



Benefits of balance

Entrepreneurs rediscover their personal lives

In a city like Calgary, which has all but redefined the word boom, there are niches to be filled and money to be made in every sector, and a large group of entrepreneurs has stepped up to accommodate. These business-savvy professionals are taking the world by storm and are reaping the benefits of their hard work—financial security, material goods, and success in their fields. While this may seem to be the ideal, too many entrepreneurs are investing everything in their professional lives and not enough in their personal lives. Adele Fox, Provisional Psychologist and Certified Imago Relationship Therapist, is helping entrepreneurs achieve better balance, which not only makes them happier personally but also more successful professionally.

For the past decade, Fox's work has run the gamut of mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, chronic pain, weight loss barriers, eating disorders, addiction, and relationships. When her own failed relationship made her look for answers, she found Imago Therapy, a process by which people learn to better understand their partners and make sense of their experiences in a way that helps both parties more effectively meet the other's needs. This therapy is gaining recognition, being touted by celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and Alanis Morissette for providing life-changing learnings. "I got in touch with an Imago Therapist and not only changed my personal relationship but completely altered every relationship I have," Fox says. She was so won over by the theories that she became trained in it and now uses Imago Therapy to counsel entrepreneurs in her south Calgary practice, MyndCare.

Entrepreneurs as a whole, she says, are a fascinating bunch. They are action-oriented problem solvers, are committed to change, highly creative, and possess a high tolerance for risk. "For a psychologist, it doesn't get any better," she says. These people commonly identify a problem and want to address it and are willing to put in the work necessary to achieve their goal. While these are valuable traits in business, it seems an entrepreneur's greatest assets at work are often his or her greatest liabilities in relationships. Entrepreneurs see a problem and take action to fix it; whereas in a personal relationship, there needs to be a more empathetic, emotional connection to achieve intimacy and effective communication.

For the past two years, Fox has focused her efforts on helping these motivated, successful people find that connection with those around them. Through Imago Therapy, entrepreneurs recognize that their personal relationships need attention, and she guides them through the process that will strengthen their bonds with others—whether these others are colleagues, employees, or spouses. In many cases, entrepreneurs have invested all of their energy in their businesses and suddenly find that material wealth isn't enough. They lack intimate wealth with their partner and often discover that they and their family seem to be living separate lives. Some entrepreneurs find themselves single and unable to find the right person.

After utilizing such therapies as Imago Therapy, many people are able to get their relationships on track and discover that their business tends to improve as a result. It's all a matter of understanding why we are attracted to certain people (who often possess charac-

teristics we lack) and changing to become better rounded. "What we don't realize is that we actually have to grow into those parts of ourselves that we're not so good at," says Fox. "I guide entrepreneurs and their spouses to see that they both have the ability to help their partner grow and develop greater intimacy and wholeness." That may mean tapping into their spontaneous or organized sides or attempting to be more laid back or assertive. This is also true when the partnership is a business one. Fox assists many entrepreneurs who have trouble connecting or communicating with their staff by working through ways to effectively interact and connect with other people.

Imago is a different type of therapy, and entrepreneurs appreciate its common-sense approach to relationships that calls into practice common business techniques—creating a vision, cultivating relationships, and achieving goals. For entrepreneurs, Imago is attractive because it provides concrete examples and exercises that lead them to find answers for themselves. And with the help of a practitioner like Fox, these answers can pave the way for a more fulfilling personal life and more successful business life.

As is the case with everyone, not just entrepreneurs, a key to fulfillment is achieving a balance between work and play. That may entail leaving the Blackberry at home and spending quality time with others, even if that time is limited. Entrepreneurs also need to make an effort to take an interest in the things that are important to their spouse—even if they themselves don't find those things terribly engaging or interesting. Success depends on listening and acknowledging a variety of perspectives. "As an entrepreneur, you look through a different set of lenses than the rest of us, and you need to be able to take a step back and realize that your partner is looking through entirely different lenses," Fox says. Couples don't always have to agree on everything—Fox says that conflict isn't bad but rather growth trying to happen—but they do have to listen and connect to have a meaningful relationship.

Entrepreneurs are an intriguing and often complicated breed of professionals; they often work hard all the time to achieve a high level of success. Many of them are now recognizing that business success is directly linked to personal success and are seeking out the services of psychologists to help balance their lives. "Entrepreneurs who are happily married or in love report an improved sense of self-esteem in their businesses and positive financial impacts," says Fox. Given the growth in her business, it seems that entrepreneurs in Calgary are taking heed and investing time and energy into balancing their lives.

—RENNAY CRAATS

Adele Fox



Childhood:

Born in the town of Drayton Valley, AB, Adele spent most of her upbringing in Edmonton.

Education:

Like many young, energetic youths Adele got some education while backpacking across Europe for three months when she was 18. She also attended both the University of Alberta and the University of Toronto.

Now:

When she isn't helping individuals and couples to experience their full aliveness and potential as one of only 2000 Imago Therapists, she is living in Priddis with her 4 horses, 2 dogs, 1 cat, and her fiancée.

Imago Therapy:

To be endorsed by Oprah is no small feat. Whether it's a book recommendation or an effective work out, the media mogul's pitch perfect taste has been showcased again and again over the past twenty or so years. Recently she listed her episode about Imago Therapy as one of her favorite episodes of all time. Although impossible to explain in brief, Imago Theory states we are damaged, usually inadvertently by our upbringing. We then look for people who have the short comings and strengths as our parents so that they can help us 'heal' what was broken in childhood. According to Imago Therapy, through counseling and different exercises, couples and individuals can become whole and see love for what is it, not just what the movies show. It worked for Oprah.