



# HOW TO WIN YOUR LIFE BACK

*CHRISTIAN MARCOLLI advises successful sales and marketing professionals how they can bring greater fulfilment to their lives in 2016 and beyond*

**Y**ou don't need me to tell you that today's sales and marketing professionals do not have an easy life. You may be a well-paid, high-performing leader or executive, but the chances are you're overworked, under pressure and stressed.

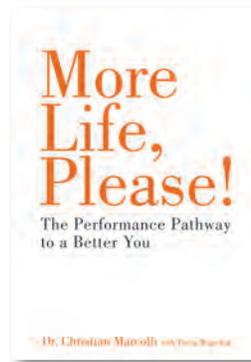
I visit a lot of companies and meet many high-performing executives and in my experience it is common to find many of them giving 100% of themselves to their career, while at the same time feeling a gnawing sadness that

their family life is not all that it could be.

As they struggle to cope with professional demands that are calling them from every direction, it becomes harder to juggle the demands on them at home, and they are managing it with ever less energy, resources and joy. All too often, with their focus, strength and energy channelled into their professional life, the quality of their private life slowly declines, weakening like an unused muscle. At worst, they suffer ill-health and broken relationships.

Many successful businesspeople will say that such malign outcomes are simply an occupational hazard – the price of career progress, and a necessary risk. But believe me, it doesn't have to be this way.

Crucially, you don't have to rein in your career. On the contrary, it is possible to maintain your ambitions and continue to achieve professionally, while at the same time creating the treasured moments for yourself and your family that build the strong foundations of your life.



With the right approach, instead of exhaustion and domestic friction because of stress and work overload, you can get more of the good things in life. Here, I don't mean more in material terms, but more joy, more satisfaction, more meaning, more love and more success – however you define it – at home, as well as at work.

For those of you with partners and children, here are some tips on how to build solid foundations at home in a way that is efficient as well as effective, so it also supports your professional performance:

### REIGNITE THE PASSION IN YOUR HOME LIFE

Instead of thinking of the family as a place of duty, where dinners are served and homework is done, start thinking of your family as a place that provides comfort, relief, laughter and relaxation after the stresses of difficult days.

Take a deep look inside yourself and your

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family to discover what is there, where the passion is and where it has gone. Think back to some times as a family where you truly felt that passion together. What was it that made that time so special? When was the last time you had that feeling? All successful families need to understand what is important and unique to them, as part of the pursuit of passion.

Having understood what makes you and your family tick and what makes you unique as a family, write it down in a “family mission statement”. Ask all family members to contribute to it and summarise your ideal vision of your family. This will give all of you clarity on what it really means to be part of a loving, supportive family unit, and the fundamental connection you have to each other.

### START SHARING

Make your family one of your most important projects. Incorporate your individual passions into family life. If you are keen on cooking, for example, get your partner and children involved in planning and preparing a meal once a week. Encourage your children to share the things that they love doing, and make space for it in your time together. Also, share your passion for your work. If your family understands what you find fulfilling about your work, the greater the chance they will offer support when you need it.



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### MEET, COMMUNICATE, SUPPORT

Hold pre-arranged family get-togethers, ideally every week at the same time. Here, you and your loved ones can agree and commit to shared leisure activities, which can create so many great moments and magical memories. Equally importantly, these meetings can be used to plan and share chores fairly and efficiently, helping all family members avoid stress and friction.

It takes some effort to create a supportive and trustworthy environment in a family. It won't happen if family members always eat separately at different times. It won't show up behind closed doors with music blaring and computers and TVs in kids' rooms. So agree some simple changes to all your routines, so that sometimes you're all in the same place at the same time.

In addition, make a conscious effort to plan quality time with your spouse or partner, for example, by setting a regular date night.

Offer regular, thoughtful support to family members and ask for support back from them. This exchange informs each other's attitudes and behaviours, making you all emotionally stronger through meaningful, constructive feedback, and building an unbreakable bond between you.

### CONSIDER YOUR OWN NEEDS

Take care of yourself – including diet, exercise, sleep and “me time”. This isn't selfishness. When we are listening to the emergency procedures on a plane, we are told to put our own oxygen masks on before putting them on our children. In this scenario, taking care of ourselves first is so critical it could save the lives of the people we love most. Similarly, as partners and as parents we can only be what we need to be in our families when we love and take care of ourselves.

And organise yourself. It is beneficial to plan upfront and be as ready as possible for all of life's challenges. This is “frontloading” and it means doing things on a daily basis rather than only when a crisis hits. Develop the skill to delegate things that don't have to be completed by you – at work and at home. This saves you time, and helps you focus on the most critical and valuable tasks in both your professional and domestic life.

### BE YOUR TRUE SELF

Too often, our interactions with others are based on fear, with our defences high and our authenticity low. Within a family, life's challenges often become even harder. Don't hide from them, but be your true self. Show your weaknesses, and capitalise on your strengths. If you mess up, apologise and look for a solution to put things right. Show who you are by living the values you hold dear. Use your head and your heart together and you will never go far wrong.