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Editor's Words

by Dr Lim Khong Jin Michael, Family Physician, Editor (Team B)

In this issue, other than keeping abreast of how Primary Care Doctors are going about work during this Covid pandemic, we take a closer look at family life.

On improving children mental well-being, A/Prof Daniel Fung suggests that happier families translate to better children mental well-being. He directs our attention to building stronger and nurturing families that can help reduce child adverse experiences, encourage good lifestyle habits and increase benevolent experiences through caring relationships in the family.

On parenting, A/Prof Daniel Fung introduces a simple analysis of our parenting style by considering the two dimensions of how demanding we are of our children's behavior and how responsive we are towards our children's needs and development. Considering these two dimensions we can broadly classify our parenting style as authoritative, authoritarian, permissive or neglectful. To steer away from the risk of becoming authoritarian or neglectful parents, we have to also listen to our children, consider their needs and development, and support them accordingly. Dr Tan Siang Hon also emphasizes the importance of putting in effort to understand our children and accepting them for who they are, bearing in mind that every child is different- how he or she perceives love or fear, his or her aspirations, potential and outlook on life.

A/Prof Daniel Fung reminds us that the end point of parenting is primarily to help children grow up to be capable of looking after themselves and be independent contributing adults. As such, especially when bringing up adolescents, parents may have to let go and allow them to make more decisions. In other words, it is necessary for parents to monitor the emotional and

developmental pulse of their children and adjust their parenting style as they grow older. Our children's lives should be able to accommodate some failures in order that they may learn from their failures and hopefully make better decisions in the future.

On strengthening our relationship with our spouse, Dr Zuraimi suggests that spouses are like 2 rowers in a kayak, and both must humbly and amicably decide on a particular direction and row in sync. Husband and wife, Dr Zuraimi and Dr Elly remind us of the need to share interests, passions and goals with our spouse other than the bed to keep the love burning strong. Spouses should invest time in communicating and loving one another, not shying from expressing affection, aiming to be each other's BFF. Dr Elly also shares that her faith in The Almighty, in each other, not forgetting self-care physically, mentally and spiritually, and support from family and friends have helped her overcome challenges.

How do we salvage our relationship with our spouse if it has already started to show cracks? Dr Tan Siang Hon opines that over time, couples, including committed ones, may encounter marital differences and may drift from one another. He advises that we need to learn to embrace both asking for forgiveness and being forgiving in our marriage. When faced with breakdown in our marital journey we need to learn to humble ourselves and apologize. Humility and forgiveness, coupled with grace from God, are the pivots that can steer strained relationships away from destruction. They are the healing balm that can hopefully one day, draw us, our marriage and our family towards restoration.

