



Working Mother

One of life's most annoying phrases, its true spirit is one of boundless love

By Kelli Wheeler

Standing still. Forward motion. Deafening silence. Busy child. Working mother.

All these linguistic redundancies cause me little anguish. I don't cringe at the sound of them, tempted to throttle whoever uttered them—except that last one.

I think it's agreed there are a lot of things going wrong in this society, this country, this world at the moment. But for too dang long the biggest thing going wrong is the value placed on the job of Mom.

I mean, really, can someone please verbally communicate to me why some ding-dong CEO at a supposed consumer services company (but really it's about bringing shareholders big dividends) gets a multimillion-dollar salary, and mothers are paid squat? Nurturing, raising and grooming the future of this Earth is not an invaluable service of the highest altruistic measure worthy of multimillion-dollar investments? The hugest injustice of it all is when

the oh-so-smart CEO then runs the company into the ground—basically the motherhood equivalent of dooming your kid to bad marriages and a permanent seat on Dr. Phil's couch—he's rewarded with a wealthy severance package.

Now I know, as mothers, we didn't choose motherhood as a job, specifically as an honorable profession. It is so much more profound than that. As author Elizabeth Stone tells it, "Making the decision to have a child is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body."

By the way, at the moment I have the two cutest, sweetest, smartest, most precious hearts walking around wreaking destruction through my house and whining for lunch.

But to get back to the point, the phrase "working mother" to describe the difference between stay-at-home mothers (don't get me started on that one, either) and career women who are also mothers is ridiculously unfair. Show me a stay-at-home mom

who is not working 24/7 using the same organizational, multitasking, tactical skill set as an upper-level CEO to accomplish quantifiable goals, and I'll show you Real Housewives of Orange County.

In the same regard, whether out of necessity or desire for professional achievement, some mothers take on the commendable effort of juggling two jobs. Show me a dual-career mother (ooh, that sounds good—run with me on this, ladies) who doesn't strive to find the perfect balance between fulfilling, productive, lucrative career and fulfilling, nurturing, quality family life, and I'll show you a woman who doesn't exist.

In both instances we working mothers, whether inside or outside the home, are simply looking for respect, recognition and appreciation for what should be considered the world's most noble profession: motherhood.

At one point I thought I could tackle both jobs of motherhood and teaching. I distinctly remember the first day I dropped off my 3-month-old son at his first day of day-care so I could return to work as a fifth-grade teacher. I cried all the way to work. My husband had flowers delivered with a card reading, "It's okay, Mommy. I'll be all right. Love, Logan." I cried some more when my class was at recess.

The thing was, I loved both my jobs. I loved molding the minds of three dozen 10- and 11-year-olds, inspiring in them a thirst and appreciation for knowledge. But it also wrenched my heart to think someone else would spend

more waking hours with my child, influencing his life and possibly witnessing his firsts instead of me. The dual dichotomy was unbearable to me, and in the end I had the blessing of focusing on the work it turned out I loved the most: Mommy.

For this amazing job of motherhood, we mothers and dual-career mothers are not asking for monetary payment. It is a priceless job. We are not asking for fame. It is enough to be the star of our children's lives. We are not asking for power. How much greater power than God can women have than producing and raising this world's destined future greatness?

We mothers put our blood, sweat and tears (and plenty of cleaned-up vomit) into molding contributing, honorable, intelligent, compassionate, happy human beings on this Earth to make it a better place. And the beauty of it is, we are asking for *hardly anything* to compensate our priceless contribution.

No, we mothers simply seek only one thing in return for the love and support we provide for our children; these children who shall inherit the Earth.

Their unconditional love.

Happy Mother's Day to all my working comrades at the front lines of motherhood.

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