

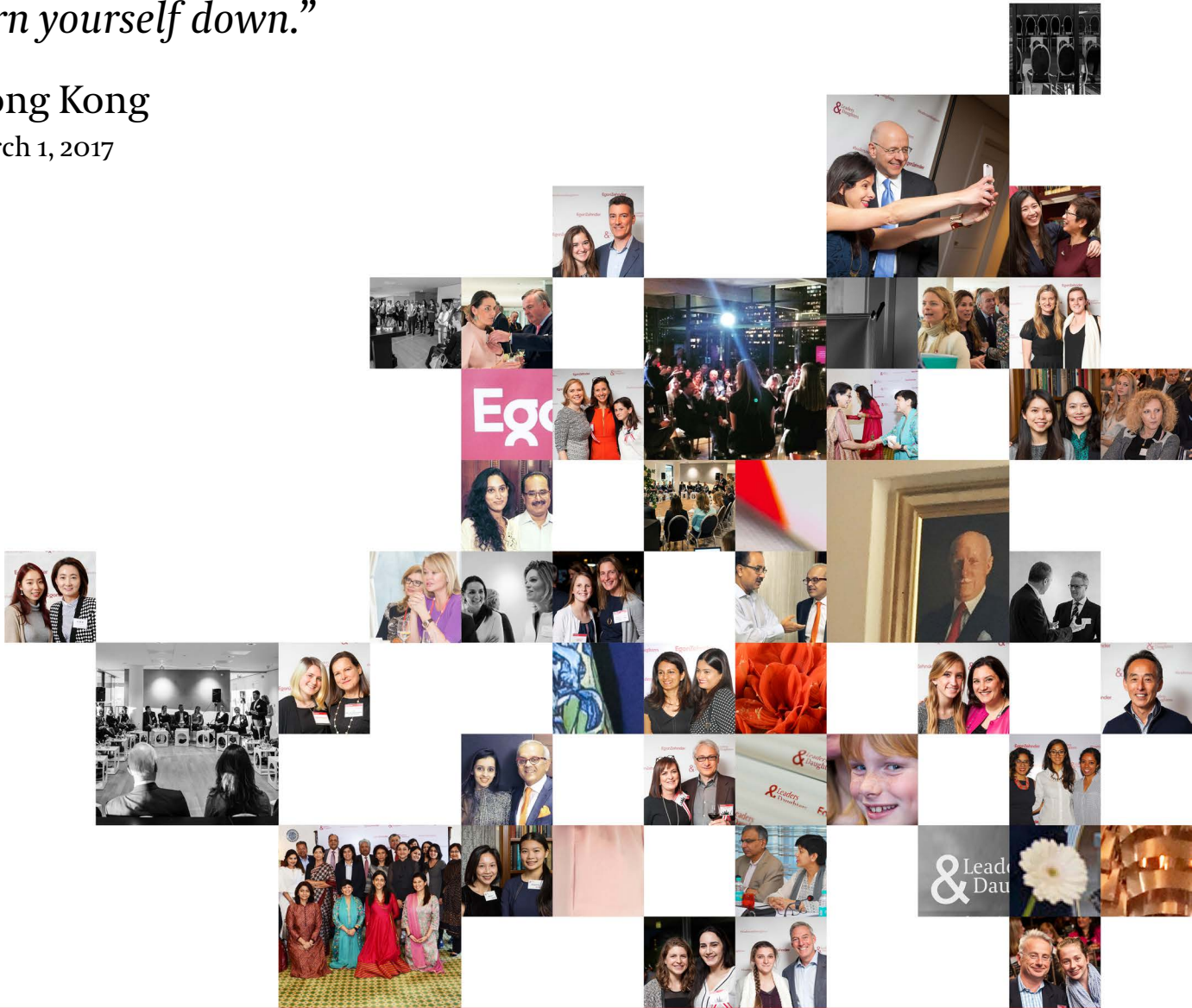
what we heard

& Leaders 2017
Daughters

Leaders & Daughters

“Other people may say no, but you should never turn yourself down.”

Hong Kong
March 1, 2017



EgonZehnder



what we heard

On March 1, 2017, Egon Zehnder hosted its first annual Leaders & Daughters event in Hong Kong. The event brought together an intimate group of high-powered women from Greater China and their daughters in hopes of spotlighting the motivations and challenges confronting the next generation of professional women.

These mothers were among some of Asia's most senior corporate executives. They relished the opportunity to spend an evening with their daughters to talk about values, influences and share experiences from their own personal journeys.

