

LIFE & TIMES **FAMILY**

# Dad in the picture

It is possible for fathers to achieve a balance between work and family, believes Anthony Raja Devadoss, vice president of KellyOCG. **Aneeta Sundararaj** is all ears

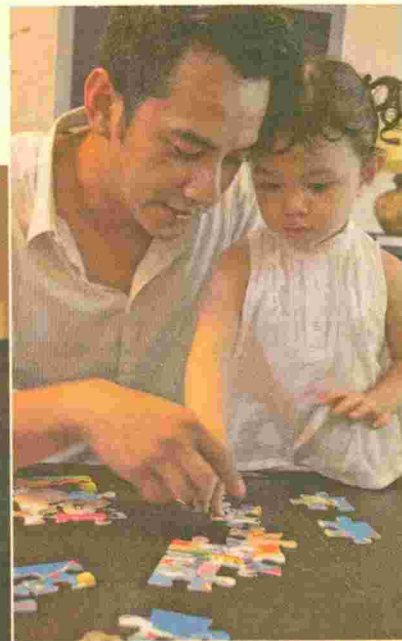
**H**OW can a man who is not a father dispense advice to men facing the challenges of balancing work and family? As Anthony Raja Devadoss, 38, begins to share his ideas, thoughts and experiences, it becomes obvious that he does have an approach that has helped men deal with precisely those challenges.

"I may not have children, but I've learnt a lot from my father," says Anthony.

The eldest of five children, he was born in Kuala Lumpur and sent to boarding school in India at a very young age. "My father believed that education is a good investment. Those first years in boarding school were very lonely. What kept me going was my father's

*"... if there's a choice between work and family, I'd choose family time, anytime."*

*Nazrudin Habibur Rahman*



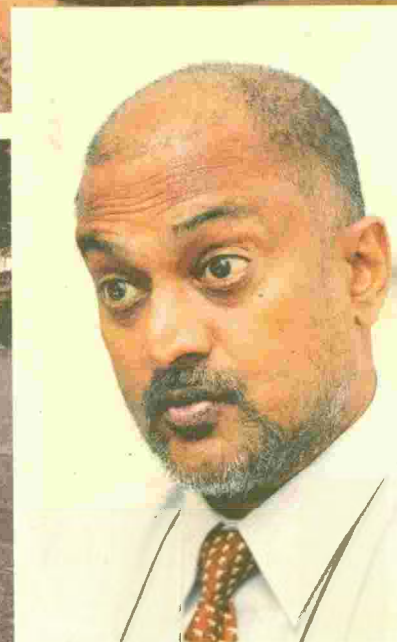
weekly letters. I still have them and find them very soothing, supportive and energising."

After boarding school, Anthony went to the US to pursue higher education and then work. After being away for 17 years, he returned home to Malaysia.

Anthony's job today, as vice president of KellyOCG (the Outsourcing



**Jason Dasey** says being an older father has made him more aware of his responsibilities



**Paul Jambunathan** believes that 'if I keep chasing more wants, I would certainly be paving my road to unhappiness and imbalance'

## WORDS OF WISDOM

ANTHONY Raja Devadoss describes his father, the late V.M. Devadoss, as his guiding spirit and shares some pointers and advice contained in letters he received from his father when Anthony was at boarding school.

**Independence:** There are times when you will feel lonely and down. To navigate around this, think of the Sherpa who are often alone with nature. Set your goals and move towards them.

**Patience:** A man wanted to insult a widow and her son. He asked the son if he could marry his mother. In a calm manner, the son answered, "That is not my choice. You have to ask her." The man did and the widow refused. The man laughed. He took a few steps back and suddenly a dagger fell from the sky and killed him. "The saying is, 'Patience is sharper than

the sharpest dagger,'" explains Anthony. "We need to remain calm and not lose our patience when someone is bad. God will be impatient for us."

**Tolerance:** Read all religious books. You need a commonality as you cannot understand others unless you understand their beliefs, religion and culture.

**Travel:** Visit one country every year. You cannot stay in one place and get life's experience.

**Food:** Be adventurous with food. Anthony laughs when he recalls, "My father had a word of caution: don't eat anything that lives on land and water." The operative word here is 'and' and the warning was not to eat amphibians.

