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Family Choices for the Career Woman in the Twenty-First Century

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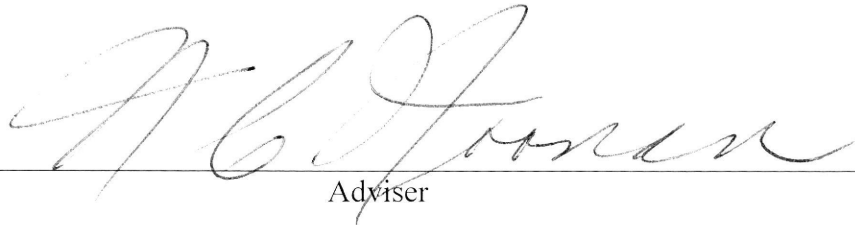
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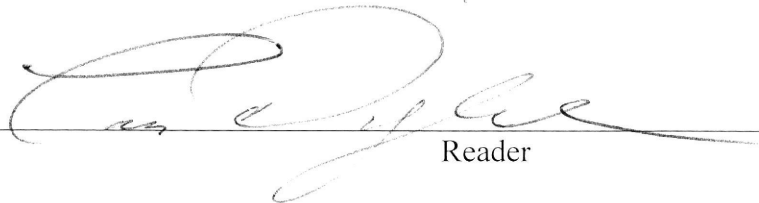
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For my father who encouraged me to dream, for my mother who showed me women could do anything,

and to my loving husband who is my partner in everything.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study poses the question, "Is it possible for the twenty-first century woman to successfully integrate career and family, and if so, how?" Feminine identity, role, and fulfillment are changing and continue to transform in modern society. Today the twenty-first century woman struggles to integrate career, family, and home successfully while understanding the passion or driving force in her life. This research explores gender roles in order to understand, update, and find order in a chaotic world. Feminist thought and chaos theory are examined to see whether or not it is possible to integrate family and career in the new millennium, what prevents integration, and what is needed for integration to be successful. The women's movement, scholarly articles, and modern case studies are explored in this study. The answers lie in helping each woman understand her purpose, discover what really matters to her, and then use this information to lead a purposeful life that impacts the world around her.

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Introduction

This study explores the question, "How can women approach the integration of family and career?" More women in 2009 are breaking the glass ceiling and entering the executive level workforce where they are in competition with their male counterparts for management positions and promotions. One of the most significant differences between executive level men and women is that a male executive may often have a wife at home to act as his partner; she manages the domestic realm so that he is able to focus fully on his performance at work. Women, on the other hand, as they climb their career ladders into high level positions of compensation and responsibility, may be missing an equivalent domestic partner. Often husbands and wives disagree about who will take the lead role in caring for family and home. As a result, some women are choosing non-traditional options and remaining childless, and/or unmarried.

Using a qualitative method of research and reviewing literature from the 1960s to 2009, this study explores the necessary elements for integrating a career and family in the twenty-first century. In searching for answers the study explores the dilemma women face in determining their wants and needs in a society where almost anything is possible, but doing everything leaves women overworked and stressed.

This study focuses on American women of work and child-bearing age. Income is not a direct factor in the study although the issues of professional and executive level careers are emphasized (and the implicit compensation of such levels). While every woman is unique, the study will seek to identify the common patterns that emerge. This study uses feminist thought and chaos theory to gain an understanding of the point from which women in American society journeyed and then reviews contemporary scholarly research and case studies to gain a perspective on where the woman is now in her role in society. The journey begins over two generations ago with the women's movement.

Literature Review

There is a growing trend of discontent in the lives of career women who feel pressure to achieve as much as possible professionally, and have found that at times the priority of career advancement ultimately sacrifices a personal life and the opportunity to have a family. It is wonderful to have so many open doors of opportunity for women, many available for the first time in modern society; however, one has to examine whether or not there has to be a choice between having a family and career. It may be possible for women to be successful in both arenas. For the women who have forgone raising children to focus on career, the question that arises later in life is whether or not the sacrifice was worth it. Men and women are by nature different and both uniquely skilled to do many things. The study seeks to understand if professional fulfillment somehow takes the place of the deeply ingrained desire for a woman to use her most unique capability-- to bare children. If it is possible to have both family and career, then the study seeks to understand what is needed in a woman's life that is missing in 2009. Lastly, as the corporate environment continues to change, the study reviews new work-life options that are available and in need of further exploration. These questions are the basis of the literature review that follows.

How Do Companies Impact a Woman's Choice to Start a Family?

According to the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), the United States economy has been in recession since December 2007 (NBER, 2008). Over 7 million people have lost their jobs since the recession began (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009). These jobs losses have occurred across the employment sectors, although almost half of these jobs have been lost in construction and manufacturing, industries that traditionally employ men (Boushey, H. & Kazzi, N., 2009). Men are losing three out of every four jobs lost over the course of the recession (Boushey, H., 2009).

With the current economic recession, it is now more important than ever for companies to re-evaluate their work-life policies as male-dominated employment areas are seeing the most significant

loss of jobs (Chatzky, 2009). According to Jean Chatzky (2009), the recession is forcing a change in attitude about employment. Chatzky (2009) wrote that economic changes are spurring role reversals in men and women that up until recent times were changing only gradually.

Women can explore their employer's work-life policies for support and negotiate their schedules to work around their family needs instead of the opposite. According to an interview conducted by Klemond (2009), Joyce Noral, vice president and chief human resources officer at Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, discussed from a human resources perspective what happens in employee-employer negotiations: "I think in the HR role you are often on the fence trying to do what's best for the organization as well as the employee" (p. 11B). When the family needs of the employee are not in conflict with company policy, and allow the employee to take care of home so she can fully focus on work, then both the employee and employer have a win-win situation.

On an annual basis, *Working Mother* (2006) magazine compiles a list entitled, "Working Mother 100 Best Companies," listing how each company is supportive to working mothers. Profiled in the October, 2006 issue, Wells Fargo Bank was recognized for the third consecutive year for creating a work environment that is welcoming to all women, including working mothers (workingmother.com, 2006). Avid Modjtabi, head of Corporate Human Resources for the bank was quoted saying: "The most significant part of being a working mother is having an employer that works with your needs to provide the best possible environment. We focus on supporting our female team members- who make up more than 62 percent of the company- through every stage in life, whether they are making a career move, starting a family, going back to school, or sending their children to school" (workingmother.com, 2006). Businesses that incorporate policies that recognize their employees as whole people with obligations outside of their position descriptions and who foster a work environment that creates solutions to help team members achieve personal and professional success are more likely to retain their employees and receive increased levels of job performance and efficiency.

Company-sponsored mentoring programs show that companies care about the personal and professional development of individuals (Blake-Beard as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). For women, *who* you know is as important as *what* you know. Proctor and Gamble (P&G) and Deloitte & Touche (D&T) are two Fortune 500 companies that have developed successful mentoring programs for their employees. P&G has the Mentor Up program in which senior male executives mentor junior women.

D&T developed the Initiative for the Retention and Advancement of Women (WIN) in response to the challenges they faced in retaining well qualified women who struggle with work-life integration and motherhood (Coughlin et al., 2005). D&T's WIN program continually made headlines in 2009, receiving accolades as they announced a historical milestone when their workforce surpassed one thousand women partners, principals, and directors (Deloitte Development, LLC., 2009). Working Mother Magazine listed D&T in it's Working Mother's 100 Best list (2009) and for the fourth consecutive year named D&T a 2009 Best Company for Multicultural Women largely for the contribution of their WIN program (Deloitte Development, LLC., 2009).

