

Excerpted from:  
*Trapped in the Family Business®: A Practical Guide to Understanding and Managing  
this Hidden Dilemma*, Second Edition, by Michael A. Klein, PsyD  
2018

Although nobody is born trapped in the family business, the seeds are often planted well before birth. Imagine the parent who thinks “having a family business will not only provide financial resources for my children, but also a job, a purpose, and prestige.” Those children already have their careers mapped out, complete with job, goals, and industry.

In some ways, working in the family business can be remarkably similar to being in an arranged marriage. There are many parts of the world (whether geographically or culturally) where it is understood and accepted that parents will choose their child’s mate. Elsewhere, the idea of an arranged marriage is highly unusual—the very concept may even be considered unfair and outdated.

Just as the tradition of arranged marriage has died out in many cultures, it is very likely that many will someday see “arranged occupations”—whereby parents control a child’s career path or job through employment in the family business—as old-fashioned, unjust, and inexcusable.

Through working with clients and conducting numerous interviews, I have identified twelve dynamics that explain how and why individuals can become, and remain, trapped in a family business. More than one dynamic is typically involved.

Below you will find comments from real people regarding a few of those twelve dynamics uncovered in my research:

Copyright 2012-2018 MK Insights LLC  
Available at Amazon and other online retailers

For more information about the book, as well as TFB programs and services, please visit:  
<http://trappedinthefamilybusiness.com>

## GUILT AND OBLIGATION

“I’m here because if this business goes under, my parents will have nothing, and I couldn’t live with that.”

“My brother would have no idea how to do what I do.”

“The only reason Dad paid for college was so I could help out in the business once I was done.”

“After my father passed away, my mother was in a crunch, so I needed to help out.”

## PRIDE

“I needed to prove to my parents that they were wrong about me—that I *could* run the business and be successful.”

“I put in so much time—I refuse to leave with my tail between my legs.”

“I wanted to show them they were right—that I was able to take the business to the next level.”

## FEAR

“How can I figure out what I really want to do with my life and, at the same time, deal with my family being mad at me? That’s too much to deal with.”

“I wouldn’t know what to do if my parents were angry or really disappointed with me.”

“I can’t really point to any one thing and say I am *proud* of that, because I was never given anything that difficult to do. I don’t think I could handle a real job.”

Copyright 2012-2018 MK Insights LLC  
Available at Amazon and other online retailers

For more information about the book, as well as TFB programs and services, please visit:  
<http://trappedinthefamilybusiness.com>