

IMMIGRANT LIVING: 101 AND BEYOND



MONETTE ADEVA MAGLAYA

MUCH of the economic woes we struggle with these days can be attributed to the impulse for instant gratification which Ameri-

Deferring Gratification

... So many of us define ourselves by what we have, what we wear, what kind of house we live in and what kind of car we drive ... If you think of yourself as the woman in the Cartier watch and the Hermes scarf, a house fire will destroy not only your possessions but yourself.

—Linda Henley

can society, through its powerful influence-peddling media and with the help of the internet, engenders without apology. Need or want something? You can have it immediately, with little or no

consequence. So the story line goes. By now, we know that's a brazen lie.

Experience has taught us that anything worthwhile takes perseverance, tough-minded discipline and the requisite time to see things through to fruition. Sadly, as many of us have found out while dealing with the heartbreak of foreclosures in a brutal recession, shortcuts often lead to short circuits.)

The practice of deferred gratification is a painful one. And who wants pain? It means letting go of the perceived whimsical, multiple yet tiny pleasures of the moment over a length of time in order to be in a financial position to afford the more significant purchases in one's life. It involves avoiding spending money on trivialities in order to save and accumulate substantial sums for the really important things in life—like being able to afford to have more time to do the things one likes to do: study, travel, paint, dance, write and a host of other things that one would have liked to do if there was time enough or the money to buy time. In the mundane world, it means quite simply, to be able to afford to buy what he believes to be important to his life, whatever

these may be.

Deferring gratification involves patience and sacrifice and having to make do without the things that one wants right at that moment. Our natural tendency is to get the things that we want right at this moment to satisfy a whim or placate that impatient part of ourselves—even if we have to go into debt to do it.

Most trailblazing, first generation immigrants who have had to start from scratch and have had to make do during the early part of their immigrant lives, do not have a problem with sacrifice. It is part of who they are and what has made them strong and resilient in the face of adversity. The supreme irony is that patience as a virtue is not something that is automatically, genetically passed down to young people. We all have a natural aversion for pain and sacrifice yet this feeling is strongest among the young ones in an affluent society.

Teaching a person to save and not spend all the money that he has in one fell swoop in consumable, useless, mere image-building, ego-satisfying items is done best at a very young age. Parents who succeed in teaching their children to save even small

amounts of money will have laid one of the basic foundations of building character in a young person.

The way to save money has always been to pay one's self first and accumulate small amounts prodigiously over a length of time. In the world of ordinary, earned money, it is not what you make that counts, it is what you get to keep.

Out of any amount earned, won or received, and before buying anything, a minimum of 10 percent is taken out and is socked away in a savings account that should earn interest. In some cultures, parents teach their children to put away 20% or more of whatever money their children receive. This account is maintained and added to on a regular basis and kept until it reaches a critical mass and can then be placed in fail safe financial instruments for longer terms that can earn compound interest. This practice teaches patience and a healthy respect for saving money over time and keeps a run-away consumer frame of mind in check.

Young people will be tempted to spend it all on one big purchase that they feel is something that they need. It is their money after all and they should be able to do so. Their decision to spend it all after they have taken the time and the effort to save it can provide them one valuable learning experience about how to make judgment calls when it comes to money. The idea is to start them thinking and developing the discipline of paying one's self first with any amount of money they earn or

receive as a gift. They will begin to regard small bits of money as tiny droplets that in time can form a pond or a lake that is ready to be tapped when a really important need arises.

One benefit of saved money is that when a rare opportunity arises for those in a position to take advantage of it, like a trained soldier in full battle gear, he can be at a vantage point to make a decision, act on it and score a hit. Picture making a strong, hard-to-resist offer on a house you really see yourself living in for the rest of your life and getting it on your terms. Saved money can act as a buffer against the unforeseen, such as losing one's job to help tide you over the rough spots until you find another. It can even serve as a welcome salve for an emotional downturn. Transitions are always tough. Money makes it easier to navigate. That Carnival cruise to the Caribbean can help soothe a broken heart.

A caveat is in order though: BALANCE IS THE KEY. It is quite possible to go to the deep end and become a soulless, dried-up old prune like Scrooge. There's just no sense being moneyed yet miserable.

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Mar, Korina seal engagement Filipino-style

by MARINEL CRUZ
Inquirer.net

"I THOUGHT I'd be single forever," Korina Sanchez, radio-TV personality, once told inquisitive entertainment journalists. "Then the right person came along at the right time."

The right time for her came five years ago, when she announced on her (now defunct) morning TV show on ABS-CBN, *Morning Girls*, that she was saying yes to a relationship. On the night of June 14, the right person, Senator Manuel "Mar" Roxas, formally asked for



Mar Roxas and Korina Sanchez

her hand in marriage in a traditional "pamamanhikan."

There was a three-hour program that involved much singing and dancing, and the groom-to-be was in the mood all evening for some good-natured ribbing.

Originally set June 6 but cancelled due to inclement weather, the "pamamanhikan"—when the groom's parents visit the bride's to seal the engagement—pushed through at the Sanchez home in Merville, Parañaque City. Since the bride-to-be's parents had both passed on, it was Korina's three brothers EG, Milano, and Mickey, who gave their blessing.

The Roxas family was led by the former Judy Araneta, mother of the groom-to-be. Mar is the grandson of the late President Manuel Roxas and son of the late Senator Gerardo Roxas.

A Mass was celebrated at 6 p.m. inside the 1,200-square-meter property at No. 19 Florida St. Pastor Nomer Bernardino, former spiritual adviser of Korina's mother Celia, gave an inspirational message.

The program, hosted by actor-comedian Epy Quizon, began at 8 p.m. Sanchez's nieces, Tyra and Maya, sang and played the violin.

Dinner was served under huge transparent tents that covered the lawn, around the bean-shaped pool. The tents were in anticipation of his off-key singing, Roxas joked.

The 52-year-old senator, dressed in a striped light-blue, buttoned-down shirt over black trousers, sang an old Tagalog love song to Korina. Comedians Tado and Jason Gainza accompanied Mar on the guitar.

The 44-year-old Korina, in a light-bronze sleeveless dress, joined in the singing. "To keep

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