**Take time for yourself:** Pray or meditate every day for mind-body co-ordination.

and Consulting Group of Kelly Services) sees him playing a key role in providing thought leadership, brand or strategy ownership, and industry connection to help organisations stay competitive. As such, he has observed a shift in trends for working fathers.

"Men are no longer single unit operations but part of a team. And those who are fathers have no hesitation in saying, "My child is ill. I need some time off."

"Ten years ago, they might not have done this. They would have kept their personal issues from the workplace. Today, they can speak up; it's a more holistic system."

### MAKING CHOICES

With a gentle nod, Anthony admits that not all men choose to strike that balance between work and life.

"Statistics show that when opportunities come for career growth, it's still men who take the step forward. Women choose to have a better work-life balance and less stress. In Asean countries, women's participation in the workforce in Malaysia is one of the lowest. This doesn't mean they're not working. Many work from home. The question is, are men making the same choice?"

And the answer, Anthony's realises, is no. "I know people who will be horrified if I ask them to work from home. They can only work in the office and spend all their time there. Then there are men who don't know how to 'switch off' when they're at home. Some say to me, 'I don't dare switch my Blackberry off.'"

To all these men who have a work-life imbalance, Anthony

says: "Things can wait. You are more than your job. Reserve time for yourself. Do something relaxing. This can be playing a sport, catching up with friends or looking after a pet. Cultivate a hobby. Talk to your children. Words can make things happen."

### USEWORDS

Anthony insists that what he's advocating is achievable and tells the story of a man he met at the airport. "He was the GM of a company, but bored with work. A single father, he was also having difficulty coping with the needs of his 'special' child. He was at the point where he wanted to give up on his life and job.

I told him that he needed an anchor. Since his career was important to him, he could do it for his son.



Anthony Raja Devadoss says many men today are more open than the fathers of yesterday

## WHAT REAL DADS SAY

**NAZRUDIN HABIBUR RAHMAN**  
TV PRESENTER, WRITER, ACTOR,  
PRODUCER, VOICE TALENT

I CAN'T say for sure what a typical workday is like. One moment it's 42 hours non-stop shoots, or living out of a suitcase for long periods and the next, I'm done by 10am!

Quality time is when you connect with your family on all levels; when there's 100 per cent attention on everyone. That's when the magic happens ... when your child speaks his first word or takes his first step, the first look of understanding and comprehension — to watch your child grow and achieve, and celebrate those milestones together.

It may be a whole evening at the pool, or it may be 10 minutes doing a puzzle together, or just two seconds to grab them before they fall off the chair.

You could be having a meal as a family, but dad will be on the phone and mum is tied up with the toddler; the other kids are all over the place. That's not quality time, in my honest opinion.

To get that balance between family and work, I try to follow a simple rule; if there's a choice between work and family, I'd choose family time, anytime. It is a simple strategy for someone whose time is not his own and works contracts and jobs, not a 9 to 5.

**Naz and his wife Sheehnee Iman Lee have two children, Zara Aaliyah (2 years, 4 months) and Zakry Aiman Nazrudin (2 months).**

**PAUL JAMBUNATHAN**  
CONSULTANT CLINICAL  
PSYCHOLOGIST AT SUNWAY  
MEDICAL CENTRE

THE day starts between 4.30 and 5am. My wife Sarah and daughter Hannah leave the house at 6.30am and I leave a little later. On Wednesdays, I leave earlier for my

radio show with Lite FM.

We typically are home before 7pm and try to have dinner together. We spend a lot of interactive time watching TV and sport. The girls' study tables are in the hall and we share a common worktable. Music is part of our lives. My other daughter, Helen, thumps the piano, with me on the guitar. The others sing wherever they are. I suppose one important thing is that we don't have a maid, so we share in the house-keeping.

