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Think of Your Life-Career as Your Four-Chambered Heart

John observes that as pharmacists, we often get lost in the intensity of our profession and the practice of being professional. He indicates that, although he has achieved professional successes, it was not without personal expense. Relationships suffered, and friends and quality family time were neglected. John realized with the passing of his father that a truly happy and meaningful life includes work but does not oppose it. He suggests that our lives are not unlike our four-chambered heart. We must purposefully maintain the four domains: work, home, community, and self.

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John's advice is: ***Commit to investing in all four aspects of your life and never forget that if you adopt a singular focus on work for a prolonged period of time, you will ultimately succumb to emptiness and regret.***



Dear Young Pharmacist,

As a relatively young pharmacist, I could advise you to work hard, follow your dreams, and reach for the stars while never forgetting that you belong to one of the most storied and respected professions in the world. Although this is sound

guidance, please join me as I venture in a slightly different direction. Rather than write solely about the profession of pharmacy, I will write to you about the importance of love. My closest friends and colleagues would tell you that I genuinely enjoy sharing quotes, and I often use them on the white board in my office to inspire both others and myself. As such, it is only fitting that I begin with a quote from the famous Beatle Sir Paul McCartney: “In the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make.”

Take a moment to pause, recalling a fond memory that harkens to deep love. Then, put this book down and shout over to the next room or pick up the phone and call a family member, significant other, or friend and tell them you love them. Now that you have adequately expressed some love, allow me to explain why I made such an unusual request. Too often we, as pharmacists, get lost in the intensity of our profession and the state of being “professional.” We forget entirely about the remaining critical parts of our lives, especially the personal ones. In the professional world, this is known as a lack of work-life balance. In my life, I have known too many people who believe that to achieve greatness we must make ruthless sacrifices, most often at the expense of our friends, family, and ourselves. I once subscribed to this flawed assumption.

When I graduated from the PharmD program at Purdue University in 2008, I struggled to maintain balance between my personal and professional lives. While I feel proud and fortunate to have achieved professional success so early on in my career, it was not without personal expense; relationships suffered, friends disappeared, and quality time with my family was neglected. This, in turn, resulted in heartache, frustration, and a general feeling that something was missing in my life. I had professional satisfaction, but I was left wanting more.

In the fall of 2014, both my life and perspective changed permanently with the sudden passing of my father. Unfortunately, many of you reading this letter have also experienced significant loss and, therefore, may understand the awakening that accompanies such a tragic event. If you have not yet experienced a personal loss, then do not wait for this to occur before changing your approach to your own life. Following the loss of my father, the fundamental change in my thinking came from the realization that my future could no longer be immersed in the constant struggle to balance work and life. The work-life balance paradigm suggests that it is work versus life; however, I now believe that a truly happy and meaningful life full of love *includes* work but does *not* oppose it.

To illustrate this concept, I want you to think of a human heart and the universally accepted symbol of life and love. As all pharmacists know, the human heart consists of four distinct chambers. Each one of these chambers must work harmoniously and be synchronized to effectively oxygenate and circulate blood