According to Joyce Roche, Girls Incorporated President & CEO: "Deloitte's efforts to improve the workplace environment for women have been outstanding. The firm admirably came to terms with its need to provide a more equitable culture for the career advancement of women nearly ten years ago, and this decision and commitment has produced numerous benefits for female professionals and role models for girls across the country" (Business Wire, 2001). Douglas M. McCracken, Chairman of Deloitte & Touche and Chief Executive Officer of Deloitte Consulting, acknowledged:

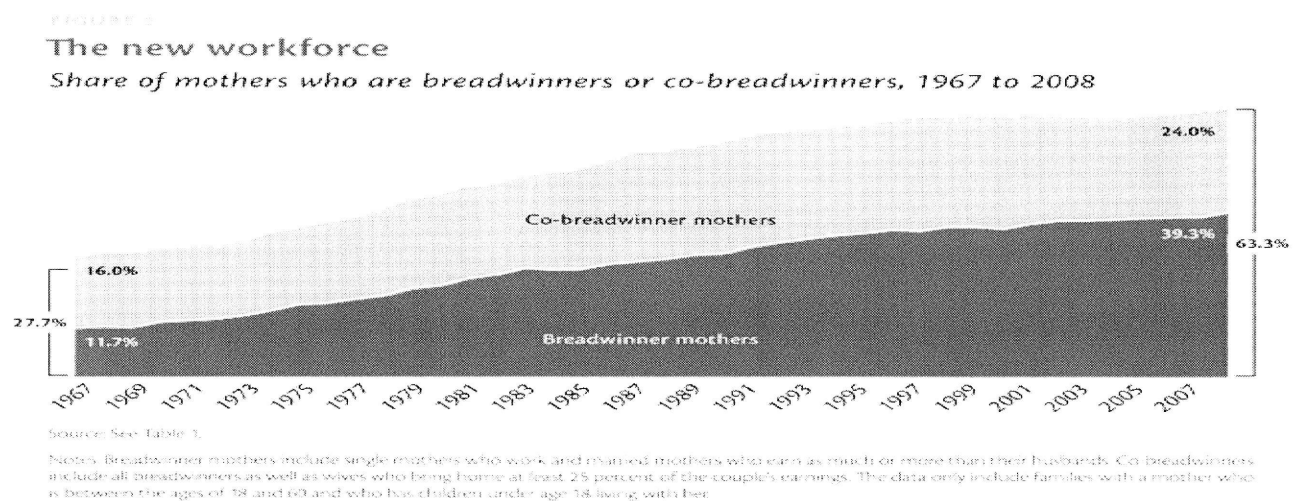> The culture change driving career equity for women had not been easy, but represented a pivotal event in the life of our firm. The cultural transformation that began with the Women's Initiative has grown over the decade of the 1990s and produced positive improvements in the culture for all the people of Deloitte & Touche/Deloitte Consulting. Attracting, retaining, and developing skilled professionals and astute leaders is a business

imperative at our firm and a competitive advantage. We believe that this multifaceted

commitment has created a workforce in which all of our people—men and women—feel

valued and respected, and in which everyone is given the opportunity to succeed.

(Business Wire, 2001)

The Women's Initiative and Mass Career Customization were cited as engines for innovation in *The*

Shriver Report: A woman's nation changes everything where D&T was praised as a model employer

(Deloitte Development, LLC., 2009). *The Shriver Report* takes an in-depth look at what changes need

to occur now that women make up half of the U.S. workforce. The report shows how businesses and the

U.S. government can collaborate to adapt and benefit from the increasing number of women in careers.

D&T emerged through *The Shriver Report* research as the trendsetter for what the workplace should

resemble in the new millennium (Deloitte Development, LLC, 2009).

Women and family-friendly programs are receiving major attention in the business world as a result

of the increase of women in former male-dominated careers. The increase of mothers who earn an

income from 1967 to 2008 is illustrated in the following:

FIGURE 1

The new workforce
Share of mothers who are breadwinners or co-breadwinners, 1967 to 2008

Source: See Table 1.

Notes: Breadwinner mothers include single mothers who work and married mothers who earn as much or more than their husbands. Co-breadwinners include all breadwinners as well as wives who bring home at least 25 percent of the couple's earnings. The data only include families with a mother who is between the ages of 18 and 60 and who has children under age 18 living with her.

(U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009)

The graph above comes from information gathered by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and used in a

study by Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress entitled *The Shriver Report: A woman's*

nation changes everything. To further explain how the above data impacts the modern workplace Boushey and O'Leary explained:

> Now for the first time in our nation's history, women are half of all U.S. workers and mothers are the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American families. This is a dramatic shift from just a generation ago (in 1967 women made up only one-third of all workers)… It fundamentally changes how we all work and live, not just women but also their families, their co-workers, their bosses, their faith institutions, and their communities. (Boushey & O'Leary, 2009)

According to Brad Harrington and Jamie Ladge (2009), career women comprise over 50 percent of the talent pool that the business world draws from. Based on this changing workforce, the authors argued that companies should prioritize the creation of a work environment that satisfies the work-life needs of their employees (Harrington and Ladge, 2009).

Before the issues for women in the new millennium can be further examined, it is important to understand how the current framework has evolved. Many of the family and career practices popular for women in 2009 are a result of the changes their mothers made during the post World War II Women's Movement. This era and its influence on the frame of mind of the modern career woman are analyzed next.

How the Conflict between Family and Career has Evolved for Women since World War II

This section explores the changes over time women have experienced in choosing between work and family; how the choices have changed, and the impact the last generation has had on feminine ideals in 2009. After World War II, there was an adjustment of the male-female role when men returned from the war to work in industry, and many women who made up a major portion of the labor market during the war returned to work at home as wives and mothers (Friedan, 1963). In the 1950s male and female gender roles were more clearly defined in urban American society than they appear to be in 2009. Men

worked to earn a living, women took care of domestic work, and children went to school to learn how to be good citizens.

On the surface, male-dominated society functioned well; however, legal vulnerability left women few opportunities to reach their full potential. The women's movement that emerged in American society came about as a result of the unhappiness women felt leading up to the mid-twentieth century. The early women's movement occurred during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Both focused on the fundamental, individual rights of all humans, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender.

The civil rights and women's movements responded to the unhappiness and injustice in society, seeking to create a social ideal where members could achieve personal fulfillment, happiness, and success through equal treatment and opportunity under the law. Betty Friedan (1963) depicted the climate of unrest that sparked the need for a feminist revolution:

> The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone…she was afraid to ask even herself the silent question: "Is this all?" (p. 81)

Friedan (1963) described the women's movement as an answer to women who lacked an identity outside of their role of pleasing men, yet longed to ask the questions "Who am I? What do I want?" Women had stopped growing and were unable to realize their full potential. The "feminine mystique" is Friedan's concept that women cannot be fulfilled through their relationship identity alone (e.g. Tom's wife, Sara's mom). A woman needed to also have a strong self- identity. Friedan (1963) believed the core of the feminine issue was a problem of, "identity- a stunting or evasion of growth" (p.81) that was caused by the confusion surrounding feminine identity.

Although Friedan did not know for certain what the American family would resemble with a liberated woman at its center, she foresaw a time when women in the future would change or leave their

domestic roles behind forever shifting the traditional feminine identity. In response to the change in definition of family values resulting from the women's movement, Friedan (1963) predicted:

> There might be a renaissance of mutual commitment and responsibility between the sexes. There will also be a growing acceptance by our whole society of enormous diversity and patterns of family life. There are many ways of loving, there are many ways of parenting that are good ways. We cannot impose just one way. (p. 104)

If the women's movement from fifty years ago is used as a baseline, then how would this baseline impact feminist thought in the twenty-first century? According to Friedan, there is not a one-size-fits-all answer. Friedan (1997) suggested the need for a new paradigm, a basic restructuring of our economy that counters gender income inequality. In a workplace where women equal men in number and authority and share in parenting, Friedan called for an increase in work/family sensitivity.

