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Career Parents And The Modern Day Challenges

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CAREER PARENTS

And The

MODERN DAY

CHALLENGES

FAMILY SENSITISATION

CHRISTIANA NDIRIKA OKAFOR

CAREER PARENTS

And The

MODERN DAY

CHALLENGES

(FAMILY SENSITISATION)

CHRISTIANA NDIRIKA OKAFOR

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© Mrs. Christiana Ndirika Okafor, 2008
E-mail: mrscnokafor_sedi@yahoo.com

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DEDICATION

To the happy memory of my dear father and mother,
Christian and Monica Anaduaka

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am very grateful to the Almighty God for the wisdom, understanding and strength without which I would not have added this book to the list of my previous works.

I remain grateful to the following;

- * My family-Godfrey, my dear husband and to each of our children. It was easy for me to write on this topic, because of the love we have for each other and the strength/support I derive from them.
- * My sisters and brothers whom I dearly love
- * My professional colleagues, and friends with whom I share insights and interests
- * Finally, I remain very grateful to my fellow women with whom I have had various interactions during annual women conferences..

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	iv
Acknowledgment	v
Preface.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE	
Introduction	1
CHAPTER TWO	
Parents giant steps to our children's career development	8
CHAPTER THREE	
Father and mother, avoid being "too busy" in order to cope with the family challenges of our time	20
CHAPTER FOUR	
The desirable state	34
CHAPTER FIVE	
How to cope with the various challenges facing career parents	38
CHAPTER SIX	
Some techniques one can use to cope with modern challenges and other problems of life	44
CHAPTER SEVEN	
Conclusion	66
EXERCISES	67
REFERENCES	69

PREFACE

In spite of modernism and its good/bad aspects, family still remains the abode of peace, joy and harmony to any sane individual. It is a place, where the person cannot hide the real self. Even when there is pretence, it is for a short while, since the individual is seriously connected and committed to the events taking place in it.

This book came out of the experience of the author's twenty seven years in marriage and twenty two years of career life. During these years, the care and love for my family remained and will continue to be the primary role of my personality.

I derived pleasure in my career but the joy I draw from my family ties, gives me the energy to move on in my career path.

I was inspired to write this short book in order to share a little of my understanding of what a family life ought to be in the face of the emerging challenges of our modern times. Life is not worth living if we do not contribute to make it worthwhile. Our contributions start from our various homes or families..

The challenges of our times are really tasking but an with understanding, maturity and good sense we can make it what we desire it to be.

The Author

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Where there is talent, there is responsibility as well. As the talents grow day by day, that is, as graces increase, so does our responsibility. It does become imperative to progress and not stagnate.

(Blessed James Alberione)
Priest founder (1884-1971)
Society of St Paul
Pope Paul VI called him the
"Marvel of our times"

Parents are blessings to the world, firstly appreciated in the family unit or home and by the individual members of the society. God in his infinite wisdom saw that Adam could not stay alone and created a woman—a suitable companion to help him. In any

environment where there is evidence of a house but not a 'home', there is bound to be rigidity, lack of love and affection and very probably, peace may elude the house.

Apart from the almighty God whom everything is subject to, the father and mother are the foundation on which a home is built. A father is the head and backbone of the home while a mother is far more a blessing to the home where God has placed her. Both parents therefore are special talents to humanity. All good gifts come from God. Where God in His infinite wisdom and goodness bless the home with children, the couple are then faced with another responsibility and challenge to nurture or train the fruit (s) of the relationship as desired by men and God.

Parents and the challenges of the modern society

As the book pointed out at the beginning, talent goes with responsibility. To be a man or woman is already a talent or gift endowed by God. To be a father or mother is a far

greater talent, which entails many responsibilities.

Parents responsibilities can be outlined as follows:

- As a good husband or wife to each other
- Good parents to the children,
- Good planners of the home
- Foundational teachers or mentors to all, particularly the children who require our examples, direction and more importantly our prayers and good wishes.
- As career personnel of our various professions.
- The role models of the church
- The role models of the society etc

Before this present day world, characterized with fast-paced technological breakthroughs, modernization and globalization, parents are faced with lesser challenges than we are seeing in our present time. The subsistence farming or petty trading of the husband was mainly major the activities. Women were only expected to assist if disposed to help.

Even after the advent of the white-collar job, the responsibilities were far easier contrary to what we are facing in the present day high

technological world. We were generally contented and closer to nature, each other, children, and home.

The challenges of the modern scientific and technological discoveries have placed many strains on our responsibilities as parents. There is now nothing wrong for us to look for white-collar jobs or engage in trading and commerce that may even take us away from our immediate boundaries in order to increase/supplement the family for a better standard of living.

Where we are not directly involved, we strive to train our children to earn a better income for their future living. This effort does not preclude any gender. In fact, most families in recent times put more effort or investment on education of their female children than males. They have their reasons. We can see the evidence of this reasoning in the female population of such professions like teaching and nursing where women are dominant and have almost taken over.

As the desire and support of female education is greatly increasing, the career women as well have different challenges which must be properly addressed in order to keep self, children, home, office and the society in a comfortable equilibrium for the benefit of all.

Let us quickly look at the meaning of career

The 20th Century, chamber's dictionary defined Career as "a progress through life achievement in profession or occupation".

Microsoft encyclopedia defines it as:

A. Long-term or lifelong job: a vocation, job or occupation regarded as a long term or lifelong activity

B. Professional progress: somebody's progress in a chosen profession or during the person's working life.

Therefore, career development could be summarized to mean a long-term vocation or profession for a living, expected to continuously progress into higher level of

knowledge and skill overtime.

Here comes the purpose of this book. To look at the very important need to train our children and self in the face of the challenges posed by the current fast paced technological world in order to achieve commendable results.

