

FOCUS[®] ON THE FAMILY

BY DR JAMES DOBSON

THE PAIN OF RELEASE

The average teenager chomps at the bit to get out from under parental rule and during those tumultuous teenage years, many parents are only too eager to show their child the door. But when the time comes, releasing a child is often painful, if not impossible for many parents.

Some parents want to hold on to their youngsters long after their duties as parents are over. The same commitment that leads parents to do well when the children are small may also cause them to hold on too tightly when they're all grown up. However, it's the responsibility of the parents to release their grip and set the fledgling adult free to make it on his own. And parents who refuse to let go often force their child to choose between two poor alternatives.

The first is to yield to parental domination which makes them dependent puppets. The second is to respond like a mountainous volcano that blows its top, pouring lava on everything in its path. To ease your child out of the house and into the world, first look at your own hands. If you are holding on too tightly, this might be the very best moment to release the grip.

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SINGAPORE ART MUSEUM

Artily disappointed

Wu Guanzhong programme did not deliver as promised

Letter from Laurence Meyer

WEEKEND TODAY's *Living* section (Sept 26-27) featured a listing for "Black and White: Wu Guanzhong for kids (Clay Fun)" on Sunday, which the Singapore Art Museum (SAM) promised would be "a creative way to keep the children occupied this F1 weekend".

The SAM website stated that the session "will commence with an in-depth guided tour of the exhibition to provide children with possible perspectives for creating their artworks".

I have three children and we are very interested in the visual arts. When we arrived at the museum, two women asked the children to sit and started distributing some clay, telling me that I could come back later.

I asked them why they weren't starting with the guided tour. They stared at me, puzzled. They finally called the admission desk to ask for access to the gallery.

Another parent asked who the artist featured was. One of the instructors answered: "Some Chinese painter."

The "in-depth guided tour" of the gallery lasted less than five minutes.



They then returned to the art and craft area, where they started to make pandas with the clay. This despite the fact that Wu's painting *Pandas* – which is supposed to be the inspiration for the clay session – is not to be seen at the museum any more.

Beyond that, there was no connection to the wonderful work of Wu Guanzhong.

Basically, the kids spent an hour playing with plasticine.

I find it unacceptable that an institution like the SAM promotes such activities for a \$30 fee. This fee covered just five minutes in the gallery, and included a \$5 charge for "materials". Five bucks for plasticine?

Promoting art to children is honourable, but proposing commercial programmes conducted by non-professional staff is not.

SHORT TAKES

SPIKED BY SPECULATION

Letter from Michael Tan

I refer to the letter "Why we peg to market rates: HDB" (Sept 25).

The key problem is in benchmarking HDB flat prices to market rates. Market rates are subject to speculation and if no effective counter-measures are taken, first-time HDB flat-buyers could soon have trouble affording a roof over their head.

With household incomes capped at \$8,000 to qualify for subsidised rates, how many young couples will be able to afford a flat if prices continue to spike, as private property prices have?

OPENNESS IS THE KEY

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

I refer to the report, "Welcoming newcomers with vouchers for language courses" (Sept 28).

I believe it is critical that integration and interaction programmes are not presented to be forcibly contrived. The most important factor should be the willingness of residents and neighbours to step out of their comfort zones to freely converse and interact with the newcomers. These traits cannot be taught or inculcated, and must originate from the gradual basis of an open and accepting society.

The key is for Singaporeans to open up and make these expatriates feel welcomed. Both sides should not come to rely on the authorities on this front.

Advertising Feature

Running for a Cause

The Run for a Cause programme has been a staple of the annual Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon. Together with the runners, the event is committed to do their part for the community. This year, the event has adopted Lions Befrienders, Rainbow Centre Yishun Park School and Bukit Ho Swee Family Centre as beneficiaries for the Run for a Cause initiative.

Father of two, **Jury Gregario, 38**, has committed his run at the upcoming event to the Rainbow Centre Yishun Park School, after his traumatising experience at the Neonatal ICU with his newborn son not too long ago.

"For 55 days, I witnessed hope and despair through the inconsolable parents at the hospital. My experience has spurred me to dedicate my run to help children with disabilities live life to the fullest potential," says Jury, an assistant creative director.

Thankfully, five-month-old Gregario Junior survived his ordeal. His elder son, Leon, 9, will join him at the Padang for the Standard Chartered Kids Dash, a race that he has taken part in since he was four years old.



Run to make a difference

Sandy Heng, 37, a financial controller, had already chosen the charity for which she would raise funds, but her late grandmother had other plans. "Just before I indicated my selection, my late grandmother spoke to me and reminded me of the elderly who are not as fortunate and blessed as she was. In her life, she was constantly surrounded by family who loved her and showered her with care, and she left the world well supported."



Sandy Heng, 37

Sandy missed running for the charity last year, and is determined to do so at the upcoming Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon. "I live in a mature estate, and I have come to realise that there are a lot of elderly out there who are not as fortunate as my grandmother. That's why I decided to dedicate my run to Lions Befrienders, to help give them a chance to live comfortably at least in their last days."

With one of the fastest-ageing populations in the world, Singapore faces a growing demand for elder care services. Lions Befrienders will fund and support community-based programmes to help dignify the lives



Standard Chartered
**SINGAPORE
MARATHON 2009**

6 December 2009

of the elderly, providing care for the home-bound or ill seniors, as well as shelter and support for those without families or homes.

Inspired by their stories to Run for a Cause? Find out how you can contribute by heading to www.comchest.org.sg for more information.



Bid to Run

Missed out on registration for the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon this year?

There is still a chance for you to be a part of Singapore's premier running event!

There are 50 reserved slots available for silent bidding to raise funds for the event's Run for a Cause charity initiative. Interested bidders can visit www.singaporemarathon.com for more details.