What the Women's Movement Did and Did Not Accomplish for African-American Women

Most women are affected by gender inequality; some are impacted by racism as well. The benefits of rights under law in the 1960s affect women differently when race and ethnicity are factored into the equation. Next the impact on a growing sub-group of career women is explored in relation to the women's movement and changing opportunities. The issue of feminine identity conflicting with traditional family values occurred even earlier in American history with African-American women. Since the entry of Africans in the American workforce through the U.S. slave trade, African-American women have not had a choice to be stay-at-home mothers or women who work. Several factors including federal and state law, classism, poverty, and segregation resulted in a legacy of African-American women working to survive rather than for exploring their educational goals or professional dreams (Freeman, Bourque, and Shelton, 2001). For the majority of African-American women, full-time work has not prevented this sub-group from becoming mothers or wives.

Patricia Collins (2000) explained that in the mid-twentieth century, while most suburban white women were upholding traditional family values by being housewives and caregivers to their children, black women were working outside the home in domestic arenas as maids, cleaning ladies, and nannies to suburban white families. As a result, African-American women became "less feminine" because they worked for pay (and thus competed with men) and spent the majority of their time outside the home and away from their children (Collins, 2000).

From the era of U.S. slavery until the women's movement fifty years ago, "work" for African-American women has been traditionally seen in American society as both physically challenging and outwardly demeaning in nature. While women similar to Friedan's experience dreamed of a day when they could be free to pursue a career, African-American women continued to view work as a "demoralizing" necessity of survival for themselves and their families (Collins, 2000).

The professional outlook for African-American women is improving although many challenges remain. According to Freeman, Bourque, and Shelton (2001): "Among the professions there has been an influx of people of color, although the top ranks of the professions are still dominated by white males . . . for African-Americans to assume leadership positions, they must overcome several appreciable obstacles" (p. 12).

Although black women have had the additional challenge illustrated above of undoing the negative connotation paid labor has carried in their lives for so long, they still benefited along with their white female counterparts from the women's movement that resulted in an equal right to pursue opportunities traditionally only available to a small segment of white male society. To explain this concept further, Collins wrote:

> When it comes to knowledge, African-American women's empowerment involves rejecting the dimensions of knowledge that perpetuate objectification . . . and exploitation. African-American

women . . . become empowered when they understand and use . . . dimensions of their

individual, group, and formal educational ways of knowing to foster humanity. (p. 289)

According to Patricia Parker (2005), African-American women who work in corporate America contribute important methods of management through their diverse ways of gathering information before decision making. Related woman-centered themes that have entered the workplace include interactive leadership, empowerment of employees, openness in communication, leadership through cross-cultural communication, and participative decision making (Parker, 2005). The diversity women bring to management is an invaluable contribution to the future of corporations. It is in corporate America's best interest to encourage women to remain in the workforce and offer assistance in overcoming obstacles to their participation (Northouse, 2007).

African-American women had a physical head start in the world of work that the women's movement helped further by opening doors that were previously closed for employment. However, the mental stigma left behind by centuries of underpaid, devalued, or forced labor has left some black women hesitant to explore the new opportunities afforded them. African-American women also have to compete to qualify for positions where their white counterparts may have more education or financial resources for formal training and less economic disadvantage in finding reliable childcare.

The women's movement helped African-American women, but now that African-American women have an opportunity to obtain higher level and higher paying employment, for the first time some are choosing not to become mothers opting instead to find inner fulfillment from their professional and philanthropic pursuits (perhaps like Oprah Winfrey).

There is still work to be done in the black family to adjust to new opportunities. Women of all races are quickly learning that the notion of "having it all" comes at a price. Women wake up in 2009 to a dawn where more options exist than time allows. The popular solution is to find a way to balance it all.

For all women regardless of race, the issues have definitely evolved since the beginning of the women's movement.

The Modern Women's Goal to Have it All and the End Result

If it is possible to have both a quality family life and fruitful career, then the factors preventing women in 2009 from achieving success in both are examined next. This section of the study analyzes the new concept of *integration* as a replacement for the popular notion of balance as a possible state for career women to strive to achieve. Women in the 1960s and 1970s fed up with wearing the apron but lacking vocational options for "paying jobs," idealized a day where women would have choice. They foresaw a time where opportunities would abound and women could contribute their talents and ambitions and finally gain the recognition they deserve.

A generation ago, the future was envisioned as one of fulfillment when women would finally have it all. Never was the notion of "having it all" synonymous with *doing it all*. Women in the 1960s were not bored because of a lack of things to do. On the contrary, keeping up the domestic realm was a full-time job. Yet somehow women knew their full potential would never be realized with such limits imposed on their activities. Somewhere along the way doors began to open, and women marched right through them.

Phyliss Moen and Patricia Roehling (2005) explained that the traditional homemaker gender role for women has not been replaced by American society's contemporary view on gender. For most women, successful careers and advanced education did not replace the desire to marry and have a family.

The downside for women is that 2009 gender roles at home have not kept pace with equal opportunity in the workplace. Support in the domestic realm is greatly lacking. Men are more apt to emotionally support a woman's decision to have a career, especially since the majority of families could not live comfortably on one income. When the time comes to clean the house, somehow the male mind often reverts to the age old adage: "That's women's work." If a woman is fortunate to have an

understanding partner, her husband or domestic partner often offers to "help out." Even the notion of "helping" infers the majority of the responsibility remains on the shoulders of the woman.

In the traditional, post World War II, American household, men were the primary breadwinners and women were the homemakers and child-rearers (Moen & Roehling, 2005). In 2006, women made up almost half of the workforce, but men had not picked up the slack in the domestic arena by becoming stay-at-home-dads. There have been obvious repercussions that resulted from this shift in family life.

Unfortunately, the societal ideal of gender is a slow moving vehicle which takes a long time to change (Moen & Roehling, 2005). If a husband does not understand the purpose of his wife, then he is bound to abuse her role in the family (Munroe, 2001). Wives are equal partners to their husbands in a marriage as much as they are as equally capable as their male counterparts in the workforce. The notion that men have no contribution to make in childrearing or housekeeping is outdated and unrealistic. Unfortunately for women, when they are the only willing partner to respond to the real life needs of the family, suffer from this imbalance, because they end up working two full-time jobs at home and in their careers. Women must learn not to enable these outdated gender roles by picking up the slack and attempting to play both the male and female gender roles like some kind of super woman.

Women are not without blame. Both men and women, when they become parents, continue to socialize the next generation of adults into accepting outdated gender roles while they are still children. This is evident in the child's world in the toys they play with, the clothes they wear, the movies they watch, and even their language in describing boys and girls. When children are raised in a household without a father or male role model, gender roles can become confused. In these cases male and female children see their mother doing everything a man and woman would normally accomplish as a team, and the children grow up with no point of reference to learn how men and women work together to take care of the needs of the family.

Moen and Roehling (2005) illustrated that the homemaker role is not less important when both the

husband and wife work full-time outside of the home. The breakdown of the American family, demonstrated by the increasing divorce rate, is a result of the male-female failure to adapt to the changing needs of the family together as partners (Moen & Roehling, 2005).