The challenge has always been how to deferrable balance the demands or the pressure of our various career endeavours with that of training our children in good morals and academics. To bring up a discipline child full of integrity and understanding of the basic principles of good living, remains our primary role of parents. When we overlook that responsibility I wonder the kind of personality we expect to emerge for whom we will be proud of.

At the same time we will not as well overlook the responsibility of watching, directing and supporting them in their career aspiration and paths.

The Book intends to highlight the following:

1. The need for parents to develop interest in the reading culture of their children
2. The import of creating a harmonious home environment for such task.
3. The value and effect of encouraging the children's vocations or skills.
4. How parents can always equip themselves for such enermous assignment

CHAPTER Two

PARENTS GIANT STEPS TO OUR CHILDREN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

It begins at home

The potentials in our children are unimaginable. No one is created with shortage of abilities. Such abilities require proper nurturing right from the cradle. The nurturing starts with us parents. Parents are the foundational mentors in both the morals and academic development of our children. Since this book is mainly on how to enhance the career of our children through the cooperation and peculiar interest of parents, that job should as well

start from the cradle just as we nurture their characters towards the right path.

Researchers has shown that if parents become involved with her children's school work while the children are young, the children are more likely to remain academically motivated in their later school years.

In spite of the pressure from our respective career pursuits, we should always bear in mind that the primary role of our parental responsibility lies in laying the right career foundation and indeed sustaining it through our continued interests in the academics works of our children. There are varied ways we can carry out the function.

Firstly, through the personal interest we occasionally show or the time we devote to look into their studies. Secondly, by asking questions on what they study and the means with which they study it.

Thirdly, through asking questions about their daily works, assignments, teachers and other activities going on in their schools.

The author is persuading parents particularly those who still have tender children to be childlike as they do this probing in order to get the facts. Sometimes, spare time and attend the parents teachers association popularly known as (PTA) meeting and the graduation ceremony. Such forums give them a sense of belonging and assurance that we are solidly behind them.

More importantly, we have to guide them into reading with concentration and not just watching unguided films, as is the case in some homes. Even when they are attending any paid extra teaching (popularly known as lesson or extra classes), it is still important to look at their books. We should not only encourage them to read only the academic work with concentration, but other good books and articles including newspapers.

There are quite a good number of good books and magazines sold in various bookshops and our places of worships. We should not ignore any opportunity we have to pick such other books like

autobiographies of notable personalities, great men and women of our time in order to motivate our children to think, aspire and eventually be great achievers in life.

Whenever we attend our professional meetings and courses, it is usually a golden opportunities to relax and find/purchase such books for our children. Let the books be part of the gifts we give them on return from any official trip. Sometimes, professionals are tempted to ignore this important idea and concentrate their shopping only on clothing, jewelry and other perishable items.

We should not have the feeling that the books are meant for some people. Let us sometimes pick such books or articles. Whenever we buy them, we should begin to show interest in such books and articles. Most times they watch us as we read them. Gradually we train them into picking interest. Reading is very important in the life of any modern child. It activates and challenges the mind of the child. No wonder William Ellery Channing

believed in his words thus:

“It is only through books that we enjoy intercourse with superior minds... In the best books, great men talk to us, give us their most precious thoughts, and pour their souls into ours. God be thanked for books. They are the voices of the distant and the dead, and make us heirs of the spiritual life of the past ages. Books are the true levelers. They give to all who will faithfully use them, the society, and the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our races”.

Aldous Huxley also believed in the transforming power of good books when he said that “every man who knows how to read has in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significantly and interesting”.

In the process of nurturing the reading habit and establishing intimate relationship with our children, we can recognize the unique potentials in them and encourage them to develop such talents. We should however be

careful not to fall into the comparison trap, which may force a child to undertake a career the child may not have the potentials to study.

We should not fail during our prayers to offer each child to God to guide his career path, for every child has a unique talent that can make him or her excel in life.

Mother's role and the academic works of a child

I would like to mention in particular the unique role of mothers required in the early training of their children. A good mother is usually the last hope of a seemed hopeless situation as far as the education of a child is concerned. It is the mother who is usually most spiritually and closely attuned to the possibilities within her child. She can nurture like no other, gently and persistently planting the seeds in the child and watering them with motherly encouragement, and sympathy as the years go by, until one day the effort bears precious fruits.

A good mother is ready at any time to spend her last time and kobo. She is as well ready to sell her treasured clothing and jewelry in order to send or sustain her children's education. Over the years, they are known for such a loving and selfless service. I wish to say brave to such mothers for the remarkable love. All men of goodwill commend this kind of service. Mothers! more grease to your elbows. For some of us who do not go extra miles to make this investment our utmost priority but rather out of prejudice or quarrel leave it to our husbands alone, a stitch in time saves nine.

Parenthood And The Challenges Of The Modern Technological Breakthroughs- The Need To Enhance Knowledge Through Our Encouragement.

Currently in Nigeria, tribes are tagged as deficient in one aspect of career or the other. Some are known as good business hustlers mostly trading at Idumota, Alaba, Oshodi, Onitsha, Apo village, Berger, Nyanya and so on. Others are known for their agrarian inclination. Other tribes acclaim I C T

knowledge while another claim being more knowledgeable in modern white-collar jobs, and commerce.

The author believe these ideas are social paradigms build over the years but subject to change if true by any individual. We as Nigerians are of course known for our intellect, ingenuity and zeal. No body can largely challenge us on such qualities as we have adequately proved ourselves even across the boundaries of our great country Nigeria.

Nevertheless, it has been observed that the population of our youths as far as qualitative and career enhancement in different disciplines of life is dwindling. The author intends not to go into the scope of the academic inadequacies resulting from so many social and economic factors.