Quality time is all about talking with each other and sharing views

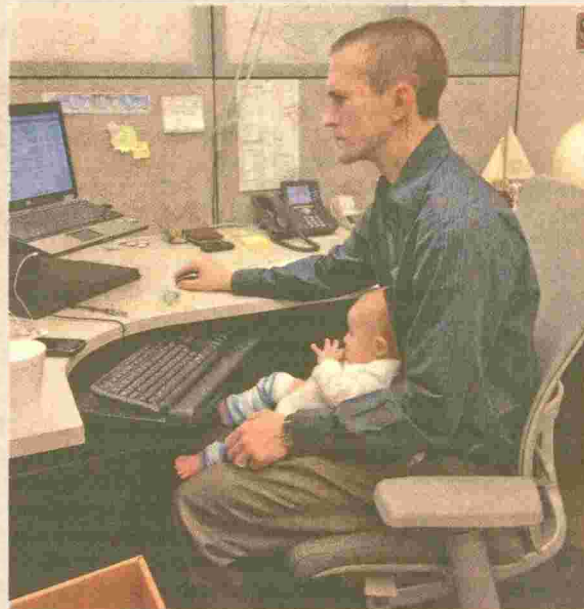
that I have everything I need. I am contented. I believe that if I keep chasing more wants, I would certainly be paving my road to unhappiness and imbalance. I have enough!

**JASON DASEY**  
SENIOR HOST AND EXECUTIVE  
PRODUCER OF ASTRO SUPERSPORT

I WORK very odd hours, with a focus on the weekend's English Premier League action as I host up to four games in our HD studio in Petaling Jaya. That means starting work around 9pm and working through until 3 or 4am for two days of the week. I work regular office hours at other times.

I get time off during the week. I make it a priority to spend as much time with family as possible. I will drop my daughter at pre-school and pick her up at least two times a week. We also enjoy having family brunches together, sometimes on Saturdays when I host the Premier League football late at night.

Quality time with the family is being outdoors — exploring a park or a beach since my daughter is very active and loves to be outside,



He also needed a hobby. He took up photography. Today, he's happy and will do anything for his child."

### STRIKING A BALANCE

Anthony also encourages people to learn to communicate effectively right from the beginning. "The first thing people will ask someone they're meeting for the first time is 'What do you do? Where do you work?' Everything's centred on a person's work. We don't know what he does for his family or how he contributes to the community. This should change. We should ask questions like, 'What do

you do on the weekend?'"

All said and done, Anthony feels that more, rather than less, men have struck that balance between work and life.

"Many men today are more open than the fathers of yesterday and I see a paternalistic support structure being built. Fathers have no hesitation telling others they should spend time with their children before it's too late. They're not afraid to talk about what they've done wrong. Many fathers today have more open conversations with their children." And this has to be good.

on anything and everything. Even if there are disagreements, we agree never to sleep angry. We are also a very tactile family and there are constant hugs and kisses. From the moment the girls learnt to talk, we taught them how to say, 'I love you' — and to mean it.

To achieve and maintain work-life balance, I like to use a diving analogy: in diving, I maintain buoyancy carefully. Only when there is balance and buoyancy can one really "smell the roses". The main factor is deciding on priorities and sticking to them. I make it a point to design and develop my work around my family and not the other way around.

I guess one of the secrets is

just like us.

It's not easy to maintain a balance between work and family because I am a workaholic at heart and love what I do. And in some ways, the team that I've built at Astro SuperSport are my "family" as well. But the feeling of looking into your daughter's eyes and hearing her laugh is something wonderful. Being an older father has made me more aware of my responsibilities, and wanting to spend every possible minute with her as she grows up. When a child's 2 to 3 years old, it's a magical age and I don't want to miss a thing, as the song goes!

**Jason and his wife Laretta have a daughter, Ella (2½ years)**




**KOOLFEVER**  
退熱貼

## FOR SUDDEN FEVER READY TO USE!

# JAPAN No. 1

**READY TO USE!**  
KOOLFEVER is ready to use when your child becomes feverish.

**STAYS IN PLACE**  
TIGHTLY FITS TO FOREHEAD. Not displaced even if your child turns in bed.

**WHOLE NIGHT COOLING!**  
Crisp and cool effects persist for about 8 hours per sheet.



NEW  
Ready to Use  
KOOLEVER  
退熱貼  
退熱貼  
退熱貼

Highly moistened gel absorbs and disperses heat.