In an essay entitled, "With Children: Leading an Integrated Life," Susan Brady and Gabriella Salvatore discussed a point in their lives where they felt they faced a paradox between their desire to advance as leaders professionally while satisfying their "deep devotion" to loving and being available to nurture their children (Brady & Salvatore as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). The authors specialize professionally in the successful integration of work and family. Brady and Salvatore networked with other working mothers and yet they felt dissatisfied with the aging concept of balance:

> We have come to believe that the discussion [of balance] deserves a new paradigm. The term *continual integration*, as opposed to balance, allows for a more complex conversation [for working mothers]. Life is moving so quickly; the demands on our time have only increased since having children, and the notion of a state of balance is what seemed so challenging-- as if when we arrive at this desired state, we'll be OK, less stressed, and even happier. (Brady & Salvatore as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005, p. 151)

The concept of integration could be the missing link for women in 2009. Brady and Salvatore have emphasized blending seemingly competitive forces instead of trying to juggle them (Brady & Salvatore as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). Through integration, a woman is able to progress towards personal and professional goals. Balance suggests a stopping point or stillness (so as not to upset the scales).

Despite the challenges for executive working mothers, many women are not satisfied with just their managerial and professional identity; they have a deep-seated desire to experience motherhood and fulfill the essence of their feminine nature and capability (Douglas & Michaels, 2004; Ireland, 1993; Safer, 1996). If balance or the juggling of many roles is found to be mentally and emotionally

unrealistic for women, then physical consequences are likely to result from this prolonged unhealthy state of being as well.

The Health Consequences of Overwork for Women

This section examines the impact on a woman's health as career and family demands increase. A common regret for women who attempt to have it all is the negative physical consequences they experience as overstress and poor health lead to women of working age now being at the highest risk for heart related illness and death (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

On average, women (regardless of full-time, part-time, or employment demographic) complete about two-thirds of the household work. This point is further developed in the following quote, "Married women who work for pay average about thirty-three hours of housework per week. Married men who are employed do fourteen to eighteen hours of housework a week" (Babcock & Laschever, 2003, p. 180). With statistics supporting the disproportionately heavy work load falling on women, it is no wonder that a growing number of career women in 2009 delay or opt out completely from the traditional role of wife or mother. Faced with such a lack of support, many women may see the benefits of leading a successful career or business as more appealing than motherhood.

A study of 3,800 men and women concluded that paid employment is associated with reduced depression among both husbands and wives, demonstrating in general that employment is a healthy choice. Successful integration is the key to experiencing good health, peace and fulfillment in a woman's career endeavors (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

Lenore Weitzman (1992) estimated that a woman's standard of living decreases by 73 percent on average after divorce while a man's standard of living on average increases by 42 percent after divorce. A woman's health and stress level is directly affected by the support (or lack thereof) she receives in the domestic realm, especially when she is a single or divorced mother. Census data show that close to 85 percent of all divorced women receive no alimony support (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

Finding a work-life solution can have a direct impact on a woman's health and longevity. In a study conducted on excessive stress and the differences of stress hormones produced in working men and women, researchers periodically measured the blood pressure and norepinephrine levels of managers during the day (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). (Norepinephrine was chosen because the hormone responds rapidly to changes in stress.) The study found that male manager's blood pressure and stress hormone levels dropped dramatically at five P.M. but the women manager's levels actually increased dramatically as they turned their attention from their "first-shift" jobs to their "second-shift" responsibilities as wives and mothers (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). "Chronic elevation of blood pressure caused by norepinephrine secretion . . . is a significant risk factor for heart disease, the number one killer of women" (Austin, 2000, p. 186). The findings on the health consequences of stress are alarming, but the concept of the female "second shift" is no news for working mothers.

Not all women want to have a family, and some stay-at-home mothers may ask the question, "Why work?" In *Enlightened Power,* Hermia Ibarra described a study where the women questioned reported that working is part of providing for their families so their children can reap the benefits of a higher family income, and that working and being a mother leads to intellectual stimulation, self-expression, rewards and recognition (Ibarra as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). The focus group explained that their "dual lives" make sense for them when their work is exciting and engaging, because their intellect and creativity is exercised at a greater extent at work than at home.

For other women who want to enjoy career and family, a solution is to have both by focusing on one or the other during separate stages in life.

The Pros and Cons of the "Mommy Track"

This section explores whether or not professional fulfillment is taking the place of a woman's deeply ingrained desire to bare children. Women who want to have both a career and family have at times

separated the two by focusing on one for a period and then switching to focus on the other, a concept that is known as the "mommy track."

The "mommy track" has recently taken on a negative connotation because of the perception that (a) women who leave work until their children enter school will return to find that their careers have stalled and that only entry-level positions are available to them or that (b) women choose or are only offered positions that do not lead to promotion in the event that they become pregnant and need to take significant time away from their careers to raise children (Belkin, 2003). Research from the *Wall Street Journal* supports the argument that women who take time off from their careers find re-entry difficult and are typically offered lower level positions then the ones they left (Wadman, 1992). According to Freeman, Bourque, and Shelton (2001): "Women now account for more than 40 percent of corporate middle managers . . . on the other hand, women account for little more than 5 percent of top executive positions" (p. 28). With these odds women are less incented to leave their positions (and chances of advancement) for even a short period of time to rear their children.

Eleven executive women were interviewed in a study of female managers transitioning into working motherhood. The study explored the decision making process and lifestyle changes women go through as they leave the workforce during maternity leave and then re-enter their careers if they choose to return. The women were chosen because as career women they had a variety of factors to consider (e.g., professional reputation, feminine roles, work opportunities, and career moves) as they became mothers and faced work-life issues for the first time (Martin, 1990; Mock & Bruno, 1994; Schwartz, 1989). The timing of pregnancy, negotiating maternity leave and childcare remain issues for working mothers. Identity and role struggles are additional problems managerial women face when their careers and their traditional female roles seem at war (Jamieson, 1995; Martin, 1990; Mock & Bruno, 1994; Schwartz, 1989). Research shows that women face greater tension and experience more emotional complexity when their identities expand to include motherhood (Allen, 2004; Hooks, 2000). The greatest concern

occurs with women who work for rigid organizations that view motherhood and career as incongruent because child-rearing constitutes a disruption in the "normal" (masculine) career course, work, and time expenditure (Fondas, 1995; Gallos, 1989; Marshall, 1989, 1995; Perlow, 1998).

One solution for women is to network with people in their professions who have hiring capability or influence so they may have an easier time staying connected to their careers even if they take time away to raise young children. Working mothers should also establish and utilize a "Mommy Network" of friends, family, and members of the community to form mutually beneficial relationships for their childcare needs and also the transition back to their career paths (Coughlin et al., 2005).

Stacy Blake-Beard (2005) emphasized the importance of mentorship in a woman's support system (Blake-Beard as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). Many women choose to spend a few years away from the workplace in order to focus on a new family. Mentors assist in career advancement and can also keep women connected professionally when they take time away.