The area of focus is on how parents can help the children and youths develop reading culture and habit of concentration in order to cope well with the challenges of our dynamic world. Gone are the days when

people are isolated, illiterate in mind and carefree with activities happening around them. If today's knowledge driven, competitive and the silicon world have taught the modern youths anything, it is for them to be innovative and make positive impact in their various communities. We parents should help them to make the positive impacts.

The world is now a global village. The discoveries and new technologies of the advanced world have affected the activities of other countries that are less developed. The rate of change is very fast. It is estimated that the amount of knowledge is doubling every year. The consequences of the changes have generated many challenges to knowledge particular already acquired knowledge. It therefore needs to be upgraded constantly in order to remain relevant. This applies to all aspects of skills, such as auto-mechanical work, medicine, engineering, teaching, trade or commerce, accountancy and other varied professions and skills.

Either you are performing or you are left

behind. There is no place to hide. Let me quickly draw three examples in order to highlight the need to assist in upgrading our children's skills and even ourselves in line with the modern trends.

1. An electrician for instance, not versatile with the modern industrial machinery and household gadgets is very likely to be thrown out of business because the era of non-digital technology is almost gone.
2. Right now, the modern cars are more sophisticated. When such cars develop problems, it requires a knowledgeable auto-engineer to accurately diagnose with ease and timeliness the problems with such cars. The solution most times comes easily from the knowledge of the computer and the correct software that could identify the problem without any waste of time by using the trial and error method. What that means is that an auto-mechanic who is not proactive to learn the electrical,

electronic and computer skills may earn less or be thrown out of job by the efficient performance of more proactive and intelligent ones.

3. Do we need to mention the domestic appliances such as the television, sound systems, computers etc and the rate of change in sophistication?

Let us aim at building wealth through technology: the basis of the modern society through the parents constant encouragement and support.

As we have seen in the above issues outlined, methods, processes and skills that are technical are required to handle the modern gadgets or technologies. The knowledge of computer will greatly facilitate the learning process but the foundation has to be right, otherwise, one may end up to just being an operator and not an administrator or programmer. In that circumstance, one will deny him or herself the just compensation.

It is high time we all started re-tracing our steps back to learning, in line with the changes taking place in the fast-paced technological world. We should aim at selling value and not time.

As parents and first known teachers with intimate relationship with our children, we can help immensely in reawakening in our children the obvious need to develop and sustain a reading culture, in order to lay the right foundation and meet up with the challenges of acquisition of more knowledge and skills suitable to the changes.

With the right foundation from the primary, secondary and even tertiary institutions, it will help them to cope confidently and increase the family economic and social status.

CHAPTER Three

FATHER AND MOTHER, AVOID BEING "TOO BUSY" IN ORDER TO COPE WITH THE FAMILY CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME

What is being observed currently with modern day parents is that we are too busy with our various duties outside the home. In the morning, both parents in most cases will be rushing to sign for instance, against lateness in the office or to secure an article of trade from the source that can give a reasonable profit or other engagements as the case may be. Sometimes, the activity might take us away from home for a number of days.

This challenge requires that we have to

think ahead and plan our family by ensuring that the necessary things such as food for the home, cleanliness of the children and home, security of the children and other necessities are provided. The planning and the provision of the basic needs will help immensely to ensure a balanced family living. It will at the same time help to develop our children's physical and intellectual development.

In some circumstances, we can cut down on some unimportant but urgent trips and stay with the family particularly during the weekends. The effect is usually profound and joyful. By focusing on the gains of the intimate relationships between the spouses and children, we can always see events we could avoid rather than being always on the move all the time.

When the family is together they should try to eat at least one meal as a family. The beautiful dining table and chairs should be put into effective use. No wonder the holy book said that part of the blessings of God for a man is witnessed when his wife, the

fruitful vine and the children are like olive-trees round his table.

I remembered when I was young, the children use to eat together with one big tray. We will be made to seat down properly, our legs well arranged to follow the child in the front of each person. Within a twinkle of an eye, the food will be finished because we will be eating with interest and struggling to gather a reasonable share before it got finished.

Actually there is joy in eating together. Every persons action will be laid bare including those who would like to pounce on the meat first. Sometimes the modern parent complain thus, ' my child does not eat'. He must eat if he or she sees others trying to get their own share of the food either by scooping the rice for instance with their spoon or hand. So try this method. Get them to eat together. If there is no person to eat with, let the child eat with the parents. Some families that have some maids that are children, should humble themselves and set the table for your child to eat with the

maid(s).

Why I am talking this way through prints is because of the basic fact that a communal life is more satisfying than a solitary life. Modern society thinks that individualism is the best. The result of such, manifest in selfishness, self-love, coldness toward another's problems. We are here for each other. We should not promote selfishness but love and the empathy of the other person to make the modern world a better place. The training starts from the family.

Advice to parents in the face of the challenges

A fathers- the pillar and umbrella

Fathers still remain the pillars of our homes. It is never questionable. A good father is there to defend the territorial integrity of his home. He is the backbone and the person looked up to, to defend against any internal or external aggression. The rest of the family members expect him to straighten crucial

and important matters. His position though often time seen as rigid, helps to define the official procedures to conduct the business of the home.

We have seen a number of cases mothers look up to the arrival of the father to report a case she feels is getting out of hand. The children usually sit up on noticing the father's present. What I am saying may vary in some degrees in some homes but the general experience remain the same. There are few cases that may be at the extreme, that is, the over exercising of a father's role but the author what to build on the positive aspect of controls and the direction fathers provide in our various homes.

We may also have seen cases mothers and their children are so fraternal that the respect and obedience to orders given by mothers are ignored by the children. The same mother will look for a stricter person to handle such difficult situation. No doubt the other roles of fathers, apart from being most times the bread winners, cannot be overemphasized.

