



Dear Member,

I have recently read a book, *Chasing Daylight*, written by the late Eugene O'Kelly, chairman and CEO of one of the largest international accounting firms in the U.S., after he learned from his doctor that he, at the age of 53, had only about 100 days to live.

In the memoir of his final days, O'Kelly recounted how he had risen to the top of his career and all his grand plans for his firm and his retirement. The ringing of his death knell gave him a new way of looking at his life. The key message O'Kelly wished to leave as the firm's chairman and CEO was to help his partners and employees live more balanced lives, and that his passing would leave them with a new perspective about their work and lives.

Our profession is a demanding one by every measure: The qualifying requirements, the continuous professional development, the long hours we put into our work. In our never-ending pursuit of professional excellence and personal success, many have paid the hefty price of sacrificing our relationship with families and friends, as well as our health.

We hear a lot about work-life balance these days, but for many of our fellow accountants, their lives are their work, and there is almost nothing else.

With our knowledge and skills in greater demand than ever before, it's time for us to take stock and put things in proper perspectives. Our families and our health are the cornerstones of our lives, and we should accord them with the priority and time that they deserve. We should spend more time with our family and looking after our physical and mental health. It is a matter

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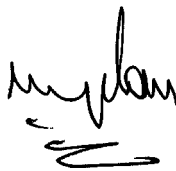
of priority setting. A caring and supportive family relationship and a healthy body and mind will increase our productivity, lift our spirits, build our stamina and help us deal with stress and setbacks.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to appeal to our member firms to pay more attention to young staff members. While vigorous training and hard work are inevitable in this competitive environment, we do need to set an example as to how we can fulfil our professional responsibilities and at the same time enjoy a balanced and fulfilling life. On the individual level, I would like to call on our members to actively participate in volunteer services, such as the Accountant Ambassadors programme, Institute committees, etc. Through giving and contributing, you will find great joy and discover the true value of life and brotherhood. What's more, these activities provide a good opportunity to network and socialise with like-minded fellow accountants and other business friends, and learn how to appreciate and serve others. It is also a good and meaningful way to achieve a balanced life.

All in all, it is important to develop a balanced lifestyle regardless of our age. It doesn't take anything as drastic as a death sentence to wake us up, but as O'Kelly illustrated, it requires priority setting, planning and commitment. Aren't these the skills required of an accountant? As Maria Edgeworth said, "If we take care of the moments, the years will take care of themselves."

Let's all have a rewarding and meaningful life!

Sincere regards,



Paul M.P. Chan

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