The U.S. government can help the situation by offering employers incentive to provide women family-friendly policies and benefits:

> The United States is the only industrialized country without any requirement that employers provide paid family leave and without nationwide government-sponsored paid family leave. The U.S. government offers no federal subsidy for employers who provide family and medical leave—unlike existing government tax subsidies for employer-provided health care and pension savings programs. As a result, 74 percent of all civilian workers have access to health benefits and 71 percent have access to retirement benefits, but only 9 percent of all civilian workers have access to dedicated paid family leave.
>
> (U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2009)

Another solution and a new movement in the political arena, the Care Giver Campaign, focuses on the unrecognized unpaid labor of childrearing and its contribution to the economic sustainability of

American society (caregivercredit.org, 2009). Gloria Steinem is on the Board of Trustees for the Caregiver Tax Credit, a credit that stay-at-home mothers could claim on their taxes for the unpaid labor hours they spend on raising their dependent children (caregivercredit.org. 2009). According to Steinem (2004): "Fortunately we have smart inventive feminists, like Theresa Funiciello, who has figured out that we can attribute an economic value at replacement value of all the work done in the home, all the care giving . . . to give that an economic value and make it deductible from our income tax" (Steinem, 2004). From the campaign's website:

> The Caregiver Credit Campaign recognizes the importance and value of unpaid and
> under-paid care work inside and outside the home. If caregivers take time off paid work,
> remain out of the marketplace, or leave a paying job, it costs; just as it costs to hire or pay
> an alternative such as daycare. (caregivercredit.org, 2009)

The above credit, if passed, would convert the Child Tax Credit to a Caregiver Tax Credit to cover care of adults and children and it would greatly benefit mothers who choose to opt out of employment in favor of raising their children at home. In many countries the cost of hiring domestic help is minimal and a necessary expense when both parents are wage earners. The majority of American families do not have the disposable income to afford the expense of hired help (i.e. a cleaning service or live-in nanny). The sacrifice of one income to have a parent stay home is often the more cost effective option; however, the tax benefit mentioned above could make a substantial difference for U.S. families. Some progress has been made with the current administration:

> President Obama's economic recovery package included a serious investment in child
> care and early education, targeting funding to low-income families. It provided more than
> $5 billion in child care and early-education funding that went directly into the hands of
> families to purchase child care, and directly to communities to improve their child care
> and preschool programs. Nonetheless, child care and early-education funding are still far

from universally available, even to the families who need it the most. (O'Leary &
Kornbluh, 2009)

Working together, the U.S. government and private employers can make an enormous impact on the career woman's ability to integrate family and work responsibilities.

Alternate Choices for Family and Career in the Twenty-first Century

This section reviews some new options available for career women that deserve further exploration. The study examines how women can yield new and improved results through negotiation, partnering, and focusing on what is important to them. Many women, even with additional economic support, may choose to pursue a professional career because of the non-economic benefits employment offers. Many working mothers enjoy the sense of achievement and public notice they receive for their professional accomplishments (Coughlin et al., 2005). Ibarra (2005) described how to examine life and find a personal pathway to power (Ibarra as cited in Coughlin et al., p. 199). Ibarra asked the question: "What do you [women] want?" The author focused on women who find themselves discontented at mid-career (between approximately thirty-five and forty years old) although the research pertains to younger women as well (Ibarra as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005).

Ibarra challenged the status quo that pits "high powered corporate life" against the "mommy track" (Ibarra as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). Instead of viewing their choice as being either a mother or a professional, Ibarra suggested women should think critically about what is important in life, what has personal heart and meaning, and what they cannot live without. The essay asserts that women who want a family, happy children, *and* time to enjoy both career and home should be asking themselves, "How can I incorporate what's important in my life?" versus trying to choose which option to eliminate (Ibarra as cited in Coughlin et al., 2005). As noted earlier in the research, integration is a method of finding fulfillment in family life and career. Integration can also lead to empowerment for women when they use this method to discover what is really important to them.

Motherhood has traditionally been full-time work that receives rare recognition. Often women feel more obligated than men to justify their desire to work and be a parent even with the U.S. workforce demographics that demonstrate that 60 percent of women over the age of sixteen are employed and 73 percent of mothers with children under the age of eighteen are employed (U.S. Department of Labor, 2004). Research suggests negotiation as being an important exercise for women to undertake when they find themselves competing with the traditional expectation of women to be responsible for the majority of the domestic duties in the family (Coughlin et al., 2005).

When negotiating with domestic partners, women have to be clear that they are not seeking "help." What career women need is fair and equal coordination of the domestic needs of the home. To accomplish this goal, women and men must clarify roles and responsibilities and set expectations at home for who will do what when (Coughlin et al., 2005). The transition from asking for "help" to expecting an equal and fair contribution from husbands and domestic partners has made progress but is far from complete. Gloria Steinem spoke in a speech, "Leaps of Consciousness,"

> . . . in our [women] dependent stage-- we're doing work in the home. In our independent stage we're saying men have to do it, too. And, you know, let's face it. We're nowhere near "even" into this stage, much less through it. But I think, at the same time, we [women] are beginning to understand that the work that is done in the home has to be counted as productive, important work in the world and given an economic value. 40 percent of the productive work done in this country is work done in the home, and it is completely invisible in the gross national product. (Steinem, 2004)

Linda Babcock and Sara Laschever defined the heart of the matter as being that women simply do not ask for higher salaries, advanced positions, or for help at home (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). Although many women are natural advocates for others, Babcock and Laschever suggest the major hindrance of women not advocating for themselves is their lack of comfort in negotiating for their

personal needs (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

There were more than one hundred interviews completed in the research conducted by Babcock (2003). Interviewees were comprised of graduate students entering the workplace, professional men and women in all aspects of the American workforce, and stay-at-home mothers (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). According to Babcock and Laschever, the main reason why women do not ask for help is simply fear. Fear is no simple matter. Babcock's surveys support the hypothesis that women experience apprehension and discomfort more than men when considering negotiation often to the point of completely disabling their ability to negotiate (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). The lack of negotiation in women inhibits their professional and personal growth in both tangible and intangible ways. According to Coughlin (2005), before employers are expected to be flexible in their policies, and spouses are expected to contribute equally, women must first develop their comfort level in expressing their needs to others (Coughlin et al., 2005). Negotiating something as simple as the starting salary in a woman's first professional position can potentially produce a gain of over half a million in her career lifespan (Babcock & Laschever, 2003). Furthermore, many employers expect initial salary negotiation, and lose respect for their female employees who do not assert their worth in the beginning of the relationship, which can have a lasting negative professional impact (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

Babcock and Laschever (2003) explained why women do not negotiate by looking at their social conditioning. In the female mind, negotiation is often perceived as equal to conflict. A woman's inherent desire to maintain relationships at the cost of her individual gain drives her to compromise before playing hardball. Career women have to psychologically recondition their upbringing by realizing that negotiation does not equal competition. With the rise in the percentage of single mothers who rely on one income to support their children, salary negotiation is especially important to ensure their families are provided for.

A new Families and Work Institute study on gender in the workplace found that the share of duel-earner family income contributed by women rose to 44 percent (as cited in NY Daily News, Chatzky, 2009). About 26 percent of women now earn 10 percent or more than their husbands. The findings also show that men are spending more time with their young children, and 59 percent report work/life conflict. Chatzky (2009) suggested that when roles are reversed at home between husband and wife managing expectations and attitude makes all the difference. By establishing priorities and making choices that reflect what matters most; understanding that it is not humanly possible to do everything, and trying will only leave women burned out, families are able to persevere through the changes.

Before women can utilize their relationships they should first get comfortable with setting boundaries and learning how to say "No" and not allowing the feeling of guilt to manipulate them into conceding their decision when they should hold their ground. Understanding limits and setting the expectation women are not the "default" for everyone and every need enables women to concentrate on their goals and achieve success at home, in relationships, and at work.

At times the new pattern to recognize is not new at all. Women can learn to be intentional in using the character traits that come natural to them in order to further their needs and agenda. By drawing on a woman's ability to form and maintain relationships, she can create a pattern of partnering and networking to accomplish her goals.

Turning Chaos into Empowerment for Women

This section examines how women can confront their fears to change their mindsets and discover new ways to impact their families, organizations, and communities. Margaret Wheatley explained that there are two types of order in society; order that is imposed through direction and control (the former male-dominant form of society) and order that arises through the concept of self-organization (London, 2007). Self-organization is a phenomenon in life derived from chaos theory in which complex, well-ordered systems are formed through the repetition of very simple patterns that are continually changing.

Wheatley explains that old thoughts about the world will not move society into the future people desire, because people and systems have to be constantly recreating and defining themselves in the context of what they seek to become.

