

MY VIEWS IN

6 SECONDS

HOW TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS

I REFER to the letter, "Downturn will test even the strongest marriages" (*my paper*, July 6), about how bad times can test even the strongest relationships.

The most important aspect of a relationship is support, which money cannot buy.

I hope that in all relationships, be they between family members, friends or spouses, people would give each other encouragement to get through bad times.

Doing so would serve to strengthen relationships between people.

Ms Brigitte Khoo Jie Bin

I REFER to the letter, "Downturn will test even the strongest marriages" (*my paper*, July 6).

Couples should strengthen their relationship with their spouses through better communication while their marriages are still healthy.

A strong and vibrant marriage does not happen naturally.

It is the result of couples spending countless hours together and being committed to the goal of constantly renewing their bonds through understanding, respect and forgiveness.

Mr Nelson Quah

SAVE SHARKS, SAVE HUMANKIND

IN THE last century, shark numbers have plunged by 90 per cent.

Shark finning is a major culprit for the decline in shark populations.

Drinking sharks'-fin soup is a tradition, particularly for the Chinese, but traditions sometimes have to change for the sake of the environment.

Fifty per cent of the air we breathe comes from oceans.

If sharks are removed from the food chain, the effect on the ecosystem would be catastrophic.

Therefore, boycotting sharks' fins is not just about saving sharks, but also about saving ourselves.

Mr Chris Whiting



MY SAY

Write to us at my paper. Please include your full name, address and a telephone contact number. E-mail your opinions to myp@sph.com.sg. We reserve the right to edit letters for clarity and length.

Family support crucial for inmates

WE REFER to the letter by Mr Jeffrey Law Lee Beng, "Give inmates more time with family" (*my paper*, July 3).

We would like to clarify that most inmates are entitled to two family visits each month.

These are conducted face-to-face at the various institutions or via tele-conferencing facilities at Prison Link Centres located at Jurong East, Toa Payoh and Changi.

The Singapore Prison Service (SPS) recognises that strong family support is crucial in encouraging inmates to lead their lives responsibly.

Family acceptance provides an emotional driver to sustain their motivation to stay crime- and drug-free, and creates a suitable environment for successful re-integration after their release.

Encouraging stronger family support is part of SPS' holistic approach to the rehabilitation and re-integration process for inmates.

Hence, for deserving inmates who have demonstrated behavioural improvement, SPS grants visiting opportunities on special occasions such as Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day.

Inmates who express their desire to change for the better through platforms such as the recent Yellow Ribbon Art Competition and Cooking Competition also earned the opportunity to spend extra time with their loved ones.

Additionally, SPS has also implemented several programmes which give well-behaved and lower security-risk inmates opportunities to expedite successful family and societal re-integration.

For instance, the Home De-

attention Scheme allows deserving inmates to spend the tail-end of their sentence at home with their families, while being engaged at work.

This promotes a gradual re-integration process and the greater involvement of family members in the rehabilitation process.

We thank Mr Law for his support of giving deserving inmates and former offenders a second chance.

We agree with him that we need to give those who are willing to change a chance to turn over a new leaf.

As the Yellow Ribbon Campaign will be held in September this year, we encourage like-minded Singaporeans to demonstrate their acceptance of former offenders by participat-

ing in upcoming activities such as the inaugural Yellow Ribbon Prison Run.

Mr Matthew Wee
Senior Assistant Director
Public Affairs
Singapore Prison Service

HELPDESK 我的字典

Clarify: 澄清 chéng qīng

Facilities: 设施 shè shī

Rehabilitation: 使恢复正常生活
shǐ huī fù
zhèng cháng shēng huó

Inaugural: 创立的
chuàng lì de

Viewers and participants' obsession with reality TV is unhealthy

I REFER to the Manic Mummy column, "Don't cry Bad Mummy too fast" (*my paper*, July 6), by Ms Clara Chow.

Unlike Ms Chow, I was turned off by my first (and last) viewing of Jon and Kate Gosselin's escapades.

I have nothing against the filming of families and children per se, but I was taken aback by how Kate was emotionally and verbally abusive to her husband, Jon, and her eight kids.

Had all the drama and tension been scripted to draw in viewers?

I don't know. What I do

know is that Kate's constant tirades against her children - which are broadcast to millions of viewers - would definitely have an adverse impact on the kids' well-being.

Whatever Jon and Kate's intentions behind appearing on TV might be - whether for fame or fortune - they have to think for their children as parents, not as celebrities.

However, who is really to blame? Would the show be bankrolled if it did not draw in all those viewers every week?

Increasingly, this brand of voyeurism has proliferated, with

reality shows such as Big Brother and The Simple Life offering the world a glimpse into the lives of conflicted individuals.

The obsession over such productions is unhealthy - not just for viewers, but for participants as well.

We need to recognise the fine line between harmless entertainment and unrealistic exploitation, and pull the plug on programmes that prioritise the latter over the former.

This way, we can develop a media culture that is safe yet entertaining.

Mr Kwan Jin Yao

Docs' diagnoses needed before patients take allergy tests

I WRITE in response to the letter, "Docs, don't be too hasty in blaming pets for allergies" (*my paper*, July 7).

It cited a case where a doctor had attributed a baby girl's allergy to the presence of a pet dog.

Doctors arrive at their diagnoses through a rigorous process of history taking, physical examinations and investigations.

The argument that doctors should practise caution because patients may end up neglecting their pets is flawed.

Even if doctors refer patients

for skin-prick tests, it is still important for them to arrive at provisional diagnoses so that potential allergens can be avoided.

Thus, in the case mentioned in the letter, even if the baby had been referred for an allergy test, the doctor should still advise the family to keep the child away from common allergens in our community before the test.

These include dust mites, animal fur and pollen.

If the family had decided to neglect their pet because of this,

I fail to see why the doctor should be blamed for being too hasty in his or her diagnosis.

The family should be held under scrutiny, not the doctor.

Therefore, I urge families to rear pets only if they are able to commit the requisite time and resources to the animal, and also if the pets will not create a health issue in the home.

If this is not the case, the pet should be given away.

Dr Jerome Tan

Keep your backpack in front on trains and buses

COMMUTERS who carry their backpacks on their backs in trains and public buses pose an inconvenience to other travellers.

First of all, when they carry them (especially when the bags are fully loaded) on their backs, the bags occupy the space of one standing commuter.

Secondly, they usually do not know if their backpacks are coming into contact with the faces of seated passengers.

I was recently on board the MRT when a young woman with a backpack was leaving the train.

As she pushed her way to the exit, a sharp object protruding from her backpack got hooked onto my shirt sleeve and tore it.

What if a child's face had been in the way of the object instead?

I suggest that commuters refrain from carrying their backpacks on their backs when travelling on public transport.

They should place their backpacks in front of them at their feet.

Not only does this free up more space on the train or bus, also ensures a safer ride for other passengers.

Mr Joseph Wong