The caution will always be to guide against the abuse of privileges endowed to each of us whether a father, mother and children. Our fathers can guide against any abuse or action considered as counter productive by application of wisdom and avoidance of being an island or Mr know-all in family affairs involving other critical stakeholders.

In any event requiring their attention, they should try to give a listening ear, and understanding before taking any action. Father should as well be open to consider other people's views or even take advice, corrections and admit errors by saying "I am sorry". This kind of openness and sense of humility will contribute immensely to the harmony and peaceful co-existence required in our homes. No body is above mistake. The problem begins when we are not humble enough to admit our inadequacies.

Motherhood-the pride and jewel, wherein lies your role in our homes.

A good mother should apply wisdom to help keep the home in order. Women have the God given qualities to determine any kind of relationship she wants established in her home. Mothers should always use their intellect and feminine qualities to guard against any kind of sour relationship rearing its head in the home.

A mother primary aim will always be to maintain a peaceful and happy home for every body to enjoy. She should be able to achieve this by trying as much as possible to sort out family issues with understanding and sacrifice. Any trace of a family problem should be solved when it is small.

Day to day misunderstanding should be sorted out almost immediately like two little children playing together. No sooner a quarrel started between one family member and another (particularly between a father and a mother) than they settled it and continued playing. Like children, even when

there is misunderstanding, family members should endeavour to re-instate normal playing and cheerful environment after the misunderstanding. That is the kind of relationship mothers should help to establish in our homes. No wonder a British novelist Muriel Spark (1918-2006) advised thus, 'Parents learn a lot from children about coping with life'. So, parents should be child like in their relationships at home.

Lack of accommodating others inadequacies and weakness may result in serious misunderstanding. What started off as a tiny crack in the wall of love may become a leveled wreck. Most times, no one recalls quite when the damage took its roll, but now the repair will be costly.

A mother should never dig into her heels and points out her points or put on muscle and force to defend her views or secure any opinion or position. Such behaviour may arouse the assertiveness of the husband because she has already offended his sense

of dignity. In that circumstance, he will never agree that he made a mistake even when it was obvious that he committed one. The two people now fall in a fiasco and the children and other household members suffer the effect of such enemy-centered relationship.

Family life is not a contest or competition between a husband and wife. It is a mutual and complementary relationship established by God Himself. He wants us to delight in the way in which we were made and not step over the boundaries.

Each of the couple has something unique to offer which the other has not. Whenever each plays the role of the others particularly on a consistent basis there are likely to be open or hidden frictions.

When for instance, women begin to develop muscles we're not designed to have, our internal systems and relationship begin to suffer. Never mind the current world where women take up jobs and earn income. The

moment a woman takes up the man's responsibility, there is bound to be a problem.

I am not taking about the widows who have no choice but to look up to God for the grace and help to do a job requiring the efforts of two people. They will always confess that it is not easy.

In a home where the father and mother are still alive, it creates a lot of frictions if one tries to assume the role of another. If for instance, a woman takes the role of a man in the home, it most times surfaces in such ugly situations like, lack of appreciation from the man or an alienation by the man. He begins to seek for an environment where he will be in charge directly or indirectly. While the woman will still be struggling to make ends meet without knowing that the man has faced another direction.

Mothers are advised to use their talents, wisdom, understanding, analytical mind, humility and balance judgement, including perseverance and the vision to have a happy

home to handle some sensitive situations at homes. The popular adage, "as you make your bed so you lay on it" adequately applies to mothers.

The secret is hidden within our physical and spiritual feminism. They are the unique gifts of our womanhood. Therefore use it. You cannot tell me you are a celebrated personality yet your home is a failure. Individual integrity should be all round, after all charity begins at home. Some career women are good outside (that is, in social roles) whereas their homes are nothing to write home about.

Some of the other techniques she can use to cope

She has to ensure as a matter of priority that good meals are prepared, served and eaten as required. It is a big and challenging responsibility particularly to the women whose jobs take them away from home for longer hours and even days. It requires being more organized and planning ahead all the time.

The planning is not only on the provision of the food but who will prepare, when, and how. The human capacity to use for this purpose is very crucial, otherwise the woman may create more problems for her self. We have seen and heard about a number of cases house helps turned to be the unceremonial second wife because the woman of the house was not wise in her planning ab initio.

More importantly, a wise mother finds out about the physical and health needs of each child and try to provide the resources and opportunities that match them.

Each child is endowed with talents/potentials and mothers should enable the children to identify and use such gifts. It is only when we are observant and close to them we will help them to discover or rediscover potentials.

Parents generally should also instruct the children on safety, cleverness, and security

consciousness. We have seen the menaces caused by our various misguided youths, men and women of our time. The negative actions have really challenged the entire society to help redirect them towards the right paths. This may principally involve changing our value systems, improving the social, economic, and political ideologies and structures.

Parents have a clarion call to teach the young people at all times. Teach by showing examples of good morals and equally lead by examples.

Occasionally we should also teach our children to imbibe the spirit of sportsmanship when dealing with others on general issues of life. The children should be able to know that the world is not for them alone. There are bound to be frictions in human interactions. Whenever such develops, they should be able to cope with the situation and help to solve the problems true better understanding and win/win relationship.

We should also make sure that adequate medical attention is given to them when they fall sick. It aids to balance physical and mental growth including general outlook.

CHAPTER Four

THE DESIRABLE STATE

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. (Winston Churchill)

Stop losing your peace over every little thing that goes wrong in your life. When there is nothing you can do about a situation learn to let go and keep your joy. Ask God to help you get over life's little offences and irritations quickly. When you put as much energy into "letting go" as you do into "stewing and steaming" like a chef and trying to control every possible outcome,

you'll find that God's peace which passes all understanding will fill your heart. This is the desirable state. Learn to lift the happiness and moral of every person in the home. Make positive comments about your family all the time. Aim at achieving positive things for them as well. Constantly oil and re-oil the relationships between you and your spouse, and between you and the children.