Chaos theory can be used as a method for women to journey from darkness (i.e. confusion, lack of growth, discontent) to the light (i.e. clarity, purpose, and fulfillment) by the recognition of new patterns in their lives. These patterns can also be viewed as a web of relationships in humans and living systems. Women who choose to pursue a professional career can find great fulfillment in producing and participating in a web of relationships with others towards a common goal.

Wheatley asked the question: "What is our work?" (as cited in Spears, 1998, p. 340). She uses chaos theory as an underlying theme in discussing the issues with America's current method of organization, which she considered outdated and dysfunctional. Wheatley described the model used in Western society for the last three hundred years as old, hierarchical, and mechanistic. She predicted that the current model will be replaced in the near future by a new model based on self-organizing systems and servant leadership. Wheatley explained this notion best in the following quote: "It is one of the greatest ironies of our age that we created organizations to constrain our problematic human natures, and now the only thing that can save these organizations is a full appreciation of the expansive capacities of us humans" (p.344).

This process of the expansive capacities of humans was also envisioned by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. In King's (1968) essay, he called for a global community that transcends tribe, race, class, nation, and religion to embrace the vision of a World House. Forty years ago when King composed this telling essay, he had already concluded what most Americans have come to accept in 2009—that material abundance has brought Western civilization neither peace of mind nor serenity of spirit. King spoke about chaos and asserted that in order to achieve stability in the global community a revolution in values must accompany the scientific revolutions of freedom predominant around the globe. According

to King: "We must rapidly begin the shift from a 'thing'- oriented society to a 'person'- oriented society . . . [for] out of the wombs of a frail world new systems of justice and equality are being born. The people who sat in the darkness have seen a great light" (pp. 12-14).

As women struggle to find new patterns of fulfillment in their lives, other words from King's essay can serve as a reminder to seek the integration of seemingly opposing forces. According to King, all people exist in two realms, the internal and the external. The internal is the spiritual realm where morals, art, and literature are expressed. The external is the realm of complex devices, mechanisms, and instruments that comprise the exoskeleton of the system we live by. Long before Wheatley's portrayal of Western culture as a machine, King warned against allowing the internal to become lost in the external (King, 1968, p. 5). King cautioned that the more society gained in power materially the more the likelihood of its own demise if the soul (i.e. conscious, ethnics, and morals) did not have a proportionate increase to keep its balance of power and responsibility in check.

According to John Neafsey (2006), " . . . our true calling is not to more work or better work or different work but to a reordering of our priorities and a more balanced life . . . vocation is not only about what we do but who we are" (pp 3-5).

This theme is echoed by Kopp (1976), who writes that in a time when most, "prefer the security of known misery to the misery of unfamiliar insecurity," enduring the darkness, unknown, and unpredictable world of chaos is the only path to becoming a transformed individual and a productive member of an organization (p. 4). The self-examining component of chaos stimulates constructive change, empowering an individual to undergo a positive transformation through the recognition of new patterns.

Discussion and Limitations

The American family in 2009 is being held together by a thinning thread. Female ambition is met with an expectation that if women want to "act like men" and have careers, then they will have to find a way to manage both their traditional role at home and their new job of breadwinner. Based on existing research, it is a possible outcome for women in the twenty-first century to integrate career and family. Before this can happen men and women in society have to shed their outdated views on gender roles.

One of the important first steps is for women and men to accept that they are equal partners, and therefore, sharing the domestic responsibility in relationships is a necessary expectation to have.

Another finding is that women who do not wish to take time away from their careers to raise their children can instead seek assistance from their employers to enable them to integrate their work-life priorities so they can be successful in both realms. Often the issue is one of time management, and a flexible work schedule is all that women need. Women who are comfortable setting boundaries and negotiating find greater satisfaction at work and at home. On the other hand, the research in this study shows that overworked and stressed women are less productive in any area of life. Women who do not let go of the notion that a woman's goal in life is to have it *all* face detrimental health consequences. Through change via the recognition of new patters, women are more empowered to find what pursuits in life carry personal heart and meaning, and leave the extra baggage behind them. It is in the interest of everyone (husbands, employers, etc.) to value the female contribution to society and find ways to collaborate with women to achieve a mutually beneficial lifestyle.

Margaret Wheatley (1999) explained that no rebirth is possible without moving through a dark passage. The research in this study illustrates how chaos can be an empowering force in the life of women when understood and not feared. Life is defined by its desire to create. Nature is not ruled by survival of the fittest as previously concluded; on the contrary, nature's driving force is the desire to

recreate (Spears, 1998). The secondary underlying force in nature is its intrinsic will to share or link itself into a system of relationships with others forming a web of support. Nature is self-organizing.

Society could take a clue from the organic biological processes on earth when determining how to function as an integrated, growing, changeable force verses the old concept of human life as mechanical or a static mechanism. Organization does not have to be an autocratic plan imposed on others from the top down, because "organization" is a *naturally* occurring phenomenon in life experienced by an organization's members (Spears, 1998). Therefore, organization should be viewed as changing, organic, human process in structure.

Some limits of the research above include non-traditional family structures where a father and a mother do not make up the parent team. There are cultural factors that are not considered like the role the immediate and extended family play in raising children. The research in this study focuses on American society in the U.S. and may not apply in the same way to non-western societies.

The dominant focuses of this study is on women who are educated, trained, and have professional careers that put them in the middle class or higher. Some of the options higher wages afford are not available to low wage earning families. There is a growing rate of single and teenage parenting in the U.S. that is not explored in-depth in this research.

The research included in this study does not factor in how life stages change the focus of women as they age. Another gap in the research above is the affect that culture and non-American traditions have on a woman's decision to pursue a professional career or become a stay-at-home mom.

This study does include case studies of stay-at-home dads or domestic partnerships in the GBLT community. Adoption and foster care as parenting alternatives are not a part of this research. The research in this study assumes that the majority of adult American women have the ability to obtain the training and/or education to qualify for professional careers; and disabled, English language learners (formerly ESL), or hourly wage earners are not factored into the conclusions. Emerging trends in

fertility management (e.g. where women freeze their eggs in their late twenties or early thirties to harvest them for artificial insemination later in life) are not explored due to the lack of research and newness of the phenomenon. The study also does not focus on career women, both married and single, who have chosen to forego motherhood in order to concentrate on their careers. Nor does it analyze the percentage of highly successful women in all professions who have no children.

More in-depth research could be done on the effect of divorce and how single parenthood impacts the choices of women in all income brackets. As stated earlier, the women's movement has impacted racial and ethnic groups differently; however, the consequences are not examined in-depth.

Although the male role is discussed at length in the area where women need to make an adjustment to how they interact with men, the male point of view is omitted, therefore the male perspective is not included nor advice for how men can cope with the changes suggested in this research. With these limitations in place there remains a great deal to gain from the research presented-- especially for the demographic of middle to upper-middle class career women of any race.

In summary, a woman's professional pursuit is an important part of her fulfillment that impacts her health and happy state of mind. However, a woman needs to make some important choices to avoid doing too much and sacrificing success in both her personal and professional lives. The promising news is that a woman does not have to choose between her career and family; she can enjoy both. The research suggests several options for integration to occur with a positive outcome.

Case Studies

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the research included in this study a few case studies where women who have publically faced career-family integration are explored next.

Tyra Banks

Tyra Banks is an example of a woman in her thirties who has "opted-out" of marriage and motherhood choosing to pursue a career that gives her personal fulfillment and empowerment instead. Banks dedicates her life's work to the education and empowerment of young women. Bank's personal story and rise to fame is empowering. A trailblazer for African-American women, Banks is the first African-American model to be featured on the covers of *GQ* magazine and the highly sought after *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue (tzonefoundation.org, 2009).

