting the need for schools to consider their social responsibility. The concept of school-community responsibility suggests that educational institutions should be aware of their external impact and adjust their practices accordingly.

### 2. Conflict Resolution and Effective Communication Skills

When faced with the neighbor's complaint, two responses were possible: defensiveness and justification or acknowledgment and adaptation. Opting for the latter—engaging in dialogue, showing empathy, and modifying the assembly format—helped de-escalate the situation and led to an improved solution. This approach exemplifies constructive conflict management, which is crucial in educational settings. Teachers frequently encounter conflicts involving students, parents, and administrators, and their ability to manage these situations effectively enhances school dynamics.

### 3. Adapting Teaching Methods and the Role of Creativity

Conducting the assembly with loud commands may have ensured formal discipline, but it also generated unnecessary stress. Replacing this method with non-verbal communication and silent cues demonstrated that a teacher's authority is not solely reliant on vocal commands but also on thoughtful, adaptive strategies. This shift exemplifies adaptive learning, where educators modify their approaches based on environmental and situational factors to enhance effectiveness.

#### 4. The Role of Empathy and Indirect Teaching in Student Development

A key educational takeaway from this experience is the importance of instilling respect for others and an awareness of the consequences of one's actions. By explaining the reason for modifying the morning assembly, students learned that their behaviors extend beyond their immediate environment and can impact others. This indirect teaching method reinforced skills such as social responsibility, empathy, and critical thinking about conventional practices.

#### Conclusion

This experience underscores the importance of flexibility in educational and managerial approaches. Schools should not adhere rigidly to traditional methods but instead evaluate and adapt their practices to accommodate both internal needs and external considerations. A minor adjustment in the execution of the morning assembly not only alleviated tension with the surrounding community but also fostered a more peaceful learning environment while reinforcing essential life values among students.

Ultimately, this case highlights that teachers are not merely conveyors of knowledge but also facilitators of life skills. The way a classroom or school is managed shapes students' thinking and behaviors, and even small changes can yield significant improvements in the learning process and social development.

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