Career parents should listen to each other. Find out what each person wants, and then give it to him or her. In contemporary times, a lot of tension is created in homes because of the pressures arising from the present day career endeavours. Couples are no longer close to each other.

Excuses are given why they should not be close to each other. The couples that uses career an excuse, I just want to tell them to be cautious so that they may not be treading on the wrong path that leads to a checkered relationship. The effect is always disastrous particularly on the children. It most times exposes them to bad behaviours, habits street boys and girls.

Therefore, contribute in making your children the precious vessels in a king's palace by your genuine contribution and sacrifice to family development.

Submission to each others needs should therefore be given serious attention. It is an invitation to bundle of blessings. Such leads to intimate and lovable relationship, respect, cooperation and synergy of actions. The accomplishment will help to uphold the family in a desirable state.

I quite agree that these kinds of relationships to a greater extent are usually oiled from the fruits of our career efforts: Nevertheless It is a necessary condition but not sufficient. Money is not peace of mind and good health. It does not make sense to amass wealth yet no peace at home.

The foundation of a good family life is the intimacy and understanding primarily among the husband and wife of the home. Intimate relationship derived from the following efforts:

each couple having a good mental outlook of each other.

✍ a good wholesome attitude toward the family, and a healthy sense of honour and humour.

✍ a sympathetic interest in each others affairs-all make up the indefinable person that makes each couple appeal to each other.

✍ cleanliness, neat and situational apparels and good posture all add to a peaceful family. The image we create of ourselves in each other's mind despite the pressure and the challenges of the modern times matters a lot.

✍ I would not like to leave off the courtesies, respect, and other thoughtful little things we do or offer each other as couples.

✍ All these help to build the emotional bank necessary for a desired relationship between ourselves and rest of the family members.

CHAPTER Five

HOW TO COPE WITH THE VARIOUS CHALLENGES FACING CAREER PARENTS

Challenges to self

Any career parent must be active, hardworking and organized. We should always have before us the vision of what we want to be in life. I believe that everyone wants to be successful and happy. Such a high vision of self should, by implication, help create positive impact in our homes, our places of work/business and the society. To be a good father or mother and remain so in our homes is a vision of its own. High

vision requires well articulated plan and effort backed up with hard work, strong will to achieve, perseverance and tolerance.

We should always plan to keep our esteem parenthood in good balance and avoid anything that will erode our happiness.

Challenges of the workplace

Those of us working for other people or the government should endeavour to enhance our existing knowledge about our profession, through training and retraining in order to contribute efficiently to our organizations. We should aim to be “the right materials” to be used in our organizations. Virtually all organizations are profit oriented. Even when its performance is not mentioned in terms of financial returns, its service delivery is always expected to be efficient and effective. For any organization to be successful, it aims at using the right material irrespective of the gender issues. This is basic and logical.

Women and peculiar work place challenges

We may face some extra challenges in our work places for the fact that we are females. We are familiar with the glass ceiling terminology. We ought to work extra miles in order to achieve what our male counter would achieve under normal circumstance. According to Dr. Christe Toby, FNIM in her lecture, Empowering Women for Greater Success she said, "that office politics involves all activities, beliefs and scheming for power and influence within an office setting". According to her, when office politics takes center stage and is allowed to flourish, it invariably affects performance, productivity, profitability and retards the progress of the work place. It takes women three to four times the effort of her male counterpart to achieve any landmark".

For mothers and women generally, in spite of all the likely odds one may encounter, we should aim at keeping intact our esteem motherhood and womanhood. God knows how to reward such efforts when we trust in

Him.

It is worthy of note nevertheless, that women are becoming more progressive and relevant in today's government system. That is the more reason we should strive to enhance our skills and qualities. Be confident in ourselves. It is time to stop trying to force others to take us seriously. Let us apply wisdom, creativity and good relationship to ensure mutual trusts we expect.. We should develop in ourselves intrinsic security that makes us stand firm and happy at all time in order to make a more meaningful and better impact in our society. All this we should achieve with humility, wisdom, good counsel and fear of God.

Parents and the society

Promote good morals and empower youths

We should be concerned about the happenings in our environment and the society. See how to contribute to the reduction of vices in our society, and help to ameliorate the sufferings of other people. It

could be either directly or indirectly. For instance, we could join or contribute ideas and money to some non-governmental organization and other organizational groups engaged in activities that promote good morals and empower our youths.

Help to dispose refuse properly

Another way to assist could be the way we dispose our refuse. We can help by impacting the training our parents taught us on cleanliness to our children. If we ignore such good habits it most times boomerang to our family health and that of neighbours. Therefore, let us teach our children environmental cleanliness, and support government efforts to make our environment clean through our family's attitudes towards our neighbourhood cleanliness, and the way we dispose the kitchen waste.

We as parents have a big role to ensure a much better society than we have seen it. If not anything else, we can offer the society constantly to God through our prayers. We

should not say that we are neither a politician, recognized personality nor a top government official.

CHAPTER Six

SOME TECHNIQUES ONE CAN USE TO COPE WITH MODERN CHALLENGES AND OTHER PROBLEMS OF LIFE

Family prayers

No one will say that all is well with him or her. Assuming, it is well today, do we know tomorrow? Those who think they are standing firm should be careful unless they fall. That is the reason we will always submit in humility our families to the Almighty God who is most powerful, through our collective prayers.

This spiritual dimension of our family life is

Career parents & modern day challenges

the core. It is the centre of our family relationship. It binds us together. Acts as a shield. The prayers draws upon the sources that inspire and uplift and tie us to the timeless truths of all humanity.