As a philanthropist, Banks dedicates her time and resources to today's young women. Recounting her own self-esteem issues growing up, the novel, *Tyra's Beauty Inside Out* (1998) encourages young women to see the value inside themselves (tzonefoundation.org, 2009).

In July 2000, Banks established a self-funded foundation that began as camp for young women, and has since then transitioned into the Tzone Foundation: a grant-making organization whose mission is to build a sisterhood movement (tzonefoundation.org, 2009). The Tzone Foundation awards grants to community-based nonprofit organizations that serve low-income women through innovative programs and services (tzonefoundation.org, 2009). Banks wrote on her foundations website,

> I launched the Tyra Banks TZONE Foundation with my own money because I feel I have a responsibility to lead by example and bring attention to the issues facing girls and young women. That's the purpose of The Tyra Show and American's Next Top Model – to inspire women to take positive action to realize their ambitions. (tzonefoundation.org, 2009)

The Tzone Foundation supports community-based nonprofit organizations that encourage supportive female relationships through programs that advance the development of girls' positive body image, self-esteem, and relationships; life skills, goal setting, sound decision making and personal accountability; personal health wellness; and an understanding and appreciation for diversity (tzonefoundation.org, 2009).

As a successful entrepreneur, Banks and her New York based for-profit Bankable Enterprises, has expanded into television, film, and a new L.A. based studio, Bankable Productions (tzonefoundation.org, 2009).

The upbringing that Banks experienced in her childhood has impacted her desire to have a family of her own. Banks spoke about the divorce of her parents and her personal weariness towards marriage. Although motherhood is an option Banks has left on the table, she admits that marriage is not a personal goal for her. Banks rather focus her time on helping young women realize their empowerment, independence, and opportunities in today's society. In September 2008, Banks spoke to middle school girls about the importance that having positive role models and mentors have played in her success (tzonefoundation.org, 2009). Banks told the students:

> My hope is that you will always be true to yourself, use your talents, and take on life's challenges with a fierce determination and drive. . . . By choosing to live a healthy lifestyle, to work hard in school, steer clear of destructive behaviors and by having supportive friendships with other girls, you will be prepared to be successful in whatever you pursue. My wish is that you will aim high, dream big, and believe in yourself. (tzonefoundation.org, 2009)

Although Banks has no intention of switching to the traditional role of wife or stay-at-home mother in the foreseeable future, she still feels a great need to leave behind a legacy. Her giving and community building will benefit women and children for generations to come. Bank's is representative

of the growing trend of women who "opt-out" of motherhood, but find an intense satisfaction from their professional and philanthropic pursuits.

Michelle Obama

Michelle Obama, the first African-American First Lady in the United States, is an example of a woman in her forties with young children who started her adult life focused on a thriving career in business and law, married, had children, and, while her children were young, juggled both career and family; but now that her husband's career has sky-rocketed, has decided to prioritize her family during this phase in her life. Many First Ladies throughout history have focused on their own political influence on the agendas while their husbands are in office, when asked what she would focus on as First Lady, Michelle Obama made a point to say that her first priority as First Lady would be to raise her children; although the work-life constraints on women are high on her list of issues to address.

A Harvard-educated lawyer and a former corporate executive, Michelle Obama said she knows, "the challenges of leading a busy life at work and at home, trying to do a good job at both and always feeling like you're not quite living up to either'' (Swarns, 2009). Only a few women in history get to say they are married to the President of the United States; however, many women married to successful partners who are not reliant on their wives contribution for the household income decide to take time away from successful careers to raise their children and enjoy family time. Michelle Obama has shared that her mother did the same and was home while her and her brother were growing up during a time when most African-American women had no choice but to work as well. Realizing that middle class career women need support from their employers, she noted: "This isn't just about family balance, this is about making workplaces stronger and more effective and keeping and attracting the most qualified people'' (Swarns, 2009). Michelle Obama pointed to research conducted by Corporate Voices that shows employees are more productive and remain with the same employer for longer periods of time if their companies provide flexible work-life policies (Swarns, 2009).

Before becoming First Lady, Michelle Obama was vice president for Community and External Affairs at the University of Chicago Hospitals (University of Chicago Medical Center, 2005). She continued to hold the University of Chicago Hospitals position during then senator Obama's primary campaign, but cut back to part-time in order to spend time with her daughters (Stacy St. Clair, 2008). In 2007 Michelle Obama took a leave of absence from her demanding career in support of her husband's political campaign and growing need to travel. The full extent of the impact her mother's choice to leave her career to focus on her family played on Michelle Obama's similar sacrifice is unclear, but they certainly factored into Michelle Obama's decision as illustrated in the following:

> I think my mother taught me what not to do. She put us first, always, sometimes at the detriment of herself. She'd encouraged me not to do that. She'd say being a good mother isn't all about sacrificing; it's really investing and putting yourself higher on your priority list. You can be a good mom and still work out, get your rest, have a career-- or not. She encouraged me to find that balance. (Vaccariello, 2009, p. 138)

Michelle Obama gave most of the credit to the memory of her early days of wife, mother, and career woman, when she was overworked, stressed, and unhappy with the results of her ineffective time management. According to Michelle Obama: "I have freed myself to make choices that make me happy-- and it will benefit my kids, my husband, and my physical health" (Vaccariello, 2009, p. 138). It was during this time that her mother, retired and still living in Chicago, began taking an active role in supporting Michelle Obama in raising her two daughters.

So much of middle class American lifestyle in 2009 requires a dual household income that women are employed out of necessity as much as the desire to explore new opportunities. Michelle Obama's case brings a new question to light: whether or not there are other well educated career women who, like Michelle Obama, if given a choice they would opt to stay home with their children, saying to themselves, "I've accomplished my educational goals, and benefited from a fruitful career, now I want

to enjoy motherhood during this time in life," reinforcing the notion that it may not be necessary to work without break until retirement age to be fulfilled.

As First Lady Michelle Obama receives staff assistance in managing her busy schedule and raising her two daughters. Her mother resides with the Obama family in the White House, and the White House staff assist with the children's daily needs. What is clear from Michelle Obama's example is family comes first for her. She attributed her mother and father's love, care, attention, and sacrifice as her early motivation to dream big and do her best in everything (Senior, 2009). Michelle Obama explained in her Democratic National Convention Keynote Address, "[my father] and my mom poured everything they had into me and Craig. It was the greatest gift a child can receive: never doubting for a single minute that you're loved, and cherished, and have a place in this world" (Michelle Obama as cited in Senior, p. 38).

Michelle Obama remains active in her husband's political career as President, and often accompanies him on the road making speeches and diplomatic appearances with him and on his behalf. Whether or not Michelle Obama will return to her professional pursuits after her daughters Sasha and Malia are grown up remains to be seen; but for now, she seems content being a well-educated mother, wife, and First Lady. Either way, Michelle Obama shares with the nation her number one rule for a healthy life, "give yourself permission to be happy" (Vaccariello, 2009, p. 136).

Marian Heard

An example of a woman in her sixties with adult children, who chose to have both a family and a thriving career, is Marian Heard. She is a modern leader and entrepreneur who integrated career and motherhood successfully. Heard is a role model of a woman who was able to integrate work and family to live a purpose-driven, passionate, and fulfilling life of service. A marriage of over twenty-five years, mother of two, and several fruitful careers, Heard's story is that of a woman who stayed true to her convictions, morals, and ethics and enjoyed success in all areas of life by focusing on what had

personal heart and meaning. Heard discovered her life's purpose in her complete commitment to improving her community, the nation, and the world through service.

