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Striking work-family balance by following the P6PROP program

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BOOK REVIEW

ACCORDING to the writer Lynn Pan in her "When True Love Came to China," the Chinese language long lacked a specific concept to describe love and affection for a spouse or sweetheart.

The Chinese word *ai*, which is today used to describe romantic love, is a fairly modern semantic development, one rising from contact with the West. In ancient China, while there were a plethora of terms to suggest admiration for the fair sex, no one apparently felt the need to say: "I love you."

In more traditional times, the husband-wife relationship was just one of the "five cardinal relationships" (*wulun*), with the bond between man and wife defined against the rigorous demands of an extended family. In that context, amorous impulses paled into insignificance.

Confucius put such a premium on family as the most basic unit of social and political life that he believed management of the state and universal affairs could only be a natural extension of familial harmony. He spoke of the ideal society as one in which there were "no unmarried men or women."

For countless generations, the husband-wife relationship was considered part of a much greater stream of family life, rather than a union between individuals based on romantic attachment. But while some Chinese have learn to say "I love you," and conjugal alliances are no longer treated as deals best brokered through parents and elders, the family unit is no longer as strong as it used to be.

As divorce becomes increasingly common in villages as well as cities, there is a need for new ways to keep marriages working. If not, the breakdown of the family as an institution could lead to serious social consequences.

According to the book "More Life, Please! The Performance Pathway to a Better You" by Christian Marcolli and Tarina Wagschal, the P6PROP performance model can help readers experience a more balanced, satisfying life both inside and outside the home.

The "P6PROP" program — short for "Personal Resource Optimizing Performance" — aims to help busy professionals become better partners, parents and friends. The "6P's" are Passion, Precision, Perception, Peace, Presence and Persistence.

The program takes into account the reality that many professionals devote so much energy and attention to their careers that they shortchange their family and friends. They crave deep connections, but for those to form they must harness the same degree of focus and commitment they devote to their careers.

The results of building these connections can be tremendous.

More Life, Please!

The Performance Pathway to a Better You

Dr. Christian Marcolli with Tarina Wagschal

"When your inner and outer worlds are integrated, aligned and working in unison, your partner and your children will see exactly who you are," the authors assert. They then go on to examine the system's principles in detail.

Passion

"Passion" in this sense refers to the desire to become a passionate participant in one's family life, and be enthusiastic about one's role as parent, partner and friend. Professionals largely accept the notion that greater investments of time and energy will increase the odds of success in their career, but they are often unaware that a successful family life entails a similar degree of investment.

That means balancing family and work. As one has only so much time and energy, over committing to one necessarily means neglecting the other.

Hence the need for careful budgeting of time and energy so the twin commitments of family and work can be harmonized.

That's no easy task. As the initial passion of amorous instinct evaporates, family-life threatens to degenerate into a series of chores and unpleasant demands. But if you learn to embrace these obligations, you will envision your home as a haven from the world.

"Coming home to our family at night should be an experience that is coveted, looked forward to and cherished," according to the authors. Ultimately this hinges on shared beliefs and a shared spiritual life. As the authors observe: "Passion is critical to families because it fuels our desire to be together and to create 'moments' and memories together."

Precision

Contrary to popular assumptions, home life requires a kind of exactitude and focus needed in the acquisition of professional skills. Setting your life on a happy track may entail great effort, but once you ritualize the routines necessary, the

results justify the effort. Create a chore system that includes your children. Once children are involved, they can share some of the burden. This can also be an educational process for them.

Perception

Perceiving yourself as nurtured and loved will empower you, and help you achieve passion and precision.

In the haven of your family, you can find for yourself a place where you are not vulnerable and afraid of making mistakes. Strive to provide the same kind of security and support to your family members, by creating an accepting, warm home environment where your family members can bring out the best in you. Be choosy about whom you invite into your "inner circle."

Parents are children's first and last tutors, and from their example children learn how to enter into empowering and enduring relationship with others. As the authors point out, "The most important job we can do as a parent is to understand our core values, beliefs and everybody's needs so we can align them with our actual behaviors."

Peace

Feeling comfortable with your family will lead to a sense of peace.

As the authors explain, peace means more than just the absence of battle. Peace is "a strong personal awareness and an appreciation of your own unique and important history," based on self-awareness and self-acceptance.

Understanding your own personal history will help you come to terms with your self and your limitations, forgive past hurts, and accept yourself as unique. "When we are at peace with ourselves, we create an environment of peace and balance that enables our children to become at peace with themselves and their own uniqueness," the book points out.

Presence

This means being present and aware as the real you and acting in alignment with your true nature rather than a person playing a role. Not acting your authentic self can put you on edge and can be energy-sapping. Your own approach to your family will set you apart, and distinguish you as unique.

Persistence

Persist in your commitment to be and do your best with the people you care about. Make a deliberate effort to prioritize all your home obligations, and ritualize these routines.

Clear and persistent rules provide children with stability and security, and help them form constructive daily habits.

Depending on our capabilities, we might be successful or not in our professional pursuits, but making family life fulfilling and vigorous is within reach of every individual. This is more than a personal choice, for the health of our family is an important barometer of the cohesion and solidity of society as a whole.

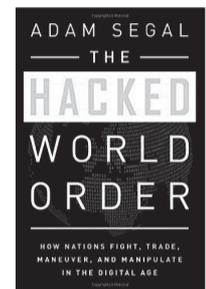
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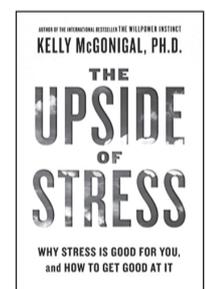
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