

‘My father was a workaholic and that was the only way he could set up this business that we have today. He has given us all comforts and the best life possible but we have paid a heavy price for it, for we lost him early in life. We as children did not know that he was under so much stress and that he was being troubled physically with ailments. I remember my mother having arguments with him many times over his health but he would ignore it and brush it off. He would laugh it off actually or sometimes shout back at her for her foolishness. He never took his health seriously. He just collapsed one day and we never saw him again’. This is the story of Meena, as she told it to me, with extreme sorrow and a resolve not to follow that model of her father. She is now handling the family business being the eldest. Her brother is still in school and would take some years to join her. She was very young in years but matured in her head I thought. What a tragic story. The child and the family were suffering due to the mismanaged life-style of her father.

This might as well be the story of thousands of families where the prime mover fails to strike a right balance between work and personal life and hence puts the family into distress. Meena decided that she will not follow the work model of her father and would strive hard to strike a balance between her work and her life. She decided that she would give equal importance to her family and spend time with them and care for them. She would draw a line between her work ambitions and her personal life. We know many chiefs of organisations who have died on the chair so to say. Wisdom does not lie there.

We know many such chiefs who have stepped down after a specific time which they have decided for themselves. These people would decide that they would not take an extension and would retire from work at sixty years or whatever their target age is. They would hand over the reins to the second in command whether in proprietorship or in a company. Of course they would be training the second generation for the same much in advance.

For the obsessed work is life you would say. Such people follow their passion and passion only. We have heard of scientists, inventors, artists, writers, poets, actors, executives, entrepreneurs who have worked with dogged devotion to their passion and sacrificed family life. Such people compromise their personal lives and focus on their job in hand. We have seen and heard their families suffer in isolation and neglect. Money could not substitute for their misery. We could assume that creativity flows only through such single track minds and such leading minds rule the world. Let us assume that creativity is all consuming and is restless by nature. A restless creature who is creative can only live this way and no other. I am not too sure about this.

“Work Life balance”- 20 July 2015.

Written by Rita Aggarwal

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One wise man said to me once that I thank God that I am an ordinary human being for I can balance my life in all ways. I can divide my time between my work, my wife and children, my extended family, and my friends as well. My health is in order and I am a satisfied man. I marvelled at his simplicity and clear thinking. As I know him he had led a very active, creative and meaningful life. And now after retirement too he was actively engaged and a happy man.

My maternal Uncle, an authority on Mirza Ghalib and a recipient of Padma Shri in Urdu literature, was a model for me in many ways. For one, he was thoroughly devoted to his wife, children and family. Two, he was a highly successful businessman of high standing and reputation. Three, he was a creative poet and besides his books on poetry he extensively wrote on Mirza Ghalib. Fourthly, he had no bad habits of any sort whatsoever. He was a devout Hindu and lived his life on sound principles- an admirable balance of work and personal happiness.

Such examples renew your faith in the fairness of things that you can balance things if you live on sound principles, follow a discipline of mind and thought, have clear aims and goals, know your assets and your limitations and know where to change gears. Nature is fair if you watch it closely and everything in nature is balanced if you care to believe. Imbalance is a distortion, a deviation, an abnormality, not the norm.