Growing up during segregation in the 1940's, Heard overcame the mental oppression most African-Americans suffered from until long after the civil rights movement, because she believed that anything was possible and had the ability to conceptualize the world as an open door. Experiencing Jim Crow in the south instilled in Heard a deep empathy for those who suffer and a greater awareness to the needs of the community. Heard dedicated her entire life to helping others succeed. Always an advocate for minority education and advancement Heard earned an associate's degree from the University of Bridgeport, a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and a master's degree from Springfield College and has completed the Executive Leadership Program at the University of Michigan. According to Heard, her parents are her greatest influences and heroes in life, because they raised her to believe in a life without limitations.

Heard is best known for her work as former president and chief executive officer for the United Way of Massachusetts. She is currently the President and Chief Executive Officer of Oxen Hill Partners, specialists in Leadership Development Programs and Brand Enhancement Strategies and located in Boston, MA. Heard recently published a new book, "The Complete Leader: Your Path to the Top." Another major accomplishment in executive leadership, Heard was the Founding President and Chief Executive Officer of the Points of Light Foundation, organized to perpetuate President George Bush Sr. call for volunteers to address serious social problems in our nation. She continues as a board member and has served two terms as National Board Chairman.

Heard is living proof that it is possible to live a fulfilling life as a mother, wife, professional, mentor, and leader. Heard's optimistic attitude has been the key to her success as a leader. The personal mission developed early in life gave her a dedicated spirit of giving back and helping others. Heard is

an example of finding personal fulfillment through service, a web of relationships and integrated

identity as a career woman and mother.

Findings

The result of this study found methods that allow women to thrive both personally and professionally in the twenty-first century. In this study, it appears that women do not have to choose between focusing on family or career. It is possible to enjoy success as a career woman and mother when both are integrated in one's life with time management and a web of support. Although there is not sufficient research on whether or not the majority of women who opt out of motherhood regret this decision late in life, there is adequate information to conclude that women who choose to include both motherhood and profession in their lives are greatly fulfilled by both.

The findings also support that a woman's professional endeavors tend to not diminish her desire for motherhood and family; although there is a growing trend of women who are choosing to focus on career early in adulthood and wait to have children into their late thirties and early forties.

There are new options and benefits offered by many employers available to women who have full-time exempt employment and longer work weeks that exceed the norm of forty hours per week. Between the 1960s women's movement and today in 2009 there have been missing elements for women in demanding professions that need consideration before they can be successful in motherhood too. At the same time that women are benefiting from advancement of opportunity due to the civil rights and feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, affirmative action, changes in acceptable social "norms," an increase in higher degrees and education levels for women, decline in occupational segregation by gender, and increased salaries for women overall; women are combating the forces of an ever increasing divorce rate, an increasing birthrate for single mothers, and budget cuts to government support and assistance to one parent families (Babcock & Laschever, 2003).

To counter the above imbalance women must increase their level of comfort in negotiation, whether it is with an employer for increased salary, a client for an attractive deal, or at home for the much needed and well deserved contribution from a spouse. Health and longevity are at risk should women

not learn to better negotiate, or integrate the many facets of their lives. A shared responsibility between men and women must exist in order to ensure the family and domestic duties are cared for in the absence of the traditional housewife and stay-at-home mother (Moen, P. & Roehling, P., 2005).

Many women are still in denial of the inequality at home between spouses. Career mothers must breakdown the myth that good working mothers are proud of their ability to work through their unequal partnership at home and still be successful (Buzzanell, 2005). In order to break down stereotypes of the "good working mother" and reframe expectations at home and at work into more sensible, equal distributions of labor, men and women must each be held accountable for furthering this process. Both men and women desire the best of both worlds and take pleasure in enjoying their careers and families. Women desire the benefits of a rich life full of family, love, and work that challenges their intellect while capitalizing on their strengths. Staying at home is the exception for mothers, not the rule (Buzzanell, 2005). If women desire to lead dually fulfilling lives at work and at home, then integration of (seemingly opposing) work-life issues is essential. Although it is natural for women to want to lead deeply impactful and fulfilling lives at home and in their communities, both professionally and in their families; it remains difficult to nurture relationships when gender identity is confusing and in constant flux.

What chaos theory teaches is that at times seemingly opposing forces actually rely on one another and can work together once the common patterns are recognizable. In order to "see" these common patterns women have to face their fear and uncertainty to discover what it is in themselves that motivates them in life. Women must uncover their driving force, the pieces that make life worth living; and doing so will enable them to focus on what really matters in their personal and professional lives. The pieces mentioned above may differ from woman to woman, but each woman has the ability inside her to uncover what has personal heart and meaning.

The research in this study demonstrates how chaos embraces change as a positive force for growth and new direction. Change for the modern career woman is a two-step process. First, society has to accept that women are intrinsically equal in importance as their male counterparts. Secondly, women have to understand their own identity, have the confidence to pursue opportunities that have personal meaning, appreciate the value of what they contribute to society, and negotiate for what they want (Babcock & Laschever, 2006).

Conclusion

In conclusion, women would benefit from establishing a network of support of family and friends who are willing to help them be successful in a variety of roles. With proper support women can take the time to discover the two to three fundamental things they can't live without for their personal fulfillment. To accomplish the latter women should ask themselves the questions, "What defines my purpose for living?" and "What feeds my passion in life?"

If women are not able to develop a network of support that allows them to do more, then they will have to learn how to do less by choosing what is important by minimizing distraction and understanding what they can live without.

It is true that the majority of twenty-first century women still desire to have a family of their own. In some cases, a woman's motivation to work hard to obtain higher education and a well-paying career is to better position herself as provider for her future family; so "opting out" of motherhood is not an option that will lead to fulfillment for most women.

Therefore, modern times require special attention towards this issue, as feminist concerns shift from wanting equal opportunity in the workforce to needing equal partnering for domestic responsibilities at home. As women battle rising divorce rates, single parenting, salary inequality, and spiraling roles and responsibilities, the outcry for a thoughtful, realistic, and practical solution to "having it all" stands in the feminine mind. Mothers who are not fortunate enough to work for an employer that offers affordable benefits, programs like flexi-hours, or on-site childcare often rely on government benefits to assist them. Single mothers face a double threat to their quality of life as the danger of higher taxes and higher healthcare costs continue to be imposed for the future. In addition, gender roles are outdated and cause tremendous strain on career women. Increased stress levels are resulting in negative health consequences on women like heart disease. Higher taxes equal less net income for single parents to take home. However, there are some new tax benefits emerging in legislation that could remedy this

concern.

What many twenty-first century women are realizing is that having it all more often than not means doing it all, and it is time for change. Working couples cannot continue to ignore the domestic realm. Career women must gain comfort in rallying the support of their community and increasing the expectations of their spouses to share an equal portion of the load at home.

Based on the research from this study, women would be more effective in integrating family and career by realizing that women are intrinsically equal partners to their male counterparts by design. Once women accept and operate under the above understanding, realizing that they have an equally important role to play in society as men, and change their focus to collaboration across genders; then the woman's impact can be truly felt on a larger scale in society.

The integration of family and career can be broken into three parts. The first aspect is that men and women are both equally beneficial and necessary partners in a functioning society. The second realization is that women have an equal capability to live the American Dream when they lead meaningful, purpose driven lives that directly impact their relationships and communities in a positive way. The third element that may require a leap of faith is that change is an unavoidable and purposeful aspect of nature and life that when understood can be used to create opportunities for leadership that yield wonderful results. When women embrace who they are by design, and share their leadership by partnering, organizing, and nurturing relationships in business, at home, and in their community, society as a whole greatly benefits.

The twenty-first century woman has the leadership ability to integrate family, career, and her life's passion while making a fulfilling contribution to society. Through the recognition of new patterns a woman can become empowered to have a greater impact on her surrounding environment. Like a small flame, her insight, leadership and vigor has the capacity to leave a lasting impact on her entire social network.

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