Grow Professionally, Strengthen Family Ties, and Elevate Family Aptitude

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The notion that cultivating our careers and nurturing our families are mutually exclusive is a common one. I am convinced that does not have the case for us - if we chose differently.

I recently proposed an idea at work; later I thought about how useful the concept could be for my immediate and extended family. I believe the approach is one that we can all adopt to allow us to develop ourselves, and our careers, without sacrificing our families; and without otherwise leaving our family members behind. How many times have once successful couples grown apart after one spouse finishes school? **Time spent apart has the effect of pulling us apart, while time invested together has the effect of coalescence and feeling closely connected.**

Individually, on our own, we learn to navigate the various technological applications in today's markets. We become aware of the different functionalities by teaching ourselves. As a result, we all possess different knowledge, skills, abilities, and capabilities.

In fact, in a 2016 article by J. Elman, the author discusses how technology-use has evolved over the years. In the 1960s and 1970s, computer users teamed together to work in designated computer rooms; using complex, unintuitive interfaces that required lots of training. In the 1980s and 1990s, technology started rolling out to the masses in the form of personal computers. The majority of computer users were no longer in team-settings. Instead they were working alone, either in their own homes or in their own offices. Users could no longer readily make use of other team members' immediate availabilities to swap tips or collaborate. Moreover, users did not have time to read lengthy manuals, so they had to tinker in applications on their own to figure out how the functionalities worked. This brought on the advent of Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs), and PC users were able to switch to applications that were more intuitively-designed.

We are now in the age of shareable design. Elman discusses what shareable design is, how it is used, and two of its implications in the following quote: "In addition to encouraging sharing, this kind of design has … [another benefit] … it makes features particularly memorable. If someone shows you how to use your iPhone to do a long press on a person's name so a menu pops up allowing you to save [that person's] information to your contacts, that knowledge sticks with you. It's a physical memory combined with a social memory, so it stays."

Creating forums/spaces where relatives can come together to share tips and processes, as well as brainstorm ways of doing things better, can expand our families' overall levels of innovation and efficiency.

I believe that our families can benefit from the facilitation of relatives coming together to share knowledge. Doing so will likely result in relatives being better at reaching-out to, and approaching, other relatives that they would not have otherwise – to ask, to learn from, and to share. We can potentially increase our families' total bodies of knowledge, skills, abilities, and capabilities by making the transfer and sharing of our familial knowledge more fluid.

As discussed, we tend to work in silos – individual silos, immediate family silos, etc. ***Breaking down those silos by embracing knowledge-sharing could help us develop better solutions for the problems that we encounter in our schoolwork, jobs, and communal interfaces.*** While some relatives already share information, others do not. We can broaden our cross-family learning in informal and family-social settings. Doing this will strengthen our families' personal and networking bonds and result in elevations of our families' overall ties, competencies, and aptitudes.

When you decide to adopt this strategy, ask other family members if they are interested in helping you set it up. Use technologies like a closed Facebook or Google Hangouts group. Or use other video-sharing technologies to converse when you are unable to meet in person. Some technologies that can be used are: Duo, Facetime, Glide, Hangouts, Messenger, Skype, and Tango. Share files using shared folders in Google Drive or create an entire Google account for the family sharing the password so that everyone has access. Basecamp and Wiggo are other collaboration tools that can help keep your family connected, organized, and motivated.

Meet at whatever frequency works for your family: perhaps weekly, biweekly, monthly, or quarterly. Use the format that best fits your family's personality; either pre-planning activities, or discussing whatever comes to mind when you meet. I suggest that you do a little of both ─ doing some preparation ahead of the meetings to have an idea of the topics that you will share, and the hands-on activities that you will perform ─ while also being flexible enough to delve into the topics that family members spontaneously choose to contribute.

All levels can contribute information to other family members: elementary/middle/high school students, trade school/undergraduate/graduate students, professional certification seekers, self-learned aficionados, and workforce participants. With special attention given to levels at middle school and beyond because students' curricula today are exposing our youth to a wide variety of academic knowledge and technological skills. Moreover, this is time invested with one another, so even very young children gain from being involved in the process of sharing time and information.

During sessions, families can touch on the things that can be done when using applications and tools like Access, Excel, Power BI, PowerPivot, PowerPoint, Publisher, Visio, Word, and other applications that generally exist in the market. ***Computer training to learn***

about these technologies are available, but nothing surpasses the human-interaction synergies of socialized learning.

Everyone should share their resumes. Adults and youth should share skills with each other such as how to: format documents, create spreadsheets, make budgets, send emails, use smartphones, balance checkbooks, speak and write proper grammar, write resumes and cover letters, dress for interviews, read oil sticks, change tires, tie ties, cook meals, and other useful skills.

We do not typically think of our families as entities, but what if we did? What quality of family would yours be? Perhaps yours would have an award winning designator like: Fortune 500 Family; 100 Best Families to Be Born Into; Most Diploma'ed, Degreed, and Certified Family; or 100% Homeowner Family. While these are fictitious designations as far as I know, I believe that they illustrate my point.

Moreover, our communities are in disarray. Our communities are plagued by social ills that are producing mental illnesses, low qualities of life, physical illnesses, personal boundary violations, and death. *It is past due that we reclaim our families as functional assemblies with strong ties that nurture one another, and groom individuals that are fully capable of thriving in today's workplaces and social settings.*

Thank you for the enlightening conversation! Visit ColumbusBlack.com to view my other professional development articles.

Reference:

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