

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT THE LAUNCH OF THE COMMITMENT BOOK ONLINE PLATFORM (RE-LAUNCH OF THE COMMITMENT BOOK), THE PLAZA, NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING, 100, VICTORIA STREET; SUNDAY, 31 JULY 2011, 12:30 P.M.

Good afternoon, friends, honoured guests,

Thank you for joining us for this modest launch of the Commitment Book online platform. As some of you know, the Commitment Book project is not really a new initiative by ADAM Association. In 2008, our Advisor, Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, who is now Senior Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry and Mayor of the South East District, launched the Commitment Book as an avenue for men to pledge their commitment to their loved ones and express what they would like to do for and with their families. Dr Maliki sends his apologies for not being able to join us for this re-launch.

When ADAM Association started this project, we began with a physical book which we took to all our roadshows and events to allow attendees to record their pledges in the book. With this re-launch, we are taking the Commitment Book online, to make it easier for men to pledge their love to their families. At ADAM, we understand that many men live in a busy, high-pressure environment, but sometimes, while we are busy earning a living, men sometimes forget that building a family requires more than just bringing home the bread.

I was just reading an article by Carey Casey, CEO of the National Centre for Fathering in America, on why great fathering does NOT involve sacrifice. While being a good father means sometimes giving up opportunities that come up, or forgoing some of life's pleasures – that game of golf, or a Sunday afternoon nap, for example – because you are responsible to your family and that is not always easy. You might not be able to do as many fix-it projects around the house, you might be seen as less dedicated at work than someone who spends longer hours in the office, because you're highly involved in your children's lives. But, for Casey, "The simple, everyday investments in your children can be the most powerful over the long haul."

For the devoted man, the matter has already been decided. He will spend less time on his hobby and more time with his family because *they* are his priority. Choosing to be a highly involved dad over a hobby *isn't sacrifice! It's a wise move -- an intentional investment in one thing over the other, because he knows his children need him.*

Similarly, with the Commitment Book, your pledges should not be seen as a sacrifice. Rather, as a nation ever concerned with KPIs, let's view it as simple goal-setting, which I believe is important to strengthening family bonds. Commitment to your family should not be seen as a sacrifice and the simple, everyday investments – pledging not to come home late from the workplace, so as to be able to sit down for dinner with their families at least five nights a week, or forgoing watching television alone each evening, and pledging an hour each night reading or telling their children a story, instead – can be the most powerful over the long haul.

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ADAM Association, with its vision to be the leading authority on men's issues and enabling them to be devoted and active men, continues our efforts to address the problems faced by men in Singapore. In pledging your commitment to your loved ones, I would ask that you remember the men out there who might find even the simple things beyond their means due to the problems they face. ADAM's projects, such as our helpline for men, is our modest effort at reaching out to such men and to assist them, in what little way we can, in facing these issues. The least we can offer is a listening ear and a space for men to share their problems, but there is much more we can do, with the support from the community, especially other men.

While we all face the pressures and problems of day-to-day living in Singapore, there are a lot of men out there with vast potential to contribute more, not just towards their own family life, but also to the community, especially in the growth of men in Singapore. Just as I would like to invite all men in Singapore to make their pledges of commitment to their loved ones in the Commitment Book, ADAM Association will always welcome more members and committed members to support its efforts, whether in manning our helpline for men, providing counselling support services, or legal advice to those who need it. Do speak to our staff, to find out how you can help. You can also find our contact details on our flyer; there is a copy in your goodie bag, or you can pick one up from the ADAM Association booth. Whatever your area of expertise, whatever your experience, all men are welcome to join us at ADAM Association.

Finally, I would like to thank Dads for Life for the support they have given to the Commitment Book. It is with great pleasure that I launch the Commitment Book online platform.

Thank you.