Twenty years ago, Hong Kong was already on its way to prosperity. A survey has revealed that 67% of parents in Hong Kong work overtime and they are exhausted after work. The majority could not enjoy family life or even too busy to spend time with families. Therefore, the generation gap between parents and their children becomes wider and wider.

There are mainly three causes why the generation gap between parents and their children is formed. Firstly, time for communication is insufficient. A majority of parents spend too little time communicating with and listening to their children, even though they love them very much. This is due to their heavy workload and inevitable stress faced in workplace, as well as long working hours. Parents are under a lot of pressure to strike a balance between work and family. Notwithstanding, children do not share their school life or other day-to-day events with their parents. On the whole, parents are actually making great sacrifices to earn a living. On the contrary, their children are being neglected. Parents may not know what their children are thinking about. This causes communication barriers in the family.

Secondly, parents may have absolute control over their children. They believe that ‘study is a privilege for the rich’. Accordingly, parents have a lot of concern for their children’s academic performance at school instead of paying attention to their favourite interests and hobbies. They want their children to have more advantages and opportunities. Thus, children may not have complete freedom in the choice of those leisure activities and the books that they read. They seem to be little birds trapped in a very small cage. As a result, children always believe that their parents are against their opinions all the way. They try to keep everything secretive and do not tell their parents when they encounter any
problems.

Thirdly, there are different attitudes adopted by two generations. Most parents adopt a straight face and do not show their feelings when they talk to their children. Furthermore, they scold their children frequently or even give them physical punishment. These are due to the traditional custom. Conversely, children do not want to follow their parents’ orders since they think that there are no reasons to support why parents’ thoughts are right. Besides, children do not want their parents to treat them as three-year-old kids. Children believe that they are grown-ups and it is high time for them to be independent. This helps them to gain more self-esteem. On the whole, both parents and their children do not see things from the standpoints of each other. Thus, misunderstanding is a great cause for the formation of generation gap.

To tackle this problem, there are some ways by which such generation gap can be bridged.

Firstly, parents and their children have to be aware of the importance of open communication. In order to break the “ice” and rebuild a close parent-child relationship, communication is extremely crucial. Parents should not only concentrate on their jobs and leave their children alone. They have to reserve some specific time to be with their children and show care to them. Similarly, children have to discuss serious things or big decisions with their parents as it shows respect to them. On the whole, both parents and children should try to explain their ideas to family members in a forgiving manner without anger or hatred.

The second one is that parents must not put too much pressure on their children’s studies. Parents should not have too high expectation. They have to discuss their children’s progress with the teachers. Moreover, parents should work closely with schools through Parent-Teacher Association in
order to participate in more talks and extra-curricular activities with their children. On the other hand, parents should know what their children like the most. Indeed, they should give their children a chance to choose what they love if the choices resort to proper outlets.

In addition, both parents and their children have to adopt an appropriate attitude in treating each other. Parents must not start a conversation by giving orders. Instead, they can begin by discussing a topic that can hold their children’s interests. Moreover, parents need to avoid being stereotyped as unreasonable commanders who order their children to do things without giving sufficient reasons. The most important thing is that parents should set a clear reward-and-punishment system for their children. Corporal punishment is not allowed since this may cause a profound impact on their children’s development.

All in all, it is not easy to bridge the generation gap between parents and their children. When parents need to work overtime, their children should be obedient to them and understand how tired the parents are after a day’s hard work. Children can give a hug or a kiss to their parents and this can increase the intimacy between them. Finally, let us remember a merry family requires lots of give-and-take, and it really needs the co-operation of all its members. Accordingly, the generation gap between parents and their children can easily be bridged.