The result will be that the children will always be well equipped to cope with their own challenges at their own time. It as well promotes us before God and men. Natural blessings usually flows to such families who has the infinite wisdom to commit their affairs early enough to the supreme power of the almighty God through family prayers.

Whenever you are bored or waned with problems, when you feel that your efforts or the family efforts are fruitless, the family should constantly and as a matter of habit have a quiet time with God.

Do not just complain or feel depressed. Prayer is the powerhouse and the good lasting solutions to our problems. Other relieves are most times temporary or even land us into greater problems. Let us as parents develop and in fact have it as a habit,

for the scourges of evils in our times requires more efforts. When we form that as a habit, we will be constantly renewed, strengthened, or centred and recommitted to serve and sacrifice at our homes and the society at large.

Avoid negative thinking.

Never load your self with negative thinking because once you entangle yourself with such, the health of body most times starts degenerating and may land you where it may complicate the original problem. Therefore, we should handle our problems with matured mind, intellect or will power crown with God's graces.

Share your problems with others but more often with your god.

Brighten your path with warm interpersonal relations and networking. Sometimes, find out through a feedback system what people say you are. It will be a useful guide in your relationship with others. The feedback might come from your children even the

least in the house during jokes and when the family atmosphere is relaxed.

Be cautious of self-righteousness for it is a source of deceit. Share your ideas or problems with personalities matured in mind and body, the people who are sympathetic with you and who will be sorry to see you fail.

However, always bear in mind that, no one's advice is more reliable than your own judgement. Sometimes your own intuition can tell you more than seven security guards on a high tower. I am saying, let your intuition lead you to pray or have a quiet time with your God.

Positive thinking

Look into the future with a positive mind. Associate with people who see the positive part of life most times. Negative thinkers might worsen your problems. Everything God created is good. What make them look bad are our thoughts and subjective judgements.

Physical exercise/choice of food

Sometimes, take a walk but be cautious if you are weak, sick or hungry. For some of us, we may not need it because we are used to trekking and active, but others, due to the nature of their work and for some who are not very active, physical exercises might be useful sometimes. It ensures blood circulation, sweat elimination and lightening up of the spirit.

Secondly, we should be careful of what and the quantity of food we eat and drink. For the active youths no much problem but for the adults and the aged we should be selective and self-controlled to avoid avoidable ill health.

Endeavour to live a good life

Finally, avoid under any circumstances, bad thoughts about yourself, your family, other people and the society. Always endeavour to live a happy life. The world is not coming to an end because of the way you feel. Let not

the negativism of the environment affects your being and focus. Ask the good Lord to give you the grace to see the good in what he created than what is bad. It will help you. Pray for such grace, desire to have it and it will come, so that you can live a fruitful and happy life.

How to manage severed relationship

Where relationships are severed for any reason either in the family or at the office, career parents should try to reestablish it through continuous sacrifice, friendliness and love for one another. We have to seek for these virtues at all times with humility and spirit of forgiveness. Our principle will always be to live in peace with all men for death has no fixed date for anybody. Our thoughts, words and actions should form an oasis, a quiet place and a heaven for the hearts of those who come across our way.

A career parent who is truly an effective leader in the home should have the humility and reverence to recognize his own

limitations while appreciate the rich resources available in the hearts and minds of other human beings.

Good parents tolerate another person's weaknesses but highlight the strengths. The good mama or papa feels your fears but fortifies or motivates your true efforts and thoughts. The bone of contention should never be the highlighting and constantly highlighting the weakness of another. Remember as was said at the beginning, that a home is a place of rest and comfort.

Sometimes corrective actions are very necessary, but should never be used to the extent to bring problems at home. Rather disabilities of any kind can be turned into abilities by the back up coming from one another in love.

A lady at the funeral oration of the mother confessed that her mother was ever lifting people up. According to the confession, the girl said it took her time to understand that what the mother did when she was alive was to mirror the very best parts of people

including the dad and other family members and lift them up for the person to see and use. She did that through positive comments and support. This is the kind of attitudes we should have at home. Helping us to turn disabilities of any kind into opportunities.

If some families are already incongruent with a desirable relationship, they should be humble and wise to seek for peace instead of reactions, counter reactions, assertiveness and utterances that will not help any of the parties involved. Good and happy life heals and promotes good health. No one is perfect except God.

However, the biggest challenge has always been to conquer self in order to make peace. No wonder Peter Drucker wrote a book titled "Managing Oneself" at his 91st year.

Be cautious of pride and self-righteousness. These are the two friends that can squeeze the life out of a blessing waiting for us in our homes. We should keep in mind that we can never accept our errors when we are full of

ourselves. Humility should be our noble companion all the time. It will make us to be open to direction, emptying ourselves of our opinions and make room for other peoples opinions and most probably other possibilities.

Remember that family life is not a business venture where one will always calculate the profit. It is neither a toy or gadget we will be playing with all the time. Every of our actions must be matured and credible.

Family life is a mystery founded on love and sacrifice. We ought to sacrifice in many ways with perseverance and desire to love at all times. We all ought to give to get. It is a natural principle of life. It is a hard teaching but true. To reestablish these basic principles of good living is no quick fix. It requires commitment to service and love rather self-ego.

Prudence keeps watch. It knows when to act and when to give in. It knows when the motive to assert is coming out of love than ego. Prudence makes parents for instance,

to correct unhealthy behaviours of children with love. Parents should correct sternly with one hand and draw the child back with another hand. Our justified anger should never be counter productive or enduring.

Disagreement between spouses over who is right or wrong as regards our children misbehaviour should not as much as possible be manifested in front of the children. Synergy of action and understanding is required to raise good children.

