

Life-Planning for the Ambitious

**How to Have an Intact Family,
and at the Same Time Reach Top Positions**

Or

**Co-verse instead of Di-vorce,
Core-partners and Co-partners in Top Positions:
A New Paradigm for Family and Work**

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BOOK PROPOSAL

Title: A New Paradigm for Family and Work.

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Target Audience: A large readership among those among the ambitious and intelligent who stand at important cross-roads in their lives and have to take decisions which will influence the rest of their lives. Furthermore those who are interested in shaping today's debate about life and society. Important questions at crossroads may be: When should I get children? Who is the 'right' partner? What does marriage mean today? How can a society integrate its women in leading positions? What does divorce mean today? How should marriage and work be arranged in an ideal society? How should I plan my life as long as society is not ideal yet?

Length: 60,000 words

Brief Synopsis:

Love and marriage: this combination is the recipe for great hopes and painful failures. Children are born and later suffering in destructive divorce wars. Women and men are being broken down, they lose self-esteem, and believe that they are failures. How can this be avoided? Can we go back to old times where marriage was a contract with duties and rights? Do we need to teach ourselves more self-control in abiding by strict moral rules?

Self-control can be positive, surely, however, if we want love, then we cannot return to the old paradigm. Love cannot be measured in duties and rights, love cannot be commanded, love is our master and we have to bow. Love is a feeling and feelings escape control. We can accuse neither ourselves nor our partners for wrongdoing if love fades or changes character.

What shall we do if love changes character and we want to stay with our partner for the children's sake, but need a new partner for our own sake? How can we turn divorce into something more constructive? How can we adopt our ex-partner as near family member, as co-parent, while finding a new spouse? We have to find a new name for divorce. It should be co-voice not di-voice.

Society needs more women in top jobs. It is a waste of resources if top women stay in lower positions because of their double load with family and work duties. What can be done? What can the individual do, and what should society contribute? How can we succeed in the transition from a world in which children and household were the responsibility of the woman while the man went 'out,' to a new world in which women and men go 'out' together and come home together? How can society support the transition from 'she stays in and he goes out' to 'both go out and come in together'?

There were times when girls and boys had completely separate biographies – the girl stayed with her mother and learned how to take care of children and household, while the boy went in his father's footsteps. Arranged marriages were the rule. Love between two partners was not what marriage was about. A woman was not supposed to enjoy sexuality, but should 'think of England.'

Later girls were sent to school, but they stayed there for a short while only, so to speak joining the boy's schedule for a couple of years, rejoining their specific female life script soon after. By time girls stayed on longer at school. The age of transition from the boy's life structure back to the female script was pushed further and further. It was a revolution when the first girls finished high school. They then got married and children and never had any professional life, or they tried to enter the world of male work when the children got independent. Parallel to this transition also the concept of marriage changed. Love marriage became the ideal; arranged marriages acquired the connotation of 'slavery.'

Today many women go to university, and feel that they would waste their education if they did not start a career after their degree, and as soon as they start a career they find out that it does not allow for pauses either. Many women end up being in their mid-thirties when they finally get aware of their biological clock, panic, and look for the 'right' man. They risk then that it is too late for children. If this trend continues, women will be ready to have children when they retire, and then fertility will be against them. Already today fertility treatment is big business, however, with low success rates, despite glamorous stories in the press.

Children usually take women out from a possible top career in the male professional world. The long-term solution must be to let man and woman share the workload connected with children evenly. No late hours at the office neither for man or woman; Kindergarten; employees in the house.

As long as this ideal state of affairs is not reached, intelligent and ambitious girls who want to serve their societies in top positions when they are forty, have to think carefully what they should do with the current trend of looking for the 'right' man and having children in their thirties. They will have to realise early on, that children are a joy, but also a time consuming burden, detrimental to any stage within the classic male life schedule. They have to ask: How can this burden be minimised?

They might have to decide that society should encourage them to have children much earlier, for example during their university time when they are still relatively flexible in their time allotment as compared to later professional life, and while their body is at its optimal preparedness.

They may also have to be taught more about the fragility of love. Society should not instil illusionary hopes in them. They have to be taught that love must be nurtured, but that it ultimately cannot be forced. Love is a flower of freedom, it cannot be commanded. Young women may have to be taught how to plan for a possible co-orce already when they get married. They may have to learn that the 'right' man is the one who will be able

to carry out a co-voice instead of a disaster in case love changes character in the future; that the 'right' man can continue being a responsible father and family member even if a new partner has entered the context.

The word 'ex-partner' should be discarded together with the word di-voice. A co-voice should mean nothing else but the redefinition of 'partner' to 'co-partner.' The new paradigm should entail that everybody has a core-partner (significant other, spouse) and, potentially, one or more co-partners (ex-partners) who are all family members.

Today girls and boys are encouraged to believe in love, but they are taught little about how to nurture love, and how to accept that it cannot be commanded. Society supports love-marriage, but leaves couples alone when they are confronted with the difficult sides of love. Society is proud of love as a positive force, but denies responsibility for its fragility and changeability. Love-marriage is a triumph of Western individualistic society, newly wed couples learn that they do the right thing when they marry out of love, - but when they get a divorce they are left alone with the feeling that it is their fault alone.

Society has to assume responsibility for the strengths and difficulties entailed in love and not leave their citizens alone with the feelings of failure when they need to transform their lives. Society, - media, friends, authorities, - are currently not only leaving divorcing couples considerably alone, there reactions are even hazardously inconsistent, thus endangering their citizens' psychological well being. Friends, media and authorities apply the love-paradigm to the start of a marriage, but they apply the 'arranged marriage-paradigm' to the change of love.

Divorce is a word fitting into the old world of marriage as a contract, it identifies the breaking of a contract, it insinuates that love could be commanded, and that the failure of doing so is immoral, and therefore a moral defect in the involved individuals. This causes deep feelings of guilt in these individuals. Their psyche is unduly burdened, their self-esteem broken down. They are left to themselves or psychotherapy. A society that advocates love, should also advocate constructive change and transformation, and remove the connotation of failure from divorce. Society has to teach couples how to nurture love and nurture constructive change.

In 'A New Paradigm for Family and Work' Evelin Lindner presents the range of solutions which different cultures have found for marriage Non-western world offers many