

Collaboration Initiative between the Family Council and Women's Commission: Strengthening Family Cohesion and Solidarity – Working Mothers

Lavender CHEUNG, Deputy Convenor of the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education under the Family Council

Emily LAM HO, Co-Convenor of the Working Group on Collaboration and Promotion under the Women's Commission

Self-introduction

Lavender CHEUNG : Hello, I'm Lavender CHEUNG, Member of the Family Council

Emily LAM HO : Hello, I'm Emily LAM HO, Member of the Women's Commission

Quick-fire Q&As

Child care or work

Lavender CHEUNG : Work

Emily LAM HO : Child care

Doing your own child care or hiring helpers to do child care

Lavender CHEUNG : Helpers

Emily LAM HO : Do it myself

Asking parents for help with child care or not

Lavender CHEUNG : Asking parents for help with child care

Emily LAM HO : Parents' help is essential

Work from home or in the office

Lavender CHEUNG : Work in the office

Emily LAM HO : Work from home

Family time or me time

Lavender CHEUNG : I choose me time

Emily LAM HO : I choose family time

Better relationship or more conflicts among family members during the pandemic

Lavender CHEUNG : Better relationship

Emily LAM HO : More conflicts

Role of Parents

Lavender CHEUNG : I think parents as children's role models
should set an example to them
As children are growing up
they will learn from their parents' behaviour by observing
I hope that what my children can learn from me
is to bounce back from failure
coming out of difficulties undefeated

Emily LAM HO : As Lavender put it
parents are role models (to children)
and have to set an example to them
Take my mum as an example
She's a very caring daughter
Even now, she still takes very good care of my paternal grandma
My dad's a conscientious
punctual person
which shaped me into a very punctual person too
I hope that I can do my part well
be a good role model
and pass on these values to my children

The meaning of family and work

Emily LAM HO : To me
work and family complement each other
I am in the eco-friendly business

and the biggest drive for work comes from my two kids
as my work allows me to bring a better future for the next generation
That's why I engage myself in the sustainable development business
This is very meaningful to me

Lavender CHEUNG : Very meaningful indeed
As for me
I agree with Emily that
work and family are complementary
But I believe so for more self-serving
less splendid reasons
The purposes of work are
to achieve one's life goals, utilise one's talents and so on
On the other hand, the purpose of family is
to provide a safe haven (for family members)
when they're sad and in need of care

Difficulties facing working parents

Emily LAM HO : It's actually really hard (to be working parents)
There's basically no work-life balance to speak of
because it's truly impossible to balance work and family
Say, sometimes, in the middle of work
I feel I don't spend enough time with my children
but my mind drifts to work when I'm with them
It's like being on a seesaw, wavering between two sides

Lavender CHEUNG : As far as my experience goes
I still remember the days when my children were in primary school
and I had to go to work
I often came back from work late at night
Sometimes I would even dine before returning home
But if the kids would have exams, dictations or quizzes the following
day
I squeezed in time for them once I got back home
to help them do revision before bedtime
But they suggested
"I've already spent the whole day studying."
"You still want to make me study even more!"

Eventually, the two generations
even ended up in an icy relationship for some time for the matter of
revision
fighting each other non-stop

How to juggle family with work

- Lavender CHEUNG : For mothers
don't make yourself score full marks for playing your roles both in the
office
and at home
or sometimes even as a wife, a daughter and so on
Give yourself a break
Don't ask too much of yourself
Don't ask yourself to seek perfection in all things
- Emily LAM HO : I think this is extremely important
I very much agree
Women today stress themselves out so much
Like me
I also want to do everything well
to perfection
But that's very hard to achieve
Sometimes giving oneself pressure
is not a good thing
I think this is great advice
We have to relax a bit sometimes

Sharing household duties with extended family members

- Emily LAM HO : (In my family) There is no fixed shares of household duties
because child care evolves every day
something of novelty on a daily basis
That makes a fixed schedule impossible
My view is that
my husband and I work in partnership
Then, there is a network of extended family members
We get each other's back

Lavender CHEUNG : As far as my family is concerned
I am in a different family setting from Emily's
I live with my Mum and kids
three generations living under the same roof
I often describe my household roles as
secretary, errand runner, driver cum gardener
Hopefully, tweaking my state of mind is a way
to help my family get along well
Say, efficiency is what we're after at work
so that tasks can be done efficiently
But back in our household
we can't ask of our parents and kids likewise
The strict way in handling business may not be applicable to family
members
Family members should be treated in an accommodating and
supportive manner, reciprocally

Sharing tips

Emily LAM HO : Do make a regular mental reminder that
there is no perfect way to teach kids
Every child is different
Every family is different
Then, there is still one more nudge that
me time is a must
How can we spend no time taking good care of ourselves
while caring for the well-being of the whole family?

Lavender CHEUNG : That is a great piece of advice
As for me
I hope that each and every one in my family will learn to speak love
whenever talking
Fighting very often come from emotions
and not necessarily from a particular event
be it dropping dirty clothes elsewhere, doing dishes or not, or doing
revision whether sooner or later
Say, whenever my children are in disagreement with grandma
they will speak in a loving way

“Sure, we can discuss it later.”

In the beginning, that was difficult

But then I gradually found my kids having picked up the habit

So I suggest that

in case you’ve come to becoming less mind over matters

you may speak in a loving way

to calm things down first

and give each other some space