All hands must be on deck in the training of our children

Children are our asset for ages to come. We should join hands together to train our children both in morals and academics or vocation. Sometimes parents should be cautious on how we handle their demands. Kindness can be cruelty in disguise when it is not accompanied by responsibility. Our sincere but naive sentiment like, "I don't want my children to suffer and as such I want to provide all the things I didn't have

growing up”,,, mayl turn spoiled children into spoiled adults.

Parents should therefore guard seriously against raising adults that think the whole world is for them. They live for a cause greater than themselves. If they should wait for others to provide or motivate them, what happens when they don't show up that means disaster for them and the larger society. Let us start early to show them what responsibility, hard work and stewardship is all about in order to produce good personalities full of integrity in the future.

When we are pushed about by the demands of the modern career we should be very careful how we relate with our family members in order not to disintegrate the unit entrusted to our care. It is a long term investment in a sense, full of sacrifice. We are therefore expected as good parents have good elevated spirits that can attract the follower ship, believe and trust and love of other people.

What are some of the things that diminish our desired happiness as career parents

Part of the modern day challenges is stress. It comes almost on daily basis. Most mornings greet people with stress coming from hold-ups, lack of fuel, gas, water, kerosene, money, lateness to work, landlords and landladies and what have you. Stress and tensions are normal part of life. They are always there as long as man lives. The problem of stress is the individual's reactions to the source(s) of the stress. Emotional maturity is needed to cope with stress. People should be cautious of being too anxious about what to eat, drink, put on and similar likes. Chronic feeling of uneasiness and worry is dangerous to a good living aspired by many. When efforts are made to meet up with daily or life needs, people should relax and leave things to sort it selves out. What ever will be will be. Many problems lie beyond our powers of control. The individual has to accept it while allow providence and time to adjust the problem. Often times people might want immediate solution.

Sometimes unreasonable demands for perfectionism not only in oneself but loved ones, friends, business associates and even from things or situations around us could be sources of stress to some people. Unfortunately, it is not uncommon to observe parents launching attacks on their children, each other, most times house helps and other relatives because of these stressors.

Most times communication between spouses are lost because of the effect of stress. Career parents should guard against this unpleasant situation at home. It is supposed that living would have been more enjoyable now than when our forefathers lived, considering many breakthroughs which have made daily life a lot easier. Yet it is unfortunate that what are being experienced today are contrary to the expectations.

Nevertheless, management of stress situations in spite of the modern discoveries lies within the control of any individual.

How to cope with stress.

Free flow of communication

This communication thing has been so much talked about. In management and leadership books, communication is treated as a very important subtitle. It reinforces the fact that it is very crucial in one's living. Man as we know is a social being that must interact with each other. Except for the hermits, I see no man that can stay alone for a reasonable number of hours without feeling bored.

Man must interact with each other if not for any thing but to exchange goods and services for a living. Therefore, communication is a necessary and sufficient condition as economists often say. This should be open at all times. Anger towards those who disagree with you may be an immediate response, but it should not lead to cutting communication, as is so frequently seen, particularly between husband and wife, parents and children.

Maturity in mind enables us to disagree with what another says, feels or does, yet make the distinction between that person and how we feel about his thoughts and actions. To tell someone, "I don't like what you are doing," is more likely to keep the lines of communication open than telling the person, "I don't like you".

It was recently, I discovered that nothing worries and keeps my little girl uncomfortable than telling her "you are not my friend". She feels it so much that I decided to tell her whenever she does wrong "I don't like what you are doing or will you stop that thing you are doing". Therefore hate the action not the person.

Talk it out

When you are angry or stressed up, do not just keep quiet. Try to 'blow off the steam' through talking to somebody. The somebody should be the person who is matured and has integrity. Is there someone in your life whom you trust and respect, that could be the person to talk to, for good counsel and

consolation. Be careful not to blow unnecessary whistle. You are not the only person who has experienced some problems.

Do not fight

When angry, upset or feeling any kind of stress or tension, it's wise to engage in some kind of positive physical activity. Do not fight either at home, office or in the public. People must offend each other either through words or action. But be careful not to turn your right into left and such action will land you into more stress and sometimes hopelessness. Some unwise husbands beat their wives at the height of family misunderstanding thinking that it will solve the problem. The emotional energy arising from such anger can be diverted into other positive use. When a man beats his wife he is most times indirectly beating himself.

Get enough sleep and rest

Lack of sleep and rest can reduce one's ability to deal with stress. Most people need seven to eight hours of sleep in every 24 hours. Many agents and chemicals, including alcohols may seem to alleviate stress, but they do not help to adjust to the stress itself. Good rest can worth more than gold to the person that need it.

Help someone

Doing things for others can be a genuine stress reducer. In many cases, stress involves over concentration on oneself and one's problems. Doing something for someone else helps you to get your mind off your problems as it gets your mind off yourself, you may win a new friend or get a new opportunity.

Take one thing at a time

Tackling a dozen tasks at once has the probability or usually means that none of them will get done right. If you can line

them up either in writing or in your mind and take one at a time, you are more wise, than putting all your fingers in your mouth at once.

Give in now and then

A common source of the stress experienced by many people is other people. One possible solution is to give in now and then. Tell your self that time changes every thing, that the situation is just for a little while. After all, all things shall pass away. This is a basic fact. What is permanent in life is change. Learn to endure by giving in. People are usually respected more when they accept some situations than when they insist on it. Develop a win/win mentality for peace to reign. Try to relax and enjoy your own defeat or change of mind. Stress may fly out of the window.

Make yourself available

When you are feeling bored, and left out of

life, the answer may be to go where the action is. Make yourself available to those who may be able to involve you in an interesting way in life- in activities, in cultural programs, in whatever you find exciting or important. To withdraw yourself or feel sorry for yourself is the worst response. Stress and tension are normal parts of life. But many can combat or even eliminate them through this way.

