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The Fast-Track Treadmill

To the Editor:

Your report on the Wharton study on the relationship between family priorities and income was misleading. The study found that respondents, especially men, who had attached high importance to a good family life when they were high school seniors had higher earnings 14 years later than those for whom family had not been a priority. From this, you concluded that the conventional wisdom about work-family conflicts and the need to work long hours to succeed may be incorrect.

But the study provides no support for this view. It does not compare hours worked with earnings, and it does not conclude that those who spend more time with their families earn more money. The study's conclusions are consistent with many studies that have shown that marriage and parenthood tend to result in an increased work commitment for men. For many parents, especially fathers, commitment to family is expressed through providing the financial security that comes from a successful career.

The people cited in your article worked long hours for their success. You do them a disservice by suggesting that their sacrifices for their families were a waste of time.

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