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Foreword

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Foreword

I first encountered the field of family law as an intern for Fung Peen more than a decade ago. What struck me then was the time he took to ascertain whether there was any possibility of saving the marriage when a client came to see him to discuss a potential divorce matter. Fung Peen often urged his clients to see a “doctor” that might save the marriage such as a counsellor, rather than an “undertaker” like himself. For him, it was not about maximising his billings or securing “victories” in court, but about ensuring that his clients had the best possible outcome for them. Yet in many cases, it was clear that there was no possibility of reconciliation between the couple and the role of the “undertaker” is an important one to ensure that the parties can move on with life with the least amount of acrimony and costs.

Family law goes beyond divorce cases, often requiring the family law practitioner to advise and assist on matters involving children and young persons, and protection orders. These can be some of the most challenging issues which a person can face and it is not always obvious to someone needing help that they can turn to the law for assistance in appropriate cases. This makes books like this one crucial in spreading the word that help is available, preventing a situation where people facing difficulties might have to suffer in silence.

Fung Peen’s first two books on Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) and Wills are excellent and informative reads, and he has proven himself to be a prolific author with this third book, *Family Matters*. His books always address important personal issues, presented in a manner that is easy for the layperson to digest. But it is this book that is likely to have the most immediate impact on the reader. It offers the wisdom and experience of 25 years of legal practice to help in the navigation of family law issues. For someone facing immense challenges such as family violence, children in trouble with the law, child abduction, or non-payment of maintenance, *Family Matters* is a starting point to understanding one’s options before seeking legal help.

Good family lawyers do not merely look at the relevant legal issues but also understand the need for therapeutic justice and collaborative lawyering. This approach is apparent throughout the pages of *Family Matters*, where Fung Peen’s sincere desire to help his clients achieve the best possible outcomes for them shines through. He emphasises the need to do one’s utmost to salvage and repair relationships and avoid acrimony even when things have broken down.

As we go through life, there will sometimes be moments where we need wise counsel and a reliable professional to stand by our side. Fung Peen is a solid rock in such situations, and we are blessed to have his wisdom in the form of a readily accessible text for us to read at our leisure.

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