Stress endured alone is a slow killer. I recall one time I was bereaved. Two of my friends visited me one Saturday and persuaded me to join them to a wedding. I resisted initially. I wasn't just interested because I had already withdrawn and preferred to be staying alone and reading spiritual books. But fortunately for me, they later succeeded in convincing me to join them. I just put on one of such dresses I did not even consider important. Just to cut the story short, I did not regret attending the wedding. Even the photograph, three of us took I was convinced within me apart from their own and other people favourable comments that I looked beautiful.

To be precise, my outlook and posture were angelic and impressive. At any time I looked at the picture where it hung on the wall, the image was exactly opposite of what I thought of myself that day they visited me. Therefore, leaving the stress and checking out where good things are happening is one of the big ways to stress off your mind and even learn and hear stories that may likely console you even when you might be thinking you are finished.

Physical exercise

I have earlier touched on it. Exercise as a matter of emphasis is another good way to ease off stress. Why, because most times, people who are under stress particularly women resort to eating food and other goodies. The resultant effect is weight gain and high cholesterol level. The two factors reinforces stress. Therefore regular exercises like jogging, gardening, playing tennis, skidding, other in-door exercises and games like playing monopoly, scrabbles,

ludo and such like usually help immensely to chase stress far away.

Household chores are another good opportunity for regular exercises. It could take the form of sweeping the compound, removing the grasses, washing cloths, cooking and what have you. Map out a non-stressful daily programme and religiously carry them out. I use to do a little bit of any of the above every morning before I prepare for work. I do enjoy it.

CHAPTER Seven

CONCLUSION

Parents! we need a renewed commitment to the responsibility of the training/formation of our children in this modern age. The sole responsibility of training a child lies directly on the parents of the child especially in the early stage of the child's life. Other individuals such as the house helps, babysitters, hired mothers and other agencies like the schools, church, mass media, etc play only a secondary role in the training and education of a child.

While we are conscious of the above role to our family, we should not lose sight of the desirable and good harmonious family relationship we must help to establish. As important as this, is the fulfillment of our professional role through constant appraisal and update of our career with knowledge and skills that are more modern, in order to enhance our income, personality, social status and overall self-actualization.

Lastly, but not the least, we need a fresh outlook as far our attitude and reactions towards the family, social, economic and other happenings in our environment are concerned. The fresh outlook entails developing a positive mental attitude towards them in order to minimise stress, the slow killer.

More importantly, depend on God at all times to help us in what we can not change and on the things we can change, we invite Him to perfect them according to his will.

I wish all of us well.

EXERCISES

Study Questions

Personal life goals

a) Family

Do I plan time to be with my family?

Do I plan time for family recreation?

Do I have a realistic operating budget for the family?

Have I adequately planned for the future of my children including my retirement?

b) Health

Do I have a personal time for fitness programme?

Do I get as much exercise as I need?

Do I have a regularly scheduled medical check-up?

Do I know the warning signs of mental fatigue and emotional stress?

Do I know how to respond intelligently to the warning signs?

Do I take vacations or leave?

c) Personal interests

What hobbies do I have?

Do I subscribe to magazines or periodicals?

Do I subscribe to other organizations through the Internet?

do I love to socialise and honour invitations

d) Emotional/Spiritual Life

Do I spend time in prayer and meditation?

Do my values of life in line with the spiritual teachings?

What would I have to do with the rest of my life?

What pleases me most about my life?

Are there hurts I should forgive?

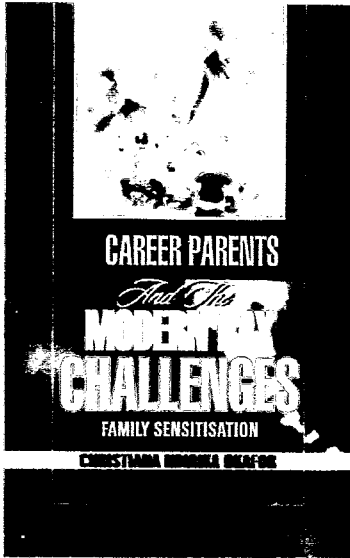
What character would I like people to have seen in me by now?

What achievements would I want to be remembered for when I retire from active service? or pass on to life beyond?

In what ways am I helping others?

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Often times, the fast-paced world characterized with scientific and technological breakthroughs make some people to forget that those things are not the end in itself. There are higher values and inner drive within us yearning for satisfaction. The higher values include the inner drive of good parenting and the claim by our children of being of good parentage as well. It is not enough to organize for instance, posh and expensive birthdays for our children and selves.

There are other important roles and values parents owe to their children, family and each other. The achievement of the goals as a result of the proper identification of our roles as career parents, will definitely add to self fulfillment when we look back in our life journey.

This book I hope will help us to identify such important matters that can help to give us a sense of direction and realignment where necessary. The result I believe will assure us an inner satisfaction and joy far above what money or our career status can get for us.

Mrs. Christiana Ndirika Okafor (JP) is a public servant and conference/motivational speaker. She is an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Cost and Management Accountants, Association of National Accountants of Nigeria, Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Administration, and the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered), and Affiliate Member Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria. She holds the University of Nigeria B.Sc Economics, PGD & MBA in Accountancy. She is currently a PhD student researcher on career.

She has travelled widely and attended many seminars, conferences and workshops, organised by national and international organisations- UNESCO, WASME, ECOWAS, SIFE International USA, Nigerian/Mali Chamber of Commerce, NCEMA, ASCON and other Government Establishments.

She is the immediate past national secretary of SIFE Nigeria and one of the recipients of the "The Distinguished Nigerian Women of Merit Award(TDNWMA)2006"

She was a former staff of Union Bank of Nigeria plc. She is happily married with children

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