Egon Zehnder's Catherine Zhu and Eliza Law moderated a thoughtful conversation over a scrumptious six-course Chinese meal at the historic China Club in central Hong Kong, and invited the women from both generations to reveal their thoughts. The result was an evening of eye-opening testimonies and heartfelt reflections, marked by both laughter and mutual respect between parent and child. Here are their stories.

Setting one's own goals

The mothers were quick to point out that one of the primary values they tried to ingrain in their daughters was a sense of discipline and respect for hard work. The daughters all echoed the sentiment, reflecting on their mothers' expectations to learn how to manage their time, prioritize and weigh the pros and cons of tricky situations.

One mother, a veteran technology leader said: "It's all about goal-setting, follow-through and being focused on results." When her daughters were young, she would give them decision-making exercises even with simple tasks such as choosing

a soft drink. "If they were thirsty, I would put a Coke and a Pepsi in front of them and ask them to choose and explain why".

With their schooling, she also expected her daughters to set goals for their performance. "At the start of a new semester, I would ask them whether they wanted to get A's, A minuses, or B's." That way she could admonish them when necessary and hold them to their own word. "If I see them slacking off on their studies" she said, "I would remind them that the goal of getting an A is looking remote." However this leader also said she was equally pleased with her children setting their sights on getting B's, provided they hold themselves accountable to their personal goals.

This sense of ownership was duly ingrained. One daughter said: "My mom has always given me a lot of freedom. Whatever decision or choice I had to make, she always supported me and never said 'that is not a good idea.' That way, if I made a mistake, it was my mistake; and it was up to me to learn from the experience".

Aim high, but you have fallback

One mother who serves as a country chairwoman of one of the world's largest hedge fund companies underscored the importance of giving young women the courage to aim high. When her daughter was applying to universities, she told her to "always say yes" to going for the best. "Other people may say no, but you should never turn yourself down."

On the other hand, this senior leader said it was equally vital for her to provide her daughter with abiding love and unconditional support. "As a mother, I must be the 'fallback' for her. Even if she is pushing hard, when she tells me she cannot



what we heard

take it anymore, I would tell her that in the grand scheme of life, she should be happy. She is always welcome to come home”.

This comment invited collective nods from other mothers at the table. One remarked: “If I can give one value to my daughter, it is to have hope in life. No matter what circumstances or difficult situation she may face, she should know that there is light at the end of the tunnel.”

Meanwhile, a daughter who’s in her early twenties and has a highly demanding job in investment banking, affirmed that she needed her mother to play dual roles. “At work I have to push through hardship and build stamina, strength of will and grit, and I need my mother’s help otherwise it’d be easy to give up. But it is conflicting sometimes because I also want comfort and consolation”.

Take the long view

Beyond work and career goals, the mothers advised their daughters to take the long view on achieving what is truly worthwhile in life. One such concern is for the young women to take their time to carefully choose a life partner who should unequivocally support their aspirations for success and happiness.

At first, this topic provoked giggles from both mothers and daughters as the senior women cautioned the single women to keep their options open and not rush, while some of the young women squirmed to avoid revealing too much. But laughter aside, the conversation soon gravitated towards a concern dear to everyone’s hearts: marriage and relationships.

One mother said: “If it is truly equal between husbands and wives, then there should be times when it is not just the husband’s career that takes

the lead in the family, but the wife’s as well. I hope my daughter will find a life partner who can understand that a woman can have aspirations and be successful in multiple ways.”

Some of the daughters readily agreed. One said: “I don’t think I would be attracted to a person who expects me to be a ‘perfect mom’ if that is not what I want. I want to be with someone who will support my work life at the very beginning.”

Diversity in the workplace

While respect and equality are important ingredients for marriage and relationships, one mother pointed out that companies must also reinforce these values in the workplace. She said: “We have to educate our own line managers that we have to promote diversity, and educate people on gender bias. As an employer, we have to do our part to help women”.

Another mother agreed but advised the daughters that they have to choose their employers carefully. “It depends on a company’s culture, how they value people” and whether there is “no gender bias” but instead “support for the family”. She said her own company was exceptional in that she was able to take a month off each year to travel with her children abroad and work remotely to stay connected with the office.

Yet for the daughters, gender equality in the workplace seems somewhat elusive – for now. One daughter who worked in finance shared her observation: “We have more men than women throughout the organization. There are more female analysts, but very few women who are managing directors.” Furthermore she recognized the challenge of work life balance: “It is a tough choice for women when they get married. It is a mystery to me how my boss, who is a woman with

what we heard

children, does it. When I ask her, she just tells me 'you have to have a 'can do' attitude'".

For the next generation of professional women, one leader offered her final thought. She advised the daughters to consider striving for "work life integration" rather than a perfect balance between career and family.

Quotes:

Advice from mothers to their younger selves

"Pamper yourself more"

"Be yourself. Go on and follow your heart"

"Take more risks"

"Meet more people and learn from everyone"

"The world has no boundaries"

On failure

"I have one rule for my daughter and that is at maximum, she can make a mistake once, or even twice, but she cannot make the same mistake three times"

"I don't see failure as anything to be shameful of. I make mistakes as [my children] do. If I am not shameful of my failures, then my kids would not hide theirs"

On work life balance

"Work is fun. Over the years I never felt it was a 'challenge' to balance work and life. To me it was always my choice to enjoy work. It is about mental stimulation and staying in touch. You have wonderful friends and interactions that are for your own pleasure. It is about your personal needs to grow"

On self-confidence

"I learned from my mother that asking questions means you are not afraid to own up to your insecurities"

On curiosity

"My mother may not have realized this but she influenced me to love reading with her own curiosity. Whenever we would watch TV at home on a Sunday night, she would look up a word that came up in a drama, and she'd go deep into finding out what it means. Or we'd be watching a movie about the biography of Steve Jobs, and she'd dig up stories about Apple and share with everyone. I've developed the same habit and think being curious is a state of mind that I will carry throughout my life"

what we heard



Group photo



The China Club, The Old Bank of China Building, Hong Kong

what we heard

below

Hester Shum, Regional HR VP, Equinix, and her daughter Alison Tam

right

Hera Siu, COO, Greater China, Cisco Systems, and her daughter Esther Kwok



above

Selina Ko, CHRO, Manulife, and her daughter Joyann Leung

above

Selina Ko, CHRO, Manulife, and Teresa Ko, Chairman, China, Freshfields

right

Tong-Wen Zhao, Group HRD, Dairy Farm, and her daughter Julia Zhang



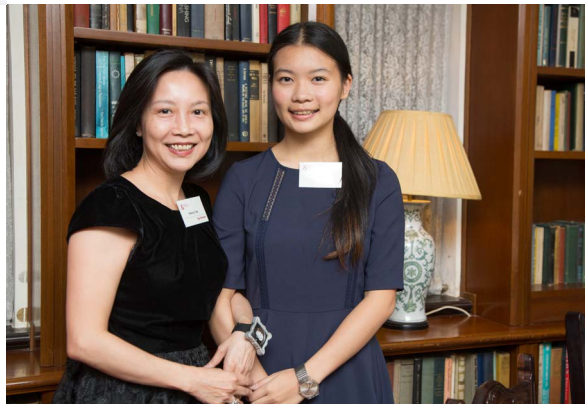
what we heard

right
*Yi-Fei Li, China Chair,
Man Group, and her
daughter Haining
Wang*



left
*Maggie Wu, CFO,
Alibaba, and her
daughter Maia Zhou*

right
*Nancy Tse and her
daughter Kessandra*



what we heard

Hosts

Eliza Law
eliza.law@egonzehnder.com



Catherine Zhu
catherine.zhu@egonzehnder.com



what we heard

About Leaders & Daughters

To mark International Women's Day, Egon Zehnder conceived Leaders & Daughters, a global series of events that bring the world's most admired leaders and their daughters together to uncover the motivations, challenges and opportunities that face the next generation of professional women.

In 2017, we went further. In celebration of International Women's Day, we hosted Leaders & Daughters events in more than 40 cities worldwide – bringing together the voices of more than 3,500 participants to share their stories of success as well as the obstacles that are preventing progress. We share one common goal: to collectively pave a better future for the next generation of women leaders.

In addition to the events, we have also launched a campaign, “To My Daughter,” in which leaders write letters to their daughters about their hopes and dreams for the future. To participate, please visit www.leadersanddaughters.com.

Visit Leaders & Daughters at www.egonzehnder.com

Join the Leaders & Daughters LinkedIn group, follow #LeadersAndDaughters on Twitter and on Instagram at @egonzehnder

© 2017 Egon Zehnder International, Inc.

All rights reserved.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise—without the prior permission of Egon Zehnder.