

imagined sitting in a class with girls, or being taught by a beautiful woman. As the Kuwaiti expression goes, our fuses burned!

After our experience in a Lebanese school, we returned to Kuwait where I repeated the third grade and in the middle of that school year my father passed away. That same year we happened to have a new Arabic teacher. Our old teacher, Mr. Naim, was replaced by Mr. Issa, and what a huge difference it made. Whereas Mr. Naim was severe and hardly ever smiled, Mr. Issa was gentle and kind. He quickly noticed my issue with reading and writing, so he took extra care with me. At the same time, my mother continued to insist that I copy my entire reading book, even though I was only drawing out the shapes of the words and letters. Eventually, after extensive exercises, and my newly found passion for comic books with Superman, Batman, Samir, and Mickey Mouse; I finally managed to break through the obstacles of reading and writing.

I wish to stop here for a moment and advise all parents to avoid placing extreme pressure on your children if they happen to struggle with a certain subject. Being too tough will not do you or your children any good. Instead of pressuring your children, picture the solution as a triangle. The first side is the teacher. There are children whose success depends on the quality of their teacher, if they love him they will learn; if they don't, learning is slow and tedious. The second side is creating positive motivation and encouragement while avoiding verbal abuse or making the child feel stupid. The third side lies in repetition without turning it into boredom. We have a saying, "repetition teaches even the donkey," although I dislike the idea of comparing a struggling child to a "donkey." It's similar to the