

**The Chinese are famous for their words of wisdom gathered from literature or uttered by philosophers or leaders over the centuries. And, although some are ancient, many of these proverbs still resonate and provide valuable guidance today.**

**As we start a new Chinese year, here are five proverbs to help with modern life**

**1. Different locks must be opened with different keys**

To overcome every problem we face in life requires a different set of skills. In a business context, or when managing relationships, it's important to recognise that a "one key fits all" approach won't work. Be flexible and face each new challenge with a fresh outlook and dig out the right tools.

**2. Dig the well before you are thirsty**

The message here is simple: plan ahead. Prepare for any eventuality before it occurs to avoid unwelcome scenarios.

**3. The longer the string, the higher the kite will fly**

Play the long game. Making a long-term plan, rather than rushing into things or expecting instant results, will reap benefits over time. In the digital age, many of us expect instant gratification – but remember – good things come to those who wait.

**4. Women hold up half the sky**

It was Chairman Mao who came up with this ode to women's equality. "Today men and women are equal," the communist leader also pronounced more than half a century ago. At a time when the pay gap and the treatment of women in the workplace has come into sharp focus, this resonates louder than ever.

**5. The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now**

Three meaning here. Don't put things off. If you want success and growth in the future, the best time to act is now. In addition, don't live in the past and talk about all the things you could or should have done. And read in a literal sense, this proverb has added poignancy. We need to act today to protect our planet from the effects of pollution, before it's too late.

Wishing you a happy Chinese New Year.